

COUNCIL QUESTIONS – 9th October 2006

Oral Question 1 – To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Williams

If he has confidence in the Executive Member for Housing following the recent Audit Commission assessment of the Housing Service?

ANSWER

Oral Question 2 - To the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation from Councillor Cooke:

Will the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation give a clear commitment that he will do everything within his power to ensure the CPZ consultations will be as thorough as possible?

ANSWER

Oral Question 3 – To the Executive Member for Community Involvement from Councillor Wilson:

What has been done to retrieve the £3,500 Making the Difference Grant that was incorrectly paid out in Chettle Court?

ANSWER

Oral Question 4 - To the Executive Member for Children and Young People from Councillor Kober:

Could the Executive Member for Children and Young People update the Council on the results achieved by Haringey students this summer?

ANSWER

Oral Question 5 – To the Executive Member for Housing from Councillor C. Harris:

What assessment the Audit Commission has made of the ability of Haringey's Housing Service to address the problems of homelessness and overcrowding in the borough?

ANSWER

Oral Question 6 - To the Executive Member for Community Involvement, from Councillor Griffith:

Can she explain what the WOW award scheme is about and how the pilot is going?

ANSWER

Oral Question 7 – To the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee from Councillor Davies:

Can he explain why the recent Homelessness and Allocations Scrutiny Review Report was submitted to both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive without a clear consensus on the recommendations therein from all panel members?

ANSWER

Oral Question 8 - To the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation from Councillor Peacock:

Could the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation update Council on the progress made by the Council since the election in improving our parks and open spaces?

ANSWER

Oral Question 9 – To the Executive Member for the Environment and Conservation from Councillor Oakes:

What data from the consultation into the Stop and Shop proposals supports and justifies the Council pressing ahead with pay-and-display as the only option for short-term parking in Muswell Hill and Crouch End, and how many businesses or traders in each area have specifically said they want this option?

ANSWER

Oral Question 10 - To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Jones:

Could the Leader outline in what way Haringey will be marking Black History Month this year?

ANSWER

Written Questions

Written Question 1 – To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Baker:

What plans have been put into place to ensure that the Council will meet its requirement to give disabled people a say in preparing an action plan to promote equal opportunities? What steps have been taken to improve relations with disabled groups in the local community?

ANSWER

1) The Equalities Unit have produced a draft Equality Scheme which will incorporate the disability equality scheme. We are looking at having this scheme in place by 4 December 2006.

The general duty will come into force on 4 December 2006 and all public authorities including Haringey Council should be prepared. Under the specific duty we will have a Disability Equality Scheme in place.

Our draft Equality Scheme will be a generic scheme which will include all six equalities strands, age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexuality. This way, equality is promoted in all the six strands simultaneously.

We have embedded disability and other equality areas into our policies and activities by undertaking equality impact assessments. These impact assessments will ensure that our activities do not disadvantage disabled people and other groups in any way (either intentionally or not), and also, crucially, to identify where we can best promote equality of opportunity. We are aware that an impact assessment is not an end in itself but is merely the process which we will go through in order to identify and then act on the need to modify and change policies and practices to better promote disability equality and other equalities areas.

We have a consultation timetable in place. This includes involving, engaging and consulting with both staff and community groups, which includes disability groups. Both staff and community groups will be involved in shaping the final equalities scheme, action plan and the specific action plan on disability. We regard community consultation and engagement as an essential element in the process of developing a strategy, policy or a plan. For this reason, Haringey Council is committed to involving the community in a meaningful and productive way in this process.

2) We have a very good relationship with disabled groups within our local community. We have a dedicated equalities officer who advises and raises awareness on disability and organises events, competitions and produces guidance on disability awareness. One of our annual disability awareness competitions is the Re-Vision: Enjoying Everyday Life. The competition is open to Haringey borough residents and employees. The aim of the competition is to take photographs of disabled people enjoying everyday

activities. The competition was hugely successful last year and is repeated again this year. We are also raising awareness of disability through our poster campaign. With Translation and Interpretation Services we have jointly produced a poster: *Disability: what disability?*

Our Equalities Officer for disability will also be working with Haringey Phoenix Group and Translation and Interpretation Services to produce a report on providing and sending information to blind and partially sighted people in appropriate and accessible formats. Haringey Council believes that all members of the community have the right to equal access to information and services provided by the Council. For this reason we provide translation, interpretation and communication services for people who: do not speak English, are blind or have a visual impairment, are Deaf or have a hearing impairment. We offer the following services: Interpretation, including sign language, Language translations, Braille, Large Print and audiotape (English and other languages).

We have also produced an Accessible Services for Managers Guidance and Disability Access Guide which covers accessible council buildings, addresses of disability organisations, disability equality duty information, and appropriate language and sign language alphabets. In our new women's directory we have included faith and community groups who cover disability issues.

Directorates are also involved in raising awareness. Environmental services will be organising a Disability cycling event and disability sports day this year and Social Services have recently held an event on raising awareness on sensory impairment. Last year as part of Haringey's events to support World Mental Health Day, the Social Services Equalities Forum presented a large community event to raise awareness about, and promote good practice in, Mental Health and Equalities. The afternoon comprised stalls, exhibitions and a programme of inspiring and emotive speakers and was well attended by staff, service users, carers and local people. Attendees were able to sample Cypriot food whilst visiting exhibitions and chatting to mental health practitioners and staff representing groups such as the Alzheimer's Society, Mental Health Rehab Team at St Ann's Hospital, Haringey Home Care Services. The Clarendon Centre and the Haringey Therapeutic Network.

