

COUNCIL – 30 MARCH 2009 - QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

Oral Question 1 - To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Councillor Gorrie:

Given that recent information shows the liabilities of the Icelandic Banks in which the Council invested money are three times the value of their assets is the Cabinet Member still confident he will recover all of the funds he has lost in the Icelandic Banks? What provision is he being advised the Council should make for losses and what provision is being made for costs involved in the pursuit of recovery?

Oral Question 2 – To the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Involvement from Councillor Goldberg:

I am sure everyone on the Council welcomes the announcement that the Arts Council has decided to continue to make funds available for Jackson's Lane. Can the Cabinet Member let us know what plans are in place to promote equal access to the Arts using this facility and /or how the facility can be used to promote a vision of One Haringey?

Oral Question 3 - To the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People from Councillor Engert:

In the debate in parliament on 12 March that followed the publication of Lord Laming's report on child protection, The Labour Secretary of State for Children said "it is important that we open up the arrangements for child protection to wider public scrutiny" and he went on to say that effective and proper scrutiny of what is happening should be provided by local councils around the country. Does this not make a compelling case for this Council to instigate a specialist Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services with meeting held in public?

Oral Question 4 - To the Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Safer Communities from Councillor Jones:

How has Haringey performed this year in relation to gun and knife crime compared with last year?

Oral Question 5 –To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Wilson:

When did the Labour Group agree to the setting up of the Quality Outcomes Board, what is their understanding of its remit, responsibilities, powers and to whom is it accountable?

Oral Question 6 – To the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Lifelong Learning from Councillor Dogus:

Now that members of public have voted for the Lordship Recreation Ground in Tottenham to receive £400,000 from the Priority Parks Initiative, would the Cabinet member for Leisure, Culture and Lifelong Learning like to set out what plans the Council will be pursuing to encourage more people to use this space.

Oral Question 7 - To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Conservation from Councillor Newton:

Has the Council considered the establishment of a local transport liaison committee?

Oral Question 8 - To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services from Councillor Peacock:

As ever, providing Decent Homes for Haringey residents is fundamentally important. Now that we are reaching the end of phase one of the Decent Homes programme in the borough, can the Cabinet Member give us an update on the programme, his impressions of the scheme's impact; let us know what lessons what he has learnt and an outline of phase two?

Written Questions

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

Will the Council provide funding to keep front counters open at Hornsey, Muswell Hill, Wood Green, St Ann's and Tottenham Police Stations?

ANSWER

Providing resources for front counters at police stations open is an operational matter for the police.

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

What is the cost, in each of the last three financial years, of providing temporary accommodation for the homeless in Haringey as reimbursed by the government, together with totals of costs not reimbursed i.e. staff salaries and office overheads. How long does the council wait for reimbursement and how many people are currently in temporary accommodation?

ANSWER

Costs of Temporary Accommodation and Staffing

2005/6 £'000	2006/7 £'000	2007/8 £'000
48,669	54,468	60,608

The cost of temporary accommodation is reimbursed through Housing Benefit which is paid into the Council's rent accounting system on a weekly basis. The costs are met in full. As at 28 February 2009 there were 4,621 households (comprised of 14,386 adults & children) in temporary accommodation.

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

To date, what has been the average leaseholder bill for improvements under the decent homes programme, when are leaseholders notified of the amount to pay and how long do they have to pay the balance of the bill?

ANSWER

With regard to the average leaseholder bill under the decent homes programme, it is not possible to provide a precise figure at present. This is because the calculations of the current bills have not yet been finalised. However it is expected to be in the region of £11,000.

Leaseholders of receive an estimate of their proportion of the cost via the Section 20 Notice, which must be issued at least 30 days before the work starts, however it is generally issued several months beforehand. The invoice is issued subsequently, after work has commenced. The first batch of invoices for the calendar year 2009 will be issued at the end of next week.

Leaseholders have a number of payment options. Payment in full attracts a discount of 5%. Payment by instalments for a period of up to 3 years is interest free. Other options are available according to a person's financial circumstances – please see the attached table. Discretionary loans for vulnerable leaseholders – Corporate Finance has agreed a rate of interest of 2% above base rate for these Council loans, which brings the rate for the loans down from 5% to 2.5%.

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

Can the Member advise as to whether he is in favour of introducing 20 mph limit along Wightman Road to complement the walk to school plans for North and South Haringey Schools?

