

**Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 6<sup>th</sup> September 2010**  
**Cabinet Member Questions: Agenda Item 10 - Councillor Goldberg, Cabinet Member for Finance & Sustainability**

No	Page/ Point	Question/Observation	Answer (Where applicable)
		<b><u>Questions from Cllr. Ejiofor</u></b>	
1	Leader's briefing 05/07/10	How will the Council address the trade off between reducing its spending, and meeting its commitment to a 40% reduction in carbon emissions?	<p>In order to meet the Councils commitment to a 40% carbon reduction target during a period of severe pressure on the Councils budget Haringey will look to utilise a number of sources of finance. This includes (UK and EU) grant funding, obligations on energy suppliers which require companies to invest in energy saving measures (e.g. Carbon Emissions Reduction Target and Community Energy Saving Programme) and the Feed In Tariff which provides a payment for renewable energy produced as well as for energy that is sold to the national grid.</p> <p>There are many carbon reduction measures which can be financed on an “invest to save” basis. For carbon emissions from corporate operations, Haringey Council operates the Sustainable Investment Fund (a revolving loan fund). The cost savings made through the installation of energy efficiency technologies funded by the loan scheme are reflected in the repayments made by the Council. Once repaid in full, the Council saves money through reduced energy costs.</p> <p>Private sector businesses can access interest free loans to invest in energy saving measures through the Carbon Trust, and in the private domestic sector it is expected that home energy improvements will be financed by providing low cost loans to home owners which can be repaid at the rate at which fuel cost savings are achieved.</p>



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			<p>Funding for measures with a long payback such as decentralised energy schemes will require investment from property developers, and also from energy services companies that will invest in schemes based on the revenue generated from the sale of heat and electricity to local users over a number of years. Haringey may also consider using its prudential borrowing powers to invest in carbon reduction schemes where there is a clear business case for this.</p> <p>Haringey will be working with the Department of Energy and Climate Change to develop a borough wide carbon reduction action plan to achieve our 40% target starting in September this year. This will enable Haringey Council to identify in detail the resources needed to deliver this commitment and additional support required where necessary.</p>
2	<p>Leader's briefing 05/07/10</p>	<p>As part of this broad wide-ranging portfolio, comes responsibility for call-centres and the ability for Haringey residents to contact Haringey Council. As a resident, I understand that the Council has an "out-of-hours" service that will only deal with emergencies, and that the main switchboard does not operate until 9.am.</p> <p>i) Are you happy that this situation optimises our residents' opportunity to contact the Council for services, help and advice?</p>	<p>1) Extended call centre opening hours of 8am-8pm were in operation until May 2008 with the intention of extending access to Council services and improving call centre performance by spreading call volumes across longer opening hours. The extended service was promoted through Haringey People, Call Centre recorded messages and via posters within the CSCs and throughout the borough, however the extra cover did not result in a change in customer behaviour and the extended operating hours never fulfilled their potential, with call levels falling well below expectation. Reductions in resources available for the service in 2008 led to a review of the extended service and the hours were reduced to 8-6pm Monday to Friday on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2008.</p> <p>In addition to the Call Centre which operates between 8am and 6pm, and the CSCs which operate from 8.45 am, residents are supported by the recently enhanced Emergency out of Hours Service, provided by the consortium which Haringey joined in August 2010.</p> <p>Additional advice, help and access to services is also provided through the Haringey web site, with additional payment opportunities for council tax and parking available via</p>



