

COUNCIL – 24 FEBRUARY 2011 - QUESTIONS

ORAL QUESTIONS

ORAL QUESTION 1 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR PEACOCK:

Will the cabinet member comment on the Prime Minister's assertion that the Tory-led government has not cut funding to Sure Start children's centres?

ORAL QUESTION 2 – TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR WINSKILL:

Considering the recent public statements from Tottenham Hotspur FC saying that they will not stay at White Hart Lane even if they are not successful in their bid for the Olympic stadium, should the Leader or any of her predecessors have done anything different in the handling of the Spurs application?

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

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the government's assistance to Councils in capitalising redundancy costs?

ORAL QUESTION 4 - TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ENGERT:

What meetings have Council members or officers had with Tottenham Hotspur FC officials since 26th Jan 2011?

ORAL QUESTION 5 –TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR EJIOFOR:

Can the cabinet member say more about the council's work to assist local people access affordable credit?

ORAL QUESTION 6 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR REID:

Please provide details on whether the Council and or Newlyn Plc have been forced to concede and or forced to make compensation or refund payments as a result of complaints received from residents about "phantom visits" by bailiffs.

ORAL QUESTION 7 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR BROWNE:

What plans does Haringey have to improve air quality in the borough?

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

With the loss of council apprenticeships how is the council going to help tackle youth unemployment in the borough?

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

WRITTEN QUESTION 1 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR ALEXANDER:

What does the Council hope to gain as a result of having granted planning permission for the supermarket development on the Tottenham Hotspur site, now that there is at the least a substantial possibility that the profits will be used to build a stadium somewhere else?

ANSWER

Council planning policy allows the development of a supermarket on this site – which would support business and jobs in the area and a developing town centre. Should the landowner need a compulsory purchase order to make the supermarket happen, (and that is currently the case) that could only be supported if a comprehensive development scheme for the stadium came forward. The Council continues to work with THFC to support the regeneration of Tottenham.

WRITTEN QUESTION 2 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR ALLISON:

How many properties does the Council lease from private individuals for temporary accommodation, how many times in the last year has legal action been taken for breach of contract and how much has the Council had to pay at the end of temporary leases to make good properties?

ANSWER

1683 homes are leased from private individuals (and through letting agents) for use as temporary accommodation. To date in the current financial year the Council has settled 59 dilapidations claims totalling £89,507 (an average of £1,517).

WRITTEN QUESTION 3 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR BEACHAM:

Please provide a copy of the equality impact assessment used when the Council made the decision to cut 75% out of the Youth Service budget next year.

ANSWER

The timescale for the Equality Impact Assessment is dictated by the timescale for the staff consultation and user consultation as they run concurrently. Therefore we have to wait until the staff consultation period is finished to complete the Equality Impact Assessment as it will be informed by the consultation.

Final decisions on the budget including the level of reductions proposed for the youth service will be made once we have completed the process of seeking the views of all of those affected and the outcomes of the Equalities Impact Assessment have been

properly reviewed. We anticipate that the Equality Impact Assessment will be completed by 22 March 2011.

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

How many appeals against the refusal of planning permission have been lodged in each of the last 5 years and in how many cases were the appeals granted?

ANSWER

The Council’s target is for only 30% of planning appeals to be “allowed” (meaning lost) by the Council. 30% is the national average.

Year	No. of appeals against refusal of planning permission	No. allowed (ie lost by the Council)	%
2006/07	139	51	37%
2007/08	122	52	43%
2008/09	116	42	36%
2009/10	114	35	31%
2010/11 (to Jan)	60	15	25%

WRITTEN QUESTION 5 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR BUTCHER:

How much money has the Council spent to date on support, development plans, officer time, compulsory purchase orders, legal fees, planning fees, and publicity on the Tottenham Hotspur/Northumberland Development Project how much has Spurs paid for Haringey Council officers’ time?

ANSWER

None. All the resources spent to date on the proposed scheme have been funded through planning application fees and cost neutral pre-application and compulsory purchase development fees paid by Spurs.

WRITTEN QUESTION 6 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR ENGERT:

What events did Haringey Council hold in National Apprenticeship Week to promote apprenticeships in the local community?

ANSWER

Haringey Council held a joint Year 9 event at Alexandra Palace with Enfield Council where we invited local employers, colleges, providers and the National Apprenticeship service to help young people in their decision making. 320 Year 9 students attended this event from Haringey. We also held a business challenge event with Year 9 students and NatWest bank where they had to make business proposals.

The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London also held two apprenticeship fairs where opportunities in sectors such as IT and telecoms, construction, hair and beauty, and health and social care were promoted.

Outside of national apprenticeship week a great deal of work is done to promote apprenticeships across the borough, with the Council and its main contractors currently employing 47 apprentices.

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

Please give details of any land sales by the borough and compulsory purchases of land that were made to facilitate the redevelopment of the Tottenham Hotspur site, the current estimated value of the land in its entirety and how many businesses have been relocated?

