

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 JULY 2022

WRITTEN REPLIES

Responses to questions put during the Council Meeting are available as part of the webcast on the Council's website.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

3. From local resident Stuart Mackenzie to Councillor David Leaf, Cabinet Member for Resources:

As the Bexley Councillor attending the Joint Crematorium Committee meetings, could Councillor David Leaf please tell me how much Bexley Council contributes towards the costs of administering the joint meetings with Greenwich and Dartford Councils (including the costs of venue hire and the Council officer time to produce agendas and record minutes)?

Reply

I am grateful for your question and for your interest in the operation and governance of the Eltham Crematorium Joint Committee.

By way of background, the Eltham Crematorium is owned by the London Borough of Bexley, Royal Borough of Greenwich and Dartford Borough Council. It was established by Agreement in 1954 by the then respective local authorities to undertake the responsibilities in the Cremation Act 1902, as subsequently amended, and similar such legislation. The Crematorium opened in 1956 and is located within the grounds of the Eltham Cemetery, which is owned by the Royal Borough of Greenwich. A new Agreement between the respective authorities was put in place in May 1997 and was subsequently revised to reflect the respective Councils changing their executive arrangements in the early part of this century.

The current governance of the Crematorium is overseen through a Joint Committee established under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and the memberships of the Joint Committee is constituted as 2 representatives from the London Borough of Bexley - Cllr Peter Craske and myself, 2 representatives from RBG, and 1 representative from Dartford BC. In accordance with the provisions of Article 10 of the 1997 Agreement, all staff at the Crematorium are employed by and under the terms of RBG. All staffing costs are met through the income that is received by the Crematorium.

With regard to the Administration of the Joint Committee, these costs are also met by the income generated by the Crematorium and as such do not require separate contributions to be made by the respective constituent councils. This is because the Crematorium generates a surplus. However, should the Crematorium operate a deficit, then the costs would be split between the constituent councils in proportion to their representation on the Joint Committee. RBG committee services administer the Joint Committee and the costs are £2,390 for the 2022/23 financial year. This forms part of an overall central establishment recharge to RBG of £69,300 which covers, HR, legal, finance, Head of service and other overheads.

In respect of changing the arrangements for the responsibility and administration of the Joint Committee, depending on the nature of the change required, this would require either the agreement of the Joint Committee, or changes to Agreement between the constituent councils. In any case, it would not impact significantly on the financial positions of the respective constituent councils as the costs for administering the Joint Committee are met through the

income that the Crematorium generates and the costs incurred should correlate to the actual costs met.

4. From local resident Stuart Mackenzie to Councillor David Leaf, Cabinet Member for Resources:

As the Bexley Councillor attending the Joint Crematorium Committee meetings, could Councillor David Leaf please tell me whether, given the financial pressures facing all Councils today, he feels it would be fairer for all three Councils to rotate the responsibility for administering the meetings in future?

Please see reply to Question 3

5. From local resident Paul McQuillen to Councillor Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Places:

As a statutory Consultee, will Bexley Council robustly object to proposals by London City Airport to extend operating hours given the high levels of noise pollution and visual intrusion frequently imposed on thousands of residents in the south of the borough by the very low-altitude over-flying by aircraft preparing for the westerly approach to the airport?

Reply

The Council will be taking into account all aspects of this proposal and will submit a response to the consultation in due course. I cannot say what this will cover as yet, as we are still looking at the issues it raises. We have previously expressed concerns about potential noise and air pollution. We understand the airport believes it can increase the number of passengers without any additional flights or changes to the current night-time curfew.

6. From local resident Paul McQuillen to Councillor Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Places:

Will the Council advise residents of the current London City Airport consultation through communications such as Bexley Bulletin and Bexley Magazine and will the Council's representative on the London City Airport Consultative Committee also accept feedback from residents?

Reply

The Council has now appointed its representative to the London City Airport Consultative Committee and as such, I am sure they will be happy to receive any comments on the consultation. While communications does not fall within my remit, I am sure we will want to highlight this consultation to residents through all our channels of communication.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

4. From Councillor Mabel Ogundayo to Councillor Teresa O'Neill OBE, Leader of the Council:

Could the Leader confirm which Cabinet Member is responsible for coordinating climate actions across different departments and functions, after the Council declared a climate emergency in April 2022?