We also work together with disabled groups through the Mobility Forum which is run by Environmental Services together with the equalities Unit. The Mobility Forum provides a platform for disabled people to give their views and opinions on transport needs and requirements. The aim of the Mobility Forum in Haringey is to enable older and disabled people in Haringey to be involved in the process of developing transport services at London wide and local level and ensuring that their views and needs are properly taken into account by policies makers including the Haringey Strategic Partnership.

The forum aims:

1. To pursue and promote the development of affordable public transport services and facilities that are accessible to all members of the community. To be consulted by and to make recommendations to the

relevant parties on the accessibility and impact on older and disabled people of the following transport issues:

2. To be consulted by and to make recommendations to the relevant parties on the accessibility and impact on older and disabled people of the following transport issues:
 - Planning – new developments, service proposals
 - Design – vehicles, infrastructure, street management, information & publicity
 - Highway issues – e.g. footways, dropped kerbs/tactile paving etc
 - Policies – fares, service reliability, maintenance, timetables, staff & training
 - Door-to-door transport services-Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, borough, community and NHS transport.
 - Freedom Pass and Blue Badge Scheme
 - Parking – including disability parking bays
 - Road Safety & Traffic Schemes
 - Equality & Inclusion
 - Eligibility & Research
 - TfL Updates

The mobility forum meeting is held at least four times a year.

An annual general meeting (AGM) of the Mobility Forum is held, to which all local disabled and older people, representative organisations, transport service providers, the ALG and TfL is invited.

Other forums include the Disabled Tenants Forum provides an opportunity for disabled tenants to comment on or feedback on their housing needs. The Welfare to Work board consists of council staff, disability groups and organisations. The board discusses employment opportunities for disabled people, recruitment and training, and welfare needs of disabled staff. Two of our Senior Equalities Officers (Social Services and Environmental Services) also work with disabled groups at the Winkfield Resource Centre, Haringey Phoenix Group, Mencap, Haringey Racial Equality Council, Age Concern, Haringey Consortium of Disabled and Carers, MIND, faith and community groups etc.

Written Question 2 – To the Executive Member for Housing from Councillor Beynon:

With respect to private buildings in Haringey which have remained empty for several years and have not been appropriately maintained by landlords, could the Executive Member for Housing please confirm:

- a. How many buildings in this category have been identified in Haringey in each year over the period 2001 -2006?
- b. What mechanism does the council use to monitor and tackle this problem?
- c. Has the council invoked section 215 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act in order to tackle this problem and if so, on how many occasions?

ANSWER

- a. Empty property numbers at 31st March each year are as follows.

2001 - 4410
2002 - 3093
2003 - 2701
2004 - 2459
2005 - 2939
2006 - 2765

- b. The Councils approach to empty properties is based upon 3 work streams
 - 1) The work of the empty property officer, who identifies empty properties and advises owners on options for bringing them back into use. Providing useful, well regarded advice to owners of empty properties is a very significant means of bringing properties back into use. The Council has an important role to play in acting as a positive source of advice about the various options available to them (e.g. sale, renting directly, renting through a managing agent). Previously, many empty properties were brought back into use as temporary accommodation (TA) as the Council needed access to TA. However, as we work to achieve the TA reduction target and deliver our Prevention and Options approach to homelessness, we are working with owners to let their properties as assured shorthold tenancies offered to those in housing need.

In 2005/06 Haringey Council brought 414 vacant properties back into use, exceeding our target of 400 and achieving top quartile performance in the country. In line with our aim to reduce temporary accommodation, we no longer count our usage of Private Sector Leased (PSL) accommodation within this definition, and so have set our target lower in 2006/07 to reflect this.

Our current target is 100 empty properties returned to use, and we are currently on course to meet it, with 57 empty properties brought back into use year to date at the end of September.

- 2) The Enforcement service currently offers Empty properties grants to properties that have been empty for at least a year. The purpose of the Empty property grant is to renovate properties and to bring them back into use.

We currently offer up to a maximum of £11k per unit of accommodation provided. In return, we secure that unit of accommodation for the Housing supply group. The grant is approved on the understanding that an Assured Short hold Tenancy (AST) will be provided on completion.

The works are undertaken in conjunction with an architect who draws up a scheme of works. For the first time we are offering Empty properties grants to owner occupiers who are currently living in rented accommodation and are purchasing an Empty property. The North London Sub region have agreed innovative funding for 2 units of accommodation that fit into the owner occupier category, of which a grant will be approved at 25K each. Currently we have approved 1 empty grant for an owner occupier and 1 is currently in the pipeline.

We have also started working with a member of staff from the London Borough of Islington who is being paid from funding from the North London Sub region who role is to aid enforcement on Empty Properties, in particular Compulsory Purchase Orders.

Last year the Enforcement service successfully approved and secured 48 units of accommodation through empty property grants to a value of £668k. This year our aim to secure 15 units of accommodation through empty property grants and to successfully spend our North London Sub Region allocation of £168k

- 3) The Enforcement Service operates a Public Eyesores programme which is a Better Haringey project. This project includes a range of neglected site locations including empty private commercial and domestic properties. Properties included in the Public Eyesore programme will receive enforcement action that requires works to resolve issues including graffiti, fly posting, litter and vandalism and other neglect which can cause a detrimental impact on the amenity value of an area.
- c. From April 04 to August 06, the Enforcement service issued 479 section 215 notices under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 on locations where a property or land associated had a detrimental impact on the amenity value of a local area.

