

COUNCIL – 21 NOVEMBER 2011 - QUESTIONS

ORAL QUESTIONS

ORAL QUESTION 1 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR WILSON:

How many responses has the Council received to its recent consultation on changing the designation of land at Pinkham Way to enable the building of waste disposal plant?

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 2 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND CARBON REDUCTION FROM COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHIDES:

Can the portfolio holder outline the impact of the Government's recent decision to cut the feed-in tariff on the council's plans to increase the use of solar panels across Haringey?

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 3 – TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAMS: [To be answered by the Deputy Leader]

Does the Leader of the Council stand by her view that Charles Adje's conduct “fell well below the standards expected of any councillor” and he “failed to meet the high expectations that the Labour Party places on its members who hold elected office.”

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 4 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND CARBON REDUCTION FROM COUNCILLOR DIAKIDES:

Can the portfolio holder outline what analysis has been done by the council so far on the impact of the reduction in funding for council tax benefit by at least 10% from 2013?

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 5 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR WHYTE:

What is Haringey Council doing to ensure all the section 106 money relating to New River Village is spent on improvements that benefit local residents?

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 6 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR RICE:

Can the portfolio holder tell us what is planned for the I Love Tottenham campaign over the next few months?

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 7 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR BLOCH:

What discussions have the Council had with Tottenham Hotspur about reducing the section 106 levy due on the stadium redevelopment?

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 8 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR PEACOCK:

Can the portfolio holder outline what the council can do to mitigate the affects of increasingly high levels of unemployment across Haringey?

ANSWER

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

WRITTEN QUESTION 1 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR ALEXANDER:

During the Olympic period next year some Haringey residents want to rent out their homes for a short period. Will the Council support this or will residents find that they need to go through a barrage of red tape if they are not to find themselves breaking the law and getting fined, as is the case in some other London boroughs?

ANSWER

The Council is not putting in place any special policies that would specifically prevent short term lets. Haringey supports the Olympics, wants to ensure that it does not lose valuable single family dwelling houses. Haringey Planning, Housing and Health and Safety services can provide guidance. It is always sensible to ensure the correct approvals are in place. In addition an information note will be put on the web site and sent to councillors in good time for the Olympics.

Letting out an entire property and /or some accommodation within the property on a regular basis, or on a permanent basis is likely to require planning permission, (depending on the details of the case), and other housing/environmental health authorisations.

Short term lets for a very short period (a couple of weeks) for a small part of a home or the entire home, will have fewer required controls. These are likely not to require planning permission, and landlords will need to satisfy themselves that all business/housing and health and safety regulations are complied with.

More information about the responsibilities and costs involved in letting rooms in homes, can be found at:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/Privaterenting/RentingOutYourProperty/index.htm>

WRITTEN QUESTION 2 – TO THE TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN FROM COUNCILLOR ALLISON:

Does the Cabinet member believe that there is a need to retain the Ashmount school site for educational purposes, and have officers had any discussion with Islington Council about the future of the Ashmount school site and when did these meetings or discussions take place?

ANSWER

Council officers have discussed the site and spoken to planners in Islington in the last few weeks. A (town) Planning Brief is to be prepared for the site by Islington Council and consultation on this brief will take place in early 2012. This will provide an opportunity for formal comment on the disposal of the site.

Islington Planners would, as part of any planning application for a change of use of the site to residential, assess the ability of the local area to provide the anticipated additional number of school places arising from the increased local child yield as a result of any development. They would also seek to negotiate Section 106 funding to contribute towards the provision of these school places as part of any planning permission that was granted. Officers in Islington have said they expect the local issue of school places to be addressed as part of any planning brief that is produced and consulted on in respect of this site.

WRITTEN QUESTION 3 – TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR BEACHAM: (Cllr Goldberg to respond in Leader’s absence)

Can the Leader of the Council indicate what progress has been made with the proposed joint venture with Waltham Forest Council to pool certain services with the aim of achieving savings and how many initiatives have been agreed and what are the total savings to date?

