

Response to written councillor questions – 24 March 2025 Full Council meeting

1. Cllr Rossetti to Cllr Hakata

For years, when I asked about what was being done to address traffic, gridlock and speeding in my ward, I was told that Haringey would look at issues 'holistically' within the Alexandra North LTN. It has become clear during the last year that there will be no Alexandra North LTN, and during the Summer Haringey launched the Alexandra Travel and Transport Review to learn more. When will Haringey finally address with actions the issues that myself, past Councillors and residents have reported for years?

Response

The unfortunate truth is that almost every neighbourhood, every street in our borough is plagued by traffic issues. Congestion, speeding, dangerous driving, drivers idling and road rage incidents. They go back years, even decades in some places. And we are committed to addressing each and every one. I generally like to steer away from party political points at Full Council, but this one is unavoidable.

The unfortunate pact between the Tories and Lib Dems in 2010 which saw the latter become the lap dog enablers of the Tory gutting of the State, has left Local Government cut to the bone, with threadbare teams of talented officers valiantly working around the clock, not simply doing the essential work of maintaining crumbling infrastructure, but also designing, co-designing and implementing solutions that create the safer, greener and fairer neighbourhoods this Labour administration was elected to deliver.

We have never used these chronic challenges bestowed on us by ConDem ideological austerity as excuses for inaction and have, instead, ensured that we amplify our ambitions, accelerate change and keep on keeping on with a rolling programme of improvement to our traffic and transport network.

That is why we are taking an holistic neighbourhood approach with a matrix of interventions. A democratic, inclusive engagement that captures all voices, hears all needs, brings as many people along with us, so we do this with residents, not just for them. Far from forgetting Alexandra ward, we have been diligently working towards a solutions which will bring long-lasting change.

The Alexandra area transformation remains a cornerstone priority in our adopted Walking and Cycling Action Plan. We've evolved our approach—shifting from a simple LTN model to a comprehensive Traffic and Transport Review—directly responding to residents' expressed desire for solutions that go beyond mere traffic removal. They've called for meaningful infrastructure improvements that enhance their local environment and revolutionise travel options through sustainable alternatives: improved bus services, secure cycle storage, safer pedestrian crossings, and other vital community assets.

We recognise the complexity of challenges facing Alexandra's streets—issues that demand thoughtful co-design processes with those who navigate these spaces daily. This collaborative approach forms the foundation of our next steps as we work towards delivering tangible, lasting solutions to long-standing problems.

We are working at pace, across the entire borough, from our historic conservation areas to our most vibrant yet under-resourced communities, weaving a tapestry of improvements that honours every neighbourhood's unique character. The decimation of local government resources—courtesy of that unholy alliance between the Tories and the Lib Dems—presents formidable obstacles, yet our resolve remains unshaken.

While transformation cannot happen overnight, inaction simply isn't an option. The residents of Alexandra deserve better, as do all Haringey citizens. We are committed to creating streets where children can play safely, where air quality improves measurably, where active travel becomes the natural choice—not through dictation but through collaborative redesign of our shared urban spaces.

2. Cllr Emery to Cllr Chandwani

Last July I mentioned several serious traffic incidents in the same stretch of Archway Road, between the Boogaloo Pub and the Co-op, and asked the Cabinet Member what was being done to lobby TfL to reduce the speed limit on the road. I received the answer that the council is in continuous dialogue with TfL including monthly meetings regarding the TLRN, is lobbying TfL for a separate funding pot similar to those for CND and PBN, and is asking for a fully funded action plan to deal with collisions on the TLRN. Since then, there have been three more serious incidents on Archway Road. Have you received any further updates from TfL?

Response

Liaison between TfL and Haringey is ongoing and on Archway Road, TfL is currently undertaking a feasibility study aimed at addressing collisions and making the road safer for all users. We wait for this study to be concluded at which point we expect TfL will share further details with Haringey.

Response

3. Cllr Isilar-Gosling to Cllr Hakata

Residents are frustrated by the lack of progress on repairing the escalators at Highgate Tube station. We've heard from residents about the impact this breakdown is having, particularly on those with mobility challenges, parents with young children, and commuters navigating busy rush hours. What communication has the council had with TfL about the progress on fixing the escalators?

Response

I want to acknowledge the significant frustration being experienced by residents affected by the ongoing escalator issues at Highgate Tube station. These mechanical failures create invisible barriers in what should be accessible public infrastructure.

The human impact here is concerning and immediate—residents with mobility challenges facing impossible choices and parents struggling with pushchairs on steep alternative routes. These everyday journeys become tests of endurance rather than simple connections.

Our dialogue with TfL has been continuous and increasingly urgent. Their engineers initially identified a gearbox fault with an estimated repair timeline of 5-8 weeks. However, the technical complexity has expanded significantly, requiring a redesign of components and additional safety approvals—a process that has, regrettably, no definitive completion date at present.