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		<p>ii) I understand that there are Councils in London where you can speak to staff (and for example pay Council Tax) between 8.00 and 19.00. How do you feel that Haringey Council's contact hours compare with other Council's in London?</p> <p>iii) Has any cost benefit analysis been done about extending them?</p>	<p>the 24 hour Automated Telephone Payment Line and online Payments Service.</p> <p>A survey of 17 authorities revealed that six had similar operating hours, two had shorter hours than Haringey, two provided extended opening until 8pm and 8 provided similar M-F hours with additional weekend access. In one authority (Enfield) a 24/7 service had been in operation but has been withdrawn following public consultation and in another (Hackney) they are reviewing opening hours as part of an efficiency drive. As a result of the austerity measures most London authorities are reviewing their customer offering, including operating hours.</p> <p>This exercise was undertaken when the decision to revert to the current operating hours of 8am to 6pm in 2008 was made.</p>
3	GENERAL	<p>The government solar power grants were available from the Low Carbon Buildings Programme and encouraged the installation of solar panels.</p> <p>i) Despite this programme having been withdrawn by the coalition government, does Haringey have any plans to encourage the installation of solar panels onto the roofs of its public buildings?</p> <p>ii) Could the lead member further clarify on the Councils policy of investing in</p>	<p>The Feed In Tariff was introduced by the previous Government to replace the Low Carbon Building Programme. This provides a financial incentive for renewable energy generated and for energy that is sold to the national grid.</p> <p>Haringey Council's energy policy, as outlined in the Carbon Management Plan, is to prioritise investment in carbon reduction measures that give the greatest CO2 and energy saving per pound invested. Even with the Feed in Tariff, energy efficiency measures are generally much more cost effective and will therefore be prioritised over renewable energy generation until these measures have been exhausted.</p> <p>Where grant funding is available or other benefits can be demonstrated the Council will investigate the potential for renewable energy technologies. Solar photovoltaic arrays, which utilise light rather than sunshine and therefore can</p>



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		<p>renewable energy?          iii) Is the cabinet member aware that we can still reduce our long term energy costs by investing in solar panels which would provide the council with free electricity (when the sun shines!), the feed-in tariff received from selling the excess could mean that the installation should pay for itself in 10 years, and provide a three fold profit for the council over 25 years?</p>	<p>generate energy on a cloudy day, are being trialled on a number of schools as part of the Muswell Hill Low Carbon Zone and Low Carbon Communities Challenge project. In addition, Haringey has supported the development of a local social enterprise company En10ergy, to lease roof spaces from commercial and non commercial properties to install solar photovoltaic arrays. These projects are being linked to education and awareness raising programmes among schools and local community groups. The Council has also been offered an innovative wind turbine at a low cost for use on Alexandra House as part of a study into turbine acoustics in conjunction with the London South Bank University.</p> <p>As part of the development of the Council' borough wide carbon reduction action plan Haringey will further investigate the business case for solar photovoltaic arrays utilising the Feed-in Tariff as a source of revenue and for developing partnerships with utility companies. This will need to be weighed up against investment into alternative carbon reduction measures; however it is likely that renewable energy technologies will become a small part of a package of measures required to meet the Councils long term CO2 reduction target.</p>
4	GENERAL	<p>Please could you explain the process through which you oversee and monitor the monthly expenditure of the Council.</p>	<p>The Council has a well developed process for monitoring monthly expenditure – which also takes into account the interrelation between expenditure, performance and staffing. It is also effective in ensuring a Council-wide understanding of budget issues.</p> <p>Directors (and managers that they have delegated budget responsibility to) sign agreement to their revenue and capital budgets at the beginning of each financial year. There is an expectation that budgets will be appropriately profiled enabling effective monitoring to occur. Furthermore, for demand led services in particular, unit costs and trend analysis is used to inform current, medium and long term planning which supports effective decision making.</p> <p>Directors are required to prepare monthly monitoring reports setting out year end</p>



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			<p>forecasts, progress against agreed savings and investments and emerging issues. These are discussed monthly with the S151 officer, Chief Executive and Lead Finance Officer and the relevant Director (together with their Head of Finance and Human Resources Business Partner).</p> <p>The information from these monthly reports and meetings form the basis of the finance section of the regular Finance &amp; Performance reports to Cabinet.</p>
5	GENERAL	<p>As you might be aware, the 2010 Haringey Residents' Survey indicated a preference from over a quarter of residents to get more of their information about Council services from our website.</p> <p>i) In these difficult economic times, would the cabinet member agree that increasing the content on the Council's website, improving its functionality and decreasing reliance on paper communications would save the Council money in the long term, and be more appropriate as we move into the digital age?</p> <p>ii) As the cabinet member responsible for investment and savings, what plans are</p>	<p>I would agree with the comments made and these are covered in both the IT Strategy 2010-13 (approved at Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2010) and in the Customer Contact Strategy which is being prepared for consideration by Members in due course and include planned investment and savings. It is anticipated that this will be reported before the year end. In recognition of the importance of this work, Cllr Anne Stennett is assisting me as Cabinet Advisor on Customer Services.</p>