ANSWER

We have successfully secured funding to consider traffic calming measures along Wightman Road as part of our 2009/10 Local Safety Schemes programme. Although my officers have identified measures to reduce the level of recorded personal injury accidents, there will be the opportunity for proposals to be amended following resident consultation. I am in favour of 20mph zones, particularly in the vicinity of schools to improve safety and encourage walking and cycling.

Written Question 5 – To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Councillor Beacham:

Following the decision by ACAS to make an additional 0.3% pay increase to local government employees, how much will this pay increase cost the Council, how will this affect the current budget and will this lead to any job losses?

ANSWER

The estimated cost of the additional 0.3% pay award recently agreed by ACAS will be £448k, per year for the general fund. This is 0.25% above the budgeted sum and an additional £391k will need to be found. The Cabinet will need to consider how to deal with this, but there is sufficient contingency allowed for in the budget going forward. No job losses are envisaged as a result of this award.

Written Question 6 – To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise from Councillor Beynon:

Considering the increase in development in Fortis Green (i.e. Old Lynx Depot site, Osier Crescent and plans for the Coppetts Hospital site) what plans are there for similar increase in local services e.g. doctors, dentists or schools? How has Haringey Council worked with Barnet Council on this issue and how is this progressing?

ANSWER

Haringey and Barnet Council liaise on infrastructure planning and a planning meeting was held on 20 March hosted by Haringey Planning Policy. Although housing units develop on a regular basis community infrastructure often lags. Also community infrastructure can be improved by “processes” not just by new facilities – and this needs to be taken into account also.

The Section 106 Agreement for the Lynx Depot would contribute sums to educational places and provision in the Borough

Recently we provided for substantial expansion at Coldfall School which is the nearest Haringey Primary school to these developments; six new classrooms, new hall and kitchen/dining facilities. As part of BSF additional buildings and facilities at Fortismere School are being planned and developed, this is the nearest Secondary School.

If the 58 units proposed development on Coppets Wood Hospital is approved – this will provide increased care capacity. There are also proposals for the closed Fortis Green Clinic to be redeveloped to also provide a new purpose built clinic/surgery

Written Question 7– To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise from Councillor Bloch:

I understand that Haringey has received an extra £270k funding from the LABGI – what is Haringey Council spending this money on and if this is yet to be decided when will the decision be made?

ANSWER

The Council has received an additional £270k from the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) scheme. This was reported to Council as part of the final budget making process on 23 February 2009. It was agreed that this one-off sum be added to the contingency for 2009/10 and that the allocation of that funding be considered in due course.

Written Question 8 – To Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise from Councillor Butcher:

What is the current unemployment level in each ward and what was the level this time last year?

ANSWER

The unemployment data available at ward level only relates to the 2001 Census, and is therefore not very up to date. There is significantly more up to date information available on Job Seekers Allowance claim rates by ward.

**Job Seekers Allowance Claimants by Ward
inc. annual change**

	Feb-08	Feb-09
Alexandra	125	212
Bounds Green	276	420
Bruce Grove	505	627
Crouch End	181	235
Fortis Green	157	198
Harringay	385	490
Highgate	135	196
Hornsey	306	462
Muswell Hill	130	164
Noel Park	375	564
Northumberland Park	670	803
St Ann's	406	506
Seven Sisters	361	513
Stroud Green	281	374
Tottenham Green	475	570

Tottenham Hale	502	647
West Green	370	519
White Hart Lane	393	509
Woodside	353	470

Written Question 9 – To the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Lifelong Learning from Councillor Davies:

What is the progress with creating play space etc on Muswell Hill playing fields which border these sites and will the plans to develop these fields receive any additional funding from the Coppetts Hospital development.

ANSWER

The Council has developed a draft design masterplan for the site. This follows consultation with local residents, young people and stakeholder groups, undertaken from September 2008. The draft proposals include for a range of improvements including play facilities for children and young people. The masterplan is due to be considered by Cabinet on 21 April 2009. A planning application has been received for the Coppetts Hospital development. This application, together with any applicable section 106 agreement will also be considered in April.

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

When will local tenants receive an amended rent calculation to show the reduction in rent increase to 3.1%?