Reply

I would draw Councillor Ogundayo's notice to the motion that was passed at the April Council which did **not** declare a climate emergency but did highlight some of the ways in which this Council has been innovative in delivering change whilst taking residents with us. In fact, we have been so successful in doing so that neighbouring Labour Councils are following our lead.

Of course, we want to go further and many of our manifesto commitments across various parts of the Council have climate implications including that of objecting to the Mayor of London's proposal to extend the ULEZ to Bexley as we believe there are better ways of addressing air pollution without impacting employment, businesses or those who can least afford it.

5. From Councillor Rags Sandhu to Councillor Cafer Munur, Cabinet Member for Growth:

Could the Cabinet Member for Growth update me on the recent night market in Bexleyheath?

Reply

The first event was successful in drawing residents to Bexleyheath Broadway who wouldn't have normally visited after 6pm. 3,000 people registered an interest in attending although the actual number of visitors was estimated to be in the hundreds.

27 Traders were in attendance, 6 locally based. Existing businesses in the Broadway reported up-tick of trade between 20-50% during the Friday evening. Key learnings from the event will be put into further develop future night markets, particularly ensuring an improved range of market stalls to meet the profile of Bexley residents.

6. From Councillor Bola Carew to Councillor Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Places:

As one of the Bexleyheath Ward Councillors I'd be grateful if the Cabinet Member for Places can give us an update on the sinkhole in Martens Avenue?

Reply

On 21st June 2022 a sink hole opened up in Martens Avenue, Crayford. The concrete slab road (with asphalt surface) collapsed due to a void in the sand-based sub-layers; the hole was approximately 7.5m wide x 6m long x 5m deep. The Thames Water surface/rainwater sewer and foul water sewer were severely damaged, as was the fresh water connection to a few properties. No other underground services were affected.

The Council and Thames Water attended on the night and commenced work to by-pass the affected sewers and protect the highway and adjacent properties.

The Council organised for the road slab either side to be cut back to form a stepped access into the site and commenced investigations and filling in the hole within a few days.

A ground penetrating radar survey has been done, which shows no particular cause for concern, just one or two minor spots of potential soft areas (which could be less compacted ground or abandoned chambers).

Thames Water are to repair their sewers and pipes in the open trench and then Bexley will re-instate the road fully (complete c. 5th August)

7. From Councillor Anna Day to Councillor Teresa O'Neill OBE, Leader of the Council:

What steps is the Government taking to help residents of Bexley deal with the cost-of-living crisis?

Reply

Details of the Government's support to help households in the cost of living crisis can be found on the HM Treasury website at the following web address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-support-for-the-cost-of-living-factsheet>

As well as likely higher inflation, household budgets may be squeezed by increases to income tax and National Insurance Contributions, higher interest rates, and changes to Universal Credit. Measures to support households were announced by the Chancellor in February, March and May 2022. The support is estimated at £37 billion, includes:

- £400 grant for all households which will be taken off energy bills in autumn 2022. Unlike the £200 'rebate', that this replaces, households will not have to make repayments;
- £650 payments for households receiving means-tested benefits, for most the first payment will be made in July 2022 and the second in autumn 2022;
- £300 for pensioners who are in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment;
- £150 for people receiving disability payments;
- £500m for the Household Support Fund and an extended scheme for October 2022 to March 2023;
- a £150 non repayable council tax rebate for households in Council Tax band A-D;
- a temporary 5p per litre cut to fuel duty; and
- an increase in the threshold at which National Insurance Contributions (NICs) begins to be charged on earnings.

8. From Councillor Stefano Borella to Councillor David Leaf, Cabinet Member for Resources:

Following the LGA's recent analysis regarding unfunded National Living Wage increases, what is the Cabinet Member's analysis of the costs to the Council of ensuring all staff and contractors receive these increases over the next two years?

Reply

I refer Councillor Borella to the responses I have given to his questions and comments on this matter at the Finance and Corporate Services OSC on 11 July 2022, Public Cabinet on 12 July 2022, and Full Council on 20 July 2022. We keep all assumptions over the budget and MTFS under regular review and the impact of pay increases will be reported accordingly in Budget Monitoring Reports and in the next MTFS update.

