

## **COUNCIL QUESTIONS – 19 JANUARY 2004:**

### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

#### **Oral Question 1 – To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Williams**

To ask the Leader of the Council: What assessment has been made of the impact of the Government's proposals to fine Council's who fail to provide alternative accommodation for patients who are stuck unnecessarily in hospital - both in terms of the potential costs to be incurred by Haringey and the capital investment needed to find places for those still in hospital?

#### **Oral Question 2 - To the Executive Member for the Environment of the Council from Councillor Wynne**

Could the Executive Member for the Environment inform me as to what progress has been made with regard to the tree-planting scheme for Stroud Green?

#### **Oral Question 3 - To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Gilbert**

To ask the Leader of the Council: what discussions he has had with Ministers in relation to the setting of Council tax levels?

#### **Oral Question 4 – To the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning from Councillor Milner**

Could Cllr Bax give me an idea of the general performance levels over the last few years for the following schools: St. Aidan's, Stroud Green and Weston Park?

#### **Oral Question 5 - To the Chair of the Alexandra Palace & Park Board from Councillor Hare**

To ask the Chair of the Alexandra Palace Board: At a previous Council meeting, the Chair of the APP board asserted that there was "no repeat, no agreement" with the preferred developer. Will he confirm there is no agreement or if there is an agreement, will he say so, and undertake to provide me the full details?

#### **Oral Question 6 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Q. Prescott**

Will the Executive Member for the Environment indicate to me the impact of 'Operation Cubit' in removing abandoned vehicles in the Stroud Green area?

#### **Oral Question 7 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Hoban**

To ask the Executive Member for Environment: How much has the council spent on the Bernie Grant Centre project to date, and what percentage of this amount is expected to be repaid from the development vehicle?

**Oral Question 8 – To the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety from Councillor Bull**

In welcoming the launch of the 'Stay Safe in Haringey' guide, can I ask Cllr Canver if she agrees with me that this onus on prevention rather than cure together with our commitment to increasing police numbers further substantiates that we are the natural party of law and order.

**Oral Question 9 - To the Executive Member for Social Services & Health from Councillor Aitken**

To ask the Executive Member for Social Services: How many looked-after children under the age of 18 years in Haringey have been prescribed a) Ritalin b) SSRI anti-depressants and c) tranquillisers, in the last 3 years, and the names of the specific drugs concerned and why the Council did not respond to this question when I contacted them back in October 2003?

**Oral Question 10 – To the Executive Member for Environment from Councillor Peacock**

Will Cllr Dodds inform me as to the percentage of households in the Stroud Green area participating in the Green Box scheme for recycling? Could he also let me know how long Green Boxes have been in operation in the area?

## **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

### **Written Question 1- To the Executive Member for the Environment from Cllr Reynolds**

Could the Executive Member for the Environment tell me how many Freedom Passes were issued in Haringey between February 2002 and December 2003?

#### **Answer**

**The Service issued a total of 37,756 Freedom Passes between February 2002 and December 2003. This consisted of:**

- 8,268 Freedom passes issued to people with a disability**
- 173 passes issued to people with visual impairment**
- 29,315 Older Persons Freedom passes.**

**The majority of those passes were renewals rather than new applications and were issued between February and April 2002.**

### **Written Question 2- To the Executive Member for the Lifelong Learning from Cllr Griffith**

Could Cllr Bax let me know how many visits were made to Haringey's Libraries between December 2002 and November 2003? Could she also indicate how this compares to the national average in terms of visits per head of population?

#### **Answer**

**Between December 2002 and November 2003, 1,729,851 visits were made to Haringey Libraries. Based on a population of 216,500, that is 8 visits per head. This compares with a national average of 5.45 visits and an Outer London average of 6.59 visits. The national and outer London figures are taken from the CIPFA Public Library Actuals for 2001-02 and are the latest available. Since most authorities have installed the People's Network since then, visits have probably increased nationally. They are, however, unlikely to have achieved Haringey's levels.**

### **Written Question 3 to the Executive Member for Social Services from Cllr Q. Prescott**

Will Cllr Sulaiman inform me as to the percentage of the social work posts within Children's Services now filled with permanent staff, and how this figure compares to the London average?

