

Committee: Ordinary Council	Date: 16 September 2020
Subject: Public Questions	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Jean Sharp	Public
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In accordance with the Council's Constitution, a member of the public resident within the Borough may ask a maximum of two questions relating to the business of the Council providing notice has been received by 10.00am two working days before the relevant meeting.

In light of the current restrictions due to the pandemic, members of the public are not allowed to enter the Town Hall therefore may attend Council meetings and put their questions remotely. Alternatively they may request that their questions are put to the relevant Member by the Deputy Mayor at an Ordinary Council meeting.

Every question asked pursuant to rule 11.1 of the Constitution shall be put and answered without discussion but the Member to whom the question has been put may decline to answer. An answer may take the form of a direct oral answer at the Council meeting or where there has been insufficient time to research an answer, a written answer will be sent to the questioner. Time for all questions from members of the public shall be restricted to 15 minutes in total. At the expiration of that period of time, any questions which have not been asked shall be answered in writing and the answer placed with the minutes.

Ms Susan Kordlandt had submitted two questions:

1. *A positive effect of Covid 19 has been a reduction in carbon emissions in the Borough and a consequent improvement in air quality. As life returns to normal, what will the Council do to ensure these benefits are maintained?*
2. *How does the Council find out when properties are converted to houses in multiple occupation and how frequently are physical checks made, to ensure registered HMO's are still in conformity with the regulations, eg additional rooms have not been added?*

Mrs Pat Smith had submitted two questions:

1. *If a Brentwood resident writes (via email) to their two officially elected local Brentwood ward councillors and one councillor does not write back at all and the other writes one line only and nothing further, and neither take any action at all to assist the resident with their genuine and difficult problems relating to the council, what can the local resident do?*

It boils down to: What can Brentwood people who genuinely need support, actually expect of their local elected representatives?

2. *The Brentwood Plan (Brentwood 2025) was presented at full Council on 22.01.2029. It claims boldly that Brentwood is where “everyone matters”, and it aims to:*

*“Provide support for all residents, focusing on equality, understanding and respect”,
“Improve communication with residents via all communication channels”,
“Protect people especially the most vulnerable”,
“Work with local health organisations to develop health and well-being initiatives”,
“Support residents to maintain and improve their mental health”,
“Offer and signpost to programmes that reduce social isolation and support people to stay active and independent”.*

*Then Cllr Roger Hirst stood up to endorse this plan saying that we should “protect the vulnerable”, (please see webcast of the meeting of 22.01.2020.)
It contains no statistics for disabled people and carers.*

*The word “business” occurs 11 times and the word businesses occurs 10 times.
The word “vulnerable” appears once.*

A search cannot find the words “disabled” and “disability”, and the bold promises in this document belie the bleak reality for people with disabilities and their carers in Brentwood, made worse by central government austerity cuts, harsher assessments for welfare benefits, lack of any support anywhere, impotent charities, impossibility of obtaining social care, the prohibitive cost of social care for clients, lack of GP appointments and fewer NHS services, lack of access to legal aid, law centres and therefore justice, lack of mental health services, lack of autism services, plus the housing crisis.

In the light of the above, I would like to ask the following question please:

Where do people with disabilities come into this plan, in reality, will they be consulted and their views and needs properly taken on board, and how are these aims being, or to be, put into effect, with what exact targets and timescales.