

## **COUNCIL – 19 JULY 2010 - QUESTIONS**

### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

#### **ORAL QUESTION 1 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR PEACOCK:**

Can the Lead Member for Adult and Community Services please provide an update on the recent investment in tennis facilities in Albert Road Rec?

#### **ORAL QUESTION 2 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR GORRIE:**

What planning assumption is the Administration currently making for the percentage fall in central government funding of the Council over the next three year financial planning period and will Haringey Council freeze Council Tax next year?

#### **ORAL QUESTION 3 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR EJIOFOR:**

Can the Cabinet Member outline how the borough's finances have changed since the Coalition Government came to power?

#### **ORAL QUESTION 4 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR ENGERT:**

What has been the total cost to Haringey Council in legal fees, administration costs, consultants' fees and officer time in relation to its representations to the Judicial Review and subsequent appeal on the Ward's Corner planning application?

#### **ORAL QUESTION 5 –TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR STENNETT:**

Can the Lead Member advise members of the outcome of the inspection of the Rowland Hill nursery, and how this centre is helping to tackle inequality and child poverty?

#### **ORAL QUESTION 6 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR WILSON:**

How many Haringey-owned residential properties are currently un-occupied?

#### **ORAL QUESTION 7 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR STEWART:**

Can the Lead Member for Housing please outline the likely impact of the coalition government's decision to slash the cap on local housing allowance?

**ORAL QUESTION 8 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR SCHMITZ:**

Will the Leader of the Council join in me congratulating the parents and staff at the South Harringay Infants School on the success of their very long campaign to obtain the funding necessary to provide their children with unimpeded access between their classroom and the outdoor play areas, the lack of this access being the only point of criticism in an otherwise glowing Ofsted Report?

**WRITTEN QUESTION 1 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ALEXANDER:**

Does the proposal to build a football facility on Finsbury Park breach Metropolitan Open Land, English Heritage or Council policy on building on green space? Why is the Council not proposing to build and run this facility, therefore guaranteeing better access for the local community?

**ANSWER**

No, such facilities if designed and located properly would be acceptable in principle on Metropolitan Open Land and would not in principle impact on the historic importance of the Park. However all these issues would be assessed in detail through the planning application process.

The current proposal out to public consultation is for the facility to go onto an area of existing hard standing (not grass or open park) accessed by Endymion Rd on the western boundary of the Park next to the railway line. If the proposal goes ahead planning permission would be required for floodlights and the changing rooms.

The proposal is designed to offer improved facilities, to ensure value for money and income generation. It would provide increased access to by all residents to formal and professional football facilities.

Cabinet recently considered its medium terms financial strategy which outlines an expected shortfall of around £60 million in the Council's revenue budget. In light of this situation the Council is severely limited in terms of additional responsibilities it can take on.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 2 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ALLISON:**

What percentage of Haringey's core assessments were carried out by agency social workers in the last a) 12 months and b) 6 months? How much did this cost?

**ANSWER**

Haringey Children and Families services have not contracted out any core assessments to independent agencies. We have employed and continued to employ social workers sourced from agencies to cover core establishment posts until such time as we are able to recruit permanent staff. During the course of their duties they complete core assessments. It is not possible to disaggregate from the overall number of assessments completed how many were done so by agency staff and how many by permanent staff.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 3 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR BEACHAM:**

What steps have been taken to enforce the 7.5t lorry ban along the southern section of Alexandra Park Road?

**ANSWER**

The 7.5t weight restriction recently implemented throughout the Palace Gates and Muswell Hill area is not enforced locally by the council's enforcement team. Council officers are legally unable to enforce the prohibition; however the Met Police are able to carry out enforcement although this is a low priority. The Safer Neighbourhoods Team have stated that they will be willing to note persistent offender's number plates and contact details and pass this to the Met Police to follow these up. The Police Community Support Officers will have a presence on site and work closely with the Safer Neighbourhoods Team to penalise these offenders.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 4 – TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR BLOCH:**

In each of the last three years, how many of the Council's employees and consultants have rented their accommodation to the Council or to households nominated by the Council? Do they require permission to do this and what steps are taken to manage conflicts of interest?

**ANSWER**

The Council does not routinely collect data that would enable the question to be answered.

The Council's disciplinary code of conduct states that any employees conduct outside of work must not conflict with their official conduct in work. This provides the basis for requiring staff to declare if they believe that such a conflict might exist.

