

COUNCIL – 24 NOVEMBER 2008 - QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

Oral Question 1 - To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Wellbeing from Councillor C Harris:

Is the cabinet member confident of receiving a good star rating in our most recent Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) assessment of adult social care?

Oral Question 2 – To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Gorrie:

What actions to recover the £37m invested by this Council in failed Icelandic Banks has the Leader taken since the last Full Council meeting?

Oral Question 3 - To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services from Councillor Diakides:

Given that works to Sheltered Accommodation schemes have not been included in the Council's Decent Homes Programme on the basis that there is a review of the future of Sheltered Accommodation provision; will the cabinet member assure this meeting tonight that there will be no stock transfer proposals for any of its sheltered housing stock?

Oral Question 4 - To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Councillor Williams:

With regard to the recent findings of the Standards Board regarding the allegation that he disclosed confidential information in relation to the future of the Wellbourne Centre, will he apologise to the Council for yet another finding that calls into question his fitness to hold his portfolio?

Oral Question 5 – To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise from Councillor Peacock:

In the current economic climate it is essential to make sure that people in our borough have access to adequate jobs and training for employment; can the cabinet member update us on what the council is currently doing to provide this access?

Oral Question 6 - To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise from Councillor Edge:

Does the cabinet member agree with her colleague and former NDC board member Cllr Diakides that the NDC has been 'antagonistic and evasive' on Wards Corner?

Oral Question 7 - To the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Lifelong Learning from Councillor Kober:

Can the cabinet member tell us what recent progress has been made towards our commitment to make every park in the borough a Green Flag Park?

Oral Question 8 – To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Councillor Weber:

With regard to the recent findings of the standards Board regarding the allegation that he disclosed confidential information in relation to the future of the Wellbourne Centre, will he state why did he not seek further legal advice from council officers and/or through council channels, rather than seek his own advice?

Written Questions

Written Question 1 – To the Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Safer Communities from Cllr Aitken:

How many shops in Haringey have been reprimanded or fined for selling knives to children in the last year?

ANSWER

Since 1 November 2007 the Council has prosecuted one company and formally cautioned a second. A third trader is in the process of being prosecuted, (Legal are in the process of issuing summonses) but the case has not been heard yet.

In this period fifteen premises were visited for an underage test purchase.

Written Question 2 – To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services from Cllr Alexander:

Using the definition supplied in the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy that ..."a fuel poor household is one that needs to spend more than 10% of its income on all fuel use and to heat its home to an adequate standard of warmth", would the cabinet member please tell us

- a) How many households in each borough currently fulfil this definition of fuel poverty?
- b) In the light of massive increases in domestic heating bills, how many households will be in fuel poverty by the end of winter?
- c) Whether he has written to the responsible minister asking what the government intends to do to support those who have to make the 'eat or heat' choice?

ANSWER

As energy prices and household incomes are constantly changing, it is extremely difficult to produce an accurate estimate of the number of households in each area that are 'fuel poor'.

The most reliable data for Haringey, obtained using a tool developed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy at Bristol University, relates to 2006:

Ward	Total number of households	Households in fuel poverty	% of households in fuel poverty
Noel Park	4749	412	8.66
Northumberland Park	5179	444	8.56
Tottenham Green	5201	435	8.39
Tottenham Hale	5205	428	8.27
Seven Sisters	5022	416	8.18
St Anns	4886	400	8.17
West Green	4690	385	8.16
Bruce Grove	4911	399	8.10
White Hart Lane	4607	371	8.05
Woodside	4784	372	7.78
Harringay	4557	348	7.68
Bounds Green	4955	358	7.25
Hornsey	4613	310	6.74
Stroud Green	4816	321	6.66
Highgate	5006	316	6.33
Fortis Green	4865	296	6.09
Alexandra	4335	264	6.07
Crouch End	5369	324	6.02
Muswell Hill	4338	260	5.96

More information is available at www.fuelpovertyindicator.org

In spring 2009, we will be publishing a multi agency Affordable Warmth Strategy that will contain, and be informed by, a comprehensive review of all of the fuel poverty data available to the Council and its partners.

b) In the light of massive increases in domestic heating bills, how many households will be in fuel poverty by the end of winter?

For the reasons given in my previous answer. It is not possible to produce accurate forecasts of the number of households who are in fuel poverty or, indeed, are likely to be in fuel poverty at any time in the future.

