

COUNCIL QUESTIONS – 15 SEPTEMBER 2003:

ORAL QUESTIONS

Oral Question 1 – To the Executive member for Environment from Councillor Wayne Hoban.

Recycling bins have recently been distributed around the borough. What consultations were carried out by the Council to determine where these bins were sited?

Oral Question 2 - To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Bull (as Chair of Crime and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel)

Will the Leader of the Council agree with me when I say that only through working together can the Metropolitan Police, Local Authorities and communities tackle street crime in our neighbourhoods?

Would he also agree that Councils, especially in urban areas, should explore ways in which partnerships can be forged between the Police and Council agencies in the tackling of crime?

Oral Question 3 - To the Executive Member for the Environment from Councillor Williams

How many calls were made to the Graffiti Hotline in the first two months of operation and if he will state the number of sites from which graffiti was removed and in which Wards they were located.

Oral Question 4 – To the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety from Councillor Bull

If she will give me the figures for youth robberies for the first 6 months of this calendar year?

Oral Question 5 - To the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning from Councillor Fabian

If she will give up to date information on the average class size in primary schools in the Borough and the size of reception class sizes in primary schools?

Oral Question 6 - To the Executive Member for Organisational Development and Performance Management from Councillor Bull

Does the Executive Member for Organisational Development and Performance concur that the Audit Commission's helpful U-turn on its over ambitious plans for the CPA, namely to increase the thresholds between performance categories, is a welcome acceptance that its plans were unworkable?

Oral Question 7 - To the Chair of the Alexandra Palace and Park Board from Councillor Hare

Why, after 6 years, during which Lib dem Councillors have been active participants on the Alexandra Palace and Park Consultative Committee, he has barred Liberal Democrat Councillors from membership? On what grounds have the Liberal Democrat appointments to the Consultative Committee and Panel been blocked for this Municipal Year?

Oral Question 8 – To the Executive Member for Finance from Councillor Bull

Will the Executive Member for Finance join me in welcoming the extra investment this Labour Government has put into public services, and the knock on effect it has had on Haringey? Will he also acknowledge the Liberal Democrat Leader Charles Kennedy, who in a speech made on July 15th 2003, at last admitted what most of us already knew when he stated:

'By the end of this Parliament, public spending will have gone up by almost a third in real terms...a very substantial increase. Over the next three years, real education spending is due to go up by six per cent, health spending by seven per cent and transport spending by eight and a half per cent.'

Oral Question 9 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Simpson

If he will detail what steps he took to keep Highgate Councillors, Crouch End Councillors and steering group members informed of the outcome of the Highgate CPZ Consultation.

Oral Question 10 – To the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning from Councillor Quincy Prescott

Could Cllr. Bax inform Council of the success of the 'Summer Program'?

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 1- To the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning from Councillor Dawson

Could the Executive Member for Education outline for me the performance of Haringey's schools in the context of the recent GCSE and A level results?

Answer

Full details have been submitted to this meeting as part of the Executive report to Council.

GCSE

All data for 2003 is still provisional and will not be finalised until November.

The results for 5+ A* - C for Haringey have improved from 30.9%(2001), to 35.6% (2002), to 40.5% (2003).

The TES is suggesting a national figure of 54.1% for 2003, the national figures for 2002 and 2001 were 51.6% and 50.0%.

Data for other London boroughs is incomplete and very provisional, but early indications suggest the Haringey may be the 2nd most improved borough in Inner London for 2002 to 2003.

Post 16

Data on post 16 results (including A level) has only just been received by the LEA and there is no comparative data from other LEAs at the moment. Provisional analysis indicates an improving picture in Haringey's performance.

Written Question 2- To the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety from Councillor Harris

In welcoming the launch by Haringey Victim Support of the crisis card for victims of domestic violence, and taking into consideration the fact that a recent study has stated that domestic violence accounts for nearly 30% of all violent crime (with more than 3000 incidents being reported in the year 2001-2002), can I ask what benefits she sees from this initiative?

Answer:

The Domestic Violence Crisis card is a partnership venture, produced by Haringey's Domestic Violence Joint Commissioning Group. Victim Support is a highly regarded member of this partnership and they also have contributed financially to the production of the card.