ANSWER

In order to implement the proposed rent reduction the government has announced that it will be consulting on changes to government subsidy entitlement to fund the reduction during April 2009. This is with a view to announcing new subsidy levels in May. Details of the proposed calculations and conditions are yet to be received from government and the wider financial implications of the proposals will need to be considered by the Council. Cabinet and Council decisions will be sought on any changes to rent during May. It will be necessary to give tenants 4 weeks notice of any changes during June. Changes to actual rents are therefore unlikely to be made until July 2009.

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

How many children in Haringey are classed as being in poverty? Please provide a ward breakdown of these figures.

ANSWER

There is a range of data which enables the council to establish an accurate assessment of child poverty. This is based on data available through the GLA and www.poverty.org. We are working with partners to update this information the Child Poverty Strategy identifies a 105 wards across London where the percentage of children living in families who are in receipt of key benefits is at least twice the national average; 10 of these wards are in Haringey. The three Haringey wards with the highest levels of children living in families in receipt of key benefits are Northumberland Park 54.6%, White Hart Lane 52.7% and Tottenham Green 52.4%

There are some proxy data at ward level that can be used, such as take up of free school meals, which is set out below.

Jan 2009 school census – Ward and free school meal eligibility data

Ward	Not FSM number	FSM number	Total number of pupils matched to Haringey postcode	FSM%
White Hart Lane	1243	922	2165	42.6%
Tottenham Hale	1349	890	2239	39.7%
Seven Sisters	964	619	1583	39.1%
Northumberland Park	1301	815	2116	38.5%
Noel Park	944	591	1535	38.5%
Woodside	907	512	1419	36.1%
St. Ann's	1047	577	1624	35.5%
Tottenham Green	1151	624	1775	35.2%
West Green	1109	580	1689	34.3%
Bruce Grove	1341	685	2026	33.8%
Bounds Green	944	438	1382	31.7%
Hornsey	1725	750	2475	30.3%
Harringay	831	316	1147	27.6%
Stroud Green	808	264	1072	24.6%
Highgate	377	82	459	17.9%
Crouch End	811	123	934	13.2%
Muswell Hill	954	107	1061	10.1%
Fortis Green	1294	133	1427	9.3%
Alexandra	1369	113	1482	7.6%
Grand Total	20469	9141	29610	30.9%

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

How many lifts is the Council responsible for in the Borough? How many of these lifts has the Council been advised need replacement? How many of

these lifts needing replacement are in sheltered housing blocks? How many lifts were replaced last year?

ANSWER

The Council is responsible for maintaining 931 lift units in residential and operational properties across the Borough. The breakdown is shown as follows. The lifts are subjected to regular inspection and servicing during which any replacements are highlighted and included in the modernisation programme (Housing) or capital maintenance programme (Operational buildings).

The lift modernisation programme (housing)

- 2008/2009 – 10 Units
- 2009/2010 – 21 Units
- 2010/2011 – 23 Units

The **supported (sheltered) housing replacement lifts programme**

- 2007/2008 - 4
- 2008/2009 - 3
- 2009/2010 - 2
- 2010/2011 – 3
- 2011/2021 – 6

Written Question 13 – To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services from Councillor Hare:

How many instances of encroachment of private landlords onto Homes for Haringey (HfH) land have been reported in the past eighteen months, has HfH taken any legal action, what action was taken and did any cases end up in court?

ANSWER

Homes for Haringey have been notified of two possible instances of encroachment onto Homes for Haringey managed land in the past 18 months. These instances are still currently subject to investigation and have not yet been resolved. Legal action has not yet been resorted to in these cases.

Written Question 14 – To the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People from Councillor Mughal:

Please provide information as to whether officers delivering the 'Youth Risk' project have asked for the selection criteria for young people to be altered so that they did not affect the self-esteem of young people and thereby severely affecting the outcomes of the project?

ANSWER

The aim of the Youth at Risk programme is for schools and other agencies to identify young people who would most benefit from this form of intervention. The criteria used by those identifying young people must be unambiguous. The assessment process used by Youth at Risk, has proved to be effective over the last ten years. Young people are asked questions to help them to think about themselves and to enable the programme facilitators to gain an understanding of who the young people are, their previous experiences and how they see themselves. All these issues are addressed within the programme. The course providers and the life coaches are guided by key principles when working with young people. These include:

- ensuring that the safety and welfare of all young people on the course is paramount
- developing young people's understanding of themselves and the control they have over their actions, so that they do not see themselves as victims
- Making assessment sensitive to culture, gender and sexuality.

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

How should residents dispose of Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs)? Are there toxic waste disposal sites in the borough and what are their locations?