However, it is known that any increase in energy prices and/or unemployment will result in an increase in the number of households in fuel poverty.

c) Whether he has written to the responsible minister asking what the government intends to do to support those who have to make the 'eat or heat' choice?

The Government is acutely aware of the stark choice facing many people this coming winter and its Home Energy Saving Programme involves spending £6.5 billion over the next three years to improve the energy efficiency of people's homes.

The Home Energy Saving Programme includes a £910 million commitment from the energy companies to invest in making their customers' homes warmer and more energy efficient. £560 million of this is for loft and cavity wall insulation; the other £350 million is for a new Community Energy Saving Programme that will involve energy companies, local authorities and voluntary groups conducting house to house calls to offer assistance in person.

The Government is planning to run advertising campaigns over the winter months, encouraging people to make use of the advice and assistance available and helping them to obtain their energy at the best possible price.

Over the next 3 years, the Government and the energy companies will invest an additional £225 million in social programmes and reduced tariffs.

The Prime Minister has recently announced that:

- Weekly cold weather payments will be increased from £8.50 to £25.
- An extra £74 million will be invested in the Warm Front scheme
- One-off winter fuel payments will be increased for older people. (People over 60 will receive an extra £50; people over 80 will receive an extra £100).

Written Question 3 – To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services from Cllr Allison:

How many Homes for Haringey residents have only an outside toilet? What is the average number of tenants living in these properties?

How many do not have a bathroom and still have a bath in the kitchen? What is the average number of tenants living in these properties?

ANSWER

Homes for Haringey are undertaking a comprehensive survey of all of the Council's housing stock to inform Haringey's decent homes programme.

To date, Homes for Haringey has surveyed 4,000 properties, none of which have an outside toilet or lack a bathroom.

I am aware that there are a small number of council properties that only have an outside toilet or lack adequate bathroom facilities. In such instances, however, the property is in such a condition because the occupants have refused improvements when they have been offered.

Haringey's decent homes programme will identify properties of this nature and provide modern bathroom and kitchen facilities. These properties will also be modernised when they become empty, before they are re-let.

Written Question 4 – To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Conservation from Cllr Baker:

Penalty Charge Notices have been cancelled due to incorrect lines or signs at the yellow box junctions of High Road with Station Road, Green Lanes with Westbury Avenue, Green Lanes with Endymion Road, Green Lanes with Kimberly Gardens and High Road with Ewart Grove.

Why are these junctions still being enforced if they are known to be non-compliant? What is being done to correct them and when?

ANSWER

The nearest box junction to High Road with Station Road is outside the Wood Green bus garage. There is no enforcement carried out in relation to these markings. The markings make a valuable contribution to public transport services by allowing buses to easily egress from the bus garage into the High Road. However, as this is not technically a junction, it would not be possible to make the markings compliant.

Green Lanes with Westbury Avenue is compliant and is currently being enforced.

Green Lanes with Endymion Road yellow box junction is with the Department for Transport for authorisation. No enforcement is taking place.

The nearest yellow box junction to Green Lanes with Kimberly Gardens is at the junction of Green Lanes with Warham Road. This box junction is compliant and enforcement is taking place.

The nearest box junction to High Road and Ewart Grove is at the junction of Bounds Green Road and High Road and is currently with the Department for Transport. We are waiting feedback from the DfT before carrying out any works. No enforcement is taking place.

Written Question 5 – To the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Regeneration from Cllr Beacham:

How many people and businesses in Haringey have been declared insolvent every year for the past three years (including bankruptcy and individual voluntary arrangements)?

ANSWER

A statistical response to this question is beset by two issues. Firstly, the Insolvency Service (the government agency for the administration of cases of bankruptcy and insolvency) provides statistics only at a national level. The second issue relates to local practices. The Council does not have a formal system for capturing data on the volume of bankruptcies and insolvencies for the area. Data is available on the number of business rate and council tax accounts that are closed. However, this can occur for a variety of reasons not specifically related to insolvency or bankruptcy and is therefore not a reliable measure.

National insolvency data is available up until 7 November 2008. It is available at national level only. Compulsory insolvencies have not significantly grown over the last three years. Creditors Voluntary Liquidations have steadily increased over the last five quarters by approximately 100 cases per quarter from 1,682 to 2,518.

