



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Labour presses Tory councillors on pre-election spending

Bexley's Labour Group of councillors have raised a number of questions with Tory councillors regarding spending on services in the months running up to the council elections in May 2018.

In a question from Cllr Danny Hackett at the Full Council meeting on 8th November, Cllr Alex Sawyer was forced to admit that spending on resurfacing on roads and pavements has seen a one-off sharp increase in spending in election year. In response to Cllr Hackett's question, he was forced to admit that spending for each of the four years was £1.69 million in 2014/15, £1.85 million in 2015/16, £1.65 million in 2016/17 and £3.49 million in 2017/18.

The meeting also allowed Labour to focus on a number of other areas of spending where areas such as grass cutting and weed spraying frequencies have been increased from summer 2017 until the council elections, with no guarantees that this spending will continue after the election.

In addition, the meeting also saw the Tories refuse to admit that the focus of their pre-election spending will be across Conservative wards in areas such as road resurfacing and street planting with 210 of the 225 trees planned for planting in this year, planned in the 16 of the 21 wards represented by the Conservatives.

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Joe Ferreira, Shadow Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Environment and Leisure said "It is now clear that Bexley's Conservatives are using the underspends from the 2016/17 budget to fund a pre-election programme of tidying up the borough focusing on areas represented by Conservative councillors.

In a number of areas, they are attempting to re-invest services to 2014 levels, showing they now accept that their programme of cuts to street cleansing and parks have failed, albeit with an acceptance that this spending cannot be guaranteed to continue after the election. The Tories are desperately trying to use our residents' money to fund their pre-election campaign and are reversing their entire budget policy in an attempt to retain control of the council."

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