9. From Councillor Christine Catterall to Councillor Melvin Seymour, Cabinet Member for Adults' Services and Health:

Would the Cabinet Member provide an update on the recent carers' week culminating in the event at the Holiday Inn?

Reply

The Local Care Partnership Engagement team organised the Carers' Week event in close collaboration with Carers' Partnership, held on 10th July at the Holiday Inn, Bexley.

The event was designed based on feedback from Carers' Partnership organisations from their members about what would be valuable and what they have appreciated in the past – the last event of this type was in 2019 at the Civic Offices.

Carers were able to take part in activities such as Reiki, Tai Chi or even get a massage or a sound bath. They were also treated to lunch and given a gift bag.

Some feedback from attendees –

"The event was well organised and organisations were all eager to give advice and guidance. The venue would be hard to be bettered and food was plentiful and fresh"

"So helpful, really made me feel valued as a carer"

The event was also a good opportunity for local organisations to network and get back to working together face to face.

10. From Councillor Cheryl Bacon to Councillor Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Places:

Could the Cabinet Member update Members on how the grounds maintenance contract is working following additional investment in the service?

Reply

We made a manifesto commitment to increase investment in this service, and its benefits are many. For example, old and outdated machinery replaced with new, modern equipment; 61,000 daffodils planted earlier this year which have bloomed and made the Borough look really great; staff now paid London Living Wage which has made recruitment easier – and 70% of the staff are Bexley residents too.

11. From Councillor Sally Hinkley to Councillor Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Places:

Could the Cabinet Member confirm the timeframe in which residents should expect their reports to Fix my Street on fly tipping to be dealt with?

Reply

All non-hazardous fly tipping reports will be investigated within 5 working days, every effort is made to provide an update to FMS also within 5 working days (resources permitting). If fly tipping has met the criteria for removal, such as being on public maintainable land or is harbourous to vermin, it will then be cleared within a further 5 days.

12. From Councillor Zainab Asunramu to Councillor Richard Diment, Cabinet Member for Education:

Could the Cabinet Member outline the support that will be provided to Welling School in order to address the concerns from the recent Ofsted report, in particular around bullying, and to ensure pupils are able to flourish within the educational environment?

Reply

Following the Ofsted inspection and prior to the publication of the report, Officers from the Councils School Improvement, Community Safety, Inclusion, Education Welfare and Early Intervention teams held a 'Team Around the School' meeting with the school's leadership team. During this meeting offers of support were provided to the school which have been reiterated to both the school and the Academy Trust.

13. From Councillor Andy Dourmough to Councillor David Leaf, Cabinet Member for Resources:

Can the Cabinet Member for Resources give an update on the rollout of the various grants received from the government?

Reply

I am grateful to Councillor Dourmough for his question and his interest in this matter. Details of a number of grants and payments made to support residents and businesses were provided by me in my written answer to question 20 from the 13 April 2022 Council meeting. Since then, a decision has been taken on the use of the second round of the Household Support Fund and the Energy Rebate Discretionary Fund. I welcomed the opportunity to discuss these matters during the recent meeting of the Finance and Corporate Services OSC on 11 July 2022 and further welcome the interest and contributions he and other Members have made to the discussions on how to support and help those affected by inflationary pressures and the recovery from the pandemic.

14. From Councillor Zainab Asunramu to Councillor Philip Read, Cabinet Member for Children's Services:

Following news that Calcote Services for Children, which were due to be commissioned by this Council, have been found to have children in their care who were groomed and sexually assaulted, will there be a re-assessment of due diligence practices when making appointments?

Reply

We have no children placed here; we were looking at this provider when this report came out. Before making placements we always request reports, including those of Ofsted, and carry out online searches followed by a visit to the establishment.

15. From Councillor Esther Amaning to Councillor Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Places:

Could the Cabinet Member tell us the number of missed bin collections that have been reported each month since November 2021?

Reply

| Month/Year | Missed bin collections per 100,000 bins | % per 100,00 bins |
|-------------|---|-------------------|
| November 21 | 304 | 0.30% |
| December 21 | 392 | 0.39% |
| January 22 | 331 | 0.33% |
| February 22 | 246 | 0.25% |
| March 22 | 237 | 0.24% |
| April 22 | 269 | 0.27% |
| May 22 | 267 | 0.26% |

16. From Councillor Stefano Borella to Councillor Teresa O'Neill OBE, Leader of the Council:

What partnership work has been undertaken with stakeholders and neighbouring Boroughs to assess bringing the DLR into Belvedere?

