

COUNCIL QUESTIONS – 3 OCTOBER 2005:

ORAL QUESTIONS

Oral Question 1 – To the Executive Member for Children & Young People from Cllr Harris

Could the Exec member for Executive Member for Children & Young People outline the results achieved by Haringey children in tests and examinations during the last school year?

Oral Question 2 - To the Executive Member for Enterprise & Regeneration from Cllr Williams

If he will welcome the decision of the Executive not to grant £380,000 to the Tottenham-based Haringey Business Development Agency (HBDA) to deliver the City Growth Enterprise Village.

Oral Question 3 - To the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation from Cllr Santry

Is the Exec. Member for Environment and Conservation aware of CABE's campaign for on site staff and a multi-skilled 'Parkforce' in every park? How many of our parks have their own park keepers?

Oral Question 4 - To the Executive Member for Children and Young People from Cllr Hoban

Please could he (a) outline the consultation process followed in respect of the promised review of a decision to close the Red Gables unit in Crouch End. (b) state who was actively invited to participate in the consultation process and (c) confirm the outcome of the consultation process, or the current status, if not yet completed.

Oral Question 5 - To the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation from Cllr Bull

Does the Executive Member for the Environment and Conservation agree with me that the £600,000 cash injection for the White Hart Lane community sports centre shows our continuing commitment to sport and leisure in Haringey?

Oral Question 6 - To the Executive Member for Finance from Cllr Aitken:

Whether future plans for the Civic Centre include possible use by the Metropolitan Police as a Police Station?

Oral Question 7 - To the Executive Member for Community Involvement from Cllr Jean Brown

Could the Executive Member for Community Involvement outline the nature and extent of Haringey Council's support for and involvement with the voluntary sector?

Oral Question 8 - To the Leader of the Council from Cllr Bloch

Could the Council Leader please confirm (a) the number of council employees paid more than £50,000 in 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 respectively, (b) where there has been a large increase in the number of staff employed within a particular salary band over this period (e.g. £50 - £59,999), explain the reason for such increases.

Oral Question 9 - To the Leader of the Council from Cllr Haley

Could the Leader outline what Haringey Council will be doing to mark Black History Month in the borough?

Oral Question 10 - To the Executive Member for Children and Young People from Cllr Engert

As a matter of urgency, what steps he intends to take to provide proper after school and holiday provision for the children of Muswell Hill, following the closure of The Grove Workshop Playcentre two years ago.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 1 - To the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety from Cllr Williams

What is the total expenditure by the Council under her portfolio and if she will provide a breakdown of the expenditure for each of the services in her portfolio; please give details of contributions to both the crime and community safety budgets by other agencies.

Answer

As will be appreciated, Haringey Council on behalf of the Crime and Drugs Reduction Partnership receives a significant amount of monies from Government departments, all of which has clear spend-criteria attached. This money is therefore separated out below from Haringey Council's core budgets.

With regard to other agencies contributions, this is beyond our powers to gain access to, as this information belongs to the Police, Probation Service, Courts, Crown Prosecution Service, Health Trusts, and the many voluntary and community groups that provide crime and community safety work and resources within our Borough.

External Grants received *(The figures given below are in £1,000's):*

External Grants	Anti-Social Behaviour Team	Community Safety/ DAAT Team	Emergency Planning & Business Continuity	Enforcement Service	Domestic Violence	Youth Offending Service	Total
£000's							
BSCF	£72	£351	0	0	0	0	£423
Borough Commander's Fund:	0	£115	0	0	0	0	£115
Formula Funding	0	0	£148	0	0	0	£148
HRA	£200	0	0	0	0	0	£200
National Treatment Agency:	0	£1,877	0	0	0	0	£1,877
NRF	£200	£280	0	£200	£80	£302	£1,062
ODPM				£300	0		£300
Youth Justice Board	0	0	0	0	0	£882	£882
Total	£472	£2,623	£148	£500	£80	£1,184	£5,007

Internal, Core Budgets (The figures given below are in £1,000's):

