

Question Number:	Question asked by:	Subject:
CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE CROYDON Councillor Muhammad Ali		
CQ017-21	Cllr Robert Canning	Repainting Parking Lines
CABINET MEMBER FOR CROYDON RENEWAL Councillor Stuart King		
CQ028-21	Cllr Andrew Pelling	Average Spend on External Lawyers
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL Councillor Hamida Ali		
CQ021-21	Cllr Robert Ward	Coast to Capital funding
CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice		
CQ015-21 (Part 2)	Cllr Clive Fraser	Housing Legal Disrepair Case's
CQ020-21	Cllr Clive Fraser	Social Let Housing Supply in Croydon
CQ031-21	Cllr Andrew Pelling	Vulnerable Households Grant
CQ033-21	Cllr Lynne Hale	Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report on Damp and Mold

CQ017-21 from Councillor Robert Canning

Councillor Muhammad Ali

“What plans, including a time frame, does Croydon Council have for repainting the faded single yellow line parking restriction on the southern side of Stafford Road between Fiveways Junction and Stafford Gardens?”

Reply

The council undertakes regular safety inspection and response to ensure that all the borough’s assets are maintained to required standards. Stafford Road is inspected twice a year and following a recent inspection, an order was raised on 28th June 21 for the yellow lines to be remarked within 14 days. The contractors have however had problems completing approximately 25m of remaining lines due to parked cars. A request has been made for arrangements to relocate cars to allow the contractors to gain access to complete the work. The work is now expected to be completed by the end of July 2021.

CQ028-21 from Councillor Andrew Pelling

“What is the approximate average spend per month by the council on external lawyers?”

Reply

Browne Jacobson, the external lawyers invoice the Council on a monthly basis. Based on the transaction reports for April 2021 to August 2021 the average amount billed is £61,635 per month.

CQ021-21 from Councillor Robert Ward

Councillor Hamida Ali, Leader of the Council

“In February 2017 the Council issued a press release announcing the successful bid for £14.2 million of grant funding from Coast to Capital for Fairfield Halls related costs.

Please advise how much of this money was received and supply an itemised listing of the individual projects on which it was spent”

Reply

In March 2017 the C2C confirmed funding for £14.23m to the Council towards works on Fairfield Halls and related costs. A total of £13m has been drawn down from the £14.23m and has been used towards spend at Fairfield Halls. The balance of £1.23m has not been used and is still with Coast to Capital.

Of the £13m that the Council has drawn down £10.25m has been used by Brick By Brick to carry out works on Fairfield Halls and therefore was used to fund the £69m of works on the Halls. The balance of £2.75m has been used by the Council to carry out infrastructure works/public realm in and around Fairfield Halls.

CQ015-21 from Councillor Clive Fraser

Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice

"I write to ask the following formal Councillor question to the Cabinet Member.

- (1) *Can the Cabinet member confirm the number of Housing Legal Disrepair Case's between residents and Housing, including individual addresses by ward across the Council*
 - *In 2000/21*
 - *2001/22 – up to 18 June*
- (2) *The length of time these individual "Legal Dispute Cases" have been existing, and average time to resolve.*
- (3) *Planned and/or required repair works that has been put on hold as a result of a "Legal Dispute cases"*
- (4) *Outcomes of "Legal Dispute Cases over the above time period, in terms of court action, and settlement between the Council and Tenant/Leaseholder*
- (5) *Any legal justification in terms of Primary Legislation, Regulations, Case Law, and/or Legal Guidance which prevents elected ward representatives being updated on Legal Dispute Cases."*

Reply

Please note the Constitution at Part 4A prohibits questions which relate to anticipated or on going litigation. However, general information has been provided to assist.

- (1) Case numbers for 2020/2021 are 121 and case numbers for 2021/2022 up to 18 June are 38. Addresses cannot be provided publically as the provision of this location information would be a breach of tenant privacy and data protection. A breakdown of case numbers by Ward is however being prepared and will be provided by 20 July (which is now complete, see Appendix 1).
- (2) There are a range of different legal routes available for tenants to use when issuing proceedings against the Council alleging disrepair. Failure to comply with the council's repairing obligations can result in a civil claim in the County Court for damages and specific performance which may also be coupled with a claim for compensation. However, some legal disrepair claims received are pleaded in the Magistrates' Court in common law nuisance or negligence. A housing conditions claim may also include a personal injury element.

As a result the length of time taken to resolve each case will depend upon the nature of the complaint made, the work required to remedy the complaint and also the type of litigation issued against the Council.