Reply

The Council undertook some initial investigation into the potential for a DLR extension into Bexley in partnership with TfL, the Royal Borough of Greenwich and Peabody as part of the development of the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area Planning Framework. A DLR link was also an early option investigated as part of the C2E SOBC as an alternative to a Crossrail extension. The Council is aware of the current feasibility work being undertaken to extend the line into Thamesmead and, although the project does not currently include any interventions within Bexley, there has been some engagement at Member and officer level with the study partners. The Council has confirmed support for the scheme subject to the design not precluding onward extension east of Thamesmead to Belvedere.

17. From Councillor Stefano Borella to Councillor Melvin Seymour, Cabinet Member for Adults' Services and Health:

Could you state how many yearly carer assessments are outstanding?

Reply

We have 82 people this year waiting for a carer's review. It's not possible to identify the number of people on our waiting list that may need a carer's assessment, as in the main we receive referrals for people who need care and support, and it is at the time of the assessment for the cared for person that we discuss and identify the need for a carer's assessment. We are working with the Carers Partnership Board to develop a carers action plan to improve the identification of carers and the response we give including support available. Last year we completed 2138 carers' assessments including the assessments we complete in Adult Social Care and the assessments completed by our voluntary sector through our grant funded and commissioned support.

18. From Councillor Stefano Borella to Councillor Teresa O'Neill OBE, Leader of the Council:

Is it acceptable that Bexley residents are having to wait 12 hours to be seen in Accident and Emergency departments in hospital?

Reply

Councillor Borella will be aware that we don't have an A&E department in-borough and that we are not responsible for health services but, as we know there is huge pressure on our health services, we are working with local health partners to try to ensure that all residents are aware of the pathways to ensure all health front doors are utilised as effectively as possible. We have also agreed to help communicate that to our residents.

Another way of helping is with ensuring Bexley residents are discharged in a timely and safe way and I know Councillor Borella will be pleased to hear that the Lewisham and Greenwich Trust Senior Leadership Team has gone on record to thank our Adult Social Care teams for the support they have given and for working collaboratively to solve problems; and recently, in a conference call with Darent Valley Hospital leadership team, they were effusive about our team's support and engagement – so we're definitely doing everything we can to support our hospitals.

We know there is more we can do – that is why I have asked local NHS leaders to come together with us to create a vision for health and care in Bexley so that our residents can get the right care, in the right place, at the right time. And if we get that right – we can be sure that our residents are turning up at the A&E because that is where they need to be.

19. From Councillor Daniel Francis to Councillor David Leaf, Cabinet Member for Resources:

Could the Cabinet Member confirm, based on the information currently available to him, whether he believes the collection fund will be in deficit or surplus at the end of the current financial year?

Reply

Councillor Francis will be aware that updates on the Collection Fund position and forecasts are reported regularly to Members in the Budget Monitoring Reports and in the MTFS updates.

20. From Councillor Daniel Francis to Councillor Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Places:

Could the Cabinet Member confirm whether he supports Scope's "Let's Play Fair" campaign and if so, what measures he plans to ensure greater accessibility is introduced to playgrounds across the Borough in addition to what is already available, over the lifetime of this administration?

Reply

We have created new playgrounds with features to make them accessible to all, just as Scope are calling for. The Belvedere Beach playground has proven highly successful, and instead of a playground that was inaccessible to everyone for at least nine months of the year, it's a facility open all year and open to everyone.

In Sidcup, the new playground on the new Old Farm Park again has features designed into it to ensure it is accessible to everyone. Like the Belvedere Beach, that new playground has proven to be a huge hit, with families coming to the park while their young children enjoy the playground, a playground that compliments the playground on the other side of the railway tracks.

I doubt Scope will be happy when they learn that Labour Councillors and candidates campaigned against our new playgrounds. In 2018, Labour candidates all stood on a platform

to “reverse” and “cancel” the accessible playground proposed for Old Farm Park. Thank goodness voters chose to invest in new playgrounds, rather than supporting Labour candidates who pledged to cancel and reverse new accessible to all playgrounds.