Internal Core Budget	Anti-Social Behaviour Team	Community Safety/ DAAT Team	Emergency Planning & Business Continuity	Enforcement Service	Domestic Violence	Youth Offending Service	Total
£000's							
Core Budget	0	£187	0	£4,200	£30k	£1,229	£5,646

In summary:

Total expenditure by the Council under the portfolio of the Executive Lead Member for Crime & Community Safety is therefore:

External funds: £5,007,000

Internal funds: £5,646,000

Total: £10,653,000

Written Question 2 - To the Executive Member for Housing from Cllr Beacham

In the last three years how many a) Police Officers b) NHS Nursing staff c) NHS Doctors d) Firefighters have been housed by the Council as part of the keyworker scheme contained in the Housing Application form? What steps has the Council taken to promote this to the relevant organisations and their employees?

Answer

The following data has been provided by Metropolitan Home Ownership, the zone agent for the key worker living programme in North London. The information covers applications for the period up to the end of the first quarter 2005, of the 2004 – 2006 Housing Corporation funded programme.

Group	<i>Intermediate Rent</i>	Shared Ownership	Homebuy
NHS	13	11	86
Education	21	17	116
LC Teachers *	3	2	67
Police	3	5	44
Prison	1	0	0
Probation	2	3	4
Local Authority	3	3	11

* LC – London Challenge

Although Haringey's definition of a key worker includes fire fighters, the definition used for the key worker living programme excludes this group. Fire fighters will be eligible to apply for key worker housing to be completed under future Housing Corporation funded schemes. NHS staff covers nurses, midwives, physiotherapists and other ancillary staff.

Haringey's Housing Strategy team has produced leaflets and a poster to provide information to potential key worker housing applicants. These have been widely distributed to Council offices, all borough schools and young children's centres, the health service for distribution to all their staff, the police and fire service. A very positive response has been received to this campaign. In addition, details have been posted on Haringey's website, and individual phone enquiries are taken.

Written Question 3 - To the Executive Member for Enterprise and Regeneration from Cllr Winskill

Which consultants have been employed as part of the Haringey Heartlands Project in the last three years and how much have they received in fees?

Answer

The following consultants have been employed on the Haringey Heartlands Project over the last three years, Prosperity Management, Arup, Avery, CB Richard Ellis (formerly CB Hillier). The totals spent for each of the last three years were 02/03 £256,055, 03/04 £173,373, 04/05 £154,389.

The funds used to meet consultancy fees on Haringey Heartlands have been predominantly from the annual revenue budget allocated for the delivery of strategic sites with some match funding provided under SRB Round 3 and by the LDA on such things as shared independent legal advice. Work has been various but includes preparing the masterplan, the outline of a Local Development Framework and work under the Council's direction on a range of regeneration matters.

Written Question 4 - To the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation from Cllr Hare

What has been the cost to the Council of pursuing the Aquaterra Option for Leisure Services for the last four years?

Answer

The Council actually made a decision to terminate the contract negotiations with Aqua Terra in the early summer of 2004, at what was an advanced stage of the procurement process. This complex project required significant external legal and financial technical support, at a cost of £470,000 over 4 years. Clearly some of that work has been used to inform decisions on both the interim management arrangement and strengthened in-house operation.

Subsequently, the Council has approved a £4.6m investment programme in new and refurbished facilities over the next 4 years.

Written Question 5 - To the Executive Member for Environment from Cllr Simpson:

How many Essential User Parking Permits have been issued in the last three years and if he will provide a breakdown of the number of permits issued to Midwives, District Nurses etc. What progress has been made with the ALG regarding improved recognition of parking permits for NHS Primary Care Staff?

Answer

The Council issued 8100 Essential Service Permits over the past 3 years and of which approximately 900 were issued to the Primary Care Trust.

The ALG Transport and Environment Committee and the London Boroughs operate a parking badge scheme for Doctors and others involved in primary healthcare. The badge is called a Health Emergency Badge. This badge covers urgent or emergency home visits by doctors, nurses, midwives and health visitors who are regularly away from their normal base.

This scheme is in place for a number of years and there are no plans at present to revise this scheme.