#### **Answer-**

**The percentage of permanently employed qualified Children and Families social workers in Haringey is 76%. In our district offices 87% of our front line social workers are permanent staff. This is a vast improvement for**

**Haringey from its position in 2001 in a very competitive and challenging labour market. In the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' an average of 40% of the posts in Children and Families Services were vacant in London.**

**Written Question 4 to the Executive Member for Housing from Cllr Knight**

Could Cllr Diakides tell me how many families were re-housed in 2003?

**Answer**

**Data taken from 01 January 03 to 31 December 03.**

**Total permanently housed into general needs stock = 827  
This figure does not include older people accommodation.**

**Within the above amount of 827 the total number of tenants transferred from permanent accommodation to alternative permanent accommodation = 125**

**In addition to the 125 moves, council tenants transferred from temporary accommodation to permanent accommodation = 32 making total transfers 157**

**Permanent moves to older people services accommodation = 181 this is included in the figure below of 1008.**

**Total numbers moved into permanent housing = 1008**

**Written Question 5 to the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety from Cllr Peacock**

Will the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety tell me how many police officers currently patrol Haringey's streets?

**Answer**

**Officers at Haringey are deployed operationally to various roles such as uniform response teams, task forces, crime squads, permanent beat managers, borough action teams and street duties. The total number of operational staff in the Borough Command is currently 671, plus 21 Police Community Support Officers. In addition there are centrally based units such as Territorial support groups, dogs section and traffic officers who regularly visit the borough operationally. Some of the deployments require the wearing of plain clothes so the officers are not visible to the public. The number of police patrolling our streets varies and can be up to 150 during special operations.**

**Written Question 6 to the Executive Member for the Environment from Cllr Haley**

Could Cllr Dodds indicate how many households received the *Community Clear Ups* service by the end of 2003?

**Answer:**

**From April 1st 2003 to 31st December 2003, a total of 49,468 households received the Community Clear Up service.**

**For this financial year 2003/04 it was anticipated that the Community Clear Up service would be delivered to around 65,000 properties (the service is not directed at multiple occupancy properties i.e. estates). However, following a review, this figure has been increased to 69,403 properties, a 7% improvement on the original target.**

**Written Question 7 to the Leader of the Council from Cllr Aitken**

To ask the Leader of the Council: Some three years in response to contact made by a colleague, the Council confirmed that the Council would compile a regularly updated database of community groups. Please would the Council update me on the progress of this issue and provide me with a date of when this database will be available and in what formats.

**Answer-**

**To support the corporate consultation strategy a Community Contacts Database was developed to: provide information on over 700 Community groups and Voluntary Organisations and 1500 residents who participate in the Area Assemblies; and monitor and co-ordinate the amount of consultation materials and information being distributed to these groups.**

**The database was originally compiled in 2000. It was updated in June 2002 and then in June 2003 it went 'live' on the 'Harinet'. (The quickest way to locate it is through the A-Z of Harinet under Community Contacts Database.)**

**Written Question 8 to the Executive Member for the Environment from Cllr Beacham**

To ask the Executive Member for the Environment: Would he make a statement on what the council's policy is with regard to e-planning and where he feels we are in relation to developing a system as compared to other London Boroughs.

**Answer:**

**Environmental Services are working towards a comprehensive e-planning portal solution, in support of and in collaboration with corporate IT strategy. New application processing systems are in the process of being introduced which are e-government ready, and similar developments are happening in GIS upgrades. We intend to utilise the new web**

environment to improve present web content and services in the short term. In the 2003 National Planning Website Review, Haringey ranked 28 (out of 33) in London and 218 (379) in the country. This survey was carried out before the UDP Review consultation, which has a strong web presence and would have lifted the score.