I also note that we have increase funding in our playgrounds by 30%, an increase in funding which all Labour Councillors voted against.

The Councillor needs to explain why he wants to see more accessible playgrounds while at the same time standing for election on a pledge to cancel and reverse them.

21. From Councillor Larry Ferguson to Councillor Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Places:

Could the Cabinet Member outline the recycling options available to the residents in tower blocks in Thamesmead East that have been without access to recycling bins for 3 years and the present efforts being made to restore these services to them?

Reply

The recycling facilities that previously served the tower blocks on Kale Road and Wolvercote Road were removed by Peabody Housing Association several years ago. Peabody took this action as a result of severe issues with contamination, abuse of the facilities and anti-social behaviour including fly-tipping and arson.

The bins were contaminated with household waste on a regular basis which meant we were unable to collect any recycling from them and all waste collected was treated as residual waste. Peabody were continually removing waste that was dumped around the bins and we regularly had to replace bins which were deliberately set alight.

The arson issue escalated to the point where it was considered a serious threat to health and safety and the cost of continual removal of fly-tipping, replacement of fire damaged bins and disposal of contaminated recycling meant that the recycling facilities were no longer financially viable. Since the bins have been removed there has been a substantial reduction in these problems and a very noticeable improvement in the quality of the street scene.

The Environmental Services team worked with Peabody to examine various options for the re-introduction of recycling services to this area but none of them have been considered to be financially or practically viable. A large part of this area ‘The Lesnes Estate’ is currently subject to an outline planning application for the wholesale demolition of all houses and flats and a phased redevelopment of the area. The team is working with the developer and the Planning department to ensure that there will be adequate waste and recycling facilities in-place for the new development.

In the meantime, residents are able to use alternative recycling facilities in Maran Way, Hartslock Drive & Lime Row.

22. From Councillor Wendy Perfect to Councillor Philip Read, Cabinet Member or Children’s Services:

Following the long delays in direct payments being provided to families with children with disabilities at the end of 2021 and the start of 2022, is the Cabinet Member now satisfied that there are no outstanding complaints with either Children’s Services or Inspire Community Trust regarding these payments?

Reply

The purpose of Direct Payments is to provide the opportunity for children and young people with additional needs(disabilities) to experience something outside of their normal day to day lives, which also offers the parents/carers respite from caring responsibilities. Those experiences are varied, agreed between the social worker and family, and can be anything from a single activity such as horse riding to a break away from home for few nights. Direct payments are made to families who then make their own arrangements as agreed with the service.

There are currently a very small number of families still waiting for direct payments to be set up. In some cases, these are in relation to the need to set up bank accounts in the name of the child or young person and the fact that the Council is awaiting confirmation of bank details from the family. There has also been an additional issue with staff capacity, and this was recently discussed at a parental engagement meeting held on July 14th.

I am pleased to say that we have successfully interviewed a candidate to provide the necessary additional capacity and, and once in post, our Children with Disabilities Service will then have a dedicated short break coordinator who will work closely to resolve these issues and assist in ensuring these payments are efficiently processed in the future.

In the interim, we are confident that there are no gaps in short break support to families and, to mitigate the effect on families, we are paying activity providers directly, hiring personal advisors to take children out on activities, involving agency support, and assisting in the availing by children of The Anchor Sensory SEND Friendly Centre.

If Councillor Perfect is aware of any issues relating to specific cases, I ask her to notify me of the details so that I can have them investigated.

23. From Councillor Anna Day to Councillor Sue Gower MBE, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing:

Could the Cabinet Member provide clarity on the percentage of homeless, due to domestic abuse, applications which have progressed into prevention/ relief where domestic abuse is recorded in 2020, 2021 and 2022?

Reply

| Relief Cases | |
|--------------|-----|
| 2020 | 8% |
| 2021 | 12% |
| 2022 | 13% |

| Prevention Cases | |
|------------------|----|
| 2020 | 2% |
| 2021 | 4% |
| 2022 | 3% |

24. From Councillor Sally Hinkley to Councillor Sue Gower MBE, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing:

Could we have a breakdown of the last 3 years for housing outcomes for young care leavers following the end of placements?

Reply

Please see table at the end of this document.

