

COUNCIL – 22 NOVEMBER 2010 - QUESTIONS

PUBLIC QUESTION 1 TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM TIM CAINES:

"How can the Council justify spending £2 million pounds on its website, the highest amount anywhere in the UK, when it has, largely of its on making, a £10 million pound budget black hole and when council tenants, especially in Tottenham, can't get basic repairs carried out?"

PUBLIC QUESTION 2 TO THE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM QUENTIN GIVEN OF TOTTENHAM & WOOD GREEN FRIENDS OF THE EARTH:

"The climate change threat is greater than ever, but given that national governments have not been able to reach agreement on a binding treaty to cut CO2 emissions, the efforts of local government are even more important. What will the Council do to ensure that the vital work of cutting CO2 emissions in Haringey continues despite the regrettable cuts in public spending?"

ORAL QUESTIONS

ORAL QUESTION 1 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND COHESION FROM COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHIDES:

Given that crime in the borough has fallen by 34 % between 2002/3 and 2009/10 Is the Cabinet Member worried about the impact of proposed Police cuts in London?

ORAL QUESTION 2 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR SOLOMON:

What tangible measures is the Council taking to support the local economy and businesses, including the many independent retailers and high streets in the Borough?

ORAL QUESTION 3 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR STRICKLAND:

Can the Lead Member please advise us on the phasing of cuts to Local Government funding advocated by the Coalition?

ORAL QUESTION 4 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND COHESION FROM COUNCILLOR STRANG:

What does the Anti-Social Behaviour Team cost per annum?

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

Is the Lead member concerned about the increased cost pressures of inward migration of vulnerable families into the borough at time when Local Government has taken the biggest cut of any Government department?

ORAL QUESTION 6 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ERSKINE:

What is the future of the mobile library service?

ORAL QUESTION 7 - TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR EGAN:

Can the Leader of the Council please explain the impact on Haringey residents of the Coalitions decision to scrap ringfencing for vital funding streams?

ORAL QUESTION 8 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR JENKS:

How much of the funds raised from the sale of Council assets has the Council invested in regeneration projects since 2006?

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

How many residents currently use services at the following and what is the average cost per resident or user of these services:

- The Woodside Day Centre
- Jackson's Lane Luncheon Club
- Cypriot Elderly and Disability project
- In-house Homecare Service
- Each of the Council's residential care homes?

ANSWER

The unit cost to Council of service is based on PSS returns where available.

- The Woodside Day Centre - 45 users. £55.56/day
- Jackson's Lane Luncheon Club - 30 to 35 attendances/week (15 individual people approx). £10,500/year
- Cypriot Elderly and Disability project (126 users of which 61 are Haringey residents). Cypriot Elderly and Disability Project (voluntary sector service) - £94K cost to Council for two management staff plus placement costs of 61 Haringey clients placed at varying rates through Supporting People and mainstream social care funding - not possible to calculate an average due to structure of service which includes funding from other boroughs.
- In-house Homecare Service – 131 service users currently. £32.10/hour/client

- Each of the Council's residential care homes:
Red House – 35 (current occupancy 27 perm, 5 respite, 3 vacancies).
£682.77/resident/week.
Broadwater Lodge – 45. £539.09/resident/week
Cranwood – 33 beds. £654.40/resident/week

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

Please provide an explanation of how, why and when the Mulberry School was selected to be given £3 million of funding received from the government for primary school places?

ANSWER

Following the coalition government's withdrawal of the £8.57m grant for school places and of the post-election budget statement (which showed that Haringey would be unable to maintain the revenue cost of borrowing to sustain its full programme), all aspects of the capital programme were reviewed with officers and the Leader, Cllr Goldberg and Cllr Reith. On the basis of this the primary school programme was stripped down to:

- Essential health and safety works and maintenance needed to keep schools open
- Rhodes Avenue expansion
- The inclusive learning campus at Broadwater Farm
- Works designed to enable short-term school places provision.

The 2011/12 capital programme will be considered by Cabinet in December. Mulberry is now in the draft programme which will formally be considered by Cabinet in December. Mulberry has been assessed as the school in most urgent need of works to ensure its basic condition and layout is suitable for teaching and learning.

Mulberry was withdrawn from the funded programme at that stage in order to re-allocate funds to primary school places. However, because of the clear need, a small fund was allowed to continue design work on the project pending any settlement in the dispute over the £8.57m. Subsequently, the settlement with the DfE has enabled the release of £3m. This enables the council to maintain the fund for school places while going ahead with Mulberry.

