Leader’s comment

I should like to thank all our residents who have contributed to the debate around the budget this year. In all, nearly 2,000 people shared their thoughts and ideas through our online survey, residents’ associations meetings, public meetings, email and letters. We also met with residents’ associations representatives where more than 30 organisations across the borough were represented.

These views give us an indication of what you value most as I and my colleague portfolio holders face the difficult decisions that are necessary to balance the budget and plan for the future with a lot less money. We have to save more than £60 million over the next four years from a net budget of £200 million and this follows substantial savings already made.

Without wishing to dampen the festive season, it is clear that future pressures on services may mean the potential need to make small increases in Council Tax in order to help protect frontline services.

Talking of Christmas - trading is well under way in Bromley and if you have not already visited the improved Bromley North Village area, I would encourage you to do so. The improvement initiative is already reaping rewards, with new businesses choosing to locate to this area. Previously, residents have asked the Council what we can do to keep our town centres vibrant and thriving. Much of the funding for this once in a generation scheme came from Transport for London and the Mayor of London. I would like to thank businesses and shoppers for their patience whilst the work was ongoing.

We are working with businesses in other town centres too, including Orpington, Beckenham, Penge and our smaller parades, with Christmas lights and cheer in evidence. Finally, as you, your family and loved ones tear open your presents this year, please don’t forget to recycle as much as possible.

On behalf of my colleagues, may I wish peace and goodwill to you, your families and friends.

Cllr Stephen Carr
Leader, Bromley Council

Bromley North open for business

The revitalisation of Bromley North Village is now virtually complete. The £5.5 million scheme to improve this historic area, which includes East Street, High Street and Market Square, now has brand new granite paving, lamp columns, trees, planters and new bus shelters. The area, which has many listed buildings, restaurants and independent shops, has been provided with an economic boost following these extensive public realm improvements, with increased footfall and fewer empty shop units.

These major improvements underline a long-term commitment to our town centre and to ensuring its competitiveness for the future. New businesses and more shoppers are already visiting the area. Bromley North Village is the perfect place to treat yourself, family and friends over the festive season.

The scheme is funded in partnership with the council, Transport for London (TfL) and The Mayor’s Outer London Fund (OLF).

Find out more about the brand new granite paving, lamp columns, trees and outdoor seating in East Street and Market Square at www.bromley.gov.uk/bromleynorthvillage.

What’s Santa doing at Beckenham Bandstand? – see page 4

My Bromley Account

Pre-register and you could WIN an i.pad - see page 2
Landmark tree planted

The completion of the Bromley North Village improvement work in December 2014 has been marked with the installation of the tallest tree ever planted in Bromley.

The 9m tall tulip tree has been planted outside the Partridge Pub in Bromley High Street as a landmark feature in the £5.5 million public realm improvement scheme. The white wooded tree, which has a life expectancy of up to 500 years is part of the ‘once in a generation’ project to provide an economic boost to the historic area. The scheme was funded in partnership with the Council, Transport for London (TfL) and The Mayor’s Outer London Fund (OLF).

For the arboreally minded

Liriodendron Trees are widely known by the common name tulip tree for their large flowers superficially resembling tulips. The tulip tree is sometimes referred to as ‘tulip poplar’ or ‘yellow poplar’, and the wood simply as poplar, although Liriodendron is not a true poplar, but is more closely related to magnolia trees.

Be first with a MyBromley Account

Sign up now for a new way to manage your council tax, apply for benefits, receive alerts and much more and you could win a brand new i-Pad.

MyBromley Account is a safe and secure way to do business with the council, at a time that suits you with no queues and no fuss. It’s open to everyone over the age of 18 who lives in the London Borough of Bromley and if you pre-register right away you will be entered into the prize draw as you complete your application. Just visit our website for more information and soon you can take advantage of the benefits of having your very own MyBromley Account.

Your views - Bromley’s library service

Bromley Council knows libraries are important to those who use them, that’s why we provided brand new facilities in Biggin Hill in 2010, Orpington the following year and this year in Penge. The Council now wants to modernise the service while making savings where possible for the future.

Library users are being asked their views on some innovative proposals for Community Management at the six community libraries in the borough while outsourcing market testing for the management of the core service.

“I would like to reassure library users that we are committed to doing all we can to keep libraries open while having to make very tough decisions at a time of financial austerity,” said Councillor Peter Morgan, Executive Councillor for Renewal and Recreation.

Consultation will take place with library users and staff until Monday 2 February 2015 when the results will be considered.

Find our more and have your say visit www.bromley.gov.uk/libraries.

