

Response to WRITTEN Council Questions.

Cllr Emery to Cllr Williams

1. Haringey's housing target has been reduced by the new government from 3,431 to 2,716, a reduction of 21%. Is the council's own target of 3000 homes by 2031 still in place despite this change, and significant budget pressures?

Response:

Yes. Our target is for affordable council homes for those most in need. 13,000 people are on the waiting list for council housing. Our target to build at least 3,000 homes reflects the budget limits that we have – our ambition for affordable council homes is much greater though. It is disappointing to hear that the Opposition do not share it.

The Government housing figures referred to in the question are the **annual** housing need figures assigned to Haringey via the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's 'standard method' for calculating housing need. Notwithstanding any potential change in the annual figure (the new figure is a draft figure), the need figure for the borough will remain substantial and in this context the Council's ambitious council housebuilding programme remains a vital programme in terms of helping address the significant housing need within the borough. The Council's own Council housing target is not affected by the emerging Government housing need figures.

Regarding the Government's housing figures, it is important to note:

- The revised figure was **not a final figure** but a draft as part of a proposed 'revised method'
- The method and figures relate only to **assessing housing need** and do not provide a final 'target'
- Final housing targets are set through planning policy taking into account the standard method and figures for assessing housing need **and** capacity of sites in a borough
- In London, the **London Plan** sets housing targets for each borough taking account of the overall housing need figure for London and the capacity of each borough
- The latest London Plan was approved and published in March 2021 and **sets Haringey's housing target at 1,592 homes** per year. This is the current extant official housing target for Haringey
- The Mayor of London has commenced work towards a **new London Plan** which will set a new housing target for Haringey
- The new London Plan will need to take into account the overall housing need figure for London. The Government's draft figure for this was published as **80,693 homes per year**. Should this need figure become a new target for London this would be a **significant increase** from the approximate 66,000 need figure for London in the existing London Plan. It would be expected that each borough's target would need to be increased as appropriate, taking into account capacity and other factors.
- Therefore, it is considered unlikely that Haringey's housing target would be reduced through this process, and would likely increase.

Cllr da Costa to Cllr Chandwani

2. What representations, if any, did Haringey Council make to central government regarding cuts to the winter fuel payment?

Response:

The council has been focused on finding ways to support pensions and all resident on low income to access supports and benefits available to them, specifically pensions credits.

- The UK government have changed the criteria for eligibility for the Winter Fuel Allowance. It is now mean-tested and most Winter Fuel payments will be provided to those on Pension Credits.
- Since February 2023, Haringey has worked with the Labour Mayor of London to increase uptake of Pension Credits through the GLA's Pension Credits Programme;
- Together with 23 London boroughs, we have worked to ensure pensioners do not miss out on receiving all of their Pension Credit. Since then, more than 4,300 Londoners have claimed Pension Credit they are entitled to, resulting in £17.9m in direct additional annual income.
- This year alone in Haringey we have identified 815 pensioners who are eligible but are not claiming Pension Credits. We have written to all of them and will be supporting them to claim what they are entitled to.
- Now the government has extended the Household Support Fund, the council will be using this fund to provide a payment from the council to pension aged households claiming council tax reduction scheme. This will provide 2,804 pension aged households with additional support this winter.

Cllr Barnes to Cllr Williams

3. The Regulator for Social Housing provided information in an FOI that all 80 of Haringey's council blocks of 5 stories or more have 'life critical fire safety' defects; yet the council has rated blocks like Newbury House, which has combustible composite window panels and panelling, as having a 'tolerable risk of fire'. However, previous tests from a council contractor have shown that 'it is reasonably foreseeable that fire could travel vertically, compromising the panels above and the other flats above. This installation may assist in rapid fire and smoke spread, externally and internally.' Could you please provide an update on how satisfied the council is that blocks like this have only a 'tolerable risk' to residents?

Response:

The Regulator for Social Housing classifies Life Critical Fire Safety risks as "defects, shrinkages, faults or other failings in a building that gives rise to fire safety risks identified by a Fire Risk Appraisal of External Wall construction, or a fire risk assessment (or equivalent) undertaken to industry standards". Their survey confirmed 1932 buildings in England measuring 11 metres plus or that have 5-storeys or more, have such defects identified.

