

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

Question Number	Question asked by Councillor:	Subject
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL Councillor Tony Newman		
PQ042-18	Oscar Dahling	Taberner House
CABINET MEMBER FOR FAMILIES, HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE Councillor Jane Avis		
CQ088-18	Hopley, Y	Autism Board and National Autistic Society
CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES & GATEWAY SERVICES Councillor Alison Butler		
CQ029-18	Creatura, M	Dumping of Furniture
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING Councillor Alisa Flemming		
CQ094-18	Canning, R	St. Andrew's School
CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE & SPORT Councillor Oliver Lewis		
CQ019-18	Neal, M	Annual County Athletic Championships
CQ024-18	Bird, M	Park Keepers

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Oscar Dahling

Councillor Tony Newman

Question No. PQ042-18

1. When Taberner House was demolished, Croydon Council temporarily handed the site over to the community group Croydon Saffron Central. This community group cultivated crocuses on the site, encouraging local residents and children to participate in an innovative urban farm. The site was also open to the public as part of the Croydon Pridefest.

Prior to demolition, Taberner House was identified as containing a total of forty tonnes of potentially life threatening asbestos.

Would the Leader of the Council confirm whether any of the community groups which were allowed by Croydon Council to use the site were ever informed by the Council that the site had recent exposure to such high levels of asbestos?

2. Building materials containing asbestos are least stable and pose significant harm while being disturbed or broken up as part of demolition, with asbestos fibres often leaching into the immediate environment.

Did Croydon Council commission a contamination report after Taberner House was demolished, examining levels of asbestos in the retained ground floor slab and soil and prior to handing the site over to the community group? If so, would the Leader provide evidence of this report?

Reply

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Before any work commenced on Taberner House a full Refurbishment and Development (R&D) asbestos survey was undertaken and all asbestos identified by the survey was removed under controlled conditions prior to internal strip out and demolition. Whilst such surveys are thorough, they do not always identify all asbestos present and therefore throughout the demolition process a robust asbestos awareness regime was put in place by the contractors to identify any further asbestos during the course of the works. As part of the removal process, air quality testing was undertaken following removal to ensure that the environment was safe and there were no particles in the atmosphere. These tests took place in the retained basement area and the perimeter of the building.

All information on the demolition, including the asbestos removals were made available to HUB, the company now taking the development forward. Upon possession of the site, and prior to commencing of any works, a further comprehensive visual survey was undertaken throughout the remaining basement area which reconfirmed that there was no evidence of asbestos nor has any been discovered as the structure has been stripped back to a concrete shell.

In addition HUB have also undertaken soil sampling outside of the existing structure adjacent to the basement, plus other areas of the development, and the soil testing confirmed that no traces of asbestos were present.

Copies of the air and bore hole test reports are available if required.

Proposed response

In response to the two points raised and supplemental to the earlier response to your enquiry we would confirm that there was no known exposure to or contamination of asbestos during or after the demolition of Taberner House. Asbestos was identified and removed before structural demolition in accordance with the Control of Asbestos regulations 2012, as such no further contamination surveys were necessary. This included removal under controlled conditions and post-removal air testing by UKAS accredited specialist subcontractors. In addition post demolition bore hole testing by the developers identified no significant or dangerous levels of asbestos in the locations sampled.

To ensure the site was safe for other users and contractors on

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completion of the demolition, additional safety works were undertaken to enclose all access points into the confined spaces of the basement.

As part of the process to allow limited occupation by community groups a thorough induction process was undertaken which included access to relevant sections of the Health and Safety file. The Croydon Saffron Central group was further advised not to dig or re-level the site to avoid damaging the remaining structure and our Officers worked closely with the community groups throughout the setting up of the site by Saffron Central.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Yvette Hopley

Councillor Jane Avis

Question No. CQ088-18

Could the cabinet member explain why the work of the Autism Board was abandoned between October 2017 and July 2018?

Could the cabinet member confirm that the contracts held with the National Autistic Society and PIP will continue to give vital support to residents?

Reply

Cllr Hopley would be correct in saying that Partnership Board which is scheduled to have 4 meetings a year did not meet in January and March 2018 as planned.

This was out of the hands of the council because unfortunately the key partners were not available to participate in scheduled meetings. This interruption to the meeting schedule was regrettable.

To reassure the Councillor it can be confirmed that the Board meetings which bring together commissioners, health and social care colleagues, with responsibility for adults and children, service providers in all sectors public independent, charitable and voluntary and including in Education and the Criminal Justice System are now scheduled for the rest of the financial year.

In addition to the meetings of the full Board there are several business meetings planned to develop the new strategy and complete the Self-Assessment Framework.

Cllr Fitzpatrick, Croydon's new Autism Champion, will be in the chair for these meetings.

I would however like to stress that the temporary hiatus in the schedule of partnership board meetings hasn't in any way halted or delayed some of the exciting new service developments and the involvement of service users and carers in shaping them.