ANSWER

Residents are able to dispose of Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs) at Haringey's two Reuse & Recycling Centres located on High Street, Hornsey N8 and Park View Road, Tottenham N17. CFLs may also be returned to local retailers which are accepting WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) items for recycling,.

Written Question 16 – To the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People from Councillor Oakes:

What steps have been taken to address the concerns of the John Loughborough PTA, as expressed in this chamber, specifically, that the regrettable legal measures employed by this council were part of a move to deter parents from sending their children to the school, and to close it down; and could she assure us that every attempt is being made to re-instate the original Board of Governors, and to return John Loughborough school to normal, faith-based working in accordance with its original establishment?

ANSWER

The way forward for the school is well documented and has been in the public domain for a long time. The Council has done nothing to deter parents from

sending their children to the school, nor done anything to try and close it. On the contrary; we include it in our BSF programme and a contractor recently moved onto the site to start work – hence the newly erected safety hoardings around the site.

A long-established Shadow Governing Body is in place, preparing to take control of the school from the Interim Executive Board in the Autumn – another fact that has been in the public domain for a long time.

The future success of the school lies in 3 factors:

- More pupils joining the school than are currently there
- Pupils, their parents and staff being able to concentrate on improving learning and achievement
- Success at the end of Key Stage 4 that builds a solid base for the future of the pupils, moving them into further education, training or employment.

Written Question 17 – To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise from Councillor Oatway:

Has any of Haringey's potential Olympic training venues been approached by countries or Olympic teams to use during the 2012 games? If they are chosen how will athletes travel from the Olympic village to the sites?

ANSWER

White Hart Lane Community Sports Centre (WHLCSC) is on the short list to be used as an Athletics in Game Training Venue for the 2012 Olympics. Shortly surveyors will be visiting the site to carry out condition surveys as part of this process. LOCOG aim to conclude bidding negotiations and contractual matters with the Council by December 2009 if WHLCSC is chosen as a venue. Travel arrangements will be the responsibility of LOCOG immediately preceding and during the games and no specific details are currently available regarding this.

WHLCSC has already been chosen to appear in the 2012 prospectus as a Pre Games Training Camp for athletics. To date no country has yet approached the Council to arrange to use the facility in the years leading up to the Games. Our application to be a Pre Games Training Venue included accommodation and travel information.

Written Question 18 – To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise from Councillor Rainer:

Please tell us the total amount that Haringey residents will have contributed to the delivery of the 2012 Olympics via their GLA precept, assuming no further cost increases, by the time the Games open in 2012?

ANSWER

The GLA explain that the amount to be raised through the council tax precept for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games is £20 a year for a band D household. This requires £20 per annum for a band D household for ten years and £9 for the final year; giving a total of £209. Payments started in 2006/07 and end in 2016/17. This equates to a total of £17.8m for Haringey residents. Similar contributions will be made by residents of the other 32 London Authorities.

Written Question 19 – To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Conservation from Councillor Reid:

Will the Cabinet Member confirm the number of fixed penalty offences issued in the past year under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005?

ANSWER

The council has served 9 Fixed Penalty Notices since April 2008 using the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (the Act). These relate to nuisance parking.

Written Question 20 – To the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Involvement from Councillor Scott:

Following Councillor Matt Cooke's visit to Jan Trust, can he confirm that the Council will increase its financial support to this vital Haringey charity for the year 2009-10?

ANSWER

The distribution of funding from the Corporate Voluntary Sector Team (CVST) is divided into the following categories:

1. Legal and Advice
2. Community Centres
3. Client Specific and Infrastructure Organisations

Each category is reviewed on a rolling basis and decisions for funding are made by the Voluntary Sector Committee (VSC) in December for the new funding agreements to start from the 1 April.

JAN Trust was reviewed under Client Specific and Infrastructure Organisations in July 2008 and this new funding agreement will start on the 1 April 2009. The reviews for Community Centres, Legal and Advice will start at the end of July 2009 to go to the (VSC) for a decision in December 2009.

Jan Trust will be re-evaluated in the next review starting in July 2009 under the remit of Community Centres instead of Client Specific and Infrastructure Organisations. The decision for any increase for future financial support to JAN Trust will be made by the VSC in December 2009 thus providing an

equitable and consistent approach to the review process in line with all other organisations. Any new funding agreement will start on the 1 April 2010.