ANSWER

No land sales have been made by the Council. Estimates will be made by the District Valuer at the appropriate time. At September 2010 (latest figures – Planning Committee Report), 45 businesses had been relocated and 70% within 2 miles of the current site.

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

In each of the last three years how much has the Council lost in rent revenue due to empty units in the Technopark?

ANSWER

Across the council's property portfolio, the council achieves 90% occupancy rates, which is comparable for local councils in the area. The rental value for empty lets was £330k in 2008/09, £360k in 2009/10 and £370k in 2010/11. That should be seen in the context of the local office market in Tottenham Hale which has been flat in these difficult economic times. There is also a high level of private office vacancies in the area.

In the current economic climate, it remains challenging to find tenants and new start-ups to take up the empty lets.

WRITTEN QUESTION 9 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR HARE:

How much has the Council spent on agency staff each year for the past two years?

ANSWER:

Agency staff are used in essential front line services such as social care and where staffing re-organisations are planned in order to minimise potential redundancy costs. The spend for the last two years is set out below:

Council Spend 2009 – 2010:	£21,994,144
Council Spend 2010 - 2011 to date:	£16,148,133

The number of agency staff employed by the Council has reduced from 658 in April to 378 in January, a reduction of 280 workers and we have reduced the cost by approx. £675k per month.

WRITTEN QUESTION 10 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR JENKS:

What is the total spent by the Council on external consultants since October 2010 and what duties have they been carrying out?

ANSWER

For the period October to December 2010 the figure is £441,426. Consultants are being used to deliver a number of programmes including: active health & wellbeing, leisure usage/ income development, Adults Service transformation, framework-i and other IT specialist skills, specialist property services advice, consultancy expertise in major projects, grant-funded school improvement partners, plus posts providing interim management.

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

Given the recent assaults in Alexandra Park and Queens Wood will the Council rethink its plans to cut the Parkforce police team?

ANSWER

The MPS worked closely with the Council and other agencies to ensure a swift response and subsequent arrest. The Council will continue to work closely with the MPS, but is not proposing to renew the existing contract for Safer Parks Team. We are intending to redirect reduced funding to support and enhance the existing Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in partnership with the MPS, to improve local intelligence, reporting and response to incidents in parks and open spaces.

WRITTEN QUESTION 12 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR REECE:

How many young people currently use the youth services provided by the Council and what is the estimated affect on the number of young people who will be able to access the services following the proposed 75% cut to the budget?

ANSWER

Last year there were 4,406 participants in Youth Service activity. This was made up of 2,225 using the universal provision and 1,944 young people accessing the targeted provision. We are holding a series of meetings with young people to seek their views on the best way of allocating resources. We are asking them about how we can best get information to them about youth services provided by the voluntary sector and out of hours provision in schools.

WRITTEN QUESTION 13 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR REID:

How many complaints has the Council received each year from residents about Newlyn Plc since the commencement of their contract with the Council and how many of these complaints claim that bailiffs have charged for a visit when no visit took place?

ANSWER

The service has worked with Newlyn since 2001 and the average number of complaints for each year is 3. The number of complaints received against Newlyn over the last three years are: 2008/09 2, 2009/10 4, 2010/11 3. There are no known circumstances for any of our bailiff companies charging for visits that have not taken place.

WRITTEN QUESTION 14 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR SCHMITZ:

In view of the recent scandal in Derby - what action has been taken by the Council to ensure that none of our looked after children are exposed to grooming?

ANSWER

There is a clear policy in place regarding young people in care and their use of social networking sites. In residential establishments, staff monitor computer use and young people are not allowed access to computers without staff being present. When young people are out on their own or with friends, carers are expected to be vigilant about their whereabouts and who they are spending time with. The Head of Service for Children in Care will be attending a one day seminar run by an independent agency in conjunction with Derby regarding the recent work they have undertaken. Key messages from this will be disseminated and used to further develop our practice in Haringey.

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

There is currently a limit of 20% on the number of conversions to multi-occupation in one street. How rigidly is this limit applied? To what degree is the Council able to agree to exceed this limit? How often has the limit been exceeded in the last year (2010)? If the limit is not rigidly adhered to, should there be a higher limit that is enforced?

ANSWER

The 20% limit is a policy guide and needs to be taken into account along with the merits of any particular development proposal and other policies to support the growth of homes every year of between 600 and 900. It applies to the whole borough, but particularly to a restricted number of key defined areas, (key streets in The Miltons, Archway, Harringay/St Anns, Stroud Green, Muswell Hill, Bruce Grove, Myddleton Rd, West Green and Crouch End).

The policy is being revised as part of the new Local Development Framework to make it more criteria based, ensuring that conversions provide sufficient housing space, amenity space, parking and waste management facilities.

In 2010, 105 applications for conversions were considered. 60 were approved, 44 refused and 1 is undetermined. There were no approvals of HMOs (7+ individuals sharing a house). In the key designated areas no HMOs were approved; 10 conversions were approved and 12 were refused. This is out of a new homes total in Haringey in 2009-10 of 780, including some 30 voids brought back into use.