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		you making to bring this about?	
		<b>Questions from Cllr David Winskill</b>	
6	GENERAL	<p>As the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has demonstrated, it is now becoming not just more expensive, but considerably riskier (to lives, the wider economy and the environment) to achieve the next marginal unit of energy from carbon based sources. The initiatives that Haringey is taking and is involved in are to be applauded but, in the context of a continually increasing demand for energy and targets for reductions based on current usage, Will Cllr Goldberg share his thoughts with us on the reasonableness of these targets and the chances of actually achieving them.</p>	<p>In 2009, prior to committing to working to achieve a borough wide 40% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020, Haringey carried out carbon reduction scenario modelling using Vantage Point Software (endorsed by the Energy Saving Trust). This enabled Haringey to update a previous study <i>Carbon Reduction Scenarios to 2050</i>, to examine what measures would be required to achieve this target. The conclusions of this study were that achieving the target would be technically possible, with decentralised energy and home energy saving measures contributing the most CO2 savings. However, to implement all measures would require a significant coordinated effort and investment by all levels of government, the commercial sector and the community &amp; voluntary sectors and individual residents. Haringey Council will not be able to achieve the target alone and in particular will be looking to Government to meets its commitment on decarbonising the national grid to help enable local targets to be achieved.</p> <p>Through the development of a detailed carbon reduction action plan (working with Department of Energy and Climate Change, Local Carbon Frameworks pilot) Haringey will establish exactly what capacity of each measure will be required within each sector to achieve the target, together with the investment and partnerships needed to implement these actions. Haringey is awaiting further information on the Local Carbon Frameworks pilot to take this work forward.</p>
7	2.2 g	<p>Sustainable Food strategy: is Cllr Goldberg aware of the Budgen's Food from the Sky initiative and would he join me on a visit?</p>	<p>The Food from the Sky initiative is extremely innovative; I commend Budgen's for their efforts to support this project and am happy to include Budgens amongst the other sustainable food projects I visit. Haringey Council supported the project by supplying old recycling boxes to use as plant containers.</p>



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			<p>Haringey Council has committed to developing 60 new food growing spaces in the borough as part of the London wide Capital Growth campaign to develop 2,012 new food growing spaces by 2012. Given the pressure on existing space in the borough, due to population and housing growth, going forward it will be necessary to make more imaginative use of existing spaces and bring back into use derelict and under-used land, in order to achieve this target. I would be interested to find out whether the Food from the Sky initiative could be replicated elsewhere in the borough.</p>
8	3.1	<p>Sustainable transport: will the Lead Member ask his colleague in Neighbourhoods what recent discussions there have been about new cross borough bus routes with TfL.</p>	<p>No specific discussions have taken place recently with TfL on cross borough routes. With our partners in North London Transport Forum we have sought a review of the bus network in the region as it is recognised in our emergency transport strategy the difficulty of making longer cross borough journeys by bus.</p>
9	Audit and Risk Management	<p>Many of the borough's roads never fully recovered from the effects of the winter's snow and ice. Repairs that were done were often of a poor standard and some were not done at all. Has any work been done on our exposure to claims from cyclists, pedestrians and other road users who are injured as a result of poor road/highways and foot path surfaces? Please outline the insurance cover arrangements for dealing with these claims.</p>	<p>The Council has a public liability insurance policy in place, which provides cover up to £50 million for any one claim relating to damage or personal injury. The Council's Insurance Service liaises with the Highways and other Council departments on a regular basis throughout the year to identify any key risk exposures and provides risk management reports after each insurance claim is finalised which highlight any recommended remedial or future action points.</p> <p>The Insurance Service recently participated in the national CIPFA benchmarking exercise for insurance services. Initial feedback indicates that, for all public liability claims, Haringey receives a higher number of claims per head of population than other authorities (10.8 claims per 1000 population compared to 7.9 claims), but has been able to repudiate a higher percentage of claims than the national average (78% compared to 70%), as a result of the Council's ongoing routine inspection and maintenance programmes.</p>