The figure 3,291 represents the total reported incidents of Domestic Violence, recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service in *Haringey alone* for the year 2002. The total figure for London is 99,865 (Source: Metropolitan Police Service Management Information Figures).

At any one time a domestic violence survivor may have contact with up to 10 agencies, including police, housing, social services and legal advice. The Crisis Card provides information on how to access appropriate help quickly and safely on a 24-hour basis. This lessens the risk to survivors who previously would have had to report their experience numerous times. Another advantage of the crisis card is that it can be easily hidden and easily kept without jeopardising safety.

I am pleased to say that the card, first printed in 2001, is already in its 2nd edition. The 2nd edition is in a 10-language format: Albanian; Arabic; Bengali; English; French; Greek; Hindi; Kurdish; Somali; Turkish. 8,000 copies have been printed so far. It has been widely welcome by a variety of agencies and individuals.

Written Question 3- To the Executive Member for the Environment from Councillor Reynolds

Could the Executive Member for the Environment explain to me what affect new plans drawn up by the Liberal Democrats, to impose compulsory water meters and a new tax on water companies would have on the residents of Haringey if ever implemented?

Answer:

On the 14 August 2003 the Norman Baker MP, Liberal Democrat Shadow Environment Secretary, released a statement advocating the universal metering of water supplies as a benefit to the environment and as a way of reducing the cost of water supplies to households. Large families and those on low income would receive financial protection.

There are two principal ways in which water companies charge consumers. Approximately 80% are by an unmeasured charge based on the rateable value of the property. The remainder, mostly houses built after 1990, are by supplied by metered water.

Currently households with metered water can receive a capped tariff if they are in receipt of income related benefit and contain three or more children under the age of 16, or a person with a qualifying medical condition.

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) issued a consultation in February 2003 which set out proposals for extending the protection offered to vulnerable metered water customers.

Issues that may be raised as matters of concern for the residents of Haringey are -

- **To be effective an effective mechanism for reducing costs, the cost would have to be sufficiently high reduce demand for water. This can have a disproportionate affect on the poor.**
- **Paying for water by volume can affect several key groups of domestic customers. These include, those with dirty jobs; post operative patients; kidney dialysis patients; eczema and arthritis sufferers, the incontinent, families with low or fixed income; households with lead pipes; and households that grow their own vegetables.**

Written Question 4- To the Executive Member for the Environment from Councillor Wynne

According to a recent report in the local press, residents at a recently held Crouch End Assembly have asserted that there has been more dumping since the charge for collection was introduced. In light of this, can I ask Cllr. Dodds to state how much revenue is generated on average each year from this charge and how much is offset as result of additional expenditure needed to clear the streets of fly tipping and general dumping?

Answer:

During the first 7 months of this calendar year the average number of special collections carried out were 445 per month. The charge for special collections is £15 each. This indicates that the annual income generated by the service based on is approximately £80,000. This income is collected by Haringey Accord Ltd and is used by them to cover the cost of providing the collection service.

There is no additional expenditure required as the Waste Management and Transport Contract contains a fixed sum paid to Haringey Accord for the removal of all dumps and flytipping on highways and housing land. This fixed sum is not affected by number of dumps that are collected or by the number of paid special collections.

Written Question 5- To the Executive Member for Community Involvement from Councillor Quincy Prescott

Does Cllr Makanji agree with me when I say that involvement with culture, access to the media, and the ability to engage in sporting activity are all vital factors in the progression of society and in the development of children within Haringey in particular? If so, will he join me in fundamentally opposing a recent statement from Leader of the Liberal Democrats, who claimed,

'We don't need a Department for Culture, Media and Sport....'

Answer:

I understand that the Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Rt. Hon Charles Kennedy MP, made this statement with regard to a proposal to reduce Whitehall bureaucracy. It appears to be his answer to the Liberal Democrat budget plans. In my opinion this seems to be an opportunistic remark, very similar to the one-penny increase on income tax for education, prior to the last general election.

I agree with the premise of a Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It is a vital factor in the development of society and is an important sector of both Haringey's and the Country's economy. We want to ensure that the nurturing of creative talent and opportunities for cultural experience are accessible, in particular to young people, but also to all parts of the community.