ANSWER

The update below provides a summary of progress for current shared service projects within the joint programme with LB Waltham Forest:

Organisational Development & Change (OD&C).

The current head of service in Haringey has been appointed as an interim joint Head of OD&C for both authorities. The interim joint head has been tasked with designing a joint

service offer for the shared OD&C service, and final proposals will include options for sharing of training budgets, shared courses and programmes of study. Total target savings of £150k have been identified for this project (i.e. £100k in 2012/13 and £50k in 2013/14).

Economic Development

The current head of service in LB Waltham Forest has been appointed as an interim joint Head of Economic Development for both authorities. Consultation on the proposed restructure begins in November and is planned for completion by December 2011. Total savings of £99k were identified for 2011/12 and these have been delivered.

Planning & Building Control

A team leader from Haringey was seconded to LBWF to undertake a preliminary review of the service (back office). This has been completed and a high level proposal outlining potential opportunities for a shared service will be developed and reviewed by December 11 (with subsequent implementation timescales to be stated then). Total target savings of £75k for delivery by 2012/13 have been identified for this project.

Regulatory Services (including Trading Standards, Food and Health Safety, Dog Enforcement, Pest Control, Pollution)

A report on a proposed shared management structure for this project was submitted and approved at November Cabinet. Consultation with staff on the proposed structure started in early November and will be completed by December 11. Implementation of the first phase of the proposed structure will commence in January 2012 and be implemented by March 2012. Total target savings of £130k have been identified for this project for delivery in 2011/12.

HR

Both authorities have agreed to run stand alone projects to meet pre agreed savings by March 2012. Work is towards developing a shared HR service (i.e. payroll, recruitment etc) is being progressed. Total target savings of £100k have been identified for this project (i.e. £50k in 2013/14 and £50k in 2014/15).

Contact Centre

Both authorities have been exploring the possibility of moving some service into a single shared contact centre for use by residents in both boroughs, as part of Haringey's wider aspiration to deliver on excellent customer services. The work on this project is in its early stages and a provisional savings target of £200k has been identified (as reported to Cabinet on 4 October).

One SAP

This is Haringey's core finance, HR and procurement IT system. The same system is also used by Waltham Forest. The current contracts for systems in both authorities are due to expire, so work is being undertaken to explore the possibility of a joint procurement exercise.

General

In general more savings are anticipated from the programme and these will be determined further during the business case development stage for the medium term

projects. The shared services programme also offers the opportunity for non cashable benefits such as improving customer experience and also sharing of best practice between Haringey and Waltham Forest.

WRITTEN QUESTION 4 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR BUTCHER:

What has been the cost of all parking consultations in the past 3 years? Please list each cost individually.

ANSWER

The cost of Parking consultations for the last three financial years totals £277,260. This can be broken down as follows:

- Preparation and printing of documents £23,651
- Publication of Traffic Management Orders £68,455
- Distribution of documents £9,652
- Officer Time £175,502

WRITTEN QUESTION 5 – TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN FROM COUNCILLOR ENGERT:

Where will the Council prioritise the extra £1.3million funding from central government for school places?

ANSWER

The Council will prioritise this funding towards the cost of the expansion of four primary schools. These are Welbourne Primary, Belmont Infant and Junior Schools and Lancasterian Primary. This proposal is currently being consulted on. The estimated cost of expanding these schools is £11m.

WRITTEN QUESTION 6 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ERSKINE:

Please provide the 'extra' income raised from the Crouch End, Muswell Hill and Green Lanes stop and shop schemes since charges were increased and provide comparative data for the same period prior to the increase in charges.

ANSWER

This information is currently unavailable. The Council committed to review the impact of the charge increases, six months after implementation. This review is currently under way and will be completed by end of November.

WRITTEN QUESTION 7 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND CARBON REDUCTION FROM COUNCILLOR GORRIE:

What percentage reduction in corporate CO₂ emissions has been achieved in the past year through the Council's disposal of buildings and other assets?