The Council is required upon receipt of any such declaration to consider the information supplied by the employee and compare it to the role that the employee undertakes to determine whether a conflict could exist.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 5 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR BUTCHER:**

When did the Council purchase ‘vehicle activated speed signs’ for Upper Tollington Park crossing and when will they be installed? When will the Council appoint a crossing patrol officer for this crossing? What other action is the Council doing to help make this crossing safer?

**ANSWER**

We purchased two vehicle activated signs on the 31 March 2010 to be installed along Upper Tollington Park. Following the purchase, suitable locations were investigated that would offer the greatest road safety benefit. The signs were erected and in operation on 29 June 2010.

We are hoping to appoint a crossing patrol officer at the zebra crossing at the junction of Upper Tollington Park with Woodstock Road.

The council have requested that extra enforcement be undertaken along Upper Tollington Park by the Police.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 6 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR DAVIES:**

How many complaints has the Council had about planning permission breaches in each ward in each of the last five years and how many of these complaints led to (i) changes in the development or the developer’s behaviour or (ii) enforcement action?

**ANSWER**

The breakdown of complaints referred for planning enforcement investigation by ward is provided in the table below for the last 5 years.

<b>WARD</b>	<b>2005-6</b>	<b>2006-7</b>	<b>2007-8</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Alexandra	24	31	36	52	36
Bounds Green	24	13	53	108	37
Bruce Grove	27	18	39	67	36
Crouch End	47	34	56	57	64
Fortis Green	45	23	44	38	33
Harringay	140	50	118	88	96
Highgate	74	60	106	96	54
Hornsey	49	42	30	30	44
Muswell Hill	56	61	54	47	48
Noel Park	33	24	44	47	57
Northumberland Park	36	15	40	41	24

St Ann's	31	17	43	41	51
Seven Sisters	44	35	49	45	42
Stroud Green	33	31	33	39	41
Tottenham Green	36	35	41	52	52
Tottenham Hale	36	23	30	28	31
West Green	57	44	32	24	31
White Hart Lane	95	79	26	102	54
Woodside	52	49	40	52	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>1,052</b>	<b>878</b>

(i) and (ii). The service is not able to report on changes to a development or changes in a developer's behaviour. We can however report outcomes from our interventions as provided in the table below

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>2005-6</b>	<b>2006-7</b>	<b>2007-8</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Compliance - Development remediated without use of powers	103	99	102	72	60
Compliance by Enforcement Notice	47	22	31	27	15
Compliance and cautioned	1	2	6	3	1
Compliance and prosecuted	6	4	6	1	1
Compliance by use ceased	51	31	14	9	10
Compliance – Permission granted/Appeal allowed	79	75	68	59	29

Note:

(1) There are currently 210 cases still open from before April 2010. Approximately 40-50% of all cases received are not breaches

**WRITTEN QUESTION 7 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR ENGERT:**

Please list all sums which Grainger PLC or any other prospective developer of the Wards Corner site is obliged to pay to the Bridge NDC or to Haringey Council, whether conditionally or unconditionally. In respect of those sums which are payable conditionally, please state the condition to which the obligation to pay is subject. Please list all parcels of land which have been sold outright to Grainger PLC or to any other prospective developer of the site; in each case please identify the land and state the price therefore

**ANSWER**

The Council entered into a Development Agreement with Grainger Seven Sisters Ltd on 3 August 2007. Under the terms of the Development Agreement Grainger/Developer is conditionally required to pay all the costs of the development process including any compulsory purchase (CPO) subject to the Council agreeing to provide Interim Gap Funding by way of:

£1,500,000 from the Bridge New Deal for Communities. To date the funding from the Bridge NDC has been paid to Grainger Seven Sisters Ltd to facilitate the acquisition of the Land required for the development.

£500,000 from the Council through the reduction in the price of land paid to the Council for its interests in the site. This was subject to approval from the Secretary of State and the Council Executive at its meeting on the 20 February 2007. The sale of the existing Council assets at a reduced cost has not been undertaken.

There are no unconditional payments/costs.

Under the terms of the Development Agreement the Interim Gap Funding is required to be repaid by the Developer in the event that the Development Agreement is terminated by the Developer or the development returns a profit to the Developer.