25. From Councillor Zainab Asunramu to Councillor Philip Read, Cabinet Member for Children's Services:

Could the Cabinet Member detail plans in place to improve retention of Social Workers and encourage more people within the Borough to consider becoming a Social Worker?

Reply

Currently there are significant challenges in both the national and local recruitment and retention of suitably qualified social workers of which there is a national shortage.

The latest information I have relates to 2020 and showed that 4300 qualified children's social workers left the profession nationally and that new entrants totalled just 2800. The majority of the 4300 departing the profession will be experienced whereas of course the new entrants are not.

Bexley of course is not immune to that and at the same time we are faced with increasing pressure on the service, due in large part, to the effects of the pandemic.

Additionally, we face considerable staff pressures because of our high-performance levels and our staff are in considerable demand and so we are often victims of poaching by other authorities.

Interestingly however, many of the staff who leave us often return within a relatively short period of time saying that the staff conditions and career development support they receive in Bexley are superior to those in other authorities.

Overall Bexley's Children's Service permanent staff constitute between 80% and 90% of our workforce and we have been particularly successful in the recruitment of managers and assistant team managers of which over 95% of these roles are held by permanent employees.

We recognise the importance of retaining staff and have a very considerable number of initiatives designed to help in their retention. These involve a combination of options geared around support and career progression.

Examples of these, and they are only examples and by no means the complete list:

A Learning & Development offer involving a range of in-house and commissioned training, including Trauma Informed Practice, MA modules, Leadership training
Practice support and career development with a 1:1 coaching and mentoring offer
Monthly career progression clinics
Specialist training/support and development in particular practice areas of interest
Weekly staff well-being sessions and similar monthly managers' sessions
Both online and physical suggestion boxes

As a demonstration of our continuing commitment to equality of opportunity to we have also embarked, as referenced in the Leader's Report, in Children's Services on the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) a national programme of 18 pilot authorities to address racial inequality within the workplace. This is working across both Children's and Adults Directorates.

In all these ways and more we seek to make Bexley an attractive place to work and in so doing help us to both retain staff and mitigate the impact of the national shortage of qualified social workers.

26. From Councillor Mabel Ogundayo to Councillor Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Places:

Could the Cabinet Member confirm how much the Council has generated in fines from litter enforcement fines in the last 12 months?

Reply

The contribution to the Council after deducting service delivery cost for the last 12 months is £73,287.

27. From Councillor Mabel Ogundayo to Councillor Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Places:

Could the Cabinet Member outline steps that are being taken to encourage residents to use more sustainable forms of transport?

Reply

The Council recognises the benefits of sustainable travel, policies supporting which are in the Council's 2019 Local Implementation Plan (LIP3) as well as the emerging Local Plan.

Despite an absence of TfL funding since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic, the Council has maintained an effective cycle training programme, for which it was independently commended by Bikeability UK earlier this year. Bexley was also one of the boroughs who were awarded Bus Priority funding in 2021/22 to identify locations where bus services were facing additional delays, and to consider possible solutions.

It is, further, intended to develop and adopt both an Active Travel Strategy and Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy to complement the LIP3, with action plans to deliver effective initiatives and interventions once funding again becomes available.

28. From Councillor Esther Amaning to Councillor Richard Diment, Cabinet Member for Education:

Could the Cabinet Member inform us of any additional support for families where there are two or more children on the spectrum identified from recent autism assessments?

Reply

The Children with Disabilities Team as part of the wider Social Care Services supports a number of families where two children have a diagnosis of ASD or other SEN needs. The children and their family will have one social worker supporting them whilst each child's needs are assessed on an individual basis. Each child would be provided with their own package of support if required whilst the agreed support packages complement each other.

In addition, all parents/ carers of children with a diagnosis of ASD are able to access support from the Bexley Early Autism Service (BEAS) and ASD Advisory Team.

When supporting children and young people with ASD the teams very much treat each young person individually to identify support appropriate to their unique set of strengths and needs. For families where there are two or more children with a diagnosis of ASD the teams would work closely with parents/ carers to ensure any strategies used at home were consistent and appropriate for all children.

29. From Councillor Esther Amaning to Councillor Sue Gower MBE, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing:

Could you please state how many citizens from Ukraine and Afghanistan have resettled or presented as homeless in Bexley?