WRITTEN QUESTION 3 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR BEACHAM:

How many new community growing spaces, on fallow pocket areas on Council owned or Homes for Haringey land, has the Council created in the past twelve months?

ANSWER

There are 17 existing or proposed community growing spaces on land that is managed, on the Council's behalf, by Homes for Haringey.

WRITTEN QUESTION 4 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR BLOCH:

How many staff are currently employed in the planning department; how many of these are contract or agency staff?

ANSWER

The service currently employs 95 staff of which 5 are agency. Two agency staff are targeted for released by end of December/January 2010 and the remaining three by March/June 2011, over which period a service restructuring will take place. The consultant contracts are targeted to end in March 2011. In addition two consultants are employed on specialised projects where the Council has insufficient expertise. A specialist consultant is required to assist the service in assessing development financial appraisals in the negotiation of section 106 agreements. In Building Control the consultant is covering a sabbatical.

WRITTEN QUESTION 5 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR BUTCHER:

Please provide the amounts spent by Child Protection Service officers and associated staff on taxi fares in 2008/9, 2009/10 and the amount for the current year?

ANSWER

Staff are authorised to use taxis in circumstances of emergency or urgency, where children are distressed or there are sibling groups making use of public transport problematic. The travel involves transportation of vulnerable children subject to s47 investigation under safeguarding duties from home or school, generally to hospital for emergency child protection medical and then on to police interview and to foster placements. Some transportation involves taking children from a foster home to supervised contact sessions. Taxi fares incurred for the above activities are:

2008/09 £62,427
2009/10 £98,545
2010/11 £35,532

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

What is the Council doing to ensure that the first bus stop in Muswell Hill for the southbound W7 and 144 bus service is moved the present steep hill to a position that is accessible, DDA compliant and enables level access interchange with the other bus services serving Muswell Hill?

ANSWER

The matter was raised by Cllr. Reith with TfL (via London Travelwatch) in February 2008. Since then, the Council and Transport for London (TfL) have looked at the possible relocation of this bus stop. TfL are responsible for decisions on the location of

bus stops. The Council put forward a number of proposals which TfL have rejected these include:

- To extend the route beyond Muswell Hill to allow passengers to board or alight at the bus stops on Muswell Hill Broadway. TfL consider such an extension would be expensive to implement.
- Converting the taxi rank on the roundabout for use as a bus stop. TfL has advised the location is not suitable as it would not meet their criteria for a fully accessible bus stop and road safety implications.
- To allow passengers starting their journey to board a terminating bus at the last northbound stop on Muswell Hill. TfL has not supported this suggestion due to the lack of capacity of this stop as it would require an additional loop of Muswell Hill roundabout.

The Council will continue to lobby TfL for an improved location for the stop.

WRITTEN QUESTION 7 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR ENGERT:

How many complaints of encroachment by private landowners onto Council land have the Council received, year by year and ward by ward, in the last 5 years and what has been the outcome of these complaints?

ANSWER

We can confirm that to our knowledge there have been 9 known separate incidents of encroachment on to Council owned land by private individuals in the last 5 years. Where encroachment takes place and we are aware of the act, we take the necessary steps to protect the Council's position.

WRITTEN QUESTION 8 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR ERSKINE:

When was the last time the Call Centre met its targets; what were those targets and what are the targets today?

ANSWER

The Call centre last met its targets in October 2010 - the last reported month. The target for calls answered in 30 seconds was 70% and 87% was achieved. The other target is 90% for the number of calls answered and in October 98% as achieved.

WRITTEN QUESTION 9 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR GORRIE:

Over the last two years several Council-owned hostels have been sold. Where are residents, who would formerly have been housed in these hostels, now homed?

ANSWER:

All residents at hostels that were being decanted for sale have been re-housed. Some residents went to the private sector but the majority went in to alternative temporary accommodation or permanent housing via the Council or a registered provider.

WRITTEN QUESTION 10 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR HARE:

A recent case in Highgate has shown the need for the Council to improve (1) Validation of tree applications, so that all the information required is provided to the planning service BEFORE the clock starts ticking on the assessment of the application (2) Management of protection processes, so that dates for notices or other responses are not missed. Will the Cabinet Member urgently put in place the review, and provide me with details and timescale?