Written Question 6- To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Lister

Does Cllr. Dodds agree with David Lammy MP that 'refuse collection is not a complex concept to master' and if so what steps is he taking to ensure that Haringey Accord fulfils its part of the waste management contract?

Answer:

I would agree that 'refuse collection is not a complex concept to master' although there are occasions when the service is affected by factors that are often outside the council's control. The council is taking or has taken the following steps to ensure that Haringey Accord fulfils its part of the waste management contract:

- Working with Haringey Accord to ensure that all side waste is collected from around wheelie and bulk bins.
- Working with Haringey Accord to ensure that wheelie bins are returned to properties clear of pathways.
- Adjusting number and size of wheelie bins at properties to ensure there is sufficient capacity to cope with waste volumes.
- Delivering leaflets to all households using wheelie bins to explain the correct procedure to ensure a reliable and efficient collection.
- Monitoring the collection service using client contract monitoring officers to ensure that targets for scheduled collections are met.
- Working with Accord and the Highways Section to determine locations to lay yellow lining where access has historically been difficult due to indiscriminate parking.

Although these measures have improved the collection service there is still more work to be done. Enforcement measures may need to be

introduced to tackle problems of waste from flats above shops and illegal dumping of commercial waste on the public highway.

Written Question 7- To the Executive Member for Regeneration and Partnerships from Councillor Santry

Does Cllr. Dillon agree with me that the announcement by the government that 88 of the most deprived areas in Britain are to receive £400m of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding in the coming financial year clearly shows the Labour Party's continued commitment to regeneration? Could he also outline how we are to spend our share of this welcome funding?

Answer:

I certainly agree that the Government's announcement to extend the Neighbourhood Renewal Funding for a further two years is excellent news. It will allow us to continue our programme of investing in projects, which are making a real difference to our most disadvantaged wards. Along with programmes like the new 'Liveability Fund', and extended funding for wardens programmes, it demonstrates the Government's policy commitment to regeneration and renewal which targets immediate issues in our poorest areas.

The Neighborhood Renewal Fund programme for Haringey is approved and agreed by the Haringey Strategic Partnership. The priorities and programme for next financial year will be determined by the Partnership over the next few months, and consultation with the different theme groups will feed into that process. For 2003/4 this process resulted in the safer communities and environment programmes being prioritised.

Written Question 8- To the Executive Member for the Environment from Councillor Herbie Brown

Could Cllr. Dodds inform me if he saw the story in the Haringey Independent (4th July) entitled 'Shoddy bin collections exposed in secret video'? If so, can I ask him what assurances he has been given by Haringey Accord to improve on their record of rubbish collection and the subsequent replacement of the wheelie bins?

Answer:

Both before and since the article in the Haringey Independent on 4th July the Council and Haringey Accord have been working closely to improve the waste collection service. Particular emphasis has been placed on ensuring wheelie bins are returned to properties so that they are clear of pathways. There has been an improvement during recent months in the execution of this part of the service. Localised complaints do still arise from time to time and these are being dealt once notified to the council.

Written Question 9- To the Executive Member for the Environment from Councillor Milner

Could Cllr. Dodds inform me whether or not the Fred Knight Sports Ground and Tottenham Sports Centre (703 Club) receive any general funding from the Council or any SRB funding, and if so how much?

Answer:

Neither facility falls within the Northumberland Park SRB6 footprint, and are thus not currently in receipt of any associated regeneration funding. Both centres have facilities to sports clubs / organisations who may be in receipt of public funding, but again neither is in receipt of any direct funding from the Council.

Written Question 10- To the Executive Member for the Environment from Councillor Bull

Could the Executive Member for the Environment outline what progress has been made in the discussions with Haringey Football Club in their prospective move from Coles Park into the New River Sports Centre?

Answer:

Officers have discussed with Haringey Borough FC the basis for a move from Coles Park to New River, which would provide the club with longer term security and improved facilities, whilst also offering the Council real value for money. Whilst the proposals are well developed, negotiations are still ongoing with the club.

Written Question 11- To the Chair of the General Purposes Committee from Councillor Hillman

Could Cllr. Rice provide an update on the progress of the review of the constitution, with specific reference to the issue of delegations to officers?

