

COUNCIL - 18 MARCH 2013

QUESTIONS

ORAL QUESTIONS

ORAL QUESTION 1 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR MALLET:

Can the Cabinet Member holder give details on what affect the Government's new 'bedroom tax' will have on Haringey?

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 2 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR NEWTON:

What action has the Council taken as a result of the petition and deputation organised by Muswell Hill traders against the high level of parking chargers for shoppers?

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 3 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND CARBON REDUCTION FROM COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHIDES:

Can the Cabinet Member provide information on the local impact of the Coalition's decision to hit boroughs with high levels of deprivation with greater levels of funding cuts?

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 4 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR WINSKILL:

What discussions has the Council had with the Whittington Hospital Trust about implementing their integrated care model and ensuring patients cared for in the community receive essential social care?

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 5 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND CARBON REDUCTION FROM COUNCILLOR BASU :

Can the Cabinet Member give more details on the projects awarded funding from the One Borough, One Future Fund?

ANSWER

ORAL QUESTION 6 - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR WILSON:

How many Council Homes has the council budgeted to build in 2013/14, 14/15 and 15/16?

ANSWER

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

Can the Cabinet member provide more information around the prospect of Crossrail 2 coming to Haringey and the potential benefits to the borough?

ANSWER

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

Will the Council be implementing all the recommendations in 'It took another riot'?

ANSWER

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

WRITTEN QUESTION 1 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND CARBON REDUCTION FROM COUNCILLOR GORRIE:

What lessons have been learnt from the recent collapse of the negotiations with the preferred developer for the Hornsey Depot site, London Square, and what steps are you taking to prevent the collapse of negotiations with the new preferred developer St James?

ANSWER

It is important that this work is progressed in partnership with a strong developer. The Council is moving forward with St James. They have a strong track record of working in partnership and provide assurance that this will lead to faster development of much needed housing in Hornsey.

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

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing confirm when the decision was made to commit to building 500 new houses, as the Cabinet papers, Scrutiny Reviews and tabled Budget Papers commit to no more than “encouraging” development, and the associated capital plans committed £1.45m of funding?

ANSWER

Building new council homes in Haringey is an objective of the Labour Administration in Haringey and featured in the last Labour Manifesto.

The Council’s capital programme includes initial funding of £1.45m in 2013/14 to undertake options appraisals and begin in-fill developments that will inform the Council’s approach to future development. There is indicative funding of £4.6m in 2014/15 for capital projects, including new build. When the 2014/15 capital programme is revised as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, a decision will be taken on the amount of money the Council will invest in building new council homes.

Officers are considering options available to invest in new homes and its existing housing stock. These options will inform the development of next year’s HRA capital programme and will be considered by the Cabinet later this year.

WRITTEN QUESTION 3 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR BUTCHER:

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing confirm if he intends to build 500 net new council homes or if he expect to reuse Right to Buy capital receipts, how many net new homes does his plan equate to?

ANSWER

The figure of 500 new homes is my aspiration as the Cabinet Member for Housing. The precise number of new homes that will be built and the size of any net increase in the number of council homes in the borough will not be known until officers have evaluated a wide range of funding and development options. We are still considering options in relation to the investment needed to deliver a Council new build programme, and the Right to Buy receipts would be one source of funding available.

The terms of the Right to Buy Replacement Scheme are such that the receipts can provide up to 30% of the total costs of the new council homes, with the rest being funded from borrowing or the capital programme. At the end of December 2012, the useable Right to Buy receipts amounted to £1.6m.

The Council is also exploring other funding options as the homes built with the assistance of Right to Buy receipts will be replacing sold properties. The development of new homes under these arrangements will not, on their own, result in any net increase in the number of council homes.

WRITTEN QUESTION 4 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAMS:

Is an ongoing subsidy required to cap rent at current council rent levels, or does he have plans to charge higher rent?

ANSWER

As the Housing Revenue Account is a ring-fenced account operating under the self financing regime, the funding of costs within the HRA can only be met from rents and service charges. Any increases in spend have to be met by either an increase in rents and service charges or a compensatory reduction in other HRA spend budgets.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy has made allowance for the rent increases that are needed in order to ensure that Haringey meets not only the expenditure forecast within the HRA but also the Government's rent convergence targets. This will be reviewed each year to reflect changes in external factors that have an impact on the Housing Revenue Account.

WRITTEN QUESTION 5 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR BLOCH:

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing confirm how his recent commitment to build 500 new homes allows for the availability and potential purchase of land?

ANSWER

The Council's Housing Service is currently reviewing a number of sites across the borough, within the HRA, that have the potential for development. These could be developed without the need to purchase additional land.

WRITTEN QUESTION 6 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR REID:

£54m of new borrowing allowance for capital housing has been made available by the Government, if this is now all going to be used to fund 500 new homes, can the Cabinet Member for Housing explain this council's policy on capital renewal of the existing housing stock?

ANSWER

Under the HRA self financing arrangements, the £54m borrowing cap affords the Council the opportunity to invest in its existing housing stock and the development of new affordable housing. Other sources of funding, such as section 106 contributions

and Right to Buy receipts, are also available and officers are currently exploring whether it is possible to access additional borrowing through partnership working.

