

**QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009**

Page no. in full agenda pack	Question/Observation	Answer (Where applicable)
Questions from Cllr Karen Alexander		
Page 67	Is the “managing agent” an outside consultant? If so, why?	The managing agent is an external contractor delivering reactive maintenance through their supply chain. They will also manage Haringey’s planned maintenance contracts (currently being tendered) in place of the existing managing agent arrangements. This will ensure coordination between the two activities and aims to achieve a higher percentage of planned repairs, increasing value for money.
Page 67	In the current economic climate and property market, is it a good time to be “releasing surplus buildings”? What are the reasons for disposal at this time, are the buildings an excessive drain on resources? Have other options such as renting the buildings out been explored?	<p>In order to make good use of resources and drive up efficiency we are routinely looking for opportunities to release surplus buildings through rationalisation and creative use of existing space.</p> <p>Although the state of the current economic climate and property market conditions require further consideration of individual property disposals it is neither sound to postpone all property disposals nor is it socially responsible to prevent regenerative developments by holding on to surplus assets.</p> <p>The overall disposals programme is reviewed by the Head of Corporate Property in conjunction with Chief Financial Officer to consider the timing of specific properties in the context of the Council’s Asset Management Plan, Capital Programme and</p>

**QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009**

		<p>taking account of alternative investment and funding options that may be available to the Council. This includes consideration of the options for holding or renting a building or site.</p> <p>The final decision to proceed with the sale of this property will be taken following an assessment of the bids received, potential social benefits for Haringey in the context of wider investment requirements, risks of further deterioration of the property and continuing financial burden in retaining a poor performing building.</p>
<p>Page 67</p>	<p>Can you please provide a brief update on the three major regeneration projects at Tottenham Town Hall, Hornsey Town Hall and Hornsey?</p>	<p><u>Hornsey Town Hall</u> The three elements of the project are currently being worked on and are running to time.</p> <p>Knight Frank are working on a number of options relating to the planned development of the site including how the site will be sold and will be reporting at the end of February with these options.</p> <p>Capita and McAslans have been working on the refurbishment options for the building and the 'masterplan' for the development of the site. These options will also be reported on at the end of February and will form the end of the feasibility stages A/B of the RIBA scale for the project. Initial work on the business plan commissioned by the Hornsey Town Hall Trust will also be available at this time and will be integrated into reporting for the refurbishment options and costs.</p>

**QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009**

		<p><u>Tottenham Town Hall</u> Newlon as developer has now obtained Planning Permission following completion of the Section 106 agreement being mobilised and will be on site from Spring 2009.</p> <p><u>Hornsey Central Depot</u> The Council is working with Sainsbury's, the adjoining land owner, to develop proposals for the site in two phases. Phase 1 is likely to be a store with some residential above together with improvements to the high street, while Phase 2 could be affordable housing with private housing being delivered as and when the property market improves. The Council is working with Salisbury's and the Planning Service on Phase 1 and will be competitively market testing Phase 2, once planning consent has been obtained. Enabling works (site clearance, asbestos removal, demolition etc) and some infrastructure works are to be carried out by Sainsbury's. Phase 2 will be ready for development prior to marketing so will be more attractive to prospective purchasers. It is planned that a Council decision will be made on this development in early summer 2009.</p>
Page 67	Carbon emissions from council buildings have been reduced by approximately 3% - how has this been achieved. What is the target for next year? How will this be achieved?	<p>This has been achieved by a number of activities:-</p> <p>a) the introduction of voltage optimisation units (to reduce voltage) in three offices and the Wood Green Library. These were installed mid-year and are projected to reduce CO2 emissions by 246 tonnes annually;</p>

**QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009**

		<p>b) variable speed motor installations in two Leisure Centres over the summer resulted in CO2 savings of 125 tonnes.</p> <p>The target for next year (2009) is 3% (5.5% cumulative based on 2006/7 baseline). Further CO2 savings projects include pool covers for our Leisure Centres with estimated savings of 300 tonnes per year and conversion of our existing IT servers is expected to save a further 200 tonnes of CO2 per year.</p> <p>We are working with the Carbon Trust to undertake free energy surveys and undertake the recommendations as a series of energy efficiency projects. These include boiler upgrades and controls (CO2 savings of up to 550 tonnes over 3-5 years) and lighting controls (CO2 savings of 97 tonnes per year).</p>
Page 68	Are there any particular benefits which have a poor "take up" rate? If yes, how are the council addressing these?	The Benefits and Local Taxation service (BLT) has concentrated on trying to increase the knowledge of and take-up of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit this year. Alongside promoting these benefits, we have provided advice to members of the public on the full range of other benefits available. All benefits are likely to be under-claimed. Those reported to be significantly under-claimed include Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit and Tax Credits. BLT has given general advice on most state benefits at events hosted by the Council. The website

QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009

		<p>“entitledto.co.uk” is useful for benefit take up promotion along with our officers’ advice based on their knowledge of claiming benefits. Shortly, BLT will be proposing to mailshot particular Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit customers who may be entitled to other benefits. BLT is continuing its partnership take up work with the Pensions Service.</p>
Questions from Cllr David Winskill		
Page 67	<p>Managing Agent appointment: please outline the cost/savings to Haringey of the appointment. Which buildings are included in the contract and which excluded.</p>	<p>The savings in reactive repairs are targeted to achieve a 5% saving in year one, which equates to £70k based on an average annual spend. Planned maintenance contracts are currently out to tender and due to commence May 2009.</p> <p>Tendering the management agent role has produced a saving on the existing planned maintenance contract management fees, effective when the current arrangements expire in March 2009. The contracts cover all operational buildings, excluding Housing and Schools/Colleges.</p>
Page 67	<p>CO2 emissions – please provide an update of the savings on savings to be made this financial year and those projected for next year. What is the overall CO2 production by the Council – please list all activities that are included.</p>	<p>There have been several initiatives to achieve reductions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the introduction of voltage optimisation units (to reduce voltage levels) in three offices and the Wood Green Library. These were installed mid-year and are projected to reduce CO2 emissions by 246 tonnes annually.;

QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009

		<p>b) variable speed motor installations in two Leisure Centres over the summer resulted in CO2 savings of 125 tonnes.</p> <p>Further projects include pool covers for our Leisure Centres with estimated savings of 300 tonnes per year and conversion of our existing IT servers is expected to save a further 200 tonnes of CO2 per year. Combining everything to-date we are looking at almost 900 tonnes reduction of CO2 per year. At present the CO2 reductions that are being reported upon is from energy use in buildings and was base-lined in 2006/7 to be 25695 tonnes. This figure does not include local authority third party operations, fleet operations, business and commuting travel. Investigations by other departments as to how this will be integrated into the CO2 figures are currently being undertaken.</p> <p>Looking forward we are working with the Carbon Trust to undertake free energy surveys and undertake the recommendations as a series of energy efficiency projects. These include boiler upgrades and controls (CO2 savings of up to 550 tonnes over 3-5 years) and lighting controls (CO2 savings of 97 tonnes per year).</p>
Page 67	Space savings: please provide an update.	The Smart working programme is being introduced as a key part of the Council's accommodation strategy. This will reduce the office space we need, based on staff desk occupancy levels of 7 desks for 10 staff.

QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009

<p>Page 67</p>	<p>Please provide an update with, if available, a timetable, for the regeneration benefits associated with the Hornsey Central depot project.</p>	<p>The Council is working with Sainsbury's, the adjoining land owner, to develop proposals for the site in two phases. Phase 1 is likely to be a store with some residential above together with improvements to the high street, while Phase 2 could be affordable housing with private housing being delivered as and when the property market improves. The Council is working with Salisbury's and the Planning Service on Phase 1 and will be competitively market testing Phase 2, once planning consent has been obtained. Enabling works (site clearance, asbestos removal, demolition etc) and some infrastructure works are to be carried out by Sainsbury's. Phase 2 will be ready for development prior to marketing so will be more attractive to prospective purchasers. It is planned that a Council decision will be made on this development in early summer 2009.</p>
<p>Page 67</p>	<p>What will the cost of the Central Procurement function be for 2009/10? What value for money savings are anticipated for 2009/10?</p>	<p>Corporate Procurement comprises a number of inter-related teams providing a wide range of services including Construction, Supplies & Services, Energy Management, Procurement Systems & Processes (e.g. SAP) and Accounts Payable (including commercial and non-commercial payments e.g. grants, payments to foster carers). Excluding overheads the cost of the whole business unit will be £1.014m.</p> <p>The Construction Procurement team budget will be £220k.</p>

QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009

		<p>The Supplies & Services Procurement team budget will be £692k.</p> <p>Revenue savings achieved over the last 3 years have amounted to £2m taken from base revenue budgets and for the next 2 years a further £250k target has been agreed. The team also contributes to significant capital and procurement projects to ensure VFM is achieved such as Decent Homes, BSF and waste procurement (projected to achieve a further £1.1m of savings).</p>
Page 67	How quickly could Haringey arrange for all undisputed invoices to be paid within 10 working days?	<p>The Council currently pays 56% of undisputed invoices within 10 days and officers are currently working to introduce a new 10 day payment target in time for the new financial year that begins from April. Once the necessary processes and systems have been changed we intend to work towards achieving 75% of undisputed payments within 10 working days by December 2009.</p>
Page 68	Has the economic recession affected Council Tax and Business Rate receipts – if so by how much?	<p>A recession will always have a major impact on Council Tax and Business Rate collection. The effects of redundancy, unemployment, falling house prices, lack of everyday credit, inevitably mean that people and business have less money to spend and so keeping a roof over their head becomes a priority - therefore rent and mortgage payments become a priority, whereas utility bills, council tax and business rate payments slip down the priority list.</p> <p>In comparison with last year overall cash collected has increased set for 2008/2009, however collection</p>

**QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009**

		<p>has began to slow since December. The slowdown is predicted to continue into the final quarter. This trend has been experienced across the majority of London Authorities.</p> <p>The effects of the recession on receipts will become fully evident by the end of March when overall year end analysis and reconciliation is completed. In year collection is being regularly monitored and BLT is undertaking a range of measures to try to maximise collection and elicit payment whilst giving due regard to the current economic climate.</p>
Page 68	Royal Mail partnership – please provide more details.	<p>The Benefits and Local Taxation (BLT) Service entered into a partnership exercise in August 2008 with Royal Mail to run a 3 month pilot project on collecting evidence from benefits customers. The project aimed to establish whether benefit customers would be willing to provide information relevant to their benefit claim to their local Post Office and whether the Post Office could collect and verify this information to the appropriate standard and forward this on to the Council for amendments to be processed by BLT. The pilot covered 12 Post Offices located in the N15, N17 and N22 areas of the borough and complemented the existing Customer Service provided by the Council.</p> <p>BLT sent out approx 450 requests for information on earnings to existing benefit customers. Initial indications show that out of the total number of customers who responded to requests for information 25% used the Post Office to validate</p>

**QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009**

		<p>their information. A survey of these customers showed that 90% were satisfied or very satisfied with the service and that 87% of those who responded would continue to use the Post Office to take in their benefit details.</p> <p>Royal Mail have undertaken similar pilot exercises with other Council's across the country. They are now in discussion with the Department for Work and Pensions on whether to have further trails with a view to implementing a national service for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Customers.</p>
Page 68	<p>Benefits Take Up: what measures are in place to measure the success of the benefits take up campaign(s). How successful have they been? Of the 600 advised – how many went on to access benefits? Is there an estimate of the amount of benefits that remain unclaimed by Haringey residents?</p>	<p>The success of the Benefits Take-Up campaign has been measured by the amount of advice given to customers we have seen. Benefits & Local Taxation are not able to follow-up on every person who has been advised to claim extra benefits. Our campaigns have been designed to signpost people towards the benefits to which they may be entitled to rather than to specifically assist them in receiving the benefit they have been advised to claim. For this reason we are unable to put a monetary value on how much extra benefit has been awarded to people who have been advised.</p> <p>There is no local estimate available of the amount of unclaimed benefit in Haringey. The Department of Work and Pensions keeps this data on a national level but does not break it down locally. We will however shortly be looking at profile all data at our disposal (using GIS) to make some key decisions on which areas of the borough need focussed take up activity.</p>

**QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009**

<p>Page 69</p>	<p>Managing the impacts of the economy: what estimates have been made of those impacts on regeneration projects and capital income?</p>	<p>An assessment of the Council's capital income is carried out in respect of the overall programme of disposals, taking account of each property and considering the best/worst case values. This has similarly been done for the regeneration projects as well as reviewing options available to mitigate the effects of the economic situation.</p> <p>A risk assessment is carried out for each property disposal and development scheme which takes into account impact of the property market and economic outlook on the project and capital income.</p> <p>To assist with this we are monitoring the "Periodic Monitoring of Property Market" (i.e. performance indicators from Land Registry on transactions in Haringey) with a market commentary included in valuation reports. At present the impact on land and property values in Haringey is close to the London average (i.e. 16% annual fall).</p>
<p>Page 69</p>	<p>Supply arrangements: of the businesses that have ceased to trade, how many are in the Borough and what are the reasons given for their demise. Has Haringey developed any tools to offer support to them?</p>	<p>To the best of our knowledge none of the businesses that have ceased trading during the recent economic climate were located in the Borough. Reduced order books were the reason given by three construction consultancy firms (within the same trading group) that went into administration. Similarly, another two construction industry firms failed to win sufficient business across the sector and the potential income from Haringey was very small; thus not a deciding factor</p>

**QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009**

		<p>in their collapse. Corporate Procurement have developed and publish a series a workbooks on the Council website that are freely available and intended to help businesses bid for either public or private sector business. We also publish up coming contract opportunities on our web pages on a rolling 18 month basis.</p>
Page 69	Review of policy to ensure responsiveness to taxpayers' circumstances: please give details.	<p>Council Tax Payers (CTPs) are advised to contact us in order for circumstances to be reviewed or if they are having difficulties in meeting their repayments. We will review the amount they are required to pay and check that they have applied for any reliefs they may be entitled to. This could include exemptions, discounts and council tax benefit. We will also review the monthly amounts they are paying and may – where difficulties are being experienced – extend repayment terms. In general, instalments are payable over ten months from April to January, we may extend the terms to March and to ensure repayments are forthcoming will look for the CTP to sign up for direct debit. In respect of aged arrears we will be able to offer the option to repay over a longer period of time as long as the current year's council tax is kept up to date.</p> <p>When a case is in recovery we are reliant on the CTP completing a financial questionnaire detailing their income and expenditure. We send these out to CTP's on a regular basis but they are not always returned. The questionnaire can be used to ascertain an agreeable repayment plan. It is</p>

**QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009**

		<p>therefore important that this information is provided so as to avoid taking other recovery action which will include additional costs to the CTP.</p> <p>This year saw the introduction of court 'open days'. This offered CTPs – at the time of being sent a summons – an option to attend an open day to speak to an officer and agree an arrangement as an alternative to attending court on the day of the hearing. This offers a more useful and amenable environment in which to discuss and agree revised repayment plans and lessens the stress to the CTP in terms of attending court.</p>
<p>Page 69</p>	<p>Please tell us the total amount of interests that will be lost following the collapse of the Icelanski Bank and how that will impact on Haringey's finances. What work is being don to retrieve the capital and how confident is the Lead member of securing the money?</p>	<p>1. £877k of interest was due from the three banks Haringey had deposits in. The due interest will also form part of the recovery action through the administration processes. In recent times there have been relatively high interest rates and together with improved cash-flow for the Council, the interest earnings have been above the estimate. In reporting to Cabinet this year the Council is still £700K above target. The overall position is that the interest due from the Icelandic banks does not impact on the budget for future years.</p> <p>2. The administration process for the Heritable Bank Plc is being progressed under UK law by Ernst & Young. Haringey and Kent CC are on the statutory creditors committee representing all local authorities and public sector bodies. There have been two statutory creditor meetings so far and detailed proposals have been agreed.</p>

QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
- FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009

		<p>3. In respect of Glitnir and Landsbanki and other Icelandic banks, resolution committees have set up by the Icelandic authorities to progress the administration. Liaison meetings are taking place with creditors on a regular basis. Local authorities are represented by Barnet and Kent CC. The LGA and appointed legal representatives, Bevan Brittain, is supporting this process and are co-ordinating through a steering committee that feeds back to all local authorities concerned.</p> <p>4. The Council is confident that a substantial proportion of the money will be returned.</p>
--	--	---