Answer:

The Constitution Advisory Panel, through the General Purposes Committee, will be making recommendations to full Council on 17th November 2003 covering amendments to the Constitution in the areas of Financial and Contract Standing Orders, Chairing the Council and Terms of Reference of Member bodies.

Recommendations are scheduled to be made to the Council AGM in May 2004 on amendments in the areas of Scrutiny, Partnerships, Access to Information, legislative issues, errors, inconsistencies and miscellaneous points raised by individual Members.

It has become apparent that the review of all delegations to officers is a major project that merits time and resources to achieve the right structure. The aim will be to produce a scheme of delegation that is functionally efficient in terms of achieving the Council's corporate priorities and which clearly identifies the precise powers exercised by specified officers.

We are currently recruiting a specialist to deliver this major piece of work, which is a key priority. Once in post a project plan will be drawn up and progress reported from time to time to Members.

Written Question 12 - To the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning from Councillor Laird

Why Haringey Council did not respond to the Guardian questionnaire on the number of vacant teaching posts published on 1 September? What is the current number of teaching positions which have been vacant for more than three months for Haringey as a whole and for each school? What measures are in place to reduce the number of vacancies over the next year?

Answer:

Haringey Council has responded to every enquiry from the press including two questionnaires from the Guardian over recent weeks one of which is referred to here. Haringey as is the case with all LEAs in London undertakes a survey of school vacancies every term. This term's survey takes place on 12th September 2003 and a detailed picture of the vacancy situation in Haringey schools will be available soon after. However a telephone survey conducted in July indicated an improvement in the position in that the number of vacancies in schools had reduced from 87 last year to 36 this year. The Council's recruitment strategy is already proving successful with the number of qualified teachers in schools and number of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) increased over previous years. Continuing the strategy should improve the position further and increased support for schools and a much larger advertising campaign over the next few months will help raise the profile of Haringey.

Written Question 13 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Davies

Although the recent consultation in Fortis Green showed a majority of residents to be opposed to the introduction of a CPZ, significant parking problems remain in the streets nearest to the border with Barnet. What investigations or alternative solutions to this problem is the Council making?

Answer:

The Council is aware of the parking problems in the streets nearest to the boundary with Barnet, since the introduction of the East Finchley CPZ. Unfortunately, residents rejected the introduction of a CPZ to mirror the East Finchley scheme, which would have alleviated indiscriminate parking, when offered in the form of public consultation. The consultation produced a 42% response of which 60% were opposed to the scheme.

We are keen to discourage parking at junctions and will be investigating this area with a view to providing waiting restrictions at junctions where obstructive parking has been identified. Although it must be noted that this could lead to a higher demand for available parking within the area and therefore result in objections from residents at the statutory consultation stage.

Written Question 14 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Gilbert

With regard to the application for floodlighting on the all-weather pitch at Fortismere School: has a reinspection of the pitch been carried out by officers, and if not when will it be; does the fencing around the pitch meet health and safety requirements; has a date been set for another public meeting to discuss the plans with local residents, if so what is it; and what recent discussions have officers had with Jarvis regarding the application?

Answer:

The planning application to erect floodlighting around the all weather pitch at Fortismere has been suspended. The Council will be reviewing the floodlighting proposals for Fortismere and two other school sites. That review will cover the lighting, fencing and operating hours. The Council will hold a further round of consultation with local residents before any new planning application is submitted.

Written Question 15 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Featherstone

With regard to Muswell Hill Roundabout;

When will the old lampposts be removed and the new ones painted and brought into commission?

What plans are there for pelican crossings and what consultations have taken place with TfL regarding funding.

And if he will make a statement?

Answer:

The lighting scheme will be completed by the end of October.

On the issue of pelican crossings, an audit has been carried out by TfL and we are liaising further with TfL regarding the completion of a feasibility study to address appropriate solutions.

Written Question 16 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Oatway

If he will give a detailed breakdown of expenditure on the Safer Routes to Schools Initiative allocated to Muswell Hill and Rhodes Avenue Primary Schools, including expenditure under the headings of design, labour, materials, legal costs etc; and what is the breakdown of expenditure under the various headings for a typical installation of a pelican crossing?