The Development Agreement includes an overage/profit clause enabling the Council to receive payment from the developer in the event that the development returns a profit and Indemnity Clauses for any reasonable costs incurred by the Council associated with assembling the site which include CPO costs in the event that the Council's CPO powers are used.

To date the Council has not sold any land to Grainger. From a Land Registry search in August 2009 Grainger owns one third of the planning application/ CPO site. From this search there does not seem to be any other "prospective developer" buying/owning land – but this is hard to know. Land Registry information is sensitive information only available to those who pay for such searches. As part of the viability assessment needed to take the whole scheme forward land/property purchase prices would be assessed by the Council to ensure value for money – but would be confidential to the development partners.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 8 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ERSKINE:**

Please provide me with an update on the decanting of residents from Sheba Court, Altair Close. What is the timescale for the move? What will the property be used for? What consultation has there been with users and carers? How many residents/users are involved? What period of advanced warning was given? Where will users be offered as an alternative? What was the reason behind the move?

**ANSWER**

Altair Close is a scheme which exists for ten people with Learning Disabilities (LD) and is funded by Supporting People (SP) and the Haringey Learning Disability Partnership (HLDP). All referrals to the service are made by the HDLP, who also remain responsible for the care management of individuals in the service.

Many of the service users who are being supported are ready to move-on to more independent accommodation, but there has been little availability to meet this need. In May 2010, Supporting People were given the opportunity to access ten, newly built, 1 bedroom, self contained flats and the tenants at Altair Close were the first to be consulted about a proposal to offer them alternative accommodation and reduced support, more in keeping with their reduced needs. Arrangements are being made with the existing Support Provider to continue with support for a transitional period where this is requested by the tenant.

The timescale for the move is toward the end of September 2010

No decision has been taken about a new client group. This is dependent upon Altair Close being vacated, although I can advise that repeat offenders is not a client group that has been considered.

Two consultation meetings have now been held with the service users (and carers). The first was on the 25 May 2010 and on 30 June 2010.

Ten residents are currently living at Altair Close

An independent advocate and a dedicated social worker have been appointed to co-ordinate consultation, ongoing discussions and ensuring that assessed need is being met.

The social worker has been appointed for three months, within which time it is hoped that each individual will secure, in the right accommodation, with the right support that best meets their wishes and their circumstances.

The alternatives being offered to tenants are dependent upon their individual assessed need.

The proposed move will deliver better targeted services and improve opportunities for people to lead independent lives.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 9 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR GORRIE:**

How much additional revenue is the council expecting to receive through the coalition governments ‘pupil premium’ and how is this money being allocated to schools? Please provide a list of Haringey schools and the relevant annual amounts. When is the new scheme expected to start?

**ANSWER**

It is not possible to identify how much might be allocated through such a premium. It is not clear how such a premium would operate or indeed whether the coalition government proposals are similar to those outlined in a recent consultation document released by the previous government.

What is clear from coalition government announcements is they are proposing significant cuts in expenditure available for all government departments apart from health and international development. The Council is expecting to see a reduction in resources available for education in coming spending rounds.

Although a pupil premium will be a welcome additional support to vulnerable pupils, it will still not address the fundamental injustice of the disproportionate funding for all pupils when comparing Haringey with other London Boroughs which leaves Haringey £35m short in 2010/2011.

This will only be resolved when the government tackles the Area Cost Adjustment issues we have raised with ministers and where we still await the outcome of their Review of Area Cost Adjustment.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 10 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR HARE:**

How much funding has the Council received to provide free swimming for under-16s from central government to date, what has been the total cost of the scheme to provide free swimming to all under-16s and what has been the increase in under-16 participation in swimming since the scheme was established?

**ANSWER**

In 2009/10 the Council received funding from the Government of £135k and this was topped up by the Council by a further £93k to cover the full cost of providing free swimming to those 16 and under. The Council will receive a pro-rata amount of approximately £45k for the period April to July 2010. In 2008/9 Junior swimming numbers were 31,500 for Tottenham Green and 52,000 for Park Road Leisure Centre. Although free swimming did not increase junior swimming at Park Road Leisure Centre it has led to a 21% increase in junior swimming at Tottenham Green Leisure Centre. The increase in junior swimming has also contributed to an increase in adult swimming as those that are under 8 need to be accompanied by an adult.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 11 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR JENKS:**

What will the Council be doing to implement their pledge to "ensure all of our parks and open spaces are designated as Dog Control Areas" and when will they carry this out? When will Priory Park be designated as a Dog Control Area?