**Written Question 9 to the Chair of the Alexandra Palace and Park Board from Cllr Bloch**

To ask the Chair of Alexandra Palace Board: Has the Council estimated:  
a, what the annual cost of maintaining any retained parts of Alexandra Palace, the Park and the road and the associated management costs.  
b, estimated the initial and annual costs of monitoring and enforcing any obligations under the 125 year lease. When was such an estimate prepared and what is the figure? If no estimate has been prepared could one be made and passed to me.

**Answer**

There is no agreement to lease and therefore no identification of any "retained" parts of the Palace. The road and park will, in any event, remain under the direct control of the charity and will not be subject to any leasing arrangements. If there is a final proposal for a delineated area to be leased it is at this stage that "retained" area running costs can be clearly identified. Monitoring costs for a lease are considered marginal and no different from any other property lease unlike those of a contract for the supply of goods or services.

**Written Question 10 to the Executive Member for Social Services and Health from Cllr Davies**

To ask the Executive Member for Social Services: What plans are there to restore funding to the Younger Children Assessment team to enable them to carry out this vital role at full capacity?

**Answer**

The Younger Children's Assessment Team consists of two management posts and eight family support workers plus administrative support. There are currently two family support worker posts vacant. The Children's Services Pre Business Plan Review sets out a proposal for funding of this service to be switched to the Supporting People fund in 2004-05 and active discussions to this end are under way. The service has recently moved to the newly refurbished premises at Pulford Road in the Seven Sisters area and it is acknowledged that the service provides an important contribution to keeping families together and promoting children's welfare where there are concerns around the possibility of future need around safeguarding or care being required. The Council remains fully committed to the interventions that this service can provide.

## **Written Question 11 to the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning from Cllr Fabian**

To ask the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning: Whether she is satisfied that enough emphasis is being given to supporting schools to deliver Key Stage 2 at a satisfactory level and what additional resources are proposed for the forthcoming year.

### **Answer**

#### **Strategy to raise standards at Key Stage 2**

Over the last five years the rate of progress made by Haringey primary schools at the end Key Stage 2 has been similar to the national trend. In 2003 overall the results remained the same in English and science and went down by 1% in mathematics. Compared to the national average results remain too low although value-added shows that in English and mathematics most pupils make good progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. The following strategies are in place to support schools to raise standards in Key Stage 2.

#### **Targeted Support**

- individual intervention programmes in 12 schools identified as causing concern, together with termly LEA reviews and additional SSIO monitoring visits for targeted schools to evaluate improvements;
- additional management support in targeted schools provided by consultant headteacher
- intensive support for literacy and numeracy in 14 schools achieving less than 60% level 4+ in English and maths at the end of KS2 in 2003 (16% achieve less than 60% in English and 21% in Maths), (the 60% gives a high benchmark for intervention – to give further context - there are 3% of schools below 50% in both English and maths and 8% in English and 9% in mathematics);
- support for 12 targeted schools to improve planning and assessment for learning to ensure pupils' learning needs are met;
- targeted monitoring of schools where underachievement of ethnic minority achievement has been identified starting with 12 schools in the autumn term 2003;
- holiday schools established to support borderline pupils in targeted schools;

#### **Support for senior managers**

- introduction and implementation of the Primary Leadership programme in 12 primary schools
- extension of the Primary Leadership programme to a further 10 schools
- introduction of the intensive support programme (ISP) into 10 schools
- allocation of experienced headteacher mentors for all new and acting headteachers

- revised and updated programme of professional development for senior leaders in primary schools

#### **Support for teachers**

- participation in the National Primary Strategy pilot project to support the achievement of bilingual pupils with an additional consultant employed to lead this;
- new appointments in the EMA team to focus supporting schools to improve strategies to raise the achievement of ethnic minority pupils;
- expansion of the EiC gifted and talented project to all Haringey primary schools;
- improved links with supplementary schools through the appointment of SIO Supplementary Schools;
- development and implementation of a primary science strategy in schools where science results are below those of similar schools;
- development of the interactive whiteboard project by providing an additional interactive whiteboard for each school and further training for staff;
- introduction of national pupil tracking system to monitor achievement across key stages;
- promote catch-up and booster classes in all primary schools;
- provide high quality literacy and numeracy training for primary teachers;
- improve the use of ICT to support teaching and learning;
- provide training for teaching assistants to improve classroom support for underperforming pupils.