Reply

Ukraine – We have not recorded any Ukrainian approaches

Afghanistan – We have not recorded any Afghanistan approaches

30. From Councillor Anna Day to Councillor Sue Gower MBE, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing:

Could the Cabinet Member confirm that Bexley Council and our housing providers are DAHA accredited?

Reply

The London Borough of Bexley is keen to seek DAHA accreditation and had in fact bid to the GLA for some capacity to support this process.

However, we have postponed the accreditation process as the Housing Team is first undergoing a restructure to put in place a specialist Domestic Abuse triage officer, a Domestic Abuse data officer and DA housing options development and partnership officer (amongst other posts).

Once these posts are recruited to, the Housing Team will be well placed to seek DAHA accreditation, which relies heavily on workforce development.

Our focus in 22/23 is putting in place the foundations and in 23/24 we will start the DAHA accreditation process which will take 18 months to two years to complete.

Not all of our registered providers are DAHA accredited, but some are. A list of the organisations that are DAHA accredited can be found here:

<https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/what-we-do/accreditation-for-housing-providers/our-housing-providers/>

31. From Councillor Esther Amaning to Councillor Sue Gower MBE, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing:

Could the Cabinet Member please provide reassurances that ongoing discussions are taking place with Bexley's Chief Superintendent to address concerns and increase public confidence after recent revelations and scandals involving conduct of officers at Bexleyheath police station?

Reply

London-wide, a series of incidents have exposed organisational and cultural shortcomings within the Met. There is no doubt these have contributed to a lack of trust and confidence in London's police service.

Locally, we have sought assurances at every level that the Police are seeking to restore trust and confidence. There is a London wide plan in place and some really good work being undertaken locally – including:

- engagement with Safer Neighbourhoods Board
- the development of the Independent Advisory Group
- the Met's Ride along scheme

<https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/st-s/stop-and-search/ras/met/ride-along-scheme/>

- excellent work being undertaken by a specialist youth engagement unit
- We also hold cross borough meetings with the BCU at a strategic level weekly to ensure the best possible communication with the public and stakeholders on 'live' issues.

Regionally, we welcome the appointment of Sir Mark Rowley.

Nationally, we welcome the record sums of investment by this government into policing, including supporting the recruitment of 20,000 additional police officers across England and Wales.

There is no doubt, the new Commissioner and local leaders like Chief Superintendent Trevor Lawry will be focussing on rebuilding public trust and delivering on crime reduction as a priority. We as a Council will continue to work in partnership with them to do so.

| Care Leaver Accommodation/CLACeased | Cl Cease dFor Any Other | Independen tLiving Arrangeme ntwith no suppor t | Independen tLiving Arrangeme ntwith support | Living with family, relatives with no PR | Living with family, relatives with PR | Remaine dwith current carers | Residenti alCare (ASC) | Gran d Total |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| B - With Parents or relatives | 1 | 2 | 8 | | 1 | 5 | | 17 |
| C - Community home or other form ofresidential care | 1 | | | 1 | | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| D - Semi-independent, transitionalaccommodation | 8 | | 27 | | | 20 | | 55 |
| E - Supported Lodgings | | | 2 | | | 3 | | 5 |
| R - Residence not known | 1 | | | | | | | 1 |
| S - No fixed abode / homeless | | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| T - Foyers and similar supported accommodation which combines the accommodation with opportunities for education, training or employment | 1 | | | | | 1 | | 2 |

| Care Leaver Accommodation/CLACeased | Cla Cease dFor Any Other | Independen tLiving Arrangeme nt with no suppor t | Independen tLiving Arrangeme ntwith support | Living with family, relatives with no PR | Living with family, relatives with PR | Remaine dwith current carers | Residenti alCare (ASC) | Gran d Total |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| U - Independent Living | 8 | 4 | 26 | | | 2 | | 40 |
| V - Emergency Accommodation (like anight shelter, direct access or emergency hostel) | 1 | | | | | | | 1 |
| X - In custody | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | | 3 |
| Y - Other accommodation | 2 | | | | | | | 2 |
| Z - With Former Foster Carers | 1 | 1 | 5 | | | 17 | | 24 |
| Not Recorded | 1 | | 2 | | | 2 | | 5 |
| Grand Total | 26 | 7 | 72 | 1 | 1 | 53 | 3 | 163 |