**ANSWER**

Options for actioning this are being explored. It is expected that a report setting out options will be available for consideration by Cabinet in the early part of 2011.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 12 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND COHESION FROM COUNCILLOR NEWTON:**

Please provide figures for the last 12 months for each CCTV camera monitored by the control centre:

1. How many times has each identified criminal or suspicious activity?
2. How many times has each been used as evidence and how many of these led to prosecution?

In each case please provide location of camera.

**ANSWER**

The Community Safety Surveillance operators recorded a total of 6852 incidents of criminal, anti social and suspicious behaviour over the past 12 months, many of these resulted in police action. The table below details the total number of incidents per camera. The Council does not hold information on the number of recordings that have been used as evidence or lead to prosecutions, as the police are unable to provide us with this information.

Camera No	Location	Postal Area	No of Incidents
1	High Road	N22	599
2	High Road -CPZ	N22	407
3	High Road -CPZ	N22	292
4	High Road -CPZ	N22	332
5	Lymington Ave.	N22	35
6	High Road -CPZ	N22	272
7	High Road -CPZ	N22	275
8	Green Lanes	N8	326
9	Alexandra Road	N8	2
13	Brampton Park Rd	N22	4
14	Coleraine Road	N22	13
15	Waldegrave Road	N22	11
16	Whymark Avenue	N22	1
21	High Road	N17	155
22	Bruce Grove	N17	111
23	High Road	N17	525
24	Chestnut Rd	N17	74
25	Chestnut Rd	N17	46
26	Philip Lane	N15	138
27	West Green Road	N15	94
28	West Green Road	N15	31
29	Ashmount Road	N15	275
30	Westerfield Road	N15	9
31	High Road	N17	124
32	Seven Sisters Rd	N17	123
33	St Ann's Road	N17	74
34	Turnpike Lane	N8	46
36	Broadwater Farm	N17	16
37	Broadwater	N17	24

Camera No	Location	Postal Area	No of Incidents
42	Broadwater Farm	N17	1
43	Broadwater Farm	N17	4
84	Muswell Hill Bdwy	N10	103
85	Tottenham Lane	N8	65
86	High St, Hornsey	N8	150
87	West Green	N15	82
88	West Green Rd	N15	72
89	Hale Rd	N17	171
90	West Green Rd	N17	24
91	Abbotsford Ave.	N15	19
101	High Road	N17	121
102	High Road	N17	82
103	High Road	N17	84
104	High Road	N17	101
105	High Road	N17	87
106	Lordship Lane	N22	81
107	Lordship Lane	N22	27
108	Turnpike Lane	N8	87
109	Colney Hatch Lane	N10	16
110	Muswell Hill Rd	N6	2
111	Crouch End Hill	N4	101
112	Muswell Hill Bdwy	N10	27
113	Bounds Green Rd	N11	62
114	Muswell Hill Rd	N10	215
115	Crouch End Hill	N4	139
116	Turnpike Lane	N8	52
9750	Green Lanes	N4	83
9753	Green Lanes	N4	100
9752	Green Lanes	N4	67

	Farm		
38	Broadwater Farm	N17	3
39	Broadwater Farm	N17	1
40	Broadwater Farm	N17	12
41	Broadwater Farm	N17	9

9754	Green Lanes	N8	48
9755	High Road	N22	66
9757	High Road	N22	20
9756	High Road	N22	30

**WRITTEN QUESTION 13 – TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR REECE:**

How much is spent annually on members' services? And what action is the Council taking to reduce this spend in light of the current economic situation?

**ANSWER**

The Local Democracy and Member Service, located within the Chief Executive's Service, has a directly controllable budget of £1,568,600.

The recently announced review of governance arrangements in Haringey will have significant implications for the members' services. Aligned to the Governance review there will be a fundamental review of Local Democracy and member services. This plans to deliver budget reductions and efficiencies in 2011/12.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 14 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR REID:**

What are the findings from the review into the lack of gritting last winter?

**ANSWER**

The winter of 2009/10 was the worst that the country experienced for 30 years. During the period from mid-December to mid-January temperatures in Haringey were almost continuously at or below freezing and there were several snowfalls. A national salt grit shortage developed and as a result of this a national salt cell was established giving the Government complete control over deliveries of salt grit supplies.