#### **Written Question 12 to the Leader of the Council from Cllr Featherstone**

Cllr Featherstone to ask the Leader of the Council: Whether he knows how much of the £340m additional funding for English local authorities (announced in the PreBudget Report in December 2003) Haringey will receive?

#### **Answer**

**Yes - £1,177,000**

#### **Written Question 13 to the Executive Member for the Environment from Cllr Floyd**

To ask the Executive Member for Environment: Please list the top ten streets for complaints received about rubbish dumping during 2003 and also the top ten for complaints about street cleaning during 2003.

#### **Answer:**

The top 10 complaints regarding dumped rubbish and street cleansing, taken from the call centre which is managed by Accord on behalf of the Council, are as follows:-



**Dumped Rubbish: -**

No	Street	Post Code	Oct - Dec 03 Frequency	Jan - Dec 03 Frequency
1	Langham Road	N15	15	51
2	Suffield Road	N15	9	30
3	Lealand Road	N15	10	21
4	Myddleton Road	N22	9	20
5	Coppetts Road	N10	0	18
6	Haringey Passage	N8	4	14
7	Colina Mews	N15	0	13
8	Eve Road	N17	6	13
9	Pembury Road	N17	0	12
10	Beaconsfield Road	N15	4	11

**Street Cleansing:-**

No	Street	Post Code	Oct - Dec 03 Frequency	Jan - Dec 03 Frequency
1	Woodstock Road	N4	3	28
2	Ennis Road	N4	5	23
3	Oxford Road	N4	0	22
4	Florence Road	N4	0	17
5	Langham Road	N15	13	16
6	Lealand Road	N15	5	11
7	Edgecot Grove	N15	0	11
8	Ermine Road	N15	0	10
9	Kerswell Close	N15	0	10
10	Perth Road	N22	3	10

**Written Question 14 to the Leader of the Council from Cllr Gilbert**

To ask the Leader of the Council: How many times since he took office, has Haringey received additional money from central Government, when this was, and what were the amounts?

**Answer**

**Mainstream funding for Council services from the government comes in the form of revenue support grant and redistributed business rates, together known as Aggregate External Finance [AEF]. I became Leader in May 1999. Since that time the increases for each year have been as follows:**

	<b>AEF INCREASE</b>
	<b>£'000</b>
<b>2000/01</b>	<b>8,543</b>
<b>2001/02</b>	<b>8,476</b>
<b>2002/03</b>	<b>4,783</b>
<b>2003/04</b>	<b>9,462</b>

**It should be noted that the cash increases also reflect changes in local authority functions.**

**Written Question 15 to the Chair of the Alexandra Palace and Park Board from Cllr Hare**

To ask the Chair of the Alexandra Palace Board: Will the Council review allotment plot rental periods and look to move towards 'short year' or a 'long year' plot rental at proportionate fees, as current rental year (same as the Council year) are some 6 months out of time with the best time for planting. This would be a minor inconvenience compared with the significant help this would give allotment secretaries and new plot holders.

**Answer:**

**The Council recognises that the current administrative arrangements for Allotments could be improved, and have had some discussion with site secretaries as to how this could be affected. It is clear that bringing forward the process would assist both the Council and site secretaries to more effectively manage sites and re-let vacant plots, recognising the seasonal work requirements. Thus we will review and amend arrangements during 2004-5.**

**Written Question 16 to the Executive Member for Social Services and Health from Cllr Hoban**

To ask the Executive Member for Social Services: How much:  
a, has the Council spent on Asylum Seekers and Refugees services since it was established  
b, is owed by central government to the council in respect of reimbursement of costs incurred in running the Asylum Seekers and Refugees Service and what has been the total cost to the council in terms of interest charged on funds advanced to run the service whilst awaiting reimbursement of these costs from central government.