- (3) I am not aware that planned or required works are 'put on hold' as a result of legal dispute litigation as it is imperative for the works to be carried out as soon as possible where the claim is made out to remedy the complaint and reduce the amount of compensation payable to the tenant.
- (4) Few cases end up at trial. Where cases are made out then attempts to settle the matter before trial will always be explored.
- (5) As with any disclosure of information any request would need to be considered in the context of the nature and purpose of the request and the potential impacts of disclosure. These assessments are undertaken on a case by case basis. As well as legal duties around confidentiality, legal professional privilege, contractual obligations, court orders or pending legal proceedings which are covered by the sub judice rule the Council must comply with obligations arising as a result of the litigation process itself such as requirements imposed in the civil procedure rules and pre-action protocols.

The Council is also required to ensure that it does not process personal data other than in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation.

Ward Members are therefore requested to contact relevant housing/legal officers for any updates required so that requests can be assessed in the usual way.

Appendix 1 - Number of Cases by Ward

	Disrepair Cases				
Addiscombe West	1		1	6	8
Broad Green	1		5		17
CP & Upper Norwood	2		4	10	16
Fairfield	1		3		4
New Addington North	2		5	14	21
New Addington South	2		3	6	11
South Norwood	3		4	5	12
Thornton Heath	3		5	16	24
Waddon	2		8	9	19
Selhurst		1	4	4	9
West Thornton		2		5	7
Bensham Manor			1	8	9
Couldson Town			1		1
Kenley			4	1	5
Norbury & Pollards Hill			4	4	8
Norbury Park			2	3	5
Old Couldson			1	2	3
Purley & Woodcote			2	2	4
Selsdon & Addington Village			3	3	6
Shirley North			6	9	15
Shirley South			3	10	13

CQ020-21 from Councillor Clive Fraser

Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice

“1. 2020/21 Social lets Supply

Presentation at SEH Scrutiny & Overview noted supply of 562 of Social Housing Lets in 2020/1

- 361 from LBC*
- 261 from Housing Associations*

Can I ask for the following:

(a) Who properties were allocated to, from:

- Housing Waiting list*
- Those in Temporary accommodation*
- Existing Tenants up seizing*
- Existing Tenants down sizing*

Cross Referenced whether Council or Housing Association Properties allocated.

(b) Properties allocated by bed room size. i.e, 1, 2, 3 or 4+ bedrooms

Cross Referenced whether Council or Housing Association Properties allocated.

(c) Proportion that is re-let, and/or new build, and/or street purchase.

Cross Referenced whether Council or Housing Association Properties allocated.

(d) Proportion of LBC stock used as Temporary accommodation within year

Cross referenced to size of units by bedrooms

(e) Level of void properties in Council Stock within year, and average length of voids

(f) Properties lost to Council Housing Stock by Right to Buy, by bed room size. i.e. 1, 2, 3 or 4+ bedrooms

2. Previous Years supply.

How does the above queries compare to 2019/20 & 2018/19 in terms of information available

3. Current Social Let/Rent Stock

(a) Council Rented, by bedroom size 1, 2, 3, 4+

(b) Housing Association Social Rented, by bedroom size 1, 2, 3, 4+

4. Current Year Supply

Projected supply in current year 2021/22

- *Council BxB purchase?*
- *Council Street Purchase?*
- *Housing association new build, and or re-let nominations*
- *Council Re-let*

Cross referenced by bedroom size 1, 2, 3, 4+

5. Current Demand for Social lets

Those currently seeking access to Social Rented in Croydon, either at start of year or current

- *Housing Waiting List*
- *In Temporary Accommodation*
- *Currently in Council or Housing Accommodation – but seeking larger properties*

Cross referenced by demand for accommodation by bedroom size 1, 2, 3, 4+”

Reply

Data showing a summary of the following:

- All Council properties rented, (all tenancies – Secure, Flexible and Temporary) by bed size (current accounts as at Aug 2021).
- Temporary Accommodation Tenancies, by bed size, for financial years, 2018 to 2021.
- Social sector housing (both LBC & RSL/Housing Associations) lets via Croydon’s Housing Register for financial years, 2018 to 2021.

NB. Unfortunately, we are unable to obtain data on social housing lets for applicants wishing to size up and size down from our current housing database.

- LBC properties sold under RTB, for financial years, 2018 to 2021.
- Current level of demand for social housing as recorded on Croydon’s Housing Register (current figures as at August 2021).

LBC Properties rented

All Council properties rented, (all tenancies – Secure, Flexible and Temporary) by bed size (current accounts as at Aug 2021).