Written Question 3 – To the Executive Member for Children and Young People from Councillor Davies:

What provision for childcare was made by the Council to mitigate the late opening of Coldfall Primary School this term, how was this communicated to parents and how much unmet demand was there from parents for this service?

ANSWER

The school term started officially on Monday 4th September, though as is common most schools arranged one or two INSET days at the start of the term. Coldfall was due to open on Monday 11th September, to allow time for teachers to re-equip classrooms following work during August.

Unfortunately, it became apparent during the week beginning 4th September that a number of items might not be finished in time due to late delivery from suppliers. The most important of these concerned toilets.

On Thursday 7th September, despite overnight working by contractors and strenuous efforts by school staff to work alongside building workers, it became clear that we could not guarantee safe access to the building for the 11th September. We then telephoned all parents, wrote to them all and informed the local press. We organised emergency childcare, staffed by Coldfall teachers, for those parents unable to make other arrangements.

The school opened three days late on 14th September and I know that the head teacher and her staff are delighted with the new facilities. I understand that they are planning to re-organise staff training days to help pupils make up the lost teaching days.

I am not aware that there was any unmet demand. We were able to provide places for those parents unable to make their own arrangements, and we had further contingency plans to open up further childcare (at Fortismere) if it had been needed.

Written Question 4 – To the Executive Member for Finance from Councillor Gorrie:

How many freehold or leasehold commercial premises does the council own or manage in each ward and what proportion of these premises is currently vacant? Will he please list these by ward.

ANSWER

The Council has 589 freehold and leasehold units that are administered for commercial purposes, of which 95 (16%) are listed as vacant. The properties listed as vacant include units that are development sites, under offer or have lease terms agreed but are not yet to be occupied. Not all vacant units are available for lease.

Ward	Units	Vacant
Alexandra	0	0
Bounds Green	22	2
Bruce Grove	15	2
Crouch End	8	1
Fortis Green	2	0
Harringay	5	2
Highgate	1	0
Hornsey	11	1
Muswell Hill	31	4
Noel Park	76	15
Northumberland	46	7
Seven Sisters	16	4
St Anns	24	3
Stroud Green	9	1
Tottenham Green	82	13
Tottenham Hale	160	31
West Green	7	1
White Hart Lane	63	8
Woodside	11	0
Total	589	95

Written Question 5 – To the Executive Member for Community Involvement from Councillor Oakes:

Does the Council know how many households did not receive a copy of the consultation forms for the proposed CPZs and what sanctions for poor performance, financial or otherwise, with the Council be taking against the contractor responsible for the delivery of the CPZ consultation forms?

ANSWER

We have evidence that properties in the Bounds Green CPZ Consultation area did not receive leaflets; this represents approx 2.5% of the overall consultation distribution process (this equates to approx 300 properties out of a total of 12,000). Immediately on being made aware we ensured these properties were subsequently leafleted. Given the very high standards we set on consultation we will not be using this distribution company's services again for any future work. With regards to the other CPZ's we have no evidence of non delivery however we did receive requests for further leaflets from individual properties, the amount of requests were not significant.

Given the high standards set on consultation we will no longer be using the contractor for any further work.

Written Question 6 – To the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation from Councillor Newton:

a) What is the detailed cost breakdown for consulting, implementing and enforcing a CPZ?

b) How many streets/houses need to be included in a scheme for it to break even?

ANSWER

- a. The cost for consulting, implementing and enforcing a CPZ would vary depending on:
- a. The size of the consultation area;
 - b. The actual size of a zone.
 - c. The number and type of signs/posts required.
 - d. The operating hours and days of the week of the zone.
 - e. Required enforcement

It would therefore not be possible to provide this figure as a detailed cost at this stage whilst we are still in consultation stage.

b. The primary objective of these types of proposals is not about 'breaking even' but to address difficulties faced by residents where parking is difficult close to their property and to also address road safety issues; in any event it is difficult to quantify a 'break even' cost at this stage where we have no definitive area. Other variables depend on permit take up, type of scheme ie 1hr, 2hr or all day etc and required enforcement costs.

Written Question 7 – To the Executive Member for Housing from Councillor Harris:

Is an options appraisal currently underway regarding the future of the sheltered housing stock?

ANSWER

No housing options appraisal of sheltered stock is taking place.

A recent survey into the long-term needs of Older People has shown that there will be a significant change in their needs over the next 20 years, eg, the need for more extra care accommodation. As a result an asset review, which will assess the suitability of the existing stock for its purpose, will be undertaken. This follows normal practice of any asset holding department to review its buildings for 'fit for purpose', cost of maintenance or alternative uses in some cases eg, the development of more extra care housing for the elderly etc depending on what the needs of the population are likely to be in the longer term.

Once this review has been carried out, the council will consider its findings and any proposals for any changes that may arise from these findings will be the subject of full consultation with all those who have an interest in the subject.

For the record this council, in line with its stated current policy, does not have any plans whatsoever for any stock transfers or any other forms of voluntary privatisation of any part of its housing stock.