**Answer**

**1. The amount spent on Asylum Services between 1996/97 and 2002/03 was £149m. The amount to be spent in 2003-04 is approximately £26m.**

**2. The outstanding amount due from the government is £1m in respect of outstanding issues relating to the 2001/02 grant claim. These issues relate to data matching a number of clients for whom we had provided services and which were not on the Home Office's original listing for that year. Reconciliations are almost complete and verbal feedback from the Home Office verifies that our claim for these clients was correct. The Home Office anticipates that this work will be completed by the end of the month.**

**3. As a result of the delays in finalising the 2001/02 claim, the Home Office made partial payments in respect of 2002/03 and delayed payments for the first two quarters of 2003/04. These payments have now been made, with the exception of the £1m being held. The cost of the delay in respect of interest paid on the sums borrowed to fund the service is estimated to be £1.05m. Payments are now regularly received quarterly on account and it is not anticipated that there will be significant sums owed to the council in the future.**

**Written Question 17 to the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning from Cllr Laird**

To ask the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning: What support is being provided to library services to ensure:

- A) Proper disability access to all
  - B) Necessary capital works and repairs are carried out
- For this coming year and work thereafter

**Answer**

**A programme of disability surveys is in progress to assess the measures required to make all Council premises DDA compliant. A major review of all aspects of library maintenance and facilities management is to be carried out and this will be completed by July 2004. The capital programme for 2004/05 is due to be considered by the Council shortly. This is likely to include investment for DDA modifications and works.**

**Written Question 18 to the Executive Member for the Environment from Cllr Oatway**

To ask the Executive Member for Environment: Some boroughs collect and recycle Christmas trees left outside homes during January, preventing unnecessary waste and gaining over 2 - 7 kg per tree towards recycling targets. Will this be done in Haringey as taking dead trees to one of the 5 sites designated is not practical for the half of Haringey households who do not have a car?

**Answer:**

The Council's current Christmas tree recycling scheme enables residents to deposit their trees at the following locations: -

- Down Lane Recreation Ground, N17 - Staff Yard, Park View Road entrance.
- Finsbury Park, N4 - Staff Yard, Hornsey Gate entrance, Endymion Road.
- Priory Park, N8 - Staff Yard, Barrington Road entrance.
- Woodside Park, N22 - Staff Yard (to the rear of Woodside House), High Road, N22.
- The Gardens Community Gardens (GRA) in Doncaster Gardens off Stanhope Gardens, N4.

The service will run from 2nd to 19th January 2004, however residents may still deposit Christmas trees at Western Road Recycling Depot (20 Western Road, N22), until March 31st 2004.

It is expected that the scheme will handle up to approximately 1000 Christmas trees (5 tonnes), which will be composted, via London Waste Limited, at a site in Rainham. The Council is currently developing plans for a green waste collection service commencing this Spring. This follows a successful pilot last year. It may well be possible to extend this new green waste collection scheme to include Christmas trees in future.

**Written Question 19 to the Executive Member for the Environment from Cllr Simpson**

To ask Executive Member for Environment: The Archway Road Neighbourhood Plan was produced with excellent collaborative work with community. However, implementation of the plan has not even begun. Will the Executive Member say how the plan will be implemented, and provide a detailed time-scale of actions.

**Answer:**

It is not true to say implementation has not begun. Some parts of the Archway Road Neighbourhood Plan have been implemented such as:

- a new recycling centre at Bakers Lane
- design guidance for Archway Road will form part of the Highgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal which is currently in draft
- ensuring applications for conversions include adequate storage space is covered by the UDP review.