ANSWER

The disposal of Council buildings to date has seen a reduction in CO₂ of 709 tonnes. This accounts for a 1.7% reduction against the Council baseline of 41,999 tonnes for buildings.

WRITTEN QUESTION 8 – TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN FROM COUNCILLOR HARE:

Has Haringey been asked if it would have or has it expressed an interest in the use of the Ashmount school site for educational purpose - primary, secondary or tertiary?

ANSWER:

No. Please see response to Question 2 - no formal consultation has taken place yet.

WRITTEN QUESTION 9 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR JENKS:

When refunding parking permits which are no longer required why is Haringey Council only able to provide a refund for the remaining whole months and not whole weeks? (for instance if a permit is refunded after three and a half months usage why is Haringey Council only able to provide a refund for eight months and not eight and a half months?).

ANSWER

Current policy, which is reflected in the Councils standing orders, is that only remaining whole months on residential permits are refunded. This is intended to cover a portion of the cost of administering refunds. This option was deemed preferable to charging an administration fee.

WRITTEN QUESTION 10 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR NEWTON:

How many businesses in the borough were affected by the riots and how many have received aid through the London Mayor's High Street Fund?

ANSWER

Over 200 businesses were affected by the riots.

A dedicated team from Economic Development has visited every business in Tottenham affected by the riots to support them with applications to the government's High Street Support Scheme, the Mayor's high street Fund and for business rate relief.

Up to 4 November 2011, 155 businesses had applied for aid through the High Street Support Scheme administered by the Council, with 116 approved (39 being followed up for more information) and £200,742 being paid in grants.

The London Mayor's High Street Fund has received 151 applications from Haringey businesses with 64 approved and £154,450 paid in grants. Work is ongoing on responding to queries to increase the number of successful applications.

WRITTEN QUESTION 11 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR REID:

How many fines have been issued by enforcement officers to motorists in the Crouch End, Muswell Hill and Green Lanes stop and shop scheme areas for failing to display a valid ticket since the charges for these schemes increased and provide comparative data for the same period prior to the increase in charges.

ANSWER

Detailed below is the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued for the same period for each Stop and Shop schemes before and after the increase in Pay and Display Charges came into effect.

Stop and Shop	28 April – 31 October 2010	28 April – 31 October 2010
Muswell Hill	435	634
Green Lanes	929	1135
Crouch End	536	840

WRITTEN QUESTION 12 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR SCHMITZ:

In view of the recent fall of masonry from a height of over 35 feet from a building on Grand Parade Green Lanes and in view also of the fact that an inspection with the aid of binoculars from ground level revealed an imminent danger from another building, will the Cabinet Member for the Environment indicate whether close-up inspections (with the aid of fire equipment or otherwise) will be undertaken in order to ensure that the survival of passers-by on Green Lanes does not remain a matter of luck?

ANSWER

Letters have been sent to all owner/occupiers in Green Lanes advising them of their responsibility to inspect, maintain and repair their properties. In addition, where properties were clearly identified as requiring a closer inspection, letters were sent to specific owners requesting that they carry out detailed inspections of their properties. Should these owners fail to carry out the inspections as requested then the Council may take further action against the owner(s) using powers contained in the London Building Acts (Amendment) Act 1939 – part VII.

The situation is being monitored and should further assessment and health and safety work be required owners will be notified, asked to commit to action and/or surcharged if the Building Control Service has to do it on their behalf.

It is not the responsibility of the Council (or the London Fire Brigade) to deal with private property maintenance – both services have always been designed to be risk management based, reactive and community information orientated. Website and Haringey People articles will be produced to help residents and businesses understand their responsibilities.

WRITTEN QUESTION 13 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR SCOTT:

Does the Council, in its public health role, intend to make any recommendations to secondary schools on the facilitation of cervical cancer vaccine programmes during the school day?