Written Question 8 – To the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation from Councillor Oatway:

To tell me in detail exactly what monitoring has been done in the Dukes Avenue and Palace Gates Road areas with regard to the number of HGVs passing through the area and the effect of the road humps on through traffic, following promises made to myself and residents back in April.

ANSWER

As part of the A406 Complementary Package, traffic surveys have been conducted in a number of areas including the Dukes Avenue and Palace Gates Road areas. The traffic surveys provide classified vehicle movement counts through the areas and enable the Council to consider the effects that proposals both existing and yet to be considered may have on the area. We are currently analysing the survey results.

Written Question 9 – To the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety from Councillor Alexander:

If she will state how many road traffic accidents have occurred in Green Lanes, Haringey for each of the last twelve months, and how many of these have resulted in injury or fatality?

ANSWER

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Fatality</u>	<u>Serious</u>	<u>Slight</u>
01/06/03 – 31/05/04	0	4	37
01/06/04 – 31/05/05	0	7	53
01/06/05 – 31/05/06	1	4	33

Written Question 10 – To the Executive Member for Housing from Councillor Demirci:

What is the current waiting time for repairs for Homes for Haringey tenants and what is the Government's target for repairs performance to achieve the Better Homes Standard? Will he state how many tenants are currently awaiting repairs and what categories these repairs fall into?

ANSWER

In line with other local authorities and ALMOs, Homes for Haringey measures the number of responsive repairs completed within the government's time limits. As at the end of July Homes for Haringey completed 94.4% of these jobs within the target.

Responsive repairs are carried out in line with priority timescales which are listed below:

- Emergency repairs – one that removes immediate danger to people or avoids major damage to the property – within 24 hours but we will make safe within 2 hours things like dangerous electrical faults or burst pipes.
- Priority repairs – to prevent immediate danger to the property or where there is a possible health, safety or security risk, such as fixing minor leaks – within 3 working days.
- Routine repairs – those that do not cause immediate inconvenience or present a danger to occupants – within 20 working days.
- Planned responsive repairs – works such as replacing external doors or window frames which cannot wait for major works contract - within 80 working days

In 2005/06, just over 60,000 responsive repairs were carried out.

The only target, which the government has set for the delivery of the Decent Homes is that all Council properties meet the standard by 2010. The Decent Homes standard will be delivered by a planned programme of major work and so are not subject to targets in the way that responsive repairs are. In order to meet the standard a range of major works will be required for which a bid has been submitted to central government. The outcome of our bid is scheduled to be announced before the end of October. We estimate that in excess of 9,000 new kitchens and bathrooms will be required as well as external elements such as new roofs and windows in addition to other work.

Written Question 11 – To the Executive Member for Children and Young People from Councillor Weber:

I understand that a reduction of 17% has been made in the budget for funding Statemented Pupils for 2006/07.

Please can the member explain:

- a) Why these cuts have been made?
- b) What effects these cuts are likely to have on the children themselves and the schools that support them?

ANSWER

a). The budget for statements was not reduced in 2006/07 but the calls on it have increased. In particular an overspend of nearly £1m on this budget in 2005/06 was brought forward into 2006/07 and it was the need to meet this overspend, coupled with a continuing pressure on the budget in 2006/07, which led to a 17% reduction in the rate of support (not the budget). It should be noted that the statemented budget is part of the Individual Schools Budget

(ISB) (delegated schools' budgets) and that any increase in it would require a corresponding reduction in other elements of the ISB.

The 17% reduction was agreed with the Haringey Schools' Forum which is predominately made up of headteachers and governors as the most appropriate method to deal with the pressure on the budget. The Schools' Forum, in reaching this decision took into account the fact that the Dedicated School's Grant (the school's budget) increased by 6.8% for 06-07.

The method of funding statemented and non-statemented special educational needs and additional educational needs is currently being examined by a review group set up by the Haringey School's Forum.

b). There has been no change to the children's statements as a result of the funding changes. Headteachers continue to be responsible for the delivery of the provision as set out in each child and young person's statement of special educational needs. Fifty five new statements have been issued between April and August 2006, compared with 58 for same period last year.

Most schools now use a provision management approach to provide for children and young people with special educational needs, including those with statements. This enables schools to pool their funding streams in order to create additional programmes, in addition to their whole school work, to address the development of literacy, numeracy and social interaction skills for targeted children and young people. Schools also have a variety of approaches to support children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. These programmes, including circle work, peer mediation and restorative justice, are mostly delivered in small groups with some opportunities for one to one support, in accordance with individual needs. The Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) is also extending its work to non BIP schools by establishing a Lead Behaviour Professional to roll out a training and intervention programme for all staff.

Central support from services for speech and language therapy, language delay and disorder, Autism, behaviour, hearing and visual impairment, Educational Psychology continues to provide advice, training and direct casework to all schools. The Vale Advice and Consultation Service provides support for schools regarding children and young people with disabilities and medical needs. In addition the Special Schools all provide advice and outreach support to schools.

The SEN Panel continues to track children and young people's progress against their objectives through the Annual Review of individual statements and the use of resources is considered as part of this monitoring process. There has been no evidence to date that children and young people are not receiving the support allocated in their statements. Monitoring of the progress of children and young people with statements continues to show that nearly all are making expected and better than expected progress against their individual targets.