The full range of options, including the use of the £54m borrowing cap, will be considered by the Cabinet later this year.

WRITTEN QUESTION 7 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR SOLOMON:

How many complaints has the council received this year and last year about roads not being gritted, and of these complaints how many related to priority 1 roads?

ANSWER

Last year the council received two complaints about carriageways not being gritted. One of these complaints was about a Priority 1 Carriageway. This year the council has received two complaints about carriageways not being gritted. One of these complaints was about a Priority 1 Carriageway.

WRITTEN QUESTION 8 – TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ENGERT:

How many complaints has the council received this year and last year about pavements not being gritted, and of these complaints how many related to priority 1 pavements?

ANSWER

Last year the council received one complaint about pavements not being gritted. No complaints were received about not gritting Priority 1 Pavements. This year the council has received one complaint about pavements not being gritted. No complaints have been received about not gritting Priority 1 Pavements.

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

How will the additional £1.5m for roads in the budget be allocated and will residents be involved in this process?

ANSWER

Referrals made by residents, councillors and officers contribute to an asset management model to assist us in developing an evidence based approach to determine priorities for our planned carriageway and footway maintenance programme. The model uses condition survey data as the primary element in assessing the best programme of works to undertake. It also takes into account referrals received from Neighbourhood Action officers, councillors and residents.

The Council has allocated £4.5m to deliver planned carriageway and footway maintenance work in 2013/14. The 2013/14 Sustainable Transport Works Plan will be presented to Cabinet in April, which will include our planned maintenance programme and provide details of the selection process and locations identified for maintenance within the available budget.

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

What support does the council provide for people on low-incomes?

ANSWER

The Council provides a great deal of support for people on low incomes, including:

- Jobs for Haringey – employability support, skills development, job brokerage and job creation, to make unemployed residents job ready and supporting them to access employment opportunities. Residents also receive benefit advice and support to maximise their entitlements.
- The Credit Union – the Council has increased its investment in the local credit union through a subordinated loan of up to £750,000. This will enable the credit union to provide affordable credit to people on low incomes – an estimated additional 1600 households will be supported through this investment.
- Funding through the One Borough One Future Fund to develop a new financial literacy and training project Futureproof delivered by Quaker Social Action. Futureproof will deliver financial education courses giving people the ability to manage their money on a low income. Working particularly with schools and community groups it will help residents make informed financial decisions that will save them money. The project will support 500 residents each year.
- London Living Wage - Haringey Council is a London Living Wage employer ensuring that all employees earn as a minimum the LLW. We also encourage firms that we work with and procure services from become LLW employers.
- Funding the Haringey CAB who provide benefit and debt advice to residents. The Council has supported the MoneyWise Haringey project which has been awarded £1 million by the Big Lottery for the next 4 years. The project will support over 1000 residents each year.

In terms of the likely impact of Welfare Reform on the residents of Haringey, a number of strategies have been put in place to assist with this, including:

- The Haringey Hub – a joint approach by Jobs Centre Plus and the Council working with residents who will be affected by the Benefit Cap. Local Authority and DWP staff are working as one Haringey team, co-located in Local Authority buildings. In the Hub we offer money saving advice, employment, benefits and housing support as well as giving advice on childcare and skills.

- The Council Tax Reduction Scheme protects pensioners and those who are in receipt of certain disability benefits.
- The Council will continue to provide a Social Fund scheme for those on a low income. This scheme is being transferred from the DWP from April 2013.
- The Discretionary Housing Payments policy has been updated and allows people in receipt of housing benefit to make an application for a 'top-up' payment to cover a shortfall in their rent.

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

How many Serious Untoward Incidents occurred at the Haringey Mortuary in the last 3 years, what was the classification of each incident, and how many of these incidents were correctly reported to the Human Tissue Authority within the required timescales?

ANSWER

The table below demonstrates that in the last three years 3 SUI's were notified to the Human Tissues Authority, all occurring in 2011/12. All notifications were notified to the HTA within the required period with the exception of one.

| Date incident discovered | Reported within HTA reporting requirement? (Five working days of discovery) | SUI classification |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| 08/12/11 | No | Discovery of an organ or tissue following post mortem examination and release of body |
| 09/03/12 | Yes | Incident not listed by the Human Tissue Authority |
| 09/03/12 | Yes | Loss of an organ |

Following these incidents the HTA and the Council's Internal Audit service conducted their own inspections on the mortuary. In October 2012 the HTA noted that they were satisfied with all the actions that had been undertaken by the Council. The Corporate Committee on 29th November 2012 was presented with the results of the follow up internal audit. All the recommendations from this report were fully implemented by January 2013.

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

How many permanent staff have been employed at the Haringey Mortuary in the last 3 years, and for what period of time have roles in the mortuary been filled by agency or temporary staff.

ANSWER

The number of permanent and temporary staff employed at the mortuary in the last 3 years is as follows:

| | Permanent Staff | Temporary Staff |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 2010/11 | 3 | 0 |
| 2011/12 | 2 | 0 |
| 2012/13 | 1 | 3 |