ANSWER

The Department of Health recommends a school based vaccination programme for vaccines given to school age children, as the evidence suggests that take up of the vaccination is maximised if provided within school hours. Haringey Council has supported the Haringey public health team in implementing this Department of Health recommendation. The school nursing team has, for many years, been commissioned to deliver the 'teenage booster vaccine' for diphtheria, tetanus and polio, given to all pupils in Year 10. Since 2008 the team has delivered the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, given to girls in Year 8.

Haringey Council, in partnership with NHS North Central London encourages all schools to accommodate a school-based vaccination programme, however, it is up to individual school Governing bodies to decide whether they want to take part, and how to best facilitate the process. The recent integration of the public health team into the Council will strengthen the message to schools about the importance of a school-based immunisation programme.

WRITTEN QUESTION 14 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR SOLOMON:

Is the Council satisfied that the new consultation on the Core Strategy Fundamental Changes (Core Document CSSD-03) and the Sustainability Appraisal was adequate considering the Planning Inspectors suggested that "the decision to target the consultation to those who had made previous representations in relation to Regulation 27 on the original Core Strategy, notwithstanding newspaper advertisements, could appear to be prejudicial to interests of fairness and natural justice " and does the Council consider that its re-consultation as "fair and just", so that it will ensure the soundness of the document?

ANSWER

Yes. The revised consultation on the Core Strategy Fundamental Changes and the Sustainability Appraisal was adequate and the carried out in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and Planning Regulations.

The previous consultation carried out in November/December 2010 was for four weeks and the Council consulted those who had made previous representations to the proposed submission Core Strategy in May 2010. The Council also placed adverts in newspapers and deposited the consultation documents in all local libraries. However, to ensure soundness of the Core Strategy and to be fully compliant with the Regulations and the Council's SCI, the Council carried out the revised consultation for six weeks, 22 September – 3 November 2011, and consulted all those on its Local Development Framework database.

The revised consultation involved sending notification, via email and letter, to all those on the Council's database, close to 3,000 consultees. In addition, press notices were placed in all of the Haringey local papers, and to ensure beyond borough boundary coverage a press notice was placed in both the Barnet and Enfield Independent. The consultation documents were deposited in all local libraries and available to view on the Council's website.

The Council considers its re-consultation exercise will ensure soundness of the document.

WRITTEN QUESTION 15 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR WHYTE:

In the review of the winter plan the Council has stated that it will not be possible to increase the maximum salt stock level within the existing facility at the start of the winter season: 1st November. Why is this, bearing in mind the severity of the last two winters?

ANSWER

The Council's salt supply is held at Ashley Road depot. The compound where the salt is stored is a permanent structure covering an area of approximately 700 square metres. The salt store has been surveyed to determine the most suitable arrangements for storing salt and under these arrangements the maximum tonnage that can be held there is 1500 tonnes. Storage of salt requires specialised facilities to ensure that the salt is not harmful to the environment. In order to store more salt it would be necessary to build a bigger local facility or seek additional storage at a satellite location within reasonable reach of the borough. Both of these options would require considerable additional resources in the form of capital or revenue expenditure.

For this winter season we will be working closely with Veolia, to ensure that the salt store is used to maximum effect. We will do this in a number of ways. Veolia will be using four new vehicles for carriageway gritting that will spread salt as efficiently as possible for the forecast and prevailing weather conditions. For pavement gritting Veolia will use eight new mechanical gritting machines. These pavement gritting machines are an innovation brought in as part of the new contract with Veolia. They will enable salt to be spread much more economically on pavements than previously possible. Finally, we will seek to maintain the salt stock levels close to the maximum tonnage level during the majority of the winter season.

WRITTEN QUESTION 16 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND CARBON REDUCTION FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAMS:

What changes were made to the cabinet's financial plan as a result of residents' responses to the Council's budget consultation last year?

ANSWER

The Council informed, consulted and engaged residents on its main budget process between October and December 2010. The objectives of the consultation – entitled *Shaping Our Future* – were therefore to:

- Tell people about the spending choices the Council would have to make about services when allocating limited money in future
- Enable people to tell the Council what, if any, changes to services they would support
- Capture ideas for saving money and views about the effects of the Government's spending plans locally.