Written Question 12 – To the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation from Councillor Hare:

Is he aware of the Forestry Commission estimate that between 40,000 and 50,000 horse chestnut trees in the UK may be affected with the pest known as the leaf miner moth, which eats the leaves, as well as a disease known as bleeding canker? Is he aware that trees in Alexandra Park and other areas in the Borough are affected in this way, and will he;

- a) Publish any assessments made by the Council's Tree officer?
- b) If necessary seek the best advice available from the Forestry Commission as to how to treat these two pests?
- c) State what financial provision has been made for this year or next year with a view to eradication and/or replanting?

ANSWER

- a) Recreation Services are monitoring current levels, where known, of both the Leaf minor and the outbreak of bleeding canker. The number of chestnuts currently managed by the Council are 322 in parks, 168 on estates, and 45 on the highway. It has been necessary to remove 4 trees to date, and individual Tree Inspection assessments were undertaken/are available in each case.
- b) The Arboricultural Section use's Forestry Commission and other industry related guidance to ensure that this issue is managed in line with current industry practice. Leaf Minor is tackled through leaf removal, whilst bleeding canker is closely monitored and dealt with if the infection lesions become so extensive that the entire trunk is girdled, then the tree will inevitably die and have to be removed and disposed of appropriately. If major branches are infected and show dieback they should be removed, because recently-dead branches of horse chestnut may be susceptible to sudden fracture and drop as the wood dries out. Any significant outbreak/infection will be picked up through Planned Inspection programmes and referrals. The Arboricultural section have undertaken 1171 inspections so far in 06/07 and the Parks service undertake bi-annual inspections as part of the planned monitoring programme.
- c) Existing revenue budgets are sufficient to deal with current associated maintenance costs, and Members will be considering further planting funding within the Business Planning process.

Alexandra Palace Charitable Trust are aware of the outbreak of this problem in the Southeast and are continuing to take the advice of the Forestry Commission regarding the collection and removal of leaf litter. They have initiated a survey of the site to assess what levels of Chestnuts are affected. All trees in Alexandra Park are annually inspected for defects, through

planned programmes and the Horse Chestnut trees will be carefully monitored for the negative affects caused by either the pest or the infection.

Written Question 13– To the Executive Member for Enterprise and Regeneration from Councillor Mughal:

If she will consider setting up a Business Forum for small to medium enterprises in Haringey where issues affecting them can be raised? Does she agree that in the light of proposals from the Council such as CPZ there is an urgent need for such a forum?

ANSWER

In considering whether to set up a Business Forum for SMEs, it is worth noting that a number of existing forums are in operation where Haringey's business community can raise issues:

Haringey's City Growth Strategy is a business led initiative designed to improve business confidence and competitiveness in the Borough. The Haringey City Growth Board comprises around 20 businesses and key local partners who are responsible for ensuring that the views of the business community are represented. The City Growth initiative focuses on Haringey's growth sectors to develop and form clusters which, amongst other things, stimulate much needed communication and networking within the business community. Following robust research the following sectors have been identified as those that are the drivers of growth in the Borough: food and drink production and distribution; creative and cultural industries; business services and ICT; retail; leisure, sport and tourism. The vast majority of these are small and medium enterprises. Cluster Action teams, headed by cluster champions offer opportunities to engage with local businesses, including some of the smaller micro-businesses that are often under-represented in terms of the various business forums in the borough. In total we are in regular discussion with 60 leading businesses in the Haringey.

Currently there are a number of Business forums across the borough e.g. Tottenham Traders Association (TTA), Tottenham Town Centre Partnership (TTCP), Wood Green Town Centre Management Group, Green Lanes Traders Association, Archway Rd Business Association etc. In addition the 7 neighbourhood managers have as their remit a duty to liaise with local business and address their concerns.

There are also a number of events that take place in the borough to promote networking opportunities for local businesses, namely the annual Haringey City Growth Business Awards, and regular meetings of the forums mentioned above. The North London Chamber of Commerce currently engages with around 500 businesses in Haringey, and works with 2 of our major business support agencies on procurement and marketing/promotional events – places where local businesses can air their views. The Chamber is also working with 5 Industrial Estates in Haringey, working mainly with SMEs, and part of their

remit is to get behind the issues affecting business on the estates and make appropriate interventions. Haringey Council funds some of the work on the Estates and has an open dialogue with Chamber in terms of raising salient issues pertaining to businesses in Haringey.

Issues such as the CPZ would have particular local impacts and I am not convinced an additional borough based forum would be either adequate or appropriate to deal with such an issue.

Written Question 14 – To the Executive Member for Organisational Development and Performance from Councillor Winskill:

For how long has the following message appeared on www.haringey.gov.uk:

“NOTICE: We are currently experiencing technical difficulties. The affected areas are the Weekly List and the Application Search. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.”

What steps are been taken to deal with this problem; who is to blame for these technical difficulties and will financial penalties be exacted?

ANSWER

This message has been displayed on the Planning Portal website for approximately 2 months.

The problem was reported to our software provider and investigated. A software fix has been received for this and will be applied. The message displayed has now been removed as it is unnecessary.

Written Question 15 – To the Executive Member for Enterprise and Regeneration, and the Executive Member Crime and Community Safety from Councillor Bloch:

Can the Executive member please confirm:

- a) whether 27 Muswell Hill, London N10 3PR falls within a conservation area and or Article 4 area;
- b) why the Planning Department has not responded in full to Councillor Bloch's email of 10 July 2006 as to the status of the unauthorised hardstanding and garage on these premises and whether they will now do so ?
- c) whether the Planning Department will also respond to the letters of The Chine and Cascade Residents Association of 28 March 2006 and 16 May 2006 on this matter and why have they not responded until now to these letters ?

