



**Responses to questions for the Cabinet Member for Resources : Overview & Scrutiny Committee 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

Page/ Point	Question/Observation	Answer (Where applicable)										
	<b><u>Questions from Councillor Butcher</u></b>											
	1. What benchmarking has been conducted of sickness absence against other London Boroughs?	<p>The Capital Ambition Team at London Councils produce an annual report on sickness absence in London boroughs. We contribute to this survey and report our performance each year in the annual Employment Profile report to General Purposes Committee.</p> <p>Average sickness levels have improved over the last two years from 10.4 to 8.7 days thanks to improved management of sickness. This is better than average compared to sickness levels in the other London boroughs.</p>										
	2. Can the lead member detail the number of disciplinary cases related to sickness absence and the number of cases at each level of the procedure?	<p><b>For the last year July 2008 – June 2009</b></p> <p><b>Sickness cases</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1234 935 1697 1078"> <thead> <tr> <th>Stage</th> <th>Total cases</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sick 1st Formal</td> <td>233</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sick Intermediate</td> <td>159</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sick Final</td> <td>29</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Stage	Total cases	Sick 1st Formal	233	Sick Intermediate	159	Sick Final	29		
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	3. What is the total number of employees currently subject to disciplinary procedures at each level?	<p><b>June 2009 – Open cases</b></p> <p><b>Disciplinary cases</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1234 1190 1966 1369"> <thead> <tr> <th>Stage</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Not Suspended awaiting outcome</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Suspended awaiting outcome</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Awaiting Appeal</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>39</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Stage	Total	Not Suspended awaiting outcome	17	Suspended awaiting outcome	16	Awaiting Appeal	6	Total	39
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	4. What is the mean, median and longest number of days for resolving disciplinary cases at each level?	<p><b>April-June 2009 – All cases</b></p>										



		<p><b>Disciplinary cases</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1234 344 2002 515"> <thead> <tr> <th>Stage</th> <th>Mean. days</th> <th>Median days</th> <th>Longest days</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dis. Invest. not Suspended</td> <td>80</td> <td>48</td> <td>328</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dis. Invest Suspended</td> <td>70</td> <td>73</td> <td>176</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dis. Appeal</td> <td>107</td> <td>31</td> <td>434</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Note – those awaiting appeal were all dismissed employees so were not receiving pay.  Mean = average  Median = the number in the middle of the range</p>	Stage	Mean. days	Median days	Longest days	Dis. Invest. not Suspended	80	48	328	Dis. Invest Suspended	70	73	176	Dis. Appeal	107	31	434
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	<p>5. What is the mean, median and longest number of days of employees being suspended on full pay pending investigation?</p>	<p><b><u>April-June 2009 – All cases</u></b></p> <p>Mean: 70 days  Median: 73 days  Longest: 176 days</p>																
	<p>6. Will the Cabinet Member detail what additional resources are being spent on Children Services as a result of the Baby Peter tragedy?</p>	<p>The Council approved additional resources of £4.2m in the budget process for the implementation of the JAR action plan at the meeting in February 2009 although it was envisaged that over half of this would be funded by additional government grant thereby requiring funding of £2m to be found from the Council. There is also an increase in the current numbers of looked after children above the original budget provision and a further sum of £2m is projected at this stage.</p>																
	<p>7. How many agency social workers are currently in Children Services?</p>	<p><b><u>June 2009</u></b></p> <p>62 FTE</p>																
	<p>8. What is the mean, median and longest number of days to process an application for housing benefit from initial submission to decision?</p>	<p>During the first quarter of 2009/10 the mean number of calendar days to process an application for Housing Benefit was 40.12 days, the median number of days was 36.</p>																



