

## QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

Question Number	Question asked by Councillor:	Subject
<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES, REGENERATION AND PLANNING</b> <b>Councillor Alison Butler</b>		
CQ021-17	Creatura, M	Disrepair Claims
<b>LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</b> <b>Councillor Tony Newman</b>		
CQ027-17	Clancy, L	Fund Reserves
<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT</b> <b>Councillor Stuart King</b>		
CQ034-17	Canning, R	School Travel Plans
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CQ037-17	Canning, R	School Travel Plans

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**CQ021-17 from Councillor Mario Creatura****Councillor Alison Butler**

Could the Cabinet Member please detail the total number of 'disrepair' claims made by Council housing tenants each year from 2010 to the most recent year available?

Can the Cabinet Member please detail the total figure each year spent on legal fees or compensation paid as a result of 'disrepair' claims?

**Reply****SUMMARY OF DISREPAIR CASES**

Financial Year	Number of Disrepair cases bought against the Council	Number of Disrepair cases settled by the Council	Damages settlement for cases bought against the Council
2010/11	13	2	£ 9,436.23
2011/12	27	6	£ 17,078.40
2012/13	11	2	£ 13,107.90
2013/14	19	5	£ 27,399.28
2014/15	20	4	£ 32,700.00
2015/16	12	8	£ 65,929.40
2016/17	9	12	£ 66,000.00
Totals	111	39	£ 231,651.21

Looking at Croydon Council data between the period 2010/11 and 2016/17 this shows that:

- Number of Disrepair cases bought against the Council 111
- Number of Disrepair cases settled by the Council 39
- Number of cases successfully defended and dismissed 49
- Current case work 23
- Damages settlement for cases bought against the Council £231,621.21
- Average cost per case £5,939

Whilst there has not been an increase in cases over the period and they have reduced in the last 2 years, there has been an increase in the number of cases settled. However, some cases are settled by carrying out a range of works and there is no monetary compensation or costs paid. The increased level of cases settled is primarily due to a change in the way that the Courts are judging these cases in favour of claimants and where cases of mould and condensation due to construction type and inadequate heating levels and ventilation are now seen as a defect and an impact on health. There has also been an increase in legal costs over the last 2 years. Many of the cases brought forward are successfully challenged by the council.

The council is committed to ensuring that all our council tenants live in good quality homes. Through investing up to £28 million per year on programmes such as new central heating, windows, kitchens and bathrooms, we have maintained all our homes at the Decent Homes Standard.

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**CQ027-17            from Councillor Luke Clancy**

**Councillor Tony Newman**

Reserves, at 3.8% of General Fund Balances, have failed to hit the 5% target. This does not appear to be prudent. Will the Leader give an assurance that the 5% target will be met in the next financial year?

**Reply**

I can assure you that the Council is always prudent in the way budgets are managed. The stated strategy, adopted under the previous administration, is to keep the general fund reserve above 3%, with a long term target of 5%.

The forecast general fund reserves at the 31.3.17 are now estimated to be 4.13% and is forecast to rise in each year of our three year budget presented to Council, from 17/18 to 19/20..

We will continue towards trying to achieve the financial strategy target of 5%. However, given the reductions in Government funding and increasing demand on services it is increasingly difficult to achieve this target.

I can assure you that every effort is made to manage reserves and it is anticipated that there will be no change in the level of general fund reserves at the end of March 2017 from the previous financial year as detailed in the 2017/20 Budget Report Presented to Cabinet on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

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**CQ034-17            from Councillor Robert Canning**

**Councillor Stuart King**

Which schools in Waddon ward, including private schools, currently have a School Travel Plan and which schools, if any, do not?

**Reply**

Schools with current Travel Plans: Howard Primary School, Regina Coeli Catholic Primary School, St Giles School, The Minster Junior School (formerly Parish Church C of E), The Minster Nursery & Infant School (formerly Parish Church C of E), Harris Primary Academy Purley Way (new school).

Schools without Travel Plans: Harris Academy Purley, Hazelglen Short Stay School plus Springboard Tuition Service. Formerly: Victoria House (Pupil Referral Unit), St Andrew's C of E High School, Whitgift School.