ANSWER

This Service is aware of the potential problems associated with the processing of applications for 6-week notices for works to unprotected trees in conservation areas particularly following the experience relating to the trees at No. 225 Archway Road N6. In order to resolve these issues and avoid similar difficulties occurring again, the Council will undertake a review of the processes currently followed. This will be completed and reported on in January 2011

WRITTEN QUESTION 11 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR JENKS:

The Audit Commission report (28/10/10) states that only 6% of total spending on adult social care in England has been allocated to personal budgets compared with an agreed milestone of 30% by next April. What progress is Haringey Council making with personal care budgets?

ANSWER

The current position in Haringey is that 445 adults have personal budgets out of 1974 adults being supported altogether, which is 22.5%. There are an 433 people currently going through the process to obtain a personal budget. If all of these receive a personal budget by the end of February then there will be 878 adults receiving personal budgets. This will then represent 36.4% of all adults supported at home.

WRITTEN QUESTION 12 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR NEWTON:

Dog fouling and incessant barking are listed as anti-social behaviour - How many complaints have the Council received for each of these in the last 3 years, year by year, and what outcomes have been achieved?

ANSWER

Dog Fouling complaints

Year	Number of complaints
08/09	78
09/10	131
10/11	159 (to date)

Where problem locations are identified there is now a programme of patrols where we will challenge dog walkers and ensure they are aware of legal requirements and are prepared to clean up after their dogs. Since September 2010, 18 dog fouling patrols have been delivered at problem locations across the borough. Where evidence to support an offence is obtained we can issue a fixed penalty notice, simple caution or prosecute. Actions taken can be broken down as follows:

Barking dogs complaints

Year	Number of complaints
2008	430
2009	438
2010	476 (to date)

The Enforcement Response team deal with barking dog complaints and have a staged approach to dealing with barking dog noise as follows:

- All complaints will be responded to and where a location for a dog can be identified we will give informal initial advice to the pet owner
- Written warnings are issued once excessive barking noise has been witnessed by an officer
- Abatement notices will be issued once we are satisfied as to the existence of a statutory noise nuisance

Where an abatement notice is not complied with then there three options available: Fixed Penalty Notice, Simple Caution or Prosecution. On conviction there is a potential fine of up to £5,000, although our highest fine has been £1,000 plus costs. There has been one case in the last 3 three years where compliance with an abatement notice was not achieved as required by the owner, this case is expected to be resolved shortly by a voluntary relocation of the dogs in question.

WRITTEN QUESTION 13 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR REECE:

How many consultants are currently employed by planning services, how many have been employed in the last three years?

ANSWER

There are currently two consultants employed by the service which are funded from mainstream budgets. In the last three years we have employed 10 consultants no more than two at any one time.

WRITTEN QUESTION 14 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR REID:

What is the full quota of staff for Priory Park?

ANSWER

Parks Operational staff are currently deployed across 3 areas – East, Central and West. The West area has 25 full time employed staff, with a team of 5 covering Priory Park.

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

When did the Council first become aware of the application by First Capital Connect to restore permitted development rights to part of the site of the Hornsey train maintenance depot, so as to allow the construction, without planning permission, of a train cleaning shed in the area south of Turnpike Lane?

ANSWER

On 15 September 2010 First Capital Connect submitted a planning application for a new train cleaning facility and associated works. This application was made on land within the recently declared Article 4 area. This application was separate from and should not be confused with Network Rail's application for the Maintenance depot.

The Council made strong representations in February 2010 to support its case for upholding the Article 4 Direction following Network Rail's application to the Secretary of State to cancel the Article 4 Direction. The Article 4 Direction had previously been approved on 29 November 2009 by the Secretary of State following the Council's application in to declare the area in August 2009.

On 23 September 2010 the Secretary of State dismissed Network Rail's appeal, but with modifications reducing the size of the Article 4 area. As a result of the reduction in size of the Article 4 area, the First Capital Connects proposed cleaning facility now falls outside the Article 4 area, meaning planning permission is no longer required. As a result, First Capital Connect withdrew its application for the train cleaning facility. In making representations the Council argued it was important as the planning authority to protect amenity and regeneration policies and schemes. The process of permitted development does however allow the Council to promote operational conditions.

WRITTEN QUESTION 16 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR SCOTT:

Please can the Council confirm or deny that it owns the pedestrian footbridge between Bedford Road and Buckingham Road N22 that runs alongside the station platform access bridge?