Officers do review the street percentage when considering conversions and HMOs. Where streets are at a very high percentage of conversions, the policy has a strong

policy influence, but design criteria is still the main influence. In reviewing Conversion/HMO policy, two other Council policies must also be taken into account:

1. the need to support more homes overall, particularly more affordable homes;
2. the majority of existing homes in the borough are in fact family sized homes and what is needed over the next 15 years are more smaller homes.

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

Please identify what plans are currently in hand to improve the safety of Durnsford Road and the top part of Alexandra Park Road?

ANSWER

We are about to implement two road safety improvements in Durnsford Road, the first is an extension of the traffic island between Crescent Rise and Wroxham Gardens towards Colney Hatch Lane to dissuade drivers from undertaking a 'U' turn out of Crescent Rise to drive into Wroxham Gardens. We will also be incorporating a cycle crossover facility within the island to improve cycle safety. The second safety improvement will be the construction of a zebra crossing on Durnsford Road near Woodfield Way. Work will start on both of these improvements within the next few weeks.

Between Durnsford Road and Alexandra Park Road is a section of Albert Road where we are designing a 20mph school safety zone adjacent to the recreation ground. The zone extends to the junction of Alexandra Park Road. We anticipate undertaking a consultation exercise regarding this scheme next month with a view to implementation early in the new financial year.

WRITTEN QUESTION 17 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR STRANG:

Please provide the average Band D Council Tax payment in each of the last ten years and show the percentage increase per year and the total increase in the charge over the period.

ANSWER

See appendix A.

WRITTEN QUESTION 18 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR WEBER:

Since the increase in pot hole and pavement intervention levels how many claims has there been against the council?

ANSWER

We have not seen any increase numbers in the claims being made since the changes were made to the intervention levels. Since the intervention levels were increased in August 2010 we have received 75 claims, for the same period 2008/9 we received 96 claims and 2009/10 154 claims. The increase in 2009/10 was due to the severe weather conditions which prevailed in the early part of 2010.

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

How many senior managers received bonuses in each of the last 5 years, what was the largest bonus in each year; and what was the total value of bonuses paid each year?

ANSWER

The senior manager pay scheme was introduced in 2005 and the first payment review occurred in 2006. Senior managers' increment progression within the grade is subject to appraisal. There are no bonus payments as such but there is the potential for additional increments to be paid for excellent performance. The number of people awarded additional increments and highest value awarded is outlined below.

Year	Number of Senior Managers	Highest value
2006	2	£1656
2007	8	£1656
2008	11	£1743
2009	11	£1758
2010	1	£1743

WRITTEN QUESTION 20 – TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAMS:

If she will set out the rules governing the participation of Haringey council employees in deputations and the making of party-political statements by such persons thereat, does she support such conduct and what action she would support in the event of any relevant rules or regulations being breached.

ANSWER

Employees conduct in deputations and the making of party political statements are governed primarily by the employee code of conduct and the Member/Officer Protocol. Defamation law would also apply to the making of any statements, whether on behalf of the Council or on behalf of a Trade Union. The Protocol refers to an expectation that officers should be committed to the Council as a whole and not to any political group. This would seem to me to mean that an officer at any level should be unbiased in their role and duties. Failure to comply with such standards of conduct would lead to disciplinary action being considered. However it is unlikely that a Tribunal would extend the meaning of that to include an employee carrying out trade union duties within a local government setting which have a degree of statutory protection.

WRITTEN QUESTION 21 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM COUNCILLOR WILSON:

How many members of staff earned over £100,000 this year and in each of the last 10 years?

ANSWER

Our pay records only go back to 2003 when we introduced a new pay system (SAP):

Year	No. of staff earning over £100k
2003/04	1
2004/05	2
2005/06	3
2006/07	5
2007/08	6
2008/09	8
2009/10	8
2010/11	7

WRITTEN QUESTION 22 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR WINSKILL:

Can the Council detail all the youth projects run in the borough by the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation, how many children benefit from these activities, what does the Council expect will happen to these projects if Spurs move from the borough and what will the council do to place pressure on Spurs not to reduce the benefits?

ANSWER

Tottenham Hotspur Foundation (THF) plays an important part of young people support and development in the Borough and the Upper Lee Valley. No decision has been made about the Club moving and the Council remains committed to working with the Club to deliver the approved planning application. THF regularly helps 100- 200 young people a year in Haringey with support of some form. As joint funding for projects runs out, projects stop or new external funding is found. Examples include:

- Heading for Success (HfS) - a 20 week adult education programme in numeracy, literacy and ICT and health;
- A separate ESOL course was also provided as this was identified as a high need for Haringey residents;
- THF is the lead club in the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) initiative with London Football Clubs. This programme works with young people aged 18-24 who are unemployed;
- A Sector Skills Council for Hospitality Leisure Travel and Tourism training and award scheme;
- The Learning Zone at Spurs provides a range of courses including Playing for Success, Learning Zone Workshops, Kick & Cook, and Work Experience.