ANSWER

Yes the building at 27 Muswell Hill is within the Rookfield Conservation Area, and therefore subject to the Rookfield Estate Article 4 Direction.

The Direction places further controls on minor developments which though are permitted development, would be detrimental to the character of the conservation area if not properly controlled. Developments affected by the direction include enlargements and alterations to houses, erection of front porches, creation of hardstanding for vehicles, construction of gates, fences, walls and other enclosures, painting and rendering.

The building is converted into two maisonettes addressed as 27A and 27B. The unit, the subject of the enforcement investigations, is 27A Muswell Hill.

Your email of 10th July was referred by Planning Control to Enforcement, and was promptly acknowledged on the same day, advising that the case officer was on sick leave and a fuller update would be provided later.

I apologise that you have not been fully updated with outcome of the enforcement investigations as promised. Clearly, this is unacceptable and I have instructed officers to take the necessary action to ensure this does not happen again.

A garage has not been built at the complaint address. Rather, a hardstanding (which is not roofed over) was formed on part of the rear garden and is now used for car parking purposes. The breach of planning control alleged at the complaint address comprises the formation of vehicular Crossover, the creation of a hardstanding and the erection of a 2m high timber fence along the side boundary fronting Cascade Avenue.

When an enforcement notice is served in October 2006, the requirements would include removing the three unauthorised developments. However, there is a right of appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against an Enforcement Notice, so the final outcome could be dependent on an Inspector's decision.

Records from the file suggests that the case officer wrote to the Chine and Cascades Resident's Association in August. The reply briefly states that in March 2006, the owner had agreed to undo the works and had requested for sufficient time to do so. But due to the failure of the owner to take appropriate remedial action to remove the unauthorised developments, enforcement action has now been authorised.

A further update has been sent to the Residents Association and regular updates will be provided on the progress of the enforcement action.

Written Question 16 – To the Executive Member for Housing from Councillor Reid:

What assessments has the Council made of the value for money that the Housing department provides, and what was the outcome of that assessment, in each of the last 5 years?

ANSWER

Housing Service

The Housing Service has made assessments of value for money in a number of areas, including:

- Benchmarking the Private Sector Leasing Management Team against other authorities to ensure Value for Money on patch sizes. Haringey's position found to rank highly in Value for Money.
- Income Recovery team patch size comparisons to other authorities showing again that Haringey ranked highly.
- Invest to save initiatives where we have invested in Private sector leasing Management and achieved significant savings on the void loss for rental income.
- All procurement of private Sector leasing stock benchmarked against guideline rents which are not breached.

The following activities show some areas where value for money has been achieved:

- Use of cheaper to rent properties outside London.
- Maximising rent return through HB subsidy.
- Investing in the Income Recovery Team to decrease rent loss.
- Investment in PSL procurement
- Investment in TA Management to decrease void properties by on average 4%, returning more properties to use and reducing the cost of voids.
- Cost of procurement of B&B Annexes has remained significantly below inflation.
- Entering into regional partnerships to provide lettings.
- Empty properties being bought back in to use
- Elimination of accommodation with shared facilities for families

Homes for Haringey

The Audit Commission's Value For Money Profile ranks Haringey's housing management against nearest neighbours and other London authorities.

Notable points in the profile include:

- a lower quartile management cost per dwelling;

- a median maintenance cost per dwelling, reflecting the need for Decent Homes investment;
- a lower quartile average rent per dwelling
- Spend on planned minor repairs is approaching upper quartile;
- Urgent repairs within time limits is upper quartile;
- Repairs appointments kept in high upper quartile.

Homes For Haringey has benchmarked three years' Housing Management costs against other Local Authorities, and used the outputs to inform the structure and workings of the ALMO, for example the formation of specialist rent collection teams. Based on value for money criteria and the outcomes of Housing Inspections, we are currently Market Testing the repairs service. The procurement of Decent Homes Constructor Partners in progress includes supplier chain management, to ensure that maximum value for money is obtained in delivering the £200m+ investment programme.

Other value for money initiatives undertaken by Homes for Haringey include:

- the adoption of a Value For Money Strategy and supporting activities to embed VFM throughout the organisation;
- the employment of a specialist Performance Manager to focus on non-cashable efficiency gains;
- the adoption of common Schedules of Rates across repairs contracts to minimise pricing differentiation;
- the introduction of job scheduling and job costing IT to improve the efficiency of the Direct Labour Organisation;
- a range of activities within our Improvement Plan to ensure that value for money improvements are able to be captured and evidenced.

Written Question 17 – To the Executive Member for Organisational Development and Performance from Councillor Butcher:

Is the Council any closer to being able to give a final figure for the cost to Haringey Council resulting from the Buncefield incident and what proportion of that cost will be met by insurers and by LBH itself? What changes in policy has the Council put in place to ensure that there is proper back up and contingency for its website and the service it provides?

ANSWER

Any costs arising out of the Buncefield explosion such as hardware costs, additional staff costs and loss of Web Services, were incorporated into the final Settlement Agreement between Haringey Council and Northgate signed on 14 March 2006. Because of this, no Insurance claim was made.