Bed size	Total number rented by bed size
Bedsit	452
1	3,783
2	4,471
3	4,067
4	332
5	31
6	8
7	1
Total	13,145

Temporary Accommodation Tenancies, by bed size, for financial years, 2018 to 2021.

TA Tenancies 2018-19:

Bed size	Total number rented by bed size (2018-19~TA)
Bedsit	7
1	158
2	75
3	99
4	5
5	0
6	1
Total	345

TA Tenancies 2019-20:

Bed size	Total number rented by bed size (2019-20~TA)
Bedsit	10
1	187
2	136
3	144
4	8
5	0
6	1
Total	486

TA Tenancies 2020-21:

Bed size	Total number rented by bed size (2020-21~TA)
Bedsit	12
1	214
2	169
3	169
4	10
5	0
6	1
Total	575

~As provided by F. Mahmood

Summary Information for period: 01/04/2018 – 31/03/2019

Total lets to social sector housing via Croydon's Housing Register ~

2018/19: 779

Landlord 2018/19	
HA	LBC
263	516

Breakdown of the above total lets by bed size, is as follows:

Bedrooms ~ 2018/19				
sheltered	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed +
132	255	243	135	14

Breakdown of the above lets, by priority Band:(A = Applicants / T = Tenants

Band 2018/19	Total lets
1A	75
1T	115
2A	270
2T	17
3A	216
3T	28
4A	56
4T	2

Summary Information for period: 01/04/2019 – 31/03/2020

Total lets to social sector housing via Croydon’s Housing Register ~

2019/20: 823

Landlord 2019/20	
HA	LBC
342	481

Breakdown of the above total lets by bed size, is as follows:

Bedrooms ~ 2019/20				
sheltered	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed +
168	298	202	141	14

Breakdown of the above lets, by priority Band:(A = Applicants / T = Tenants

Band 2019/20	Total lets
1A	62
1T	157
2A	245
2T	13
3A	233
3T	59
4A	53
4T	1

Summary Information for period: 01/04/2020 – 31/03/2021

Total lets to social sector housing via Croydon’s Housing Register ~

2020/21: 570

Landlord 2020/2021	
HA	LBC
208	362

Bedrooms ~ 2020/2021				
sheltered	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed +
129	164	173	96	8

Breakdown of the above lets, by priority Band:(A = Applicants / T = Tenants

Band 2020/21	Total lets
1A	51
1T	130
2A	215
2T	4
3A	132
3T	10
4A	27
4T	1

LBC properties sold under RTB

LBC properties sold under RTB ~ 2018-19:

Bed size	Total number sold by bed size (2018-19)
Bedsit	1
1	18
2	36
3	26
4	2
5	0
6	0
Total	83

LBC properties sold under RTB ~ 2019-20:

Bed size	Total number sold by bed size (2019-20)
Bedsit	1
1	6
2	28
3	22
4	2
5	0
6	0
Total	59

LBC properties sold under RTB ~ 2020-21:

Bed size	Total number rented by bed size (2020-21)
Bedsit	1
1	11
2	37
3	22
4	1
5	0
6	0
Total	72

~As provided by F. Mahmood

Recorded level of demand for Social Housing Sector properties

Current level of demand for social housing as recorded on Croydon's Housing Register (current figures as at August 2021).

THE HOUSING REGISTER:

The current Housing Register stats / Figures, correct as of 5th August 2021.

Since June 2021, we have seen a 5% increase in Housing Applications on the Housing Register:

- Currently 6,627, up from 6,310 (June 2021) = Increase 5.02%
- We had 6,193 applicants registered on the Housing Register in April 2021. An increase of 7%

Total Housing Register Applications, broken down by bands and bed-size required, correct as of 05/08/2021:

TOTAL		1-bed*	2-bed*	3-bed*	4-bed	5-bed	6*-bed+
Band 1A	126 Applications	96	16	11	3	0	0
Band 1T	437 Applications	182	150	62	30	9	4
Band 2A	2,816 Applications	1,069	1,150	415	129	40	13
Band 2T	209 Applications	7	22	72	75	25	8
Band 3A	2,802 Applications	863	1,259	483	149	35	13
Band 3T	237 Applications	68	52	46	54	14	3
Total Applicants	6,627 applications	2,285	2,649	1,089	440	123	41

Official Management Transfer figures, correct as of 05/08/2021.

TOTAL	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed	5-bed:
101	33	30	28	8	2

Housing Solutions: Creating churn in the Social Housing Sector

Under-Occupation Scheme Stats, correct as of 5th August 2021.

