

# Liberal Democrat Budget Amendment

*to Bromley Council 27 February 2023*

## **Scrap expenditure on legal costs to fight ULEZ (£140,000 saving)**

Bromley can continue its opposition to ULEZ, like Lib Dem run Sutton, without wasting taxpayers' money on a legal case that is seems unlikely to be winnable. This saving can be redirected to much needed air quality, school streets and road safety priorities below.

### **1. Funding for Air Quality Nodes (£20,000)**

Install up to 10 Breathe London Node Air Quality Monitors in locations across the borough that do not currently have monitoring of PM 2.5 and NO2 and where preliminary indicators show there are reasons for concern. The monitors, which will raise public awareness of air pollution and help find out where and when air pollution is at its highest or lowest to enable Bromley Council to deliver its ambitions in the Air Quality Action Plan more effectively. Potential sites where concerns have been raised include:

- Waldo Road (Reuse and Recycling Centre)
- Orpington High Street
- Beckenham High Street
- Westmoreland Road, Bromley
- Widmore Road, Bromley
- Elmers End
- Anerley Hill
- Crystal Palace

### **2. Funding for School Streets (£50,000)**

Provide ANPR cameras to support school streets.

School Streets have been effectively abandoned by Bromley Council following the decision not to install ANPR cameras to enforce the restriction. Relying on volunteer enforcement simply does not work and - as has been proved - means most school streets are not viable.

The Liberal Democrats propose a budget of £50,000 to cover the initial cost of two cameras. It is anticipated the revenue from the ANPR cameras will fund the maintenance costs in the out-years.

By the end of year one we should have enough data and enough information about revenue and enforcement to decide on moving cameras to another school street at the cost of £2,000 each or funding additional cameras.

### **3. Additional Funding for Road Safety Projects (£70,000)**

In recognition that road safety issues are one of the most significant concerns of residents in our wards, and likely many others, the Liberal Democrats propose allocating an additional £70,000 toward low cost road safety measures such as signage, road markings and vehicle activated signs, where there is currently a lengthy waiting time for simple interventions.

## **Council Reserves**

The Lib Dems propose to allocate a modest one-off resilience fund from the Reserves with the expectation that by year end the cost will be at least partly offset by increased Council revenue (such as higher yields due to interest rates, or lower costs due to lower inflation) or departmental underspends.

### **4. Community Resilience Fund (up to £500,000)**

Establish a Community Resilience Fund of up to £500,000 to support community groups and individuals, particularly including carers, through the cost of living crisis. Separate from the Household Support Fund, this fund should be targeted to help groups, organisations and individuals who are already providing a valuable service supporting residents in general, but who are struggling to continue because of the increased costs they face in providing this service, and individuals in need who are not eligible for the Household Support Fund.

## **Redirect funds from £3million allocated to manage the sale of council properties to save community assets**

### **5. Funding for Community Operators of Beckenham Public Halls, and Community House in Bromley (up to £1m)**

Stop the sale of the freehold of Beckenham Public Halls and Community House. Instead help community operators, willing to take responsibility for the buildings, purchase and maintain them for community use.

This could be achieved by providing a direct contribution towards the repair backlog, a low cost loan to the community operator to form part of their funding stream, or a combination of both depending on the business models of the operators.

There are community operators that have expressed interest for both sites, but they need financial assistance from the Council due to the large cost of the backlog of maintenance. A council contribution will enable Community Operators to access other funding streams to support the community use of these buildings (noting many funding schemes, like HLF will not fund maintenance backlogs).

The benefit of protecting these community assets in the out years outweighs this one off cost. We appreciate that the £3m set aside to manage the sale of the council-owned properties was an estimate and removing Community House and Public Halls from this process may not result in enough of a saving to fund this proposal, and if this is the case the use of **Council Reserves should be used if necessary**.

We believe it is right the Council allocate funds to secure community operators for both the Beckenham Public Halls and Community House. These buildings were in the guardianship of the Council and it has been the Council's failure to maintain them that risks their future as community assets.

## **Identify funds within existing Council budgets (£175,000)**

The Liberal Democrats propose that the following three projects are funded within the main departmental budgets and will look to officers to identify efficiencies, savings or underspends. Given the size of the departmental budgets affected these items of expenditure are relatively small and we are confident funding can be identified.

### **6. Develop and implement a Digital Inclusion Strategy (£50,000)**

Allocate £50,000 from the Transformation Fund to pay for Officer time to develop a Digital Inclusion Strategy, create a Digital Exclusion Champion to make sure that every service has support for residents who find council services difficult to access because of their lack of access to digital services. Noting the Leader of the Council's commitment to progressing the Liberal Democrat Motion on Digital Exclusion at Committee Level.

### **7. Support for Youth Services (up to £75,000)**

Allocate £75,000 from the Children Education and Families' £60m budget to fund five new youth workers. After years of cuts it's time to start supporting and expanding our support for the 78,500 young people in our borough. The new youth workers will develop initiatives, seek funding and engage with youth organisations providers to increase youth

centre facilities in the borough. This reflects the Liberal Democrat commitment to support, encourage and engage with young people.

**8. Install parking meters that take card payments at key locations  
(£50,000)**

Allocate up to £50,000 to fund cashless parking meters that take card payments in key locations, such as town centres and by key public services such as doctors and dentists. This would fulfil the Council's duty to support residents and visitors who can not use the RingGo app to pay for parking, and ensure excellent accessibility to our town centre and key services. It will also provide contingency when residents cannot access Ringo.

*Bromley Liberal Democrats  
27/2/23*