The Council's performance during this time is being appraised as part of a review of our Winter Service Operational Plan which is being finalised. This will include elements such as new grit bin locations and changes in the priority treatment status of certain roads. It is intended that a consultation of the plan will be undertaken during the summer and that it is adopted for winter 2010/11.

The review will also include national learning identified as part of the Department of Transport review: 'Lessons Learned from the Severe Weather of Winter 2009/10', due to report July 2010.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 15 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR SCHMITZ:**

With regard to the development of the Ward's Corner site, please list all the loans and grants made by the Bridge NDC or by Haringey Council to or for the benefit of Grainger Plc or any other prospective developer of the site, specifying in each case the amount, the date, the payer, the payee and the purpose of the same.

**ANSWER**

In addition to the answer provided to written question 7.

The NDC grant money (through LBH payments system) was paid to Clyde and Co – Grainger's solicitors as follows:

£874,343 bacs payment on 25/03/2008

£625,657 bacs payment on 25/04/2008

Total payment £1,500,000

The NDC Partnership Board at a full Partnership Board Meeting, the Accountable Body (Legal and Director of Urban Environment) and Government Office for London have all authorised the release of Interim Gap Funding.

Government Office for London (GOL) are the programme managers for the London NDCs on behalf of CLG. All consultation and approvals for NDCs are routed through the GOL Contract Manager. GOL have approved the transaction for payment of the Interim Gap Funding by the NDC.

The sale of the existing Council assets has not been undertaken.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 16 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR SCOTT:**

How many planning applications to build houses or any other development on garden sites in Haringey were received in the year 2009-10? How many were approved?

**ANSWER**

The total number of applications to build houses on garden sites in Haringey in 2009/10 was 7 and the number which were approved was 2.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 17 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR SOLOMON:**

How many incidents of obvious HGV pavement damage has occurred and how much money has been recovered from the companies that have done the damage in the past two years?

**ANSWER**

In the last 2 years we have recorded 27 different incidents of very serious damage to pavements that may have been caused by Heavy Goods Vehicles. In all instances the costs incurred in carrying out repairs have not been recovered since the council has never been able to obtain evidence to identify the drivers responsible for the damage. In all these instances HGVs would have left the scene before we are alerted of the damage.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 18 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM COUNCILLOR STRANG:**

If the Council is unsuccessful in securing its share of the emergency grant made available to London councils to address the primary school place shortage forecast for next year, what contingency plans are in place to provide those extra places? Do those plans take due account of the existing geographical mismatch between supply and demand so that parents do not face unreasonable journeys with young children?

**ANSWER**

We continue to lobby the coalition government to reinstate the funding which was withdrawn on 12 May this year. The funding was initially awarded in November 2009 and the Council had started to prudently plan primary places in the borough on the basis of the funding. We have had two meetings with the department of education to clarify the withdrawal of funding but both were cancelled at short notice by the department. The Council faces increasing demand in places and the problem will be more acute in September 2011.

In order to meet this increase and despite the significant budget challenges the Council will face during the coming spending rounds the Council is pleased to be able to continue with the expansion of Rhodes Avenue Primary school. This will provide much-needed places at this popular and successful school.

If the £8.57m is not restored, we will be relying on opening classrooms at schools across the borough to allow bulge classes while exploring lower cost ways to enable schools with existing space to take in more pupils. These plans are being discussed with schools at the moment and will be announced in the Autumn.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 19 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR WEBER:**

Following the acknowledgement by the Council last Autumn of the back log of Housing and Council Tax benefit claimants and the action taken to prioritise new claims as a result, what progress has been made on reducing claims awaiting to be processed? How many cases are currently waiting to be processed (both new claimants and change of circumstances claimants) compared to last autumn, how many claimants cases are open and yet to be resolved that are more than two weeks old and how many change of circumstances are outstanding compared to last autumn?

## **ANSWER**

Last autumn there were over 5000 new claims and changes in circumstances outstanding which, due to continued increase in demand, peaked at 7000 in March 2010. The level now stands at 4431 (1230 new claims and 3201 changes in circumstances).

The current economic climate has had a major impact on the demand for Housing Benefit assistance in Haringey. This has been highlighted by an 8% rise in caseload, from 37,745 in January 2009 to 40,646 in May 2010. When taking into consideration that amount of claimants that move in and out of the borough (churn), this is a significant rise. We have also seen an increase in documentation received by the service, including claims from those who have never claimed benefit in the past and do not understand the process. e-benefits has assisted such claimants in completing claim forms by eliminating unnecessary questions from the form based on a claimants personal circumstances.

