



## **Questions from the Opposition and Other Non-Cabinet Members**

### **Full Council – 9 July 2018**

#### **1. Question from Cllr Neil Nerva to Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council:**

Please could the Leader provide an update on plans for the West London Orbital rail line.

#### **Response:**

Following the commitment from the Mayor to work towards delivering the West London Orbital (Proposal 88 Mayor's Transport Strategy, March 2018), significant progress is being made.

Work completed to date has been around understanding the outline case for the project. Work by the boroughs and TfL continues, specifically:

- Continue to embed the scheme into Local Plans
- Work with the GLA to secure MCIL contribution and/or HIF 2 funding when announced later in 2018
- Incorporate into Corporate Plans
- Commence work on land assembly along the line
- Engaged with a number of potential market providers of battery-powered rolling stock which may be operated as an alternative to diesel.
- A bid has been submitted to the Strategic Investment Pool to support a range of complementary and masterplanning measures associated with the rail line.
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Next steps are focussing on designing a programme (GRIP stages) that will cover areas such as detailed layout of specific sections of track, train timetables, station locations and funding strategy.

Regular updates are made to the West London Economic Prosperity Board by West London Alliance.

**2. Question from Cllr Kieron Gill to Cllr Shama Tatler, Lead Member for Regeneration, Highways and Planning :**

I would like to encourage my local park, Tiverton Park, to apply for Neighbourhood CIL funding but as 'Parks and Open Spaces' are not in our local top three neighbourhood CIL priorities I am unable to do this at present. After this round of neighbourhood CIL funding allocation has been completed would this council agree to review the outdated restrictions on the allocating of funds; such that all worthy local projects could be funded, whether prioritised or not, or indeed to remove the whole prioritisation process

**Response:**

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge applied to eligible developments to help fund infrastructure. The CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) stipulate that at least 15 per cent of CIL receipts generated may be spent on Neighbourhood Projects, that is, infrastructure or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area. The element is known as Neighbourhood CIL.

The current Neighbourhood CIL priorities were agreed following a public consultation in February 2017. The priorities for each of the five CIL Neighbourhoods were approved by Brent's Cabinet in May 2017. The priorities vary between Neighbourhoods as they reflect the wishes of those who took part in the consultation. The current priorities are set until 2020. However, as the priorities are fairly broad, this has allowed some flexibility for those who wish to submit project proposals, and a wide variety of projects have been funded to date. These projects include, amongst others, a community gardening hub, music studios, public Wi-Fi, community art and employment projects.

Brent's Planning Service is currently undertaking a review of the NCIL Programme and would welcome suggestions for improvements. It is anticipated that, following the review, any recommended changes will be approved by Cabinet in time for the December 2018 project application deadline.

**3. Question from Cllr Matt Kelcher to Cllr Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment:**

Can I ask the Cabinet Member for Environment if she will consider implementing a mattress tagging requirement for all private sector landlords as part of the licensing regime to act as a deterrent against illegal mattress dumping, which has become an epidemic in Brent?

**Response:**

Mattress tagging has not been considered before now and is not something that seems to be undertaken elsewhere. There is therefore no track record of how effective the approach might be or how it might be enforced.

Unfortunately, landlords seeking to illegally dispose of large items such as mattresses usually take very careful steps to remove any evidence before they do so.

Nevertheless, we remain open to any new ideas that will help reduce levels of illegal dumping in the borough. Our revised bulky waste offer now provides a service to landlords meaning they need only turn to the council to arrange for proper disposal of mattresses.

In addition, our new Neighbourhood Managers are also delivering their own programme that targets dumping hot-spots area by area. That has begun to see the amount of dumped rubbish reduce this year.

**4. Question from Cllr Roxanne Mashari to Cllr Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment:**

Can I ask the Cabinet Member for Environment what assessment she has made of grass cutting schedules on the accessibility and use of public parks, open spaces and recreation grounds and what steps are being taken to maintain and enhance areas of habitat and biodiversity significance?

**Response:**

We are now managing our park grass in a different way. That is partly necessary so the council is able to live within its ever-decreasing means.

This new grass cutting regime enables the council to better prioritise its funds. In addition, it means a different habitat is created in our parks, which is intended to be a positive.

Our approach in many of our parks is to allow grass and wildflowers in some designated areas which were cut periodically to now grow freely throughout the year.

The hope is also that some of these meadows will start to become wildlife havens for bees, birds and other animals not seen in our urban areas for many years.

Designated meadow areas now only receive a cut at the end of the growing season (autumn) in order to ensure that the meadow effect is kept to a manageable level.

Other areas within each parks are still cut to provide recreational space and so a balance is struck.

We are not advocating abandoning areas of council land but are introducing a new less intensive form of grassland management.

Effectively cutting grass less in the right places will not only help to counter the decline of bees, for example, it will benefit other wildlife and people too