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**CQ035-17            from Councillor Robert Canning**

**Councillor Stuart King**

What monitoring and evaluation does Croydon Council undertake of individual School Travel Plans, both for new travel plans for newly-built schools plus the travel plans of long-established schools, to ensure that each plan is ambitious and meeting its stated aims and objectives?

**Reply**

School Travel Plans (STPs) are monitored and evaluated through Transport for London's (TfL) Sustainable Travel: Active Responsible Safe accreditation (STARS) programme (website [www.tfl.gov.uk/stars](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/stars)). Every year schools are asked to update their STP on STARS to at least a Bronze level. However having an up to date STP is not a legal requirement, so not all schools are currently engaged despite our best efforts to work with all Croydon schools.

In order to help schools to produce and develop good quality travel plans, some of the measures we provide for support include:

- Run termly workshops and training sessions (Roughly 10-12 per year)
- Send out half termly newsletters with school travel updates, to share best practice and funding opportunities
- Regularly send out e-mails prompting schools to update their STP with tips on how to do so
- Create guidance documents for schools on how to create and maintain their STP and how they can achieve accreditation
- Work with Transport for London to share best practice through the TfL STARS website's activity bank – guidance on how to run activities in schools
- Offer 1 to 1 school visits to support schools, prioritising those who are unable to secure release time to attend training
- Run school travel and road safety themed activities and competitions, all of which can be included on a STP and
- Offer accredited schools to apply for funding, either through our mini-grants programme or our cycle/scooter storage programme.
- Send out school bulletins to alert Headteachers of training and funding opportunities

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**CQ036-17            from Councillor Robert Canning**

**Councillor Stuart King**

What evidence has Croydon Council collected with regard to the success of School Travel Plans in the borough, particularly in relation to reducing the number of car journeys made by parents driving their child or children to and from newly-built primary schools?

**Reply**

Schools are asked to conduct hands-up surveys annually in order for us to see breakdown of school travel habits. In addition, each year the travel plans of schools that have applied for STARS accreditation are audited once a year, with silver and gold level applications being passed onto TfL for quality assurance. One example of this is Regina Coeli, who have recorded reduced car usage from 63% in 2013/14, to 58% in 14/15 then to 54% in 15/16 (academic years).

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**CQ037-17            from Councillor Robert Canning**

**Councillor Stuart King**

What sanctions or other measures are available to Croydon Council in the event that a school in the borough (i) does not prepare a School Travel Plan; (ii) produces a plan that is deemed to be inadequate or lacking in ambition; or (iii) fails to meet the aims and objectives set out in its plan?

**Reply**

- i. Having an up to date school travel plan is not mandatory, therefore schools are not obliged to engage with the local authority to create a travel plan. However, where schools request measures related to travel and safety, such as cycle parking facilities or road safety measures, we encourage them to have a travel plan in place to enable funding to be allocated for these measures. We also offer support for the harder to engage schools, usually in the form of 1 to 1 sessions to try get them to produce a travel plan. Having an up to date school travel plan is often required for certain planning applications such as school expansion, and it is also necessary if a school wishes to achieve a Healthy Schools Croydon award.
- ii. Where a school produces a school travel plan that does not meet the criteria to achieve Bronze level (the lowest) STARS accreditation or does not outline the schools aims and targets in terms of reducing car usage, we offer 1 to 1 meetings or group training workshops for schools to attend where we advise on how to create a suitable travel plan and also inform them of the opportunities available schools can take up in order to help them meet STARS accreditation. Additionally, when applying for planning permission for a new site or expansion of an existing site, production of a travel plan is usually applied as a Planning Condition, and a poor or missing travel plan can lead to enforcement action including non-occupation of the building. The Condition may also specify particular issues that need addressing.
- iii. Where a school fails to meet their own targets we provide help and advice on what steps can be taken to encourage and facilitate a change. Reviewing a school's travel plan provides a breakdown of current travel habits, and identifies what areas may require addressing. If necessary we work with the schools to try to facilitate a modal shift towards an active mode of travel, for example by running more cycling activities such as Bikeability to teach pupils how to cycle correctly and increase confidence etc., or perhaps running a Walk Once a Week event in a school to encourage more walking.