In 2009/2010 the amount of documents received by the service ranged from 31,000 to 35,000 per month in 2009/2010. In 2010/2011 this had increased to an average of 36,000 documents received on a monthly basis, with a peak at 45,000 documents received in April 2010. In 2009/2010, the service received around 1600 claims per month. This has increased to around 1,950 new claims per month in 2010/2011.

Of the 1230 new claims in progress, 450 are less than two weeks old. Of the total number of claims there are about 30% for which we are awaiting information from claimants.

Of the 3201 changes in circumstances, 1997 are less than two weeks old. Of the total number of these there are about 20% for which we are awaiting information from claimants.

Details of the number of open cases and the age of cases in the Autumn is not currently available for comparison purposes.

## **WRITTEN QUESTION 20 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR WHYTE:**

What cross checks are done on names and addresses with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that the wrong council tax and housing benefit is not being paid?

**ANSWER**

The benefits service has on line access to the DWP computer records (CIS). Before any new claim or change of circumstance is actioned, the benefits service will check CIS to ensure that the personal details and income match what the claimant has told us. Claimants also provide documentary proofs when they submit their benefit claims

In addition to this, the Service takes part in the Housing Benefit Matching Service and National Fraud Initiative, which data match data from Local Authorities, HMRC, local Probation Boards and other public bodies, but specifically includes the DWP. Any discrepancies between our records and those highlighted from the data match exercise are investigated and appropriate action taken.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 21 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAMS:**

What plans does the Council have to tackle the acute problem of persistent dumping on Southwood Lane N6 near the junction with the Archway Road, and what action has been taken to date?

**ANSWER**

According to Enforcement records there have been 7 reports of dumping investigated at this location since July 2009. The last report was 30 June 2010 and is currently under investigation. Only one of the previous reports resulted in the opportunity for formal action and a fixed penalty notice was issued. We will continue to respond to complaints as they arise through the Street Enforcement Officer for this ward.

Dumping at other locations along Archway Road have been identified in our published ward level action plan for Highgate ward for increased monitoring and investigation. This will be undertaken by the Street Enforcement Officer for this ward.

As well as the response to complaints and fixed penalty notice action, we have placed 'No Dumping' signs at strategic locations; and undertaken leaflet distribution to residents in the area to remind them of waste collection arrangements and to encourage witnesses to come forward.

Over the summer we will be offering all councillors the opportunity of influencing our next ward level action plans and this location will be specifically reviewed for any further action that can be taken.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 22 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR WILSON:**

Can the lead member confirm what action he is taking to act on the finding of the Grant Thornton audit of practices of the HfH's Homeownership Team and their failure to agree on recommendation promoting better value for money?

**ANSWER**

In the report on it's audit of Haringey's Leasehold Service Charges, Grant Thornton concluded that the Home Ownership Team operates "an efficient and effective service in terms of calculating and issuing annual service charges" and highlighted a number of areas of good practice.

Of the ten recommendations in Grant Thornton's Audit Report, Homes for Haringey has agreed or partly agreed with seven of them. Commenting on the three recommendations that were not agreed, Grant Thornton has stated that "where implementation has not been agreed, we do not regard this as fundamental but would urge the Council and HfH to keep these areas under review when future improvements to arrangements are being considered".

Members of the Council's Audit Committee have asked for further consideration to be given to the recommendations that have not been agreed by Homes for Haringey. Additional work will now be carried out by the Council to ensure that Homes for Haringey's systems and processes are sufficiently robust and provide value for money. The Audit Committee will consider the results of that review at its meeting on 14 September 2010.

**WRITTEN QUESTION 23 – TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR WINSKILL:**

Please provide details of all correspondence and meetings with central government over the last four years relating to a review of Haringey's population figures produced by the 2001 census and supporting efforts by the Council to maximise grants and financial support.

**ANSWER**

Here is a table listing the key or main meetings and correspondence undertaken by Haringey Council (Finance and Performance Officers) with Government Departments over the last 4 years.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Meeting /Correspondence</b>
1	2006	July	Association of London Government Census Working Group attendance lobbying on various population issues especially the accuracy of ONS statistics.
2	2006	July	Association of London Government – Migration Issues Meeting (chaired by Slough Council Director of Finance).