I've personally escalated this matter, pressing TfL to consider the broader systemic implications of this single point of failure. What's become increasingly clear through this situation is how our transport networks—when designed without robust contingencies—can rapidly transform from enablers of mobility to barriers of exclusion.

I've advocated strongly for interim accessibility solutions while the repairs continue, challenging the notion that budgetary constraints should override basic accessibility rights. The pathway forward requires both technical resolution and fundamental reconsideration of how our transport systems respond to failure—not as isolated mechanical problems, but as community-wide accessibility challenges.

I remain committed to pressing for both immediate interim solutions and long-term systemic improvements that prioritise universal accessibility as a fundamental principle, not an optional feature, of our transport network.

4. Cllr Connor to Cllr Carlin

Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been asking for two years for the administration to provide quarterly budget updates to scrutiny panels. The cabinet member indicated at Budget Council that these reports should be made available, so will the administration commit to providing quarterly budget reports to all scrutiny panels - covering revenue, capital, risk and performance - beginning this financial year, and ensure that scrutiny officers are sufficiently resourced to support councillors in examining these reports?

Response

The Quarterly Monitoring Report is already reported quarterly to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). It will be for OSC to then determine any further detailed discussions for panels.

This year, the Director of Finance has started giving scrutiny committee members dedicated pre-briefings on the budget ahead of meetings. This is a 'page-turn' exercise to help increase transparency and support scrutiny members to perform their role.

5. Cllr da Costa to Cllr Carlin

In recent days, several people have contacted us regarding being sent a second home council tax surcharge bill for their primary/sole residence. In each of these cases residents have objected/appealed with supporting evidence, but all have received no response or acknowledgement from the council, and instead have received an escalation in threatening debt letters. What is being done to immediately rectify this situation?

Response

The second home council tax premium does not take effect until 1st April 2025 and when this question was raised, no residents had received a bill for 2025/26, so they certainly won't be receiving letters about a debt relating to this. We wrote to all residents recorded as having a second home on 30 January 2025 to ask that they inform us if the information we hold is out of date, with a deadline of 14 February 2025, in order that it could be applied in the new bills for 2025/26. All responses received have been processed so that only residents with second homes will receive bills with the premium applied.

Residents who are receiving bill reminders are more likely to be incurring the empty home premium, whereby properties left empty for more than 12 months incur double council tax. We have unfortunately had staffing capacity challenges that have meant our response times on correspondence are unacceptably low and we are now increasing staffing temporarily so that the backlog is eliminated by early September

2025. However, we do not pursue debt enforcement with residents who have unprocessed correspondence.

6. Cllr Barnes to Cllr Gordon

The council's economic/regen team recently engaged an external accessibility specialist to do a town centre review across four Haringey town centres. Can you confirm how the council will use the final reports and recommendations and what budget it has assigned to carrying out any improvements recommended as part of this consultancy work?

Response

Ensuring everyone can use and enjoy our town centres is an important issue for the Council. Reducing inequalities in the borough is a pillar of our Haringey Deal.

The High Streets Accessibility Study has been funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It reviewed four town centres, with two studies in Wood Green and Bruce Grove complete and the remaining two to be completed by the end of March 2025. So far, we have had recommendations on how to address accessibility needs across several areas, including public transport, pavements, cycling, parking, road crossings, planting and seating.

Once the review has been completed, our Inclusive Economy team will engage Haringey Council departments with responsibility for the delivery of capital projects on the recommendations from all of the studies. There is not a specific budget aligned to the delivery of these recommendations, but we expect them to help inform delivery decisions and to support business cases for specific accessibility action in future funding bids and to identify potential sources of funding for this work.

Wood Green and Bruce Grove were selected as priority study areas as recommendations should also complement the Shaping Wood Green and Shaping Tottenham programmes.

7. Cllr Cawley-Harrison to Cllr Carlin

Pink Zebra, who leased the council-owned commercial property at 42/44 Park Road in Crouch End stopped operating in August 2023, something the council was not aware of until I raised the issue last year. The council's lease with the business stated that they must be open to trade. Given this, is the council reviewing whether similar situations, where shops need to be brought back into use, may exist at other properties you own?

Response

LBH is the Landlord for multitude of commercial assets across the Borough. The Property Team seek to manage these assets in line with the principles of good property management (i.e. Income and arrears management, lease compliance and repairs) within the constraints of the resources available. Where the Team becomes aware of an Asset not being used as envisaged under the lease, we seek to engage with the occupier and take any appropriate action. It is notable that the commercial portfolio has a low vacancy rate. Less than 1% is being held void, with any other vacancies being subject to the letting cycle.

8. Cllr Mason To ask Cllr Zena Brabazon

The recent Children's Well Being and Schools Bill has highlighted concerns about Safeguarding with statutory guidance requested about sexual violence in our schools.

Could the Lead Cabinet Member inform us whether guidance and training is provided for teachers and support staff in all our schools on best practise in dealing with incidents of peer to peer sexual abuse and sexual violence.