The Web Service was reinstated at Northgate's Disaster recovery site in Hounslow and a replica was built within the Haringey datacentre to provide resilience. From July 13 the Haringey hardware took over the live service with Northgate hardware available as a disaster recovery site. Northgate will

shortly be moving into their new datacentre facility in Basildon at which point we will discuss with them the best configuration to provide a robust and resilient service for the Council.

Written Question 18 – To the Executive Member for Organisational Development and Performance from Councillor Beacham:

Would he please report how many sick days the average employee has taken a) across the Council as a whole and b) broken down by department.

ANSWER

The Council is committed to reducing absence attributable to sickness and has a plan to target both long term and short term absence. Since the Autumn of 2005 work has been targeted at reducing the outstanding long term cases. To date 33% of outstanding cases have been resolved to either a return to work, or exit. Our focus is now being targeted on short term absence. A series of measures have been adopted to support staff wellbeing and attendance. These include: health checks for staff, smoking cessation classes, health promotion, and improved management reporting. These activities are expected to feed a reduction in the average – which because it is an average will take some time to materialise.

For the last complete financial year (2005/6) the average number of days sickness absence was 10.4 days.

This represents the following Directorate averages:

Directorate	Ave Last 12 Months
ACCESS DIVISION	10.13
CHILDRENS SERVICES	8.89
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	13.66
FINANCE SERVICES	11.45
LEGAL SERVICES	8.00
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	6.34
SOCIAL SERVICES	15.08
STRATEGY SERVICES	8.05
HARINGEY COUNCIL	10.36

Written Question 19 – To the Executive Member for Finance from Councillor Portess:

- a) How many Housing Benefit appeals are outstanding?
- b) How many people are waiting more than 4 weeks, 12 weeks, 24 weeks, 36 weeks and 52 weeks respectively for their appeal on Housing Benefit to be heard?
- c) Is the council confident that it is adhering to best practice when hearing these appeals?

ANSWER

A) Out of a caseload of 36,500 ongoing benefit cases, the Council currently has 207 requests that are subject to a review of the decision notified on benefit applications. Many requests do not proceed to appeal for a variety of reasons.

B) In addition to cases subject to review, there are currently 17 cases waiting to be heard by the Appeals Tribunal Service, this can be broken down as follows –

Less than 4 weeks – 14 cases
Between 4 – 12 weeks – 1 case
Between 24 - 36 weeks – 1 case
Between 36 – 52 weeks – 1 case

C) The Council does not hear appeals, instead, on receipt of an appeal it is required to reconsider its decision and if unable to agree with the appellants case it must submit the appeal to the Appeals Tribunal Service. This is a national body which is entirely independent of the Council. There are no regulations on how quickly cases must be referred to the Appeals Tribunal Service. However, the Benefits Performance Standards do provide a national standard by which the council is judged and which contributes to the Benefits Comprehensive Performance Assessment score.

The 2005/06 Comprehensive Performance Assessment judged the Benefits and Local Taxation performance in relation to reconsiderations and appeals as 'Fair'. Improvement plans have been implemented to raise the current level of performance and since April 2006 the following improvements have been made –

Performance Measure	CPA Standard – (to achieve an excellent score)	2005 – 2006 performance	August 2006 Performance
% of Appeals submitted to the Appeals Service in 4 weeks	65%	19%	48%
% of appeals submitted to the Appeals Service in 3 months (includes submitted within 4 weeks)	95%	53%	75%

Written Question 20 – To the Executive Member for Housing from Councillor Aitken:

- a) Is he aware that plans by Community Housing Association Ltd to redevelop Roden Court, Hornsey Lane N6 will involve the eviction of up to 20 Assured Shorthold Tenants, some of whom are vulnerable, and a move to temporary accommodation for up to 50 Assured and Secure tenants, some of whom are elderly and disabled?
- b) What support and advice is the Housing Service offering these tenants?
- c) Will he meet with Community Housing to seek assurances that they will not create strain on already overstretched local housing services?

ANSWER

[a] Although these properties are not the responsibility of the council, the council has been keeping an eye on developments and it is committed to do everything in its power to assist the owners and the users to achieve the best possible solution to the issues they are facing.

We understand that this is a sheltered housing scheme that is no longer fit for its purpose as its fabric and facilities are not up to current standards. Community Housing Association, owners of this site, hope to secure money from the Housing Corporation to fully redevelop and improve this site through the re-provision of a much needed 40 bedspace extra care unit for the elderly and up to 100 more units of rent and shared ownership housing.

We understand that, for the benefit of occupants, it will be necessary to move them to another site and that Haringey Community Housing will ensure that any moves meet the needs of the tenants and are carried out with the least

amount of disruption as possible. Any eligible tenants will be able to return to the new development once completed.

[b] While tenants are able to seek advice from the Council's Housing Service they will be able to expect a full advice and support service from their landlord Community Homes. At the time of decanting the Council will work with Community Housing to help any particular needs of the residents.

[c] The Executive Member is happy to meet with Community Housing to seek any necessary assurances.

Written Question 21 – To the Executive Member for Health and Social Services from Councillor Wilson:

For how many months has the Council missed its target for the number of carers receiving a carer's break, and what actions has he taken to attempt to address the difficulties that his department face in this area?

ANSWER

Informal carers provide invaluable support to other family members, friends or neighbours who require support. Recognising this, the Council and the TPCT have provided £100k to fund a Carer's Centre this year.

The challenging target of 12% for Carer's breaks has not been met this year.