Ref	Year	Month	Meeting /Correspondence
			Made representations on behalf of Haringey Council and the additional cost pressures associated with migration.
3	2006	September	Letter to Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Department for Communities and Local Government from George Meehan (Leader) dated 19/9/06 challenging ONS population figures methodology and the need for major revisions.
4	2006	November	Association of London Government Census Working Group attendance on 23 November 2006 to discuss and highlight London-wide and local issues on population data.
5	2006	December	The High Ethnicity Authorities Special Interest Group (HEASIG), Haringey is a member of this lobbying group which forms part of the Local Government Association. HEASIG members wrote a letter to Phil Woolas (CLG) dated 11/12/06 lobbying for Government to address the increasing population levels in Haringey resulting from EU migration and the consequent resources issues across London Councils.
6	2007	January	Response from Phil Woolas received in relation to letter to Ruth Kelly (19/9/06) from the Leader, acknowledging the issues raised by Haringey in respect of population.
7	2007	January	Population mobility meeting (31/1/07) at London Councils. Leader of Haringey Council attended along with a Finance Officer and a Performance Officer, to strengthen the lobbying case both locally and London-wide.
8	2007	January	Letter dated 5/1/07 addressed to Phil Woolas – Secretary of State for Department for Communities and Local Government on the Local Government Finance Settlement, again challenging the inaccuracy of population figures for Haringey.
9	2007	September	Labour Party Conference – attended by HEASIG including Haringey representation, to lobby for increased funding levels for deprived communities including the maintenance of ethnicity indicators within Formula Grant

Ref	Year	Month	Meeting /Correspondence
			Settlements.
10	2007	October	Haringey Council commissioned a private firm Local Government Futures to undertake independent research on population in the context of Haringey concerns over increases in population and resulting higher service demands impacting on constrained resources. This information was used to lobby Government to review their population data.
11	2008	January	Letter dated 8 January 2008 John Healey, Secretary of State for Department for Communities and Local Government on the Local Government Finance Settlement, again challenging of the inaccuracy of population figures for Haringey.
12	2008	April	2006 Sub-National Population Projections (SNPP) methodology consultation. Haringey made a robust response to this consultation.
13	2009	January	Response to John Healey MP Communities and Local Government (CLG) on the Local Government Finance Settlement, once again challenging of the inaccuracy of population figures for Haringey.
14	2009	January	Reference to the LGA letter dated 14.1.09 concerning the Office for National Statistics (ONS) consultation document on the timing of improvements to population estimates and projections. Corporate Finance authored and co-ordinated Council-wide comments on behalf of Haringey Council and submitted to Office for National Statistics.
15	2009	February/June	ONS Student Adjustment Reference Group held on 10 February and 26 June 2009. Quality assurance work on student adjustments undertaken in relation to changes to ONS mid year estimates and sub-national population projections methodologies – group work undertaken by Haringey’s representative with other Local Authority representatives. This led to positive revisions to the indicative impact figures released by ONS in November 2009.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Meeting /Correspondence</b>
16	2009	March/July	<p>Following earlier lobbying efforts, both local and London-wide, Government announces new Migration Impacts Funding, to acknowledge the additional cost pressures from the transitional impacts of migration.</p> <p>Haringey Council successful in submitting a range of projects to be funded over 2 years from the Migration Impacts Fund.</p>
17	2009	November	ONS issued revised indicative mid-year population estimates impacts at LA level, as part of a user engagement exercise between 30 November 2009 and 18 January 2010 on changes made from the improving migration and population statistics project.
18	2010	January	Letter dated 4/1/10 to Barbara Follett MP Minister for Local Government Communities and Local Government on the Local Government Finance Settlement, challenging the continued inaccuracy of population figures for Haringey.
19	2010	January	Haringey Council provided a robust response to the consultation which challenged the ONS revised indicative mid-year population estimates impacts at LA level.
20	2010	May	The revised 2008 mid year estimates were issued on 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2010 and the ONS Sub-National Population Projections (SNPP) were published on 27 May 2010. The net positive effect of these revisions appear to have taken into account our previous lobbying work.
21	2010	June	Mid-2009 population estimates were published by ONS on 24 June 2010. The 2009 mid year estimate for Haringey's population is now 225,500. This is 200 more than the revised 2008 figure of 225,300.