The information regarding Haringey's buildings was provided to the Regulator by Haringey from our risk assessments, where each building may have one or more of the relevant characteristics classified as above by the Regulator.

The 'Tolerable' risk rating has been applied where appropriate, as a holistic assessment of the entire building, inclusive of all risks and passive and active measures in place at the time. The risk assessments identify where non-compliant panels are present and recommend that Haringey should plan and undertake their

replacement, due to the on-going residual risk. The panels themselves have been assessed as a medium risk due to the construction of the building and on the basis that the panels, which are not a 'cladding system', are not wrapping around the building and considers the size, positioning and space between the panels.

Concerns raised by the Cabinet have been discussed and reviewed with our risk assessors and in the opinion of the risk assessor, with all factors considered, the correct rating has been applied.

Cllr Isilar-Gosling to Cllr Brabazon

4. Currently, children leaving care in Haringey get approximately £3000 to set up their new home. Unfortunately, care leavers are forced to put sizable amounts aside to install flooring or carpets which doesn't leave a sufficient amount for furniture and white goods, because the standard of flooring in the properties they are moving into is simply not adequate. Would you commit to looking into this issue, and either increasing the total allowance for care leavers to cover this additional expenditure, creating a separate flooring allowance, or increasing the standard properties are handed over in before a care leaver is handed the keys?

Response:

We know this is a concern for our young people and have already made strong efforts to work with local businesses to negotiate best prices. Those going into the new build flats have flooring.

Where flooring is exceptionally expensive, we also make applications to charities to assist care leavers and to maximise and add to their allowance of £3000. This increased allowance – up from £2500 - is in line with London Councils' recommendations made in 2023 and like most other councils, is now the accepted benchmark amount .

Cllr Cawley-Harrison to Cllr Chandwani

5. I have a large number of outstanding street lighting reports still not repaired, many going back months. Many of these have been blamed on issues relating to the lighting CMS units which are managed and repaired by an external company. What SLA is in place with this company to resolve CMS issues in a timely manner, and what penalties have been imposed on them for failing to do so?

Response:

In September 2023, there was a software issue with the 3G nodes supplied by Urbis Schreder as part of the CMS contract with the Council for 15,500 lighting columns across the borough. Under the contract, Urbis Schreder paid for the replacement of circa 1,450 3G nodes with upgraded 4G nodes and implemented a system upgrade in February 2024 that worked on 15,100 columns. Urbis Schreder investigated why circa 400 nodes did not upgrade.

However, by May 2024, more 3G nodes began failing, reaching 2,000 by September 2024. Urbis Schreder has paid for the replacement of these and a further 1,000 3G nodes so now Haringey has circa 5,500 upgraded 4G nodes. Whilst Urbis has borne a sizeable cost of this upgrade (for the supply and installation of replacement components), it also continues to bear the cost of ongoing investigations to

determine why there is a high failure rate of 3G nodes – not experienced on this scale anywhere else. Urbis Schreder will continue to be held to account for any further issues with CMS nodes but street lighting faults are now generally back to general component failure and UK Power Network electrical supply issues.

Cllr Connor to Cllr Chandwani

6. Many residents have contacted myself and the Highgate councillors about escalating levels of fly tipping in Queens Wood, with some photos showing truckloads of rubbish piled several feet high. Evidence shows that mobile CCTV can effectively deter fly tipping, but I have been told that no deployable cameras will be available for at least three months. What will be done in the immediate future to prevent the continuation of this fly tipping?

Response:

There is a range of methodology to tackle fly tipping including both preventative and reactive measures. Due to requests of Mobile CCTV, implementation is driven by statistics of reported fly tips in terms of location priority. The recently appointed new Head of Recycling, Waste and Enforcement will check the timescale given on the availability of a camera and look at our smaller mobile cameras that may be suitable for this location, should a larger deployable camera not be available. We will also monitor the area and install signage as necessary.

In addition to the above, the Council will be launching an “enhanced” enforcement service from early next year, which will enhance resources for litter and fly tipping enforcement.

Cllr Rossetti to Cllr Chandwani

7. Haringey has been consulting on eliminating daily visitor parking permits in CPZs, based on as yet unproduced ‘circumstantial evidence’. Putting aside cost implications for residents, if this move goes ahead how will you ensure it isn’t overly laborious (e.g. having to log on to the parking portal each hour) for those visitors staying for an extended period?