For individuals, levels of bankruptcy have increased over the last three years rising from 13,501 to 17,341. However, only in the last quarter has there been a sudden rise by over 2,000 cases. For Individual Voluntary Agreements, the last year has shown relative stability following a peak of 13,233 in the first quarter of 2007, with the most recent rate being 9,746 cases.

Corporate Procurement, Corporate Property Services and Local Benefits and Taxation have been identified as the council services most likely to be able to flag local trends and work is underway to ensure this is being monitored.

Written Question 6 – To the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Lifelong Learning from Cllr Beynon:

What is the procedure and policy when trees are felled by the Council? Are residents notified or consulted before trees are felled?

ANSWER

The Council's tree stock is subject to a planned maintenance programme, which largely involves pruning/ pollarding and occasionally removal. Before work is undertaken we undertake the following:

- Notify residents adjacent to the works
- Erect advance notices on trees scheduled for works
- Inform Ward Members and known local residents associations

On Homes for Haringey estates, local Housing Managers are notified and they inform tenants and residents associations.

We are planning to improve notification by publishing the maintenance programme on the web and providing specific briefings through Area Assemblies.

The above excludes emergency situations when immediate action/ works are clearly required for example storm damage.

Written Question 7– To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Cllr Bloch:

How many local authority property searches were carried out by the Council in 2006, 2007 and 2008 (to date)? How much revenue has the Council received from these searches? When was the last time the charge for this service increased?

ANSWER

For the financial year 2006/2007, 9,011 local authority property searches were carried out generating an income of £877,163.

In 2007/2008 the amounts were 8,037 and £670,557 respectively.

In 2008/2009 the respective amounts as at 31 October 2008 are 3513 and £177,925.

There are two types of searches.

The fees for personal searches are set by Central Government and have been at the current levels since 8 September 2003.

The fees for official searches are set by the Council and have been at the current levels since 1 April 2004.

Written Question 8 – To Cabinet Member for Environment and Conservation from Cllr Butcher:

Has the Council joined the 2M campaign against the opening of a third runway at Heathrow? And, if so, when did the Council join?

ANSWER

The Council has not joined the M2 campaign. Although we do not have a formal position on the expansion of Heathrow airport, I do have concerns at the environmental impact of an additional runway. I feel this would add to global warming.

The recent Government consultation on expansion at Heathrow Airport raised a number of issues. Specifically,

1. Much of the technical work in justifying the expansion has been prepared by BAA who have an interest as owners of the airport.
2. There is a lack of consideration for the scope of passengers on short haul flights to use high speed rail services. This is particularly relevant given the opening of the high speed line into St Pancras.
3. Further development at Heathrow over and above the current proposal has not been ruled out.
4. Much of the demand at Heathrow is for leisure use. Around 60% of journeys are for leisure purposes yet the Government seeks to justify the expansion on the benefits to business.
5. Expansion of airport capacity contradicts Government policy to address CO2 emissions and climate change
6. The impact on public transport has not been assessed and the provision of public transport is left for further development.

We support the view of London Councils, an organisation to represent the interests of all London boroughs, which opposes any further expansion at Heathrow Airport.

Written Question 9 – To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services from Cllr Davies:

With the housing market in turmoil and the number of home repossessions rising, has the Council explored the possibility of buying newly-built homes from developers or purchasing homes from people struggling with their mortgage payments and renting the home back to them?

Does the Council have a budget earmarked for the acquisition of housing and how much is this?

ANSWER

The Council is being proactive in its response to the deterioration in the housing market, and is continuing to explore the scope for putting unsold, empty properties to good use and developing new services that help defaulting mortgage payers to remain in their homes.

The Leader of the Council and I have recently written to the Housing Minister, requesting her support for a package of measures that will make effective use of such properties and reduce homelessness.

I believe that the best outcomes can be achieved by the Council working collaboratively with registered social landlords (RSLs), developers and mortgage lenders (with Government funding from the Homes and Communities Agency) and I welcome the recent Ministerial announcements, promising support for mortgage rescue, housing construction and sales.

As far as unsold new homes are concerned, the Council is supporting RSLs' request for financial support to enable temporary or permanent changes of tenure to enable unsold properties to be let, under the 'Rent to Homebuy' scheme, to prospective purchasers for a period of up to 5 years during which time they will have the opportunity to raise a deposit and obtain the mortgage.