**Haringey Council**

		The longest number of days taken to process a claim for Housing Benefit was 159 days. This was due to a delay by the claimant in providing the required details. An internal reorganisation took place in May, and by the end of June, BLT were averaging 30 days to pay benefit claims. The time taken to pay benefit claims also depends on the time a claimant takes to submit the required information and evidence when requested.
	9. How many decisions in Housing Benefit are appealed?	During the first quarter of 2009/10, 47 cases have been referred to the Appeals Service
	10. What is the mean, median and longest number of days to process an appeal for housing benefit?	During the first quarter of 2009/10 the mean number days to process an appeal request for submission to the Appeals Service was 68 days The median number of days to process appeals was 76 days The longest time to process an appeal was 110 days
	11. How many Housing Benefit appeals are upheld?	During 2008/09 76 (25%) appeals were upheld.
	12. How many people are employed in the communication department?	<b><u>June 2009</u></b>  There are 5 media & press officers in the Communications Business Unit. They are supported by others eg on the web team, and in translation services.
	13. Can the lead member explain the marked reduction in National and Non Domestic Rates collection and what impact if any this has on Haringey Council's revenue accounts?	This fall can be attributed to the effects of the recession and a similar trend was seen across other London authorities. The Business Rates Team have been approached by organisations who are experiencing difficulties in meeting their business rate commitments. By way of assistance the team are offering the option to extend monthly instalment schemes from the statutory ten to twelve months for the current year. The Government has also outlined proposals to allow rates to be deferred in certain circumstances. The legislation for this is



**Haringey Council**

		<p>expected by early autumn.</p> <p>Proceeds from business rates are paid to the government so there is no direct impact on the Councils revenue account.</p>
	14. How many agency staff currently working in Haringey Council and at what cost?	<p><b><u>June 2009</u></b></p> <p>620 FTE. Last year the Council spent £19.4 million on agency staff.</p>
	15. What is the total lost income to date from the loss of reserves in Icelandic Banks?	<p>Just under £900k of interest was due from these investments in 0809. Obviously current interest rates would produce a much lower loss. The current projections from the administration processes are estimating a recovery rate of around 90%.</p>
	16. What steps has the Cabinet Member put in place to improve treasury management in Haringey Council?	<p>A number of improvements have been put in place since last year including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New treasury management strategy restricting the counterparties for investment to UK banks on the government credit guarantee list;</li> <li>• Appointment of new treasury management advisers that provide advice as well as information;</li> <li>• Revised processes for dealing with transactions and information;</li> <li>• New quarterly reporting to Members at the General Purposes Committee on activities and proposals for change.</li> </ul>
	17. Can the lead member detail which Audit Commission recommendations in relation to treasury management has he implemented thus far?	<p>The high priority recommendations from the Audit Commission already coincided with the improvements we had already put in place and are therefore implemented e.g. following clear procedures, regular reporting to Members,</p>



		considering other options than deposits, ensuring the strategy is clear about the balance between security, liquidity and yield.												
	<b>Questions from Councillor Winskill</b>													
1	18. <b>HR and OD</b> : please tell us the average time that a dismissal case takes before it is resolved at appeal, as well as other relevant statistics, please give figures over the last three complete years.	<p><b><u>Jul06-Jun09</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Disciplinary dismissals</u></b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>No. cases</th> <th>Ave. days</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Jul 06 - Jun 07</td> <td>13</td> <td>76</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jul 07 - Jun 08</td> <td>19</td> <td>130</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jul 08 - Jun 09</td> <td>22</td> <td>88</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	No. cases	Ave. days	Jul 06 - Jun 07	13	76	Jul 07 - Jun 08	19	130	Jul 08 - Jun 09	22	88
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2	<b>Audit and Risk management</b> 19. Please give details of Haringey's response to the LAML ruling. Are there any financial costs and future implications?	Haringey Council purchased insurance policies to ensure that the council's liabilities were fully protected and there was no break in insurance cover after the LAML ruling. The council is currently working with other London authorities (original LAML members, plus a number of additional councils) on a consortium procurement process. Legal advice is being taken to ensure that all procurement processes are within EU consortium regulations. In the short term, the new policies purchased are more expensive than LAML policies (which saved the council approximately £200k in 2008/09), although it is anticipated that the proposed consortium contracts will offer savings in the longer term.												
2	<b>BLT</b> 20. Are there any signs in the collection and arrears rates of Council and NNDR of the effects of the recession. Please give figures.	The decline has been more noticeable in respect of NNDR collection with a drop from 98.7% in 2007/08 to 95.7% in 2008/09.												