Response

The local authority and Haringey Education Partnership (HEP) run network meetings for Designated Safeguarding Leads throughout the academic year. The agenda covers all safeguarding matters in relation to education settings and there are deep dives into particular aspects. The network focusses on sharing effective practice in the borough and nationally. There has been a recent deep dive into misogyny and a presentation on gender based violence with the sharing of the MOPAC toolkit to support schools in their work . <https://tender.org.uk/our-services/training/toolkit-training/>

9.Cllr M Blake to Cllr Dana Carlin

Haringey Statement of Accounts 2023-24 (28 February 2025) presents the findings of KPMG Auditors. <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-02/auditor-s-annual-report-2023-to-2024.pdf>

Under the report on the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, the auditors are required to report any significant weaknesses in the arrangements made by the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

They reported on significant weaknesses and made recommendations against each of the following:

1. Cost setting and budgetary processes
2. Identifying and monitoring cost saving schemes
3. Improving economy efficiency and effectiveness in managing commercial property.

4. Improving economy efficiency and effectiveness in procurement;

Will Cllr Carlin confirm that work has begun in implementing recommendations in the above four areas with full progress reports to be made to the Cabinet and all relevant committees quarterly?

Response

Action plans have been created to improve VFM (Value for Money) in the organisation and will be further strengthened following the most recent recommendations presented by KPMG. Progress will be reported regularly to Audit Committee.

10.Cllr Lotte Collett to Cllr Mike Hakata

Energy-from-waste incinerators have been described as the dirtiest form of power generation in the UK. Currently plants in the UK are emitting approximately 12 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year. Opponents suggest that incineration undermines recycling.

The LGA suggests that the inclusion of energy-from-waste incinerators in the Governments Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) could cost UK local authorities a total of £1.1bn a year. Current projections suggest that fees under the ETS will exceed the cost of landfill and the cost of waste export.

Given Haringey's commitment to the NLWA Edmonton Incinerator, what financial projections have been made for the Governments planned pollution charges under the UK Emission Trading Scheme?

Response

Let's get straight to the point: The Edmonton Energy Recovery Facility doesn't create waste—it processes what already exists. This fundamental distinction often gets lost in heated debates about incineration.

The seven North London boroughs within the NLWA partnership collectively generate approximately 600,000 tonnes of waste annually. This material reality doesn't disappear through wishful thinking or passionate speeches—it requires pragmatic infrastructure. If anyone has a solution beyond landfill or shipping our waste overseas to undisclosed destinations, I'm genuinely eager to hear it and would enthusiastically share such innovations with our board.

The waste challenge sits at a fascinating intersection of individual behaviour and systemic design. I'm a keen advocate for mandatory recycling precisely because individual behaviour change for the greater good remains notoriously difficult to achieve without structural frameworks.

NLWA is a publicly owned organisation, with the board made up of elected officials from the seven boroughs. As it happens, all Labour controlled authorities. This has meant that the demand for the highest environmental and social values has been a foundation of this project.

The Energy Recovery Facility represents world-class infrastructure incorporating the cleanest emissions control technology available in the UK. By integrating with a local heat network, it will achieve carbon efficiency significantly beyond older facilities—delivering tangible benefits to thousands of local residents through low-carbon heating while saving up to 215,000 tonnes of CO₂e annually compared to landfill alternatives.

The Edmonton EcoPark represents more than a single facility—it's a comprehensive ecosystem of solutions. The recently completed Resource Recovery Facility will process approximately 135,000 tonnes of recyclable waste annually. This represents the largest public sector investment in London's recycling infrastructure for decades.

The Climate Change Committee confirmed in its Sixth Carbon Budget that facilities like our ERF represent the optimal disposal route during the UK's transition to Net Zero. This position is further reinforced by independent think tank Policy Connect, whose 2020 report "No Time to Waste" concludes that ERFs with heat offtake represent the most advanced solution for managing non-recyclable waste in our journey toward a Net Zero economy.

The path forward requires addressing waste at its source—particularly fossil-based materials in packaging, textiles, and non-essential plastics. This is where carbon pricing mechanisms would be most effective, creating economic incentives that drive systemic change in production patterns. The NLWA and its members are actively lobbying government on this. Penalising local authorities for undertaking their statutory duty to dispose of residual waste, regardless of type and resident behaviour, only puts an additional squeeze on our already overly-stretched resources. I would urge all elected members who are concerned to bring this up with your MP. We agree with the ETS, but municipal waste should be exempt.

The challenge before us isn't simply technical but philosophical: how do we create infrastructure that manages today's waste reality while actively contributing to tomorrow's waste reduction? The Edmonton facility represents our best answer to this complex question—a solution that balances immediate environmental protection with long-term transformation of our material culture. In the end, right now, it is up to us, as consumers to think about what we buy and what we throw away and how we throw it away.