The consultation was undertaken using an online and paper questionnaire and was supported by a range of other activities. The main issues raised, and the Council's response, included the following:

- More effective and efficient use of resources through greater means testing and charging of those able to pay for older peoples services;
- a fees and charges review was undertaken following these principles and appropriate changes made
- Requests that the Council not make any changes to libraries because of their social, cultural and economic role in the life of the borough and/or generating more income to help finance the service through increased charges, rental/concession space and greater use of technology;
- no libraries were closed under the savings programme as had been previously considered
- Ways of generating income in order to finance sports and leisure services through increased and varied charges, more efficient use of centres for corporate business use and health promotion;
- proposals to put the centres under different management arrangements were included in the approved budget, the Council's aim for more efficient use of the resources clearly defined.
- Securing adequate funding for public services in the borough by Council opposition to the cuts through campaigning and lobbying for increases in taxation.
- We have continued to campaign for increased funding of the Council which should include a more equitable distribution of resources to Boroughs like Haringey, who are in the most need, based on known deprivation indicators.

WRITTEN QUESTION 17 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR WILSON:

Does the Cabinet Member for Housing agree with Ed Milliband that eligibility for social housing should be altered to give greater priority to those who contribute to the community, and how would this change be implemented in Haringey?

ANSWER

At present, Haringey has more than three thousand homeless households (many of them families with children) living in temporary accommodation. Most will wait at least six or seven years before they are offered permanent social rented housing.

If greater priority is given to housing applicants who contribute to the community, it is inevitable that some of the borough's most vulnerable citizens (including those whose contribution to the community is limited by illness, a disability or, indeed, their obligations as a carer) will spend even longer in temporary accommodation than they do at the moment. Others (who are not living in temporary accommodation) may face an extended wait in overcrowded and/or substandard private sector housing.

It is also important to remember that, as the housing subsidy regime does not cover all of the costs that the Council incurs in providing temporary accommodation, any increase in the amount of time that a housing applicant spends in temporary accommodation will result in additional expense to the Council.

Consultation on Haringey's multi agency Homelessness Strategy 2011-14 has only just ended and a review of the Housing Allocations Policy 2011 is currently underway. I will, of course, be guided by the results of the Homelessness Strategy consultation and the Housing Allocations Review when considering this issue.

Having said that, I do think that it will be very difficult for the Council to assess and corroborate the contribution that housing applicants are making to their community. Furthermore, as the applicants' circumstances would need to be reviewed annually, this will place an extra complex administrative and financial burden on the Council.

Members will have the opportunity to have their say on this and other matters as part of the review of the Housing Allocations Policy 2011. At the end of that review, I expect to be in a position to recommend to Cabinet whether or not housing applicants should be given greater priority for social housing if they are able to show that they are contributing positively to the community.

WRITTEN QUESTION 18 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND CARBON REDUCTION FROM COUNCILLOR WEBER:

There has been an on-going backlog and constant pressure on the councils benefit services. Now that the service had been restructured how old is the oldest case for each benefit type and when will the backlog be cleared bearing in mind the workload of new claimants and new change of circumstance applications ?

ANSWER

The service receives two main types of benefit requests:

New Claims

The service receives approximately 1,200 new claims per month. These are treated as a priority, and if all the information is available these are calculated and paid

immediately. There are currently no outstanding new claims but there are 400 that the service is still awaiting additional information before a final calculation is made.

Changes to Existing Claims

The service receives approximately 7,000 changes per month. These cover a wide range of changes and are prioritised as follows:

1. Changes likely to generate an overpayment - the oldest case dates from the 10 August.
2. Change requests received from the Department of Work and Pensions - the oldest case dates from 20 October.
3. General changes unlikely to affect benefits or create an overpayment – the oldest case dates from February. However, the older cases should not change the benefit claim so are treated as a non-priority.

The outstanding benefit work is expected to have reduced to a level that is within target (all benefit changes within 19 days) by the end of January 2012.