The Council is also keen to support RSLs' acquisition of unsold new homes for use as affordable rented accommodation or 'Rent to Homebuy', and unoccupied private homes, through 'spot purchase', to meet local housing needs, depending on the size and location of developments.

Consideration is being given to making even greater use of the Council's use of compulsory purchase powers to bring more empty properties back into use as affordable rented accommodation. HCA funding will be required to enable the Council to dispose of such properties to RSLs.

As far as mortgage rescue is concerned, we will actively support the development and implementation of mortgage rescue initiatives that assist, as a priority, vulnerable households that are having difficulty meeting their mortgage payments and will be working closely with RSLs and lenders to provide advice, support and settle housing solutions, especially for families and people with a serious disability, enabling them to remain in their homes.

Early indications suggest that, under its mortgage rescue initiative, the Government will task the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) with providing RSLs with the grants required to enable them to deliver mortgage rescue schemes, provide shared equity and deferred purchase schemes, and make housing costs more affordable.

Mortgage rescue can provide a socially desirable and cost effective outcome that enables families to remain in their homes without the trauma of homelessness and the difficulty caused by the loss of local support networks.

It is hoped that details of the mortgage rescue scheme will be announced soon, with the scheme coming into effect in January 2009.

I am confident that the government funding provided to bring empty properties back into use and support struggling mortgage payers will make a difference.

At present, I do not feel that the allocation of funding for the 'spot purchase' of vacant properties would provide a best value outcome that can be better achieved through working with housing providers, lenders and the HCA.

Written Question 10 – To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services from Cllr Edge:

How much has Homes for Haringey paid in compensation to residents affected by damp/mildew in the last year? How many cases were there in the last year?

ANSWER

Compensation is paid to residents in settlement of disrepair cases. These cases generally involve some degree of dampness. As compensation is paid on an aggregate basis and based on a number of different factors, it is not possible to confirm exactly how much money was paid in respect of dampness alone.

In 2007/08, Homes for Haringey paid out a total of £37,664 in settlement of seven disrepair cases. To date, it has paid out a total of £47,200 in 2008/09 in settlement of four disrepair cases.

Written Question 11 – To the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People from Cllr Engert:

How many incidents involving knives have occurred in Haringey's schools this academic year (to date)?

ANSWER

There have been no knife related permanent exclusions from any school in Haringey since the beginning of term in September 2008.

There have been 5 knife related fixed term exclusions from Haringey schools since the beginning of term in September 2008.

Written Question 12 – To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Cllr Gorrie:

What measures have been taken to encourage the use of local labour and suppliers as part of the BSF & Decent Homes programmes? Please provide any metrics currently being collected by the Council to measure this local content in the two projects.

ANSWER

The Decent Homes programme has clear targets for the employment of local labour. These are monitored monthly with our construction partners to ensure we are complying with the target.

The baseline target set out at the procurement stage calls for 20% local labour to be employed across the contracts. This is assessed by recording where the workforce lives by post code and proximity to the heart of borough. Homes for Haringey (HfH) are currently achieving 22% across the board.

There are currently four apprentices working on the decent homes programme. Two of these have been employed from the local community.

In addition HfH recently met with all the main construction partners to review overall progress and look at ways to add value to the service being provided. Two of the key areas to come out of this exercise were to increase local employment and developing an apprenticeship and local training programme.

The Building Schools for the Future programme is at an earlier stage of development to HfH, but is adopting similar approaches. The first contract to be signed is for ICT managed services to schools. The contractor, RM, will provide ten IT apprenticeships on a rolling basis. Broadly this will be one apprentice at each secondary school site. These apprenticeships will prioritise young people in Haringey.

At the Haringey sixth form centre, the contractor employed two apprentices for construction trades. All contractors working on the BSF programme will be required to engage apprentices on their schemes. Contractors have agreed in principle to offer 'work & skills' development for NVQ level 3 & 4 in the Value Bidding Stages of their Contracts.

The BSF programme itself has also employed an apprentice for administration. Beyond the apprenticeship programme, the BSF contracts will take the same approach to local labour as HfH, although as yet the KPIs have not been defined and contracts are yet to be finalised.

Written Question 13 – To the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Involvement from Cllr Hare:

What is the Council's contingency plan for Jackson's Lane should the Arts Council cease funding in the spring?