I have, therefore, asked the Director to remind all staff carrying out assessments of the need to consider separately the needs of carers and ensure services are offered to meet the needs of carers and not just to meet the needs of the cared for person.

Managers have been asked to monitor this weekly and I am pleased to tell you that performance is now improving.

Written Question 22 – To the Executive Member for Housing from Councillor Williams:

In each of the departments of the Housing Service, what proportion of the staff in his department are temporary agency staff, and how does this figure compare to the proportion of Council staff as a whole?

ANSWER

The Housing Service now consists of one overall department, which was previously known as Housing Strategy and Needs.

Following the establishment of Homes for Haringey this Service has been the subject of an ongoing radical restructuring of various units and during the

restructuring a number of new and vacant posts have been covered by temporary and agency staff to minimise long-term disruption.

As each restructuring is completed, the posts that had been kept covered by agency staff to aid the reorganisation are being recruited to on a permanent basis.

At this stage the proportion of temporary agency staff employed in the Service is 26.5%, with a range of posts being currently placed through a recruitment process for the new permanent posts.

The main areas where the use of agency staff has been necessary as a result of major restructurings in the service, are:

- the move from having a housing advice team and a homelessness team to having a Prevention and Options Service
- changes in the Housing Supply Service to facilitate improved working and to allow for the changing environment in terms of temporary and permanent housing supply
- changes to the Lettings Service to facilitate the move to Home Connections

Written Question 23 – To the Executive Member for Community Involvement from Councillor Edge:

Will she confirm how long the council owned premise above Stroud Green library has been vacant and whether the Council will be investigating and supporting residents calls for the space to be turned into a community facility?

ANSWER

We are endeavouring to bring the flat above Stroud Green Library back into residential use for homeless households. However, there are property issues that need to be investigated further before a final decision can be taken in this respect.

Written Question 24 – To the Executive Member for Children and Young People from Councillor Rainger:

- a) When will the re-organisation of free long term nursery places take place?
- b) Will such a reorganisation take into account the lack of free long term nursery places at Noel Park nursery, which is situated in a ward with a high deprivation profile?

ANSWER

In answering this question, I am assuming that the member is referring to 'full-time' rather than 'long-term' nursery places.

500 full-time nursery places are funded at present by 'top-slicing' the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The DSG is set by the Schools Forum and has been agreed for 2006/07 and 2007/08, as is the case nationally. Thus it is unlikely that any funding shift could take place before 2008/09.

Officers are currently reviewing options and would expect to consult the Schools Forum early in 2007.

Such a review would of course consider the relative priority for full-time places at Noel Park.

Written Question 25 – To the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation from Councillor Whyte:

- a) Will the council formally acknowledge that the initial consultation forms for the Hornsey Train Station CPZ Proposal were not delivered to every household in Hornsey?
- b) Why was every adult in a household not asked to participate in the initial consultation?
- c) How will the second stage consultation documents be delivered to households and will each adult in that household have an opportunity to submit their opinion?

ANSWER

There is no evidence to substantiate claims that the initial consultation forms were not widely distributed in the Hornsey area. 2.5% of non-delivery occurred throughout the total consultation exercise on CPZs. This 2.5% fell within the Bounds Green consultation area.

The Council is seeking to analyse the views from properties along roads rather than individuals. It is felt that this will provide a better representation of the road as a whole rather than enabling those properties with more adults to have a greater influence.

For phase 2 consultation, documents will be posted to all properties within the redefined areas. For the remaining roads that formed the original consultation boundaries, letters will be distributed, by hand, by a distribution company. Audit checks will also be conducted to ensure that all properties received a document.

Written Question 26 – To the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety from Councillor Hoban:

Does the Council support the proposal for the introduction of a CCTV camera at the junction of The Avenue and Alexandra Park Road to combat chronic antisocial behaviour and crime in the area and also to monitor a very

dangerous junction used by large numbers of schoolchildren from Alexandra Park School and Rhodes Avenue School? If so, please indicate the timetable for introduction.

ANSWER

Since the beginning of January 2006 there have been a small number of minor incidents reported in this area, which relate to abandoned vehicles, theft of and from motor vehicles, robberies and criminal damage. But there is certainly not 'chronic anti-social behaviour and crime' taking place there, unless it is not being reported to either the Council or the Police, as it is lower than the Borough-average for these crimes. There is no evidence available to us to suggest that CCTV installation should be considered for this location.

We are committed to improving safety for children attending schools in the borough. CCTV is not necessarily the most effective mechanism to assist in the maintenance of safety provisions for our children crossing roads. School Travel Plans enable us to achieve this aim through the use of education, enforcement and traffic engineering solutions. A School Travel Plan is a document produced by a school, which outlines an action plan to make journeys to and from school safer and healthier. The junction of The Avenue and Alexandra Park Road was redesigned in December 2003 as part of the Alexandra Park School Travel Plan. The measures consisted of raising the junction and reducing the crossing distance for the benefit of pedestrians crossing at this location.

Written Question 27 – To the Executive Member for Children and Young People from Councillor Engert:

Will she give her assurance that Coleridge School will be in a position to receive 120 reception children at the start of term in September 2007?

ANSWER

The current programme is to install a 2 classroom unit into Coleridge Primary School in July/August 2007, to be ready for the additional 2 form entry commencing September 2007. We plan to complete the works during the summer holiday.

Works will then be completed on the TUC site to allow for its opening in September 2008.