Answer:

£99,000 has been made available from the Safer Routes to School Programme, which is a TfL funded programme. This figure is inclusive of 15% fees and therefore means that £86,000 is available for design and implementation of the scheme.

The estimated cost of the raised zebra crossing on Dukes Avenue is £48,000. This includes the labour, materials and legal costs. The design of the feature is carried out in-house and is not funded from the Safer Routes to School Budget.

The estimated cost of the junction treatment at the junction of The Avenue and Alexandra Park Road is £37,000. This work does not have any legal requirements and is for materials and labour only. Again the design of the feature is carried out in-house and is not funded from the Safer Routes to School Budget.

The cost of implementing a pelican crossing will vary depending on the layout of the road. A good indication of cost would be around £35,000. This would include £1,000 to cover the legal costs and the remaining for materials and labour.

Written Question 17 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Floyd

What are the current National and Local Laws concerning the dropping of litter? Will he confirm that there are still fixed-penalty fines for those who drop litter and how many such fines have been issued in the last three years?

Answer:

Environmental Protection Act 1990 - Section 87 and 88 is the legislation. Yes, there are still fixed penalty fines for dropping litter.

Nationally, figures show that £70,000 was collected in 2001 from all Local Authorities in England, Scotland and Wales representing 2,800 litter fines. In the two and a half years that Haringey has re-introduced the service of litter fines, we have served 332 litter fines.

Written Question 18 - To the Executive Member for Social Services and Health from Councillor Aitken

On how many occasions he or officers from Haringey Social Services have met with or spoken on the telephone with the Social Services Inspectorate in the last year and the dates when these contacts took place?

Answer:

Social Services officers have had, or been involved in, 34 meetings with the Social Services Inspectorate over the past year. These meetings are broken down as follows:

Regular Performance Meeting	8
Meetings to discuss and manage the work of the Performance action Team (KPMG)	15
Meetings to discuss Inspection of Children's services	4
Meetings to discuss the Annual Review of Performance	2
Other meetings include London-wide meetings involving the SSI and a visit to officers in Tottenham	5
<u>Total number of meetings:</u>	<u>34</u>

Written Question 19 - To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Williams

Does he agree with the instruction issued by the Council's Legal Officer Mr John Suddaby that the Council Procedure Guide needs rewording with regard to amendments to Motions, and will he explain why he did not support any changes in the wording himself in any of his answers to previous written questions on this issue?

Answer

The note was issued for the guidance of officers and was circulated to Members for completeness. It has always been my understanding and

that of anyone else involved in the process that the decision-taking aspect lies completely with Members. I have made this explicitly clear in all previous answers to similar questions on this matter. However, for the purpose of complete and utter clarity, I have asked The Acting Head of Legal Services to issue a revised note next week.

Written Question 20 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Hoban

How many complaints of noise nuisance were reported to the council by council tenants during the period 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03? How many of these complaints resulted in action being taken by the council? Please indicate the outcomes of these actions.

Answer:

Noise complaints received from Local Authority Tenants, 1st April 2000 - 31st March 2001

**1099 Complaints Received
129 Warning Letters sent
34 Noise Abatement Notices Served
35 Prosecutions
1 Seizure**

1st April 2001 - 31st March 2002

**760 Complaints Received
104 Warning Letters Sent
30 Noise Abatement Notices Served
13 Prosecutions**

1st April 2002 - 31st March 2003

**229 Complaints Received
53 Warning Letter Sent
26 Noise Abatement Notices Served
23 Prosecutions**

Written Question 21 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Simpson

Despite many requests and correspondence with Council Officers, we still have not established who is finally responsible for the maintenance and cleaning of the steep path linking Wood Lane to the entrance of Highgate Tube Station. As winter approaches, we need to make sure that this path remains swept and safe at all times to avoid an inevitable injury. I seek assurance from the Executive member that this will happen, regardless of ownership.

Answer:

Haringey Accord have this area included in their schedules and it is being swept weekly on Mondays.

Written Question 22 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Bloch

Whether Trading Standards and investigating the sale of pre paid international phone cards in the Borough and whether any prosecutions have resulted?

Answer:

During 1999-2001 Haringey Trading Standards received quite a lot of complaints about these phone cards. Recently there have been very few complaints.