ANSWER

The footbridge known as Alexandra Station Footbridge is owned and maintained by Network Rail. The Council as the Highway Authority are responsible for the maintenance of the surfacing.

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

Please provide a complete list of criteria against which traffic schemes in the borough are evaluated, and in particular, how any cost-benefit analysis for minor schemes is done?

ANSWER

Our main criteria when evaluating traffic schemes under our Local Implementation Plan (LIP) namely Corridors and Neighbourhoods is to develop a holistic approach which includes:

- Identified regeneration area / town centres
- Identified Defined Employment Areas
- Bus priorities
- Identified cycle route
- High pedestrian activity levels
- Accident levels
- Traffic congestion
- Presence of community centres, children’s centres and other centres with elderly/disabled people
- Identified locations for parking pressure
- High proportion of car trips to schools
- Expansion of electric vehicle charging points

In the current financial climate there is no budget for minor schemes. Any additional funding would be considered on a case by case basis in light of numbers accidents and associated costs incurred set against the cost of the proposed scheme.

WRITTEN QUESTION 18 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR STRANG:

How many (and % of) planning applications were rejected as being improperly completed rather than being accepted into the timed planning review process?

ANSWER

From 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2010 the service has received 3344 applications, of these 982 (29%) were invalid. Approximately 70% (680) of these applications were resubmitted and validated.

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

How many housing benefit staff have been let go since May 2010?

ANSWER

We have not reduced any of the Council's benefits staff, but since May 18 agency workers in the department have left, 15 were working on clearing the backlog caused by increases in demands on the service.

WRITTEN QUESTION 20 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR WHYTE:

What percentage of one year old children in Haringey with child protection plans received their one-year health check from a Health Visitor after their first birthday?

ANSWER

All infants who are one years of age and who have a child protection plan are in receipt of regular (4-6 weekly) intervention and support from a named Health Visitor. This would include a health review when the infant is one year old. Child Protection Specialist Health Visitors provide child protection supervision for all Health Visitors and all children with a child protection plan.

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

What is the percentage of Haringey private rental properties where rents would currently lie outside a cap on housing benefit set at £400 per week for four-bed properties and £290 per week for two-bed properties?

ANSWER

The government has announced that Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates will be 'capped' from April 2011 and that, from October 2011, they will be calculated on the basis of the 30 percentile of rents, rather than the 50 percentile used at present.

Unfortunately, we are only able to confirm the percentage of Housing Benefit recipients (rather than the percentage of all private tenants) whose current rent is above the LHA 'caps' that come into effect in April 2011.

At present, a total of 9,651 private tenants are receiving Housing Benefit in Haringey and, of these, 2,868 are living in two-bedroom accommodation and 447 are living in accommodation that has between four and seven bedrooms. Of these, a total of 144 families will be affected by the LHA 'caps': 60 (2%) of the families living in a two-bedroom home will be affected by the £290 'cap' and 71 (16%) of the families living in a home with at least four bedrooms will be affected by the £400 'cap'.

Of the 144 Haringey families affected by the LHA 'caps' that come into effect in April 2011, a total of 84 families are living in the west of the borough and a total of 60 families are living in large family homes (with at least 5 bedrooms) in the east of the borough.

Many more families, however, will be affected by the government's decision to base the calculation of the Local Housing Allowance on the 30 percentile of rents (rather than the 50 percentile used at present) with effect from October 2011 because this will result in the LHA being based on the least expensive (and, most probably, the poorest quality) private rented accommodation in the borough. Also of significant concern is the government's proposed benefit cap at £500 a week – this is likely to severely impact on families and couples in Haringey.

To illustrate the impact of the government's changes to the calculation of the Local Housing Allowance, let us consider the LHA rate for a two-bedroom home in Highgate.

Based on the 30 percentile of current rents, the LHA for a two-bedroom home in Highgate would be £60 a week less than the LHA would be if it was based on the 50 percentile. This is £20 a week lower than the £290 LHA 'cap' proposed from April 2011.

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

How many fixed penalty notices have been issued by Estate Services Managers, for what offence?

ANSWER

One fixed penalty notice for dog fouling.

WRITTEN QUESTION 23 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR WINSKILL:

Regarding my question for the Full Council meeting on 18th Oct 2010 please could you provide the following regarding the consultant identified:

- Please give times of any employment periods with Haringey Council prior to January 2009?

ANSWER

The consultant was not employed by Haringey prior to January 2009.