Bromley’s libraries

Bromley has eight libraries in its core service and the following community libraries

- Burnt Ash
- Hayes
- Mottingham
- Shortlands
- Southborough
- St Paul’s Cray

Find our more and have your say visit www.bromley.gov.uk/libraries

Report, apply, pay at www.bromley.gov.uk
Become a Dementia Friend – it’s easy!

More people are living with dementia - in your family, your neighbourhood or work. They want to carry on with their daily lives and feel included. How do you talk to someone with dementia? What is the best way to help them out?

It’s often the small things that count and as a Dementia Friend you will understand and have the confidence to know what to say and do.

Armed with a bit of knowledge about living with dementia, you could turn it into action and help someone find the right bus or encourage patience at a shop till.

You can register, watch a short video, apply for an information pack or find your local face-to-face session on the Dementia Friends website. There are also videos covering work or if you deal with the public. You can also find local face-to-face sessions at www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Eat, drink (sensibly) and be merry

At this time of year in particular, many people enjoy a drink with family and friends so it’s timely to talk about the importance of sensible drinking as well as raising awareness of the health risks associated with drinking even moderate amounts of alcohol.

This year’s Public Health Report looks at levels of drinking in Bromley, though these are not considered higher than for London or England. Bromley’s Director of Public Health, Nada Lemic concludes there is a need to develop approaches to help the wider population in Bromley keep their drinking to safe levels. Also important is helping children and young people delay the age at which they start drinking.

Find helpful advice on how to cut down at: http://bromley.mylifeportal.co.uk/annual-public-health-report.aspx

Get flu safe

Have you had your flu jab yet?

If you are over 65, pregnant or with an existing health condition you could be at greater risk if you catch flu. Bromley Public Health advise you make an appointment with your GP or your pharmacy to make sure you get protected. There are also nasal spray vaccines available for children from two to 18 who have long-term health conditions. Find out more at www.nhs.uk/flu

Report, apply, pay at www.bromley.gov.uk
Beat the Scammers

It’s a time of year when we think more about helping others, so why not make this your new year’s resolution – make sure you know about postal, telephone and internet scams and what to do if you suspect one. Then keep an eye out for family, neighbours or friends who may fall prey to the criminals perpetrating these scams. These become ever more ingenious and plausible, so the more we can all do to raise awareness, especially amongst those who may be more vulnerable in our communities, the better.

If you suspect a scam contact the police http://content.met.police.uk/Borough/Bromley - or 999 in an emergency or you can get in touch with Trading Standards through their Rapid Response Line for advice 07903 852090. www.bromley.gov.uk/scams

Buy a bandstand brick

A Beckenham bandstand legacy brick makes a novel gift or why not treat yourself? As part of a campaign to raise money towards the £120,000 restoration fund for the historic Beckenham Bandstand, sponsored bricks will be inscribed with a short message and laid in a circular pathway around the late Victorian structure. The bandstand is the only remaining of its type in the country and has links to one of Beckenham’s most famous residents, David Bowie. The campaign is being run in partnership with the Friends of Croydon Road Recreation Ground with a launch event planned for next August. Bricks are £100 and launch tickets are £35 each, £60 for two.

Find out more: www.bromley.gov.uk/beckenhambandstand

Slip Slidin’ Away

Did you know there are several kinds of frost? There’s ground frost and air frost as well as ‘rime’ and ‘glaze’ - a clear ice deposit that can be mistaken for a wet surface which can be dangerous. A good thing, then, that when frost and ice are forecast Bromley Council’s gritting vehicles are on the march. They work to treat 260 miles of priority roads in the borough as well as pavements in town centres, transport interchanges and schools. And if the white stuff puts in an appearance, our army of Snow Friends are at the ready to help support us all in the residential roads we cannot reach. More information is at www.bromley.uk/winter

Watch our new gritting video at www.bromley.gov.uk/gritting

Handsome prints

History enthusiasts will love a gift that brings back memories of times gone by. Images from the Local Studies and Archives photographic collection are available to purchase on high quality semi-gloss paper, allowing time to stand still for a moment. Images include Bromley places, people, buildings from the mid-19th to the late 20th century. Prices start from £8.75 plus postage and packaging. Visit www.boroughphotos.org/bromley

Need to know

All you need to know about waste and recycling collections and when the Council is open over Christmas visit www.bromley.gov.uk/christmas

Don’t forget that online you can pay, apply and report matters at any time over the festive season – you can even pre-register for your new MyBromley Account.

Have a Happy Christmas!

Report, apply, pay at www.bromley.gov.uk