ANSWER

The Jacksons Lane Management Board has recently commissioned a feasibility study to identify funding opportunities to ensure the future of the centre. The Council is providing 50% of the cost of the feasibility study and officers within Culture, Libraries and Learning have already met with the

consultants to discuss initial ideas. The report from the feasibility study is expected in December 2008.

Written Question 14 – To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services from Cllr Mughal:

How many people are currently housed by Haringey Council in bed and breakfast accommodation?

ANSWER

Bed and breakfast accommodation is defined as accommodation that is not self contained and has some shared facilities. In total 37 people are currently accommodated by the Council in bed and breakfast accommodation.

Written Question 15 – To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Conservation from Cllr Newton:

How many zebra crossings are there in the whole borough? How many were repainted last year? How much money has the Council earmarked for the repainting of zebra crossings in the borough and how much does the repainting a zebra crossing cost? Does the Council have a pro-active programme to repaint worn zebra crossings?

ANSWER

The Council has 74 zebra crossings located at various roads on the public highway network. During the 2007/08 eight crossings were repainted.

The current budget allocation for maintenance of all road markings on the entire highway network is £7,000 and the cost of refreshing markings at a zebra crossing (including the zigzag lines) is in the order £250. The total cost to renew all the crossings annually is put at £18,500. On average between 8 to 10 crossings are renewed annually (maximum cost £2,500).

The Council identifies road markings requiring maintenance through highway inspections and considers renewal of road markings including zebra crossings when more than 30% (approximately) of their area becomes ineffective. This is in accordance with provisions in The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002. Where possible, we also include the maintenance/upgrade of pedestrian crossing facilities as part of our Local Safety Scheme, 20mph Zones and Travel Plan programmes.

Written Question 16 – To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Cllr Oakes:

With regard to the 13 October press release putting on hold plans for a new Civic Centre at Woodside House could the lead member confirm the minimum period this hold will last? Are there any capital investment plans for Woodside

House included in the current draft budget being considered for 2009/10 to 2011/12?

ANSWER

No minimum period has been set; economic conditions will be monitored and the project recommenced at an appropriate time. The original plans for Woodside House were based on a £12 million project. This will be re-profiled in line with the decision to put the project on hold and submitted in the draft budget proposals for 2009/10 onwards.

Written Question 17 – To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Well Being from Cllr Oatway:

Provide details on any discussions between Royal Mail and the Council regarding the proposed citing of a Post Office in Alexandra Park Library? When have meetings taken place, who attended and what was the outcome of the meetings?

ANSWER

The Assistant Director of Culture Libraries and Learning has had a number of meetings with a representative of Post Office Ltd (20 August, 10 September and 28 October) and also met with Post Office branch managers (30 September, 28 October and 18 November 2008). These meetings were to discuss in considerable detail the possibility of piloting the “outreach” model already utilised in Essex County Council to operate post offices within suitably adapted Council buildings.

There is no outcome at present. The issues under discussion are “commercial in confidence” and regrettably cannot be disclosed in further detail as the Council signed a confidentiality agreement with Post Office Ltd. in order to hold these discussions. We all recognise the ideal solution is to re-open Alexandra Park Post Office and that this matter has been raised with the Post Office.

Written Question 18 – To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise from Cllr Rainger:

How many shops/businesses have closed on our main shopping centres (Wood Green, Tottenham, Crouch End, Muswell Hill, Highgate) in Haringey this year and how licences have been granted to open new shops/businesses?

ANSWER

We have strong links with the business communities in our town centres and officers currently work with traders in Crouch End, Wood Green and Tottenham. To date there is no discernable increase in the closure of shops or

businesses in our main shopping centres but we will be closely monitoring the situation.

Businesses do not require a license to open a new venture unless the commercial activity is covered under the Licensing Act 2003. This Act covers new businesses that may want to sell alcohol, provide entertainment or sell food after 11pm. Where a new business seeks to make changes to business premises, it may require planning permission. This is therefore not a good measure of changes in the vacancy rate.

We expect that in the run up to Christmas it is unlikely that there will be an increase in the vacancy rate. It will be vital that we closely monitor the situation after Christmas when it will be clearer what impact the economic down turn is having on traders.

Written Question 19 – To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Cllr Reid:

Following the recent collapse of the negotiations with Inner Circle on the Hornsey Depot site development could you please confirm how much the Council has spent on fees and officer time on the project since the decision to have an open market tender was taken at the end of 2006?