Written Question 6 - To the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety from Cllr Floyd

With regard to the Council's proposal to place CCTV cameras to monitor the fountain beside Hornsey Library where will they be monitored from and will the Police have direct access to the images?

Answer

The cameras will be monitored by library staff during library opening hours: footage from the previous evening will be routinely screened each morning.

We have investigated the potential for linking images directly to the wider CCTV arrangements for the borough. We will implement procedures to ensure routine screening each day of footage from the previous evening.

Written Question 7 - To the Executive Member for Finance from Cllr Gilbert

What is the average time in days that it takes for Haringey to settle accounts with external suppliers for financial years 2002/3, 2003/4, 2004/5?

Answer

This has been an area of considerable improvement. Best value performance indicator no.8 measures the percentage of commercial invoices paid within terms (usually 30 days) and our performance over the last three years is as follows:

	Haringey target	Haringey actual	London top quartile	National top quartile	National target
Year	%	%	%	%	%
2002/03	80%	73%	80%	94%	100%
2003/04	80%	76%	87%	96%	100%
2004/05	86%	85%	87%	96%	100%

In 2005/06 to date the performance is at 90%.

This measure excludes disputed invoices.

Written Question 8 - To the Executive Member for Children and Young People from Cllr Engert

What has been the total cost in legal fees and compensation of the two recent cases involving a) the boy who was taken to court by Haringey Council after being granted a place at Weston Park School b) The eight year old boy with Asperger's disorder who was adjudged by the Local Government Ombudsman to have been denied him much needed extra schooling. Which budget head do these legal and other costs come under?

Answer

a) The case of the child offered a place at Weston Park School.

The authority initiated legal proceedings against the admissions appeal panel on the grounds that its decision was unlawful and unreasonable and thus created an undesirable precedent in relation to future cases. The court found in the authority's favour on the basis that the panel had applied the wrong legal test in making its decision. The proceedings were not issued against the child whose appeal had been upheld by the panel. The authority did inform the parents of the child, at the earliest opportunity, of its intention to issue proceedings against the appeal panel.

Under statute the authority is required to indemnify members of an admissions appeal panel in respect of legal costs incurred in relation to any decision taken by them in good faith in pursuing their functions. Consequently the authority incurred legal costs in respect of both parties in the proceedings. The total sum for the external legal costs for both parties amounts to £9,990 plus staff time valued at £3945 (internal legal charges) was incurred.

The fees were taken from the Admissions budget, which contains a provision for judicial review cases and legal advice.

b) This concerned a Haringey child with Asperger's who was placed in an out-borough school. The Children's Service had to contract with Barnet PCT for Occupational Therapy provision, the delivery of which was delayed. Haringey PCT were providing clinical support but this was not school-based. The pupil concerned was not out of school nor missed any schooling during this time. The parents were compensated with the sum of £7000 from the SEN budget for the delay in the OT provision.

Written Question 9 - To the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation from Cllr Newton

What bonus scheme if any are offered to parking wardens and other parking enforcement officers employed or contracted by the Council.

Answer

Parking Attendants working for the London Borough of Haringey do not receive any form of 'bonus' incentive for carrying out their duties. No such schemes or initiatives are in place for any member of staff working within the Parking Service.

Written Question 10 - To the Executive Member for Community Involvement from Cllr Davies

In light of recent Electoral Commissions report that 8-9% of the eligible population, did not register to vote in 2000, could the Executive member please detail what the Council is doing to encourage greater electoral participation, particularly in areas of economic deprivation?

Answer

The responsibility for electoral registration lies with the Electoral Registration Officer [ERO] appointed by the Council. In Haringey this is the Chief Executive. The Electoral Commission's report, *Understanding Electoral Registration*, highlights the difficulties associated with compiling an accurate register of electors. The report is to be welcomed, although there are some aspects of the statistical data that are being questioned by Electoral Registration professionals and we await further clarification on these.

There is, however, no room for complacency when it comes to involving residents in the democratic process and Haringey has been at the forefront in encouraging people to register. Haringey won the first national award for innovation in electoral administration for the introduction of telephone registration. This is now used by more than half the Councils in the Country. Our Electoral Services Office is currently in the process of recruiting 150 canvassers to call on all households that have not returned the registration form delivered to them at the end of August. They will be calling at all these addresses during October and November. We expect to get responses from 95% of these households in order to ensure that the revised register which is to be published on 1 December 2005 is as accurate as it can be.