10	E-change of circumstances	Please tell us the number of claims (and changes) as a percentage of the total volumes. If available, it would be useful to have figures over a period of time that indicate the take up of these services.	<p><u>New Claims Reporting Period - Feb – July</u></p> <p>New claims submitted via customer services - 7710          New claims received using e-benefits -2230 (29%)</p> <p><u>e-Change of Circumstances reporting period – August</u></p> <p>e-change of circumstances was only introduced at the beginning of August, so take up is currently fairly low.</p> <p>Changes in circumstances reported via customer services - 3250          Changes reported via the e-change of circumstances software – 78 (2.4%).</p>
11	Performance	Although the improved performance in processing new benefit claims and changes is welcome, there is still a substantial gap between achievement and target. If there is an increased take up in claims what modelling has been done to see if the system will cope?	<p>Benefits and Local Taxation constantly monitor demand on the service using a resource utilisation tool. Future demand is predicted based on current trends, and strategic operational decisions taken to ensure that the service has the capacity to cope with the increased demand at any given time. We will continue to monitor the resources required to cope with any significant increases in demand and take proactive action where required.</p> <p>Some of the strategies already put in place to increase capacity include benefit assessors on the front line to assess new benefit claims and changes in circumstances, thus getting claims 'right first time' in the presence of the customer. Use has been made of a processing house for off site processing on a 'call off' basis as and when required. A review and simplification of the new claims and change of circumstances processes in partnership with Customer Services has taken place to eliminate waste and a project to review and simplify the Verification requirements for new claims, in order to make it easier for customers to claim benefit and quicker for the service to process claims has occurred.</p>





12	Customer service performance	The increased productivity is impressive: has the Lead member reassured himself that levels of service have been maintained, particularly for people who have little English or have auditory or mental impairments?	Customer Service through its experience of dealing with and providing services to a wide range of people with various individual needs, has, and continues to learn from its interaction with its customers. As part of our commitment to addressing the needs of residents with disabilities or limited English Skills we offer both language and sign language interpreters, this is in addition to utilisation of hearing loop and type talk, which is recommended by RNDI as a medium to assist auditory impairments.
13	IT Strategy 2010 - 13	What savings will this investment generate?	<p>The IT Strategy 2010-13 sets out a clear vision for the IT activity that needs to be undertaken to deliver the strategic projects which address our current business priorities and the renewal of our IT infrastructure. The delivery of this strategy will be a key enabler in the modernisation of services to residents, improving the customer experience and supporting the realisation of the efficiency savings required in future years.</p> <p>The proposed investment in the technical infrastructure renewal is presumed to be cost neutral in terms of on-going revenue costs. The funding for strategic business projects is only agreed once a robust business case has been prepared, the primary criteria being that any new business IT projects deliver efficiency savings and contribute to the Council's savings targets.</p> <p>While the savings are not quantified the IT strategy sets up the process for savings to be made elsewhere in the business e.g. SMART working.</p>
14	Finance and Sustain-	How much is it anticipated that the Council will spend on IT this year: how much will be new and/or replacement	The IT Services Revenue Budget for the financial year 2010-11 is £16,364,400 of which £1,311,800 has been set aside this year to contribute to the funding of the technical infrastructure renewal. As detailed in the IT Strategy 2010-13, the technical infrastructure