Response:

No decision was taken by the Cabinet on 16th July 2024 to abolish daily visitor parking permits. Statutory consultation on this and a range of other potential parking-related policy changes continues until 20th November 2024. Everyone is encouraged to express an opinion on those changes in accordance with the process set out on the Council’s website. The Council will consider those opinions and, thereafter, determine whether to progress with any of those proposals or not.

Cllr Lotte Collet to Cllr Carlin

8. Please confirm what percentage of Haringey Councils Pension Funds are used to directly or indirectly invest in Elbit systems and other arms manufacturers who are producing and or selling arms to Israel.

Response:

We have a strong commitment to ethical standards in all our policies and procedures – including our procurement, expenditure and investments. The Council is the administering authority of the Haringey Local Government Pension Scheme, and the

Pensions Committee and Board (PCB) exercises that function under the Council's Constitution and has a legal duty to manage the Pension Fund.

As a responsible investor, the council's staff pension fund encourages companies to take positive action on social, environmental and governance issues, requiring all appointed investment managers to comply with the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment (UNPRI).

The council has a statutory responsibility to administer its pension scheme in accordance with government regulations, on behalf of all its staff. A review of the fund's investment strategy is already underway which will carefully consider all aspects of its portfolio.

Cllr Mason to Cllr Chandwani

9. The current statutory consultation into parking has caused discontent in many areas of East and Central Haringey due to the proposed end of day parking passes.

We believe there are many other ways of dealing with the misuse of day passes which will avoid a detrimental impact on disabled, elderly, and poorer residents.

A statutory consultation does not have to be brought back to Cabinet for a decision. However, given the concern about this issue, we ask the Cabinet member for parking to agree to bring this decision back to the Cabinet meeting following the end of the consultation.

Response:

We are currently exploring a range of potential changes to parking policies, including daily visitor parking permits.

No decision has been made.

As with all proposed changes, we want everyone to have their say. Our aim is to always get a wider range of views so we're able to make an informed decision.

We are in the process of gathering feedback from residents and stakeholders through the statutory consultation period, open until 20th November 2024.

We encourage everyone to share their views on these proposed changes through the process outlined on the Council's website.

We will consider your feedback before deciding on the proposals.

Cllr M Blake to Cllr Williams

10. Haringey is set to deliver 3,000 council homes, which are aimed at providing housing for those locked out of other long term housing options. The London Housing Strategy and London Plan set out in detail the structure of London rents at three different levels. We are concerned that genuinely affordable homes aimed at the needs of the lowest earners are now being replaced in Haringey with new council homes at an intermediate (affordable rent). The

Mayors Housing Plan shows clearly that social rents need to be affordable to those on the lowest incomes.

Please can you explain why you are setting council rents at a level which is not affordable to the poorest section of home seekers in Haringey.

Response:

The Council is not building any homes at an intermediate rent. All of the homes that the council we are building are often genuinely affordable Council rent products levels – either Formula Rent or London Affordable Rent.

The London Plan considers both Formula Rent and London Affordable Rent to be low cost rented homes. While London Affordable Rents can be higher than formula rents – the current rate for a 2-bedroom property is £205 per week. This is not just a significant discount on market rents – but is well below the London Housing Allowance caps which are £322 per week in the Outer North London BRM and £413 per week in the Inner North London BRM.

We also have to remember the reason why the Council made the decision to build a proportion of homes at London Affordable Rent. In the run up to setting the 23-24 budget, the Council had seen its construction costs rise by 25% and its interest costs double (effectively doubling our costs). With GLA grant rates not having kept up with the external environment we had two choices – either we moved a significant proportion of homes to London Affordable Rent or we would have had to largely stop building council homes.

It is our belief that this was the right course of action. At London Affordable Rent, we are able to provide secure lifetime tenancies for Haringey residents. The homes are significantly cheaper than the vast majority of homes that are available to our residents – with rents fully payable through universal credit or housing benefit. They are Council Homes at Council Rents – which are both desperately needed and have been enormously popular amongst the 500 Haringey households that have moved into new homes over the last 6 months.