Written Question 11 - To the Executive Member for Crime & Community Safety from Cllr Edge

How many a), prosecutions for fly-tipping were made in each of the last five years, and b), of them how many have been successful?

Answer

The Enforcement Service records date back to 2002. Since 2002 officers have reported 34 offences of fly-tipping for prosecution. In addition to this there are a number of cases pending from 2005 that have not yet been reported and which are not included here.

Reported cases have resulted in a range of outcomes from a conditional discharge to £700 plus costs. There is no record of any cases being lost, although some have been withdrawn where for example a company has ceased to trade.

A more detailed breakdown dating back 5 years can be provided at a later date using records held by Legal Services.

Written Question 12 - To the Executive Member for Crime & Community Safety from Cllr Oatway

How many fines have been issued in the borough for each of the last five years for a), littering, and b), dog mess?

Answer

(a) Fixed penalty notices issued for littering in the last 5 years are as follows

2001	-	45
2002	-	118
2003	-	91
2004	-	85
2005 ytd	-	72

(b) No fixed penalty notices have been issued.

Written Question 13 - To the Leader of the Council from Cllr Aitken

With regard to Civil Partnerships will the Executive Member a) detail how many of the registered venues in the borough will accept civil partnerships from 20th December 2005 b, whether Haringey Council will be permitting civil partnership ceremonies at the Civic Centre c, what training has been given to registry staff in preparation of the introduction of civil partnerships.

Answer

There are 8 premises in Haringey which are approved venues to celebrate marriage ceremonies. They have all been advised that their registration covers Civil Partnerships from the 20th December 2005. Haringey Registration Service will be offering ceremonies for Civil Partnership in the Civic Centre. Many enquiries have already been dealt with and 10 ceremonies have provisionally been booked for December and others for the New Year. Staff have already attended Civil Partnership Awareness Seminars arranged by the Association of Registration & Celebratory Services and are booked in for further training courses organised by the Registrar General's Office in October.

Written Question 14 - To the Leader of the Council from Cllr Bloch

How many requests under the Freedom of Information Act have been received since 1 January 2005, how many cases has the information been provided in full, in how many cases in part, and in how many cases has the council declined to disclose the information. How many cases have been taken to review and what has the outcome been in each instance.

Answer

At the end of August 2005, 333 Freedom of Information requests had been received. Of the 333 requests, 266 were supplied in full, three were supplied in part and two were declined. Of the remaining 62 requests not responded to at that date, exemptions are being considered in four of the cases. Two requests have been subject to internal review and in both cases the decision was upheld.

Written Question 15 - To the Executive Member for Community Involvement from Cllr Featherstone:

To ask the Executive member for Community Engagement from Cllr Featherstone: Please would the Council detail the a, staffing b, production c, distribution cost per issue to produce Haringey People magazine.

Answer

The total average costs per edition under the current contract is £36,366, broken down as follows:

Staffing and production: £14,841
Distribution: £21,525

It is forecast that these costs will reduce to £30,760 under a new contract to produce the magazine starting in December.

Written Question 16 - To the Executive Member for Finance from Cllr Hoban

Please would the Executive Member detail the amount of housing benefit over-paid in each of the last three years and of that a, how much was recovered and b, how much was written off.

Answer

Please see below a breakdown of each of the last three years in respect of overpaid housing benefits:

2002/03

Overpayments raised	£4.014 million
Payments received	£1.175 million
Write-offs	£4.647 million

Please note that the above figure for 2002/03 excludes the overpayments raised and received from ongoing benefit entitlement.

2003/04

Overpayments raised	£10,913 million
Payments received	£3,714 million
Write-offs	£275,000

2004/05

Overpayments raised	£7,742 million
Payments received	£3.412 million
Write-offs	£2,182 million

Please further note that the write-offs undertaken in each year will cover debts raised from 1st April 2000.