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	ability	kit?	renewal will be delivered in a phased approach over the next 4 financial years at a total estimated cost of £8,330,000.
		<b>Questions from Cllr Karen Alexander</b>	
15	Page 1, Point 2	Sustainable procurement strategy – How is this implementation going? How many contracts does this involve?	<p>The Sustainable Procurement Strategy requires the Council to meet Level 4 of the Flexible Framework by September 2012 and we are on target to achieve this. Sustainability is prioritised for contracts where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant environmental/social risk;</li> <li>Scope to improve contract delivery; and</li> <li>Influence with suppliers.</li> </ul> <p>To date we have included sustainability specifications in 13 contracts totalling £248m. Environmental performance is a standard question in all Pre-Qualification Questionnaires and there are environmental contract clauses in our standard form of contract.</p>
16	Page 2 & 3	What measures are being used to ensure that the targets set are going to be met?	The Council has produced a Sustainable Procurement Action Plan which was agreed by Procurement Committee in October 2009 and contains a series of actions to achieve the target. The plan is managed by the Sustainable Procurement Manager and a quarterly KPI is produced on progress.
17	Page 4  Benefits & Local Taxation	<p><u>Changes to small business rate relief scheme:</u></p> <p>Is the council considering any other proactive measures to help small businesses in the borough?</p> <p>Do the council plan to introduce any forums, events or programmes to</p>	<p>The Business Rates Team has been very proactive in promoting the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme since its introduction in 2005. There has been a high take up amongst the eligible ratepayers and we currently have over 2,300 businesses benefiting from the scheme. There have been twice yearly mail shots/reviews, publicity within the literature sent with all Business Rate bills and subsequent notices and website promotion. Publicity has also been provided at the various Business Events and Traders meetings</p>



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		promote small businesses?	held around the borough.
18	5	<p><u>Performance</u></p> <p>Can you clarify this please? Are we only collecting 29.7% of all council tax and 31.5% of business rates or do these percentages relate to outstanding monies?</p>	<p>The percentages relate to how much of the 2010/11 annual debt we have collected at a certain point in time in the year.</p> <p>These collection rates relate to the position at the end of June, not the full year position.</p>
19	6	<p><u>Improved use of office space</u></p> <p>Please explain SMART working practices.</p>	<p>Under SMART Working practices all office facilities are used as shared resources to increase space utilisation, provide greater flexibility of workplace settings and locations, reduce travelling time for employees and promote greater teamwork and collaboration.</p> <p>A majority of the workstations are now being provided in an open plan environment with modifications to the physical layout, supporting facilities and working practices to enable workstations to be shared rather than allocating to individuals.</p> <p>Along with flexible working practices (working from home) this is enabling the Council to reduce the number of workstations provided (current standard is to provide 7 workstations for 10 staff). This is helping to release spaces to increase meeting rooms and other team spaces and ultimately increasing cost efficiency by reducing the number of buildings.</p>
20	7	<p><u>Capital Income</u></p> <p>Corporate Property Services</p> <p>How successful has the soft market testing been? What are the current market yields now against what they</p>	<p>We have yet to complete the soft market testing but there are indications that yields have improved since this time last year, however have some way to go yet to reach the levels achieved at the height of the property market in mid 2007.</p>





23	7 Finance and Sustainability	<p>Could the Cabinet member for Finance and Sustainability explain to the Scrutiny Committee how he will develop a coherent strategy that weaves together the diverse strands of his portfolio - financial oversight and management of the council and departmental budgets; Council's green / environmental and sustainable development policies; delivery of improved customer services ; collection of council tax and payment of benefits; development and delivery of accessible and cost effective IT strategy; effective use and development of the Council's property portfolio; improved public consultation - and that also addresses the conflicts that appear to be inherent within it."</p>	<p>I recognise that Finance and Sustainability is a comprehensive brief, yet the responsibilities are all critical to ensuring we deliver on the commitments laid out in the One Future, One Borough Labour Manifesto which won a mandate from the people of Haringey in May 2010.</p> <p>That mandate requires to ensure we use resident monies efficiently and effectively to improve the quality of our services and promote the quality of our Borough for the benefit of all.</p> <p>This is clearly challenging and yet all the more important in the current climate where the government have not only withdrawn £16.85m to date, but are contemplating cuts of up to 40% which are the most savage cuts in Europe. In highlighting this I not only am concerned with the direct impact on our budgets, but also the impact of cuts to other services on our residents and most critically the damage to the economy which will hinder efforts to improve prosperity and opportunity for all in our borough.</p>
24	9	<p><u>Agency Staff</u></p> <p>What efforts are the council making to further reduce the figure of 582 FTE agency staff. Are these staff given incentives to move from agency to permanent staff?</p>	



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