In the interim officers from the CVST will continue to work with JAN Trust looking at what added support could be provided through volunteers or apprenticeships.

Written Question 21 – To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Conservation from Councillor Weber:

How long is the new CPZ fast track currently taking from petition to implementation, which roads have already lodged petitions to be included in CPZ's across Haringey, what is the timetable for the roads who have petitioned be progressed, how much funding has been set aside each year for fast track proposals and what are the Councils criteria and stages to progress from petition to implementation?

ANSWER

Since the fast track process was introduced in July 2008 we have used it twice. We have introduced the Green Lane CPZ B extension within 7 months and the Wood Green Outer CPZ extension in 8 months. Before this the normal length of time to introduce a CPZ extension was at least 14 months. This process has worked in reducing the waiting time for residents/ businesses. We have received the following petitions:

- 2 petitions prior to implementation of the Crouch End CPZs requesting to be part of Crouch End CPZ
- 1 petition from Perth Road requesting to be part of Wood Green Outer CPZ
- 1 petition from Cornwell Rd requesting to be part of Green Lanes B CPZ
- 1 petition from Stormont Road requesting to be part of Highgate Station Outer CPZ extension
- 1 petition from Fortis Green requesting to be part of existing Fortis Green CPZ
- 1 petition from Myddleton Road requesting to be part of the existing Bounds Green CPZ.

We have received petitions from areas requesting CPZ controls which are not close to an existing CPZ and can not be processed under fast track process. This includes a petition from Alexandra Park Road requesting a new CPZ.

The Parking Programme for 2009/10 was approved as part of the Highways Works Plan at Cabinet on 24 March 2009. This includes implementation of extensions in Fortis Green, Bounds Green and Highgate West through the fast track approach. Residents in Fortis Green and Bounds Green have been asking for these extensions for a year and the residents in Highgate West for 18 months. The budget for these extensions is £95,000. As the Highways Works Programme is only for one year, the timetable for future extensions is yet to be developed. Any changes to the Highways Works Plan, such as

including any further CPZ extensions, would have to be agreed by the Lead Member.

A fast track approach we require evidence of a high level of support for a CPZ extension. The extent of the extension is agreed with ward members taking into account the support from residents. Following this the CPZ extension is designed and the traffic management order is drafted. The Council then proceeds to statutory consultation, which allows residents and traders 21 days to make representations. At this stage it is only possible to reduce the scale of the extension rather than include additional roads. Once the consultation period has been completed, the representations are considered and reported to the Lead Member for decision.

Written Question 22 – To the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Involvement from Councillor Whyte:

What is the average number of days it takes, in response to a members' enquiry, for a substantive response to be sent to: a) a Labour councillor b) a Liberal Democrat councillor

ANSWER

Between 1 April 2008 and 20 March 2009, the average number of days taken to reply to a Member's Enquiry from a Labour Councillor was 7 days and a Liberal Democrat Councillor was also 7 days.

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

With regard to Standards Board case no.SBE21513.08, what training has he received with regard to his understanding of the members' code of conduct subsequent to the Standards Board Inquiry?

ANSWER

Refer to the previous answer I gave.

Written Question 24 – To the Cabinet Member for Resources from Councillor Wilson:

How much would it cost the Council to pay local suppliers and businesses within 10 days?

ANSWER

The Council already pays approx 56% of all suppliers within 10 days. The new agreed target is to pay 75% of all undisputed invoices within 10 working days. The cost of gearing up has incurred costs of approximately £5,000 to-date.

Written Question 25 – To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Winskill:

Would Councillor Kober tell us what meetings she has had with traders and business organisations in the borough to discuss the very concerning trading conditions experienced by shops in Haringey. Would she tell us which ward councillors were invited to these meetings and the names of those councillors who actually attended. Would she also tell us the type of initiatives discussed with representatives of each town centre?

ANSWER

To date there have been meetings with traders in Muswell Hill and Crouch End. There are further visits being scheduled for Green Lanes and Tottenham. The Crouch End and Muswell Hill visits were attended by Cllr Kober and Cllr Amin, Niall Bolger and representatives from Economic Regeneration, who brokered these meetings.

The traders at Crouch End raised the issues of parking, bus routes, empty retail units, children's retail offer, the loss of custom to Muswell Hill, refuse collection, recycling Initiatives, licensing/enforcement and anti-social behaviour.

The traders at Muswell Hill raised the issues of business networks and trade associations, parking, high rents, security and dumping.