**Haringey Council**

	21. Please give the latest figures for those claiming Council Charge benefit	Council tax collection fell from 93.9% to 93% in 2008/09. The number of households in receipt of Council Tax Benefit in July 2009 is 32,199
2	<b>Corporate Property Services</b> 22. Please tell me if any targets have been set for energy efficiency; if so are they by individual building or has a global figure been established? Please give details.	The Council has a 10% carbon reduction target for 2011/12 against a 2006/7 baseline. This is a blanket target for carbon reduction across all Council owned buildings (excluding social housing).
2	23. What is the council's guiding policy on <b>property disposal</b> in the current economic climate?  24. Please list all property disposals (non council house stock, to include hostels, shops, industrial, land and office) over the past three years. Please indicate type of property, location, size, special features, method of disposal, estimated price and price actually realised.	Officers are currently working to review property disposals in the current economic climate on a case by case basis.  With regards to the list of properties sold within the last three years, including specific information on size etc, there is not sufficient time to answer this question in the reporting timescales of the committee. I would respectfully request members to consider carefully weighing up the benefits of a question against the amount of officer time required to produce an answer.
3	<b>IT</b> 25. Please give more details of the "IT Value for money review"	The IT Value for Money review is one of a series of value for money reviews under the Haringey Forward Programme and will look at ensuring that IT Services provides a cost effective service that meets customer needs.
Econ Regen	<b>Portfolio for Economic regeneration.</b> 26. Please list your new responsibilities for Economic Regeneration.  27. What will your key priorities in this area be for the next three months, six months and year?	Employment and Skills Support and Enterprise/Business Support  <b>Employment and Skills</b> (3) Prepare the Haringey bid for the Government Job Fund to support job creation for 18-24 year olds



**Haringey Council**

	<p>28. Do you have any plans to meet with officers of the LDA?</p> <p>29. Will you be taking over/attending meetings with Town Centre representatives?</p>	<p>(6) Review the delivery of the HSP Apprenticeship Programme. Recession position; consider allocation of contingency funds with HSP Enterprise Board.</p> <p>(12) Review achievement of the Employment/Skills Programme/Targets (Haringey Guarantee 218 jobs; North London Pledge 171 jobs; Families into Work 50 families engaged) and the recession position</p> <p><b><u>Enterprise</u></b></p> <p>(3) Review all business partnership meetings and review what business needs are and how LA service can help</p> <p>(6) Review recession indicators and consider need to adjust the Action Plan. Consider allocation of contingency funds through the HSP Enterprise Board</p> <p>(12) Review achievement of the Enterprise Programme/Projects</p> <p>The LBH regularly liaises with the LDA. Monthly officer meetings called “Transforming Haringey” take place and this also includes the Homes and Communities Agency, GLA Planning and TfL. I will meet with LDA officers as appropriate.</p> <p>This is mainly an officer led exercise – where officers meet key Town Centres on a regular basis. I or other councillors will attend these meetings where appropriate.</p>
	<p><b><u>Questions from Councillor Allison</u></b></p>	



**Haringey Council**

<p>Combating unemployment. 2009/10 priorities</p>	<p>31. What has been chosen as the 'Recession Statistical Monitor', and why?</p>	<p>Council officers looked at what other Councils were collecting; it was also discussed with the HSP and the HSP Enterprise Board. We collect a mixture of economic key indicators (unemployment) and social indicators to get a balanced feel for the impact of the recession.</p>						
	<p>32. When can we expect the first Recession Action Plan?</p>	<p>It now exists and was agreed by HSP Enterprise Board and the HSP in April/May 2009. It is set out below in the answer to Cllr Newton's Question.</p>						
	<p>33. How many apprenticeships are we aiming for per year for the next 2 years? How many have been delivered to date? What is the cost?</p>	<p>Haringey Strategic Partnership is aiming to create a minimum of 70 Apprenticeships over 2 years 2009-11. Target for 09-10 is 20, and 50 in 2010-11. So far 10 have been created. Cost of an Apprenticeship is between £12-14k with half going on wages and half on training/qualifications which usually are the equivalent of NVQ Level 2/3, (ie between "O" and "A" level).</p>						
	<p>34. The Haringey Guarantee costs about £5,000 per job/training delivered. What criteria are used to decide if a job gained under the Haringey Guarantee is sustained/permanent? For how long must someone be employed? Does it include part time work? What is the average wage of someone gaining work under the Haringey Guarantee? How many people in the scheme are under 25, 25-45, over 45?</p>	<p>London Development Agency average range is £3.5-7.5k. Haringey Guarantee average is £3-5k</p> <p>The job is sustained/permanent if it is FTE or PT for 6 months, (this includes checks at the start, at 3 and 6 months). PT claims only count if 16hrs or more worked per week. We don't monitor average HG wages. The average wage for people in work in Haringey (16-64) is £14.34 per hr. London £15.09 and England £12.13, (2008 figures). The GLA is campaigning for a "London Living Wage" of £7.60 per hr.</p> <p>Of the 551 Haringey residents now registered with Haringey Guarantee:</p> <table data-bbox="1229 1310 1603 1417"> <tr> <td>Up to 22 years old</td> <td>: 62</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23- 45</td> <td>: 339</td> </tr> <tr> <td>46 +</td> <td>: 150</td> </tr> </table>	Up to 22 years old	: 62	23- 45	: 339	46 +	: 150
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Haringey Council