Financial Year	Total Number of properties brought back	Breakdown of the properties brought back into circulation
April 2019 - 2020	50	7 -Four Bedroom Council properties 30 - Three Bedroom Council properties 13 - Two Bedroom Council properties (4 advertised & let via CroydonChoice)
April 2020 - 2021	38**	2 -Four Bedroom Council properties 19 - Three Bedroom Council Houses 17 - Two Bedroom Council properties (all advertised & let via CroydonChoice)
April 2021 – to date	15	Successful return of a 5-bedroom house. Some of which have been successfully offered a unit in Malcolm Wicks House

Councillor Hay-Justice**CQ031-21 asked by Andrew Pelling:**

“What was the share of monies granted to Croydon under the vulnerable households grant? What measurements and techniques will be employed by the authority to judge how these monies will be dispersed?”

Reply

Croydon Council (the Council) has been awarded up to £3,013,689.49 for the period of 6 Oct 2021 to 31 Mar 2022, under the Household Support Grant (HSG). The Council intends to utilise the grant primarily to support households most in need with food, clothing and utilities, ensuring those in greatest need can access vital support to help cover every day costs.

Croydon Council’s Discretionary Support Service is pulling together a summary of projected spend and further detail regarding how the grant will be utilised. This involves working closely with various services across the Council, including: Adult Social Care (ASC), Children Social Care (CSC), Care Leavers, Education, Homelessness and Housing services. Approximately 50% of the funding will be utilised to support vulnerable households with children and the remainder of the funding will be available for vulnerable households without children (including individuals).

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Councillor Hay-Justice

CQ033-21 asked by Lynne Hale:

“Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report on damp and mould – October 2021

In light of the above report please could you advise your response to the following questions:

- 1) Does this Council have a proactive, zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould and a comprehensive, consolidated policy or framework for responding to these cases? Is the Council considering damp and mould as part of our net zero strategy?*
- 2) How effective and timely is the Council at responding to and resolving reports and complaints concerning damp and mould? How does the Council know that meaningful information and support is being provided to Croydon residents?*
- 3) How does the Council identify and manage complex cases, complex situations and/or those involving legal disrepair claims? Is the Council promoting the complaints processes enough and does the approach allow the complaints process to continue alongside pre-action claims?*
- 4) What is the Council’s organisational culture with respect to learning? Is the Council making the most of its complaint data and case studies to learn and improve?”*

Reply

Croydon Council is committed to ensuring every Croydon resident has a warm, safe and dry home to live in. Please see responses below to your queries related to the *Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report on damp and mould – October 2021*:

- 1) Croydon Council (the Council) is aware that the Housing Ombudsman has recently issued a number of recommendations to landlords concerning damp and mould, including the consideration of a zero-tolerance policy in this area. The Council will be considering all of the Ombudsman’s recommendations as part of a wider review of how we handle disrepair concerns - a key element of our developing Housing Improvement Plan. At present where damp and mould is identified, the Council will work with residents to resolve. The Council can be made aware of issues through a variety of routes, including direct reporting from the resident, from inspections by our own staff, as well as through our contractors.

- 2) The Council aims to respond to all complaints within 20 working days from the receipt of the complaint. To ensure we deliver better outcomes for residents, we have established the Housing Improvement Board which is an independently chaired body that reports to and makes recommendations to Cabinet. The Housing Improvement Board will influence the development of the Croydon Housing Improvement Plan, and recommend it to Cabinet for adoption. Details of Croydon Council's approach were set out in the paper that went to cabinet in July 2021.

The early work in preparation for the Council's Housing Improvement Plan has identified a number of key areas for improvement of services to residents, including how we respond to and learn from complaints from our residents.

- 3) The way in which the Council handles customer complaints, resolves their problems and uses the feedback to improve our services is a key component of the Council's customer strategy. The Council aims to give its customers a consistent, fair, structured and easy to follow process when they are unhappy about Council services and feel they need to raise a complaint. Currently to manage complex cases, complex situations and/or those involving legal disrepair claims, officers work from across disciplines to find solutions and deliver the best outcome for residents.

As identified above, the early work in preparation for the Housing Improvement Plan has identified a number of key areas for improvement, including how we identify and manage complex cases to deliver the best outcome for residents.

- 4) At Croydon we believe that a skilled and committed workforce is crucial to our future success. To deliver Borough outcomes successfully we aim to equip our people with the knowledge and skills they need to operate in a fast paced, ever evolving environment. The Council aims to learn from complaints, using customer feedback to inform service improvements or to develop training for staff. As previously outlined, the early work in preparation for Housing Improvement Plan has identified a number of key areas for improvement of services to residents, including how we respond to and learn from complaints from our residents, this may also include in depth analysis of complaint data.