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These include for the council implementing the findings of the “Walk in our shoes” report, mobilising the new patient support service, relocating the Chatsworth House autism service in newly refurbished and accessible centre, and the development of new free school. At the same time the NHS has also completed the development of a new autism friendly A&E department.

Could the cabinet member confirm that the contracts held with the National Autistic Society and PIP will continue to give vital support to residents?

NAS Croydon and PIP are active local voluntary groups, both of whom currently hold provider contracts with the council supporting people with Autism and PIP also support families of children with Pan Disabilities.

Both organisations are effective advocates for the needs of people Croydon who are on the autism spectrum. Both groups actively participate in the Autism Partnership and Learning Disability Partnership Boards and any relevant consultations. We can say that we look forward to continuing a fruitful relationship with these organisations.’

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Mario Creatura

Councillor Alison Butler

Question No. CQ029-18

You said in your 2014 manifesto ‘We will make landlords responsible when old furniture and mattresses are simply discarded in front gardens or dumped in the street.’ How many Landlords have you prosecuted for this?

Reply

One of the major issues for residents across the borough have been concerns about poorly kept gardens and inadequate refuse facilities and we have carried out a significant amount of enforcement for these offences. Since October 2015 we have issued over 1,000 financial penalty notices for fly tipping, which includes items of furniture. In addition, we have issued 365 community penalty warning letters specifically relating to issues within gardens. I am pleased to say that these are very effective, with most recipients complying with the warning. One of the major issues for residents across the borough have been concerns about poorly kept gardens and inadequate refuse facilities and we have 68 of these cases have been escalated for more formal action a number of them relating to private sector landlords. Of the 68, 52 were resolved at that point and 16 cases progressed to the service of a community penalty notice. Of these 16, 5 were served on private landlords.

In addition, we have dealt with numerous cases using the licence conditions, i.e. ensuring rubbish is removed and that adequate provision is made for tenants to dispose of refuse. Again, this action is very effective – landlords are faced with losing their licence if they do not comply – and it has not been necessary to either prosecute or revoke any licences for this issue.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Robert Canning

Councillor Alisa Flemming

Question No. CQ094-18

Can the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning set out the current position regarding the future of St Andrew's Church of England school in Waddon and what impact is this expected to have on meeting future needs for secondary school places in Croydon?

Reply

The future of St Andrew's C of E High School is a matter for the governors and Southwark Diocesan Board of Education to determine. However, it is anticipated that the school will once again begin admitting pupils in to year 7 in September 2020. There is currently sufficient capacity in other local schools to accommodate Key Stage 3 pupils (those in Years 7, 8 and 9).

The Council will work closely with both the Diocesan Board of Education and the school to ensure a strong offer will be able to be delivered at St Andrew's in the future.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Michael Neal

Councillor Oliver Lewis

Question No. CQ019-18

You said in your 2014 manifesto 'The council will work together with Croydon Harriers and Surrey County AA to bring the annual county athletics championships back to the borough for the first time in more than a decade'. Has this happened yet?

Reply

The Annual County Athletics Championships have not been held in Croydon since moving to Kingston and other facilities in the early 1990's. However schools programmes and club development have continued to grow seeing over 50 events this year from May with over 22,500 competitors.

Minor track improvements were carried out in 2017 and investment into a replacement track has been secured which is currently being discussed with the new operator Greenwich Leisure Ltd for 2019.

GLL who also operate the National Centre at Crystal Palace will work with partners and clubs to develop fully along with continuing to hold Borough athletics championships, Secondary and Primary along with Inter Borough games for disabilities and supporting London Youth Games. Including out of borough events and further development opportunities to enhance activities at the venue.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Margaret Bird

Councillor Oliver Lewis

Question No. CQ024-18

You said in your 2014 manifesto 'We will have a named park keeper (for each park) and a team of staff to work with local communities'. Please list the appointed 'named park keeper' for each park and outline how many staff each of them manages.

Reply

As part of the labour parties ambitious for Croydon manifesto commitments we did indeed want to have a named park keeper in our parks and for the parks teams to work with local communities and friends of groups. The parks team and grounds maintenance contractor Idverde have and continue to work with and develop relationships with a large number of 'friends of' groups across the borough. In 2014 we were keen to have a named parks keeper in our parks but found this was not necessarily the way to maximise resources considering the financial constraints we inherited from the conservatives along with the conservative government austerity measures imposed on councils.

At the May elections the residents of Croydon again elected labour to run the council as they believe we deliver on our promises despite the financial constraint we have. This council believes our parks are one of the greatest things about Croydon and are vital to our busy town, they help to create healthy communities where everyone can exercise and have fun. Bringing and unifying the grounds maintenance service in house will enable the council to offer increased control and better quality of services. It will be easier to monitor and manage performance issues much better and be more responsive as a service for our communities.