<b>Questions from Councillor Bull</b>		
1	35. In welcoming the Cabinet member to his new responsibilities can he outline what he sees as his main challenges/priorities?	Please see my written submission.
2	36. Can the Cabinet Member outline what part HfH and specifically HMOs will play in the new 'Get in Touch – Not in Debt' campaign?	The 'Get in touch – Not in Debt' campaign was a campaign aimed at residents who may be experiencing financial difficulty regarding payment of Council Tax and other bills. Leaflets will be available at customer service centres and will also be issued with all Council Tax recovery notices. Copies will be sent to Homes for Haringey for distribution to their staff and clients as appropriate and discussions will be held with Homes for Haringey regarding possible inclusion in further activity.
3	37. Does a member working Group exist to establish whether members' IT requirements are being met?	A member working group does not exist. However IT member support staff are available and meet with members as required to ensure that their IT requirements are being met.
3	38. Can the Cabinet Member update the Committee on the future of Bull Lane?	<p>Community Action Sport has submitted its proposals for acquiring the Bull Lane Site together with Business Plan. Officers are currently reviewing the Business Plan and aim to report an assessment of it to a future Cabinet meeting later in the year. In summary the Business Plan looks at the use of all of Bull Lane and Pasture Gardens for sports related use.</p> <p>The Council is also negotiating the terms of the S106. However, Enfield have kept negotiations in abeyance, subject to the outcome of the village green application, which was submitted in March 2009.</p> <p>A Village Green application was made under the Commons Act 2006 and submitted to Enfield Council for determination as host local authority. The application seeks to use Bull Lane</p>



Haringey Council

		<p>as a village green as a right and therefore if successful would prevent the redevelopment of the site. A Public Inquiry into the application was held on 20.07.09 and a recommendation will be made by the Inspector in the next four to five weeks. Following the Inspector's recommendation it will be up to Enfield to decide whether to confirm or reject the village green application.</p>
3	<p>39. Can the Cabinet Member update the Committee on the future of Hornsey Depot?</p>	<p>Sainsbury, in taking forward the planning application, is seeking pre-application feedback and advice from the Planners on technical and relevant Regeneration and Planning Policy. This work takes account of the previous public consultation carried out and therefore the broad intent for a mixed use scheme comprising retail and residential scheme is well known.</p> <p>The outcome of this will inform the likely parameters of a feasible and acceptable scheme. By Autumn 2009, we expect the Planners and Sainsbury to have agreed design principles and sketch proposals, which will be presented to Ward Members.</p> <p>Once the base scheme and the proposed Development Agreement have been reported to Cabinet for approval, Sainsbury will carry out public consultation which will exceed the normal statutory requirement and a public exhibition is envisaged. The Development Agreement will set out what the Council expects by way of a capital receipt. Following the exhibition, amendments may be made to take on board comments from this exercise and a detailed planning application will be submitted for the whole site.</p>
4	<p>40. Can the Cabinet Member outline how he feels that the aspects of the old Regeneration and Enterprise brief will fit in to his Resources portfolio?</p>	<p>Particularly at a time of recession, in looking at how the Council can support local employment and skills and local businesses. There is particular overlap on issues like 'Claim It'</p>