Given the process has taken almost two years and still failed when will there be a review of the procurement process used and a report published on lessons learnt?

ANSWER

In common with a wide range of property developments, sales and regeneration projects throughout the country, this important regeneration project is severely affected financially by the steep decline in the property market due to the sudden decline in the global economic situation outside the control of the Council and parties involved.

The terms of appointment of the marketing agent jointly by the Council and Sainsbury was based on the payment by the Council and Sainsbury's of a percentage of the disposal value achieved from the sale of the site, 50% of which becomes payable on exchange of contracts and the balance on completion. As contracts did not exchange, there are no fees payable by the Council.

An estimated £50,000 has been spent on fees and officer time since the end of 2006 to date.

The report scheduled for the Cabinet in December 2008 will set out a brief review of the disposals process undertaken and any lessons learned together with any issues arising from the abortive negotiations so these can be taken

into account in considering the options and agreeing a realistic timetable for achieving the Council's regeneration and financial objectives.

Written Question 20 – To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Cllr Scott:

How much money has the Council spent on the external decoration of Civic Buildings in the past year and how much has been earmarked for future funding? How many buildings have been re-decorated? When was the last time Alexandra Park Library was decorated externally?

ANSWER

There has been no expenditure on external decorations of civic buildings in the past year. Funding has been prioritised on those projects required to ensure legal compliance of all corporate buildings. External redecoration has been included in year three of the current programme (to be commenced during 2009/10). It is likely some will be carried out subject to funding and assessment of competing priorities throughout the year.

Alexandra Park Library has not been redecorated externally in recent years and we have plans to redecorate it in the near future.

Written Question 21 – To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Cllr Weber:

The economic downturn has significantly increased the risk of business failure. Has the Council reviewed its exposure to supplier failure in the light of the new economic conditions? Does the Council have a list of the suppliers it believes are most vulnerable in the current economic climate and has it taken any specific and additional steps to mitigate the impact of any potential failures? Specifically are the Council secure in the escrow and support arrangements for all the third party IT systems used by the Council should any of these suppliers fail?

ANSWER

At any one time, Haringey Council has approximately 5,500 active commercial vendors on more than 850 contracts or framework agreements. Corporate Procurement works closely with managers in departments and around 100 suppliers are usually monitored that we regard as business critical or a risk to the Council. We expect this number to increase over the coming months given the worsening economic climate.

Currently, 13 suppliers are identified as being of "higher than average risk" of business failure and of those, 8 have been removed from active use until such time as their rating improves. In these cases we do have alternative suppliers that we can readily call upon.

With regards to IT suppliers, we have 5 on the monitored list and all are regarded as being of Lower than Average Risk of business failure.

Corporate Procurement currently subscribes to two credit alert services and each provide daily email alerts of any adverse status of monitored suppliers.

It should be noted, however, that such credit alerts are largely dependent upon published accounts and are not a safeguard against unexpected business failure.

Regarding support arrangements for third party IT systems, the Council has formal contracts in place for strategic service suppliers. These contracts include terms and conditions that require such suppliers to make their application and supporting documentation available to the Council in the event they become insolvent. In the event that their services become unavailable, individual Council departments would invoke their own disaster recovery/business continuity planning (BCP) process to ensure continuity of service during the recovery process.

Written Question 22 – To the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People from Cllr Whyte:

How many applications for child protection orders have been made for each of the last five years?

Has the council received extra funding to make such applications?
If so, has that funding been ring fenced for applications for child protection orders?

ANSWER

I assume the term 'child protection orders' refers to applications to start care proceedings. The number of new care proceedings is:

2004/05	43
2005/06	55
2006/07	39
2007/08	47
2008/ to 31 October 2008	27

The council was allocated in April 2008 £365.444 for this purpose.

Written Question 23 – To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Cllr Williams:

With regards to the recent findings of the Standards Board regarding the allegation that he disclosed confidential information in relation to the further of the Wellbourne Centre, what steps has he taken to familiarise himself more thoroughly with the provisions in the members code of conduct in relation to the disclosure of confidential information?

ANSWER

The Council should be aware that the issue is about seeking independent legal advice which has resulted in a request by the Standards Board for England for proper guidance to be provided.

Written Question 24 – To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social care and Wellbeing from Cllr Wilson:

What consultation has the Council held with users, carers and local residents regarding the future of the Wolves Lane Plant Centre?