The complaints included being disconnected, incorrect prices displayed on the poster, a connection charge being unknowingly applied, the rate only applying to the £20 card and not the £5 card, calls from phone boxes being much higher than the advertised price, calls rounded up to the next minute, service charges, different rates depending on which access number was used.

The situation was the same in many other boroughs and as a result , the North West London Fair Trading Group undertook a project on phone cards.

Recently the inter borough group agreed that the volume of complaints has dropped off significantly although they are still on sale.

We have not prosecuted any businesses but three were interviewed & investigated.

If Councillor Bloch would like to discuss this in more detail then I would be happy to talk to him about the issues. If there are any phone cards that he believes are misleading then we would investigate whether there have been any infringements of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 to do with giving misleading price information.

Written Question 23 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Hare

Following a number of complaints from residents in the vicinity, could you please explain what is done currently to enforce the 5 ton weight limit on North Hill? As it appears that it is being consistently abused, what further steps does the Council propose to take to ensure that this is adhered to?

Answer:

The Council does not have the powers to enforce moving traffic offences. The Metropolitan Police usually deal with this type of offence and this issue will be raised with them. At present the Council have no plans to reduce this type of traffic using North Hill and it could only be considered as part of a traffic management scheme for the area, for which there is no funding at present.

Written Question 24 - To the Executive Member for Housing from Councillor Beacham

What money would annually be saved if the Council met its target of 15 weeks of housing homeless people in temporary accommodation as compared with the current 22 weeks?

Answer

The indicator refers to family households in shared facilities B & B. The 22 weeks referred to in the question is the performance in relation to average length of stay for the whole of 02/03.

A target of 15 weeks average length of stay for 03 / 04 was set by the Council in the Council's Best Value Performance Plan for 03 /04. The performance on this to August is 10.36 weeks. The target is therefore being exceeded.

The government has set a target of 6 weeks maximum length of stay for any household with children in shared facilities B & B to be achieved from April 2004 onwards. This will be a statutory requirement. The Housing Service is well on track to achieve this by the required date.

It is worth pointing out that we have been steadily reducing the numbers of families in such accommodation throughout the last year from c80 at the start, to single figures. As a result we were one of the very first authorities to achieve the government's target a year early and we have been congratulated by the relevant government department for this achievement.

At the moment we have only 4 families in such accommodation. In recent months there were difficulties in moving one or two families to suitable alternative accommodation and as a result the average length of stay year to date has risen to 10.36 weeks. We are however talking about very small numbers indeed and it is expected that we will comfortably reduce performance to a maximum stay of 6 weeks and maintain performance within this government target for the next year onwards (04/ 05).

This improvement must be seen in the wider context of the package of measures contained in my recent briefing note to all councillors under our new "Leaving no stone unturned" initiative.

As a result of this and various other refinements listed there, we have already secured substantial savings from the budgeted amounts for Homelessness, as well as significant qualitative improvements for the people affected. I am expecting that, bar any unanticipated explosion in homeless demand, this trend will continue with further savings over the next year and I intend to bring to the Executive in the near future proposals to re-invest a proportion of these savings in further measures to improve the services we are providing to this most needy section of our community.

Written Question 25 - To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Fabian

What would it cost to bring Haringey Council's buildings up to the required standard for disabled access?

Answer:

All appropriate buildings (around 120) will require work. 76 have been audited so far. The remainder are programmed to be audited this financial year.

7 (not particularly representative buildings) have been costed in detail. The estimated cost of DDA compliance for these seven buildings is around £200,000 in total.

Written Question 26 - To the Executive Member for Finance from Councillor Winskill

How much money is annually lost to the Council due to the fact that only 36.69% of benefits overpayments are recovered?

Answer:

The figure 36.69% represents the amount of money collected direct from customers in relation to the total outstanding Housing Benefit overpayments from April 2000. Some types of overpayment are met by subsidy and subsequently there is no loss to the council. We will continue to seek to collect any outstanding overpayments.

An improvement plan is being put in place to increase the amount of debt recovered throughout the year and this area of activity is due for inspection under the forthcoming Income Collection Scrutiny Review and any Members will be welcome to participate.