**Haringey Council**

		and 'Reaping the Benefit' campaigns, and the possible creation of credit unions / loan facilities. My resources brief includes human resources / personnel which provides a link with apprenticeships and job creation.
	<b><u>Questions from Councillor Newton</u></b>	
1	<p>HR and OD:</p> <p>41. What are the levels of procedures taken or in process per department over the last 12 months for capability, discipline and grievance including sickness?</p> <p>42. Has there been any correlation undertaken to assess whether these are an indicator of stress in particular departments?</p>	It is not clear from the question exactly what information Cllr Newton is requesting.
1	<p>Benefits and Local Taxation:</p> <p>43. How many cases of Council Tax arrears were there in the last 12 months and what was the potential total lost income before recovery procedures were undertaken?</p>	<p>Benefits and Local Taxation collected 93% of the amount due during the 2008/09 year. The 7% unpaid will include bills sent out later in the financial year and arrangements to pay being extended into 2009/10. The bad debt provision within the budget allows for 4% uncollected over 8 years as the outstanding council tax will continually be collected in future years</p> <p>In 2008/09 21,186 Liability Orders to pay were obtained from the Magistrates Court. This will include more than one order per household and for council tax owed prior to 2008/09.</p> <p>In 2008/2009, 20,140 cases were referred to external enforcement agencies. This will include more than one case per household and for council tax owed prior to 2008/09.</p> <p>The external enforcement agencies generally collect approximately 25% of outstanding council tax referred in any given financial year. They will continue to collect outstanding</p>



**Haringey Council**

	<p>44. How many were subject to a Court Hearing?</p> <p>45. How many were passed to external bailiffs for collection?</p> <p>46. How many are still outstanding and what is the current total lost income?</p>	<p>council tax into future years through agreed arrangements.</p> <p>See Q40</p> <p>See Q40</p> <p>See Q40</p>
2	<p>Corporate Property:</p> <p>47. How many buildings were planned for disposal prior to the downturn in the property market? Can you give an estimate of how much the Council expected to achieve overall from disposal prior to the need to re-appraise these sales?</p>	<p>As part of budget preparations officers identified 14 sites (excluding Right to Buy properties) for disposal in the financial year 2009/10 with an estimated capital receipt of £8.6 million.</p>
3	<p>Corporate Procurement:</p> <p>48. Has the establishment of frameworks with multiple suppliers meant a move away from smaller suppliers who may therefore be less able to survive the recession?</p>	<p>Frameworks are better for smaller companies than one off contracts as we are able to put onto the framework a numbers of smaller suppliers rather than awarding a large contract to one major supplier.</p> <p>In construction the current Minor frameworks and Major frameworks currently have a number of small companies (SME's less than 250 employees) on the list. Out of 26 on the list 19 have less then 250 employees.</p> <p>Corporate Procurement have also published on the Haringey website a list of all council contracts. This allows smaller companies to identify and contact our larger contractors to explore opportunities for them to become a part of the supply chain.</p>
	<p>Enterprise and Regeneration:</p> <p>49. Please provide more details of the Recession Action Plan</p> <p>50. What funding has been allocated to carry out actions?</p>	<p>The Haringey Recession Action Plan has 20 actions - these are set out at Appendix 1, attached.</p> <p>With regard to those actions focused on Employment/Skills</p>



**Haringey Council**

51. What particular measures to help small business?

and Enterprise/Business, the figure is £1.6m from Haringey's Area Based Grant. The Action Plan however covers a number of actions from across the whole Council and some of our partners.

The main measures to help small business the Council is funding from its annual "Area Based Grant" include:

- General business advice and support through North London Business and signposting to London Business Link
- Business networking to help businesses get contracts and business from each other
- Work to support young people's business skills, through the education and business partnership
- Projects focused on helping BME businesses; business women and businesses in key sectors like construction and creative industries, (eg fashion; film; TV; design)
- Advice and support for those businesses on the threshold of VAT registration. Moving into a VAT band means the firm is stronger and likely to employ more people.

In addition the Council's Enterprise Team does the following:

- Regularly meets town centre business groups at Wood Green / Green Lanes; Muswell Hill; Crouch End; Tottenham High Road/Seven Sisters/West Green to look at safety; promotion; transport issues; cleaning.
- Bi Annual Film Festival/Haringey Business Awards
- Regularly meet with the new Haringey Business Board



**Haringey** Council

		<p>and North London Business to promote business advice and networking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quarterly meeting with Bank representatives to examine credit and loan services – with a report back to local business forums</li></ul>