ANSWER

The Council completed the transfer from Livability in September and is now undertaking an options review to inform decisions on the long term development of the site. We are currently consulting a number of stakeholders including providers, local voluntary sector organisations and current service users/ carers. We have undertaken a series of interviews and held 2 workshops, one of which specifically targeted users/ carers and was held at Wolves Lane on Friday 14 November 2008.

Written Question 25 – To the Cabinet member for Housing Services from Cllr Winskill:

Haringey Council is relying heavily on Warm front to deliver insulation and heating system upgrades as a main tool in the fight against fuel poverty. Please tell me:

- How many households in the borough are estimated to qualify for Warm Front intervention grants?
- How many households have been helped by Warm Front (formerly the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme) each year since 2002?
- Please give numbers by Ward.
- What is the average time from application for grant to job sign off?
- How many households have received the maximum grants?
- How many households have received top-up grants form Haringey?

- What is the best estimate of the number of households that could have received top-ups but did not apply?
- Can top-ups be applied for and awarded retrospectively?
- How are top-ups advertised?

ANSWER

Warm Front is a Government funded grants programme to deliver heating and insulation improvements to those households in receipt of means tested and disability related benefits. The scheme is administered by DEFRA and delivered in England by the EAGA partnership.

Although Warm Front publishes details of its activity, the Council is not involved in the administration of the scheme, does not monitor the progress of individual applications and is not yet involved in checking the quality of the work or the level of satisfaction of those benefiting from the work.

In response to the demand from residents being asked to pay ‘top ups’ on the Warm Front Grant awarded to them, the North London Sub Region has made funds available to the Council to help residents meet this cost. Residents wishing to apply for ‘top ups’ must do so in writing and provide a copy of the letter from EAGA, confirming the size of their assessed contribution.

Since 2002, the Council has operated its own energy efficiency scheme for older people, people with disabilities and households in receipt of a means-tested benefit. In 2006, the scheme was extended (as part of a wider sub regional delivery programme using government funds) to include improved, upgraded and, in some cases, new heating installations to bring homes in line with the decent homes standard.

- How many households in the borough are estimated to qualify for Warm Front intervention grants?

Based on information provided by the Benefits and Local Taxation Service, there were 15,531 households in receipt of means tested or disability related benefits in September 2008. Depending on the condition and energy efficiency of their home, all of these households could qualify for a Warm Front grant.

- How many households have been helped by Warm Front (formerly the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme) each year since 2002?

A total of 4,412 households (an average of 630 per annum) have benefited from the Warm Front Scheme in Haringey since 2001/02:

Financial Year	Households
2001/02	957

2002/03	1257
2003/04	328
2004/05	499
2005/06	274
2006/07	343
2007/08	754

- Please give numbers by Ward.

This information is currently unavailable. Officers have requested the information from EAGA, which administers the Warm Front scheme.

- What is the average time from application for grant to job sign off?

This information is currently unavailable. Officers have requested the information from EAGA, which administers the Warm Front scheme.

- How many households have received the maximum grants?

This information is currently unavailable. However, the table below contains details of the total spend in Haringey since 2001/02:

Financial Year	Spend
2001/02	£194, 718
2002/03	£260, 528
2003/04	£294, 256
2004/05	£515, 576
2005/06	£407, 233

2006/07	£348, 356
2007/08	£526, 662

- How many households have received top-up grants from Haringey?

During the current financial year, a total of 78 households have applied for and received financial assistance from Haringey Council.

- What is the best estimate of the number of households that could have received top-ups but did not apply?

In order to ensure that no households are disadvantaged by not being aware of the availability of 'top up' payments from the Council, Officers have asked EAGA, which administers the Warm Front scheme, for regular information about those households that have decided not to proceed with their Warm Front application because they are unable to fund their assessed contribution.

Assuming that there is sufficient funding available, the Council will agree to 'top up' the Warm Front grants of these households, thereby enabling the improvements to go ahead.

- Can top-ups be applied for and awarded retrospectively?

No. The purpose of the 'top up' payments is to enable a resident to proceed with their application for a Warm Front grant when they would otherwise have had to abandon the application because they cannot afford to meet the difference between the total cost of the works and the Warm Front grant that is available.

If the resident has already managed to pay their contribution, they are not entitled to claim a refund of what they have already paid.