A meeting is due to be set up between planning and neighbourhood management to agree the next set of actions.

**Written Question 20 to the Executive Member for the Environment from Cllr Winskill**

To ask the Executive Member for the Environment: What is the staff establishment for Planning and Enforcement, what has been the actual figure for the last and

current financial years and what efforts are being made to recruit staff of a high enough calibre to Planning and Enforcement to make Haringey a better Borough?

**Answer:**

**The Planning and Enforcement Services have been established in this current financial year and were previously a combined service the Planning and Environmental Control Service.(PECS).**

**Establishment figures for the previous year are therefore combined. PECS had an establishment of 163 posts with a further 12 Posts funded through Capitalised projects. The total number of permanent officers in post was 149. A further 23 posts were covered using agency staff (temps).**

**Comparisons between the last two years are difficult due to the investment in both services increasing the establishment of both.**

**For the current financial year the following applies;**

#### **Planning Service**

**The establishment total is 79 posts. The Actual number of staff employed is 84 ( the surplus is due to capitalised projects ). There are currently 61 permanent staff and 23 temporary.**

#### **Enforcement Service**

**The Establishment total is 96 posts ( this figure includes the new heavy enforcement team, but does not include the proposed move of the wardens). In addition to the established posts there are a further 15 posts funded through Capitalised projects. The total number of permanent staff in post is 96. There is currently 7 temporary staff also in post.**

**Both services have been actively involved in recruitment . Recruitment to Planning posts has proved to be difficult. Initiatives to attract and retain staff have been developed and included in the service's emerging people plan. Examples include:**

- to advertise in the national press using high profile methods e.g. recent heavy enforcement team recruitment
- develop a promotional programme that will improve the Service's image as an employer.
- develop links with Academic institutions with a view to recruiting high quality trainees, and tailoring development courses for existing staff.

#### **Written Question 21 to the Executive Member for the Environment from Cllr Williams**

To ask Executive Member for Environment: In Nov 03, the Council went to court in an attempt to delay the judicial review of the Halls Yard planning permission. This reason for this decision was cited to be to allow the relevant planning officer to be

contacted. The Council's court case collapsed when it was revealed that the officer had actually been sacked, with criminal investigations only terminated when the sacked officer returned home to New Zealand. Subsequently, the Exec member was quoted as saying that the officer was not significant in this planning case, contradicting the original reason given for seeking a delay. Was the Council seeking to delay the JR to a point when it would have been irrelevant rather than answering the case without misrepresenting the facts? Could the Council explain why it chose to do this and so waste thousands of pounds of public money?

**Answer:**

**The Council made an application to the Administrative Court on 23rd September 2003 in an attempt to defer the final hearing of the Judicial Review case. This application was made because it would have improved the Council's position if a second planning permission for the Hall's Yard development had been granted in October before the final hearing. This was done openly and properly on Counsel's advice. Nothing was said in this application by the Council about contacting the dismissed locum Planning Officer.**

**In the event, the application to defer was refused on 6th October mainly because the challenger by way of Judicial Review, Mr. Gavin, had in the interim organised a petition requiring the holding of a Development Control Forum. This created a long delay before the possible grant of a second planning permission. The costs awarded against the Council in respect of this application were £4,000.**

**After the final hearing of the Judicial Review on 21st and 22nd October the Administrative Court decided not to quash the original planning permission challenged by Mr Gavin notwithstanding the procedural failures admitted earlier by the Council. The Court did not grant Mr. Gavin any substantive relief and there was no further order for costs.**

**Mr Gavin had claimed that the issue of the dismissed locum Planning Officer was relevant to the Judicial Review. The Administrative Court accepted the Council's argument that it was irrelevant to the case and refused to order disclosure of the Council's internal audit file.**

**Much of the press coverage of this case has been inaccurate. In the end the challenge to the Council was unsuccessful. The Council conducted its case throughout with a view to minimising the risk to public funds and without any misrepresentation of the facts.**