

Minutes

OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET held at
The Town Hall, Hendon, NW4, on Tuesday, 12 April, 2005

PRESENT:

- *The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Wendy Prentice)
- *The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Brian Coleman, AM, FRSA)

Councillors:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| *Steve Blomer | *Arun Ghosh BSc BVSC AH | *Susette Palmer BA (Hons) |
| *Maureen Braun | Mphil CBIOL MIBIOL, | *Kanti Patel MEng, MCI OB |
| *Fiona Bulmer | MAPHV, MRSM | FFB, MCM I |
| *Terry Burton | *Brian Gordon, LL.B | *Barry Rawlings |
| *Anita Campbell | *Eva Greenspan BA, LL.B | *Colin Rogers |
| *Wayne Casey BA (Hons) | *Christopher Harris | *Paul Rogers |
| MIIA | *Helena Hart | *Brian Salinger |
| *Danish Chopra | *Lynne Hillan | *Gill Sargeant |
| *Jack Cohen | *Sean Hooker, BA (Hons) | *Joan Scannell |
| *Melvin Cohen | *Daniel Hope | *Alan Schneiderman |
| *Katia David BSc, MBA, JP | *Anne Hutton | *Gerard Silverstone |
| *Jeremy Davies BA (Hons), | *Mark Langton | *Agnes Slocombe |
| CPFA | *Malcolm Lester FCCA | *Ansuya Sodha MBA (Middx) |
| *Peter Davis Ctext, FTI, | *Victor Lyon, BA (Hons) | DipM (CIM), Cert Ed |
| FCFI | *Kitty Lyons | *Susan Steinberg |
| *Aba Dunner MCIJ | *John Marshall | *Leslie Sussman, MBE |
| Kevin Edson | *Linda McFadyen | *Andreas Tambourides |
| *Olwen Evans ACIS | *Kath McGuirk | *Soon-Hoe Teh |
| *Claire Farrier | *David Mencer | *Jim Tierney |
| *Anthony Finn B.Sc (Econ) | *Alison Moore | Allan Turner |
| FCA | *Jazmin Naghar | *Phil Yeoman |
| *Mike Freer | *Robert Newton | *Zakia Zubairi |
| | *Matthew Offord | Vacancy |
| | *Monroe Palmer OBE FCA | |

*denotes Member present

193. WELCOME TO COUNCILLOR ZAKIA ZUBAIRI

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Zakia Zubairi as the new Member for Colindale Ward.

194. PRAYER (Agenda Item 1):

The Mayor's Chaplain offered prayer.

195. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2):

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Allan Turner, and from Councillors Phil Yeoman, Barry Rawlings, Colin Rogers and Kath McGuirk for lateness.

- 196. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2005 (Agenda Item 3):**
RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 1 March 2005 be approved.
- 197. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 4):**
A minute's silence was held to remember Lord James Callaghan and Pope John-Paul II who had passed away.
- 198. RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION (Agenda Item 4a and 15.2.7)**
Moved by the Deputy Mayor, duly seconded and
RESOLVED –
- 1. That we, the Members of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet, hereby express to the Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Mrs Wendy Prentice, our appreciation of the excellent service she has rendered to the London Borough of Barnet as its Mayor during the period May 2004 to May 2005 and for the friendly and conscientious way in which she has performed the duties of that office. We also note how ably supported she has been by her Escort, her husband Edward.**
We offer her our gratitude for the concern that she has shown at all times to promote the welfare of the London Borough and its residents, particularly, for her willingness to support the many organisations and individuals who called on her time and services during her year of office. We congratulate her on the success of her appeal for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.
We compliment her on the manner in which she represented the Borough and upheld the dignity of her office on all occasions.
 - 2. That the foregoing resolution be engrossed over the common seal of the Corporation and presented to the Worshipful the Mayor.**

The Mayor expressed her gratitude to the Council for passing the resolution.

- 199. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS (Agenda Item 5):**
Councillor Jack Cohen declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 15.2.2 (ii) as was a season ticket holder for Barnet Football Club.
- 200. QUESTION TIME FOR MEMBERS (Agenda Item 7):**
Questions were put to the Leader and the relevant Members of the Cabinet. Those questions, together with the original answers provided and the text of any supplementary questions and answers are set out in the Appendix to these minutes.
- 201. MEMBERS' MOTIONS (Agenda Item 8):**
The Mayor stated that, using her discretion under Rule 34.2, she would allow 20 minutes each for Motions 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 and then put the remaining Motions and Amendments to the vote without debate.
- 202. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS**
Councillor Joan Scannell, duly seconded, moved that the order of business relating to the Motions be varied so that Motion 8.8 would be considered after Motion 8.2.
Upon being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.
The Worshipful the Mayor confirmed that her ruling referred to in Minute 201 now applied to Motions 8.1, 8.2 and 8.8.

203. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR WAYNE CASEY (Agenda item 8.1)

Motion 8.1 in the name of Councillor Wayne Casey was moved.

An amendment in the name of Councillor Matthew Offord was moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment moved by Councillor Matthew Offord was declared carried. Ten Members demanded a division on voting. Upon being taken, the results of the division were declared as follows:

For	Against	Not Voting	Absent when vote taken
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Maureen Braun	Steve Blomer	The Mayor	Danish Chopra
Fiona Bulmer	Anita Campbell	Brian Coleman	Kevin Edson
Terry Burton	Wayne Casey		Paul Rogers
Melvin Cohen	Jack Cohen		Allan Turner
Katia David	Jeremy Davies		
Peter Davis	Claire Farrier		
Aba Dunner	Arun Ghosh		
Olwen Evans	Sean Hooker		
Anthony Finn	Anne Hutton		
Mike Freer	Mark Langton		
Brian Gordon	Kitty Lyons		
Eva Greenspan	Linda McFadyen		
Christopher Harris	Kath McGuirk		
Helena Hart	David Mencer		
Lynne Hillan	Alison Moore		
Daniel Hope	Monroe Palmer		
Malcolm Lester	Susette Palmer		
Victor Lyon	Barry Rawlings		
John Marshall	Colin Rogers		
Jazmin Naghar	Gill Sargeant		
Robert Newton	Alan Schneiderman		
Matthew Offord	Agnes Slocombe		
Kanti Patel	Ansuya Sodha		
Brian Salinger	Soon-Hoe Teh		
Joan Scannell	Jim Tierney		
Gerard Silverstone	Phil Yeoman		
Susan Steinberg	Zakia Zubairi		
Leslie Sussman			
Andreas Tambourides			

For 29
 Against 27
 Not Voting 2
 Absent 4
 Vacancy 1

The amendment was therefore declared carried.

Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council reiterates its commitment to the provision of CCTV in Mill Hill Broadway and confirms the importance of good street lighting in the effective implementation of any CCTV scheme. Council also welcomes the first phase of its programme of additional cameras at High Barnet, Burnt Oak including Watling Park, Cricklewood, Friary Park, and the extra camera installed in Hendon. Council notes that this brings the total number of cameras in Barnet to over 80. Council resolves to implement the full CCTV programme in combination with next year's ambitious PFI street lighting scheme, both of which will assist in this administration's corporate priority of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in the borough.

204. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR LYNNE HILLAN (Agenda item 8.2 and 15.2.11)

Motion 8.2 in the name of Councillor Lynne Hillan was moved.

An amendment in the name of Councillor Sean Hooker was moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment moved by Councillor Sean Hooker was declared carried. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – Council is appalled at the rise in Crime, particularly violent crime, both locally and nationally.

Council notes the increase in overall crimes in Barnet by 16 per cent, the highest in London, and the growth in violent crimes by 36 per cent over the past year.

Council also notes the statement by the Borough Commander that Barnet is no longer a “Safe” Borough

Council understands that, nationally, over 40 per cent of Police time is now spent on paperwork as opposed to catching criminals

Council however welcomes Barnet Council initiatives that have outlawed outdoor drinking in the town Centres of Finchley, Hendon and North Finchley.

Council further welcomes Barnet Council's implementation of CCTV in at least one extra area per year.

Council understands that if more Police time could be spent on the streets, then their presence, coupled with Barnet Council's anti-Crime initiatives would cut disorder.

Council urges Cabinet to support the Borough Commander in his efforts to get more Police for Barnet and to press for these Officers to work on the front line to cut the crime blighting this Borough, instead of being tied to their desks with red tape and paperwork that helps no-one.

205. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR DANIEL HOPE (Agenda item 8.8)

Motion 8.8 in the name of Councillor Daniel Hope was moved with an amendment also moved by Councillor Daniel Hope.

Amendments in the name of Councillor Monroe Palmer and Councillor Colin Rogers were moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendments moved by Councillor Monroe Palmer and Councillor Colin Rogers were declared lost. The substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED –

Council notes that Mobile Phone Masts are being erected in Barnet.

Council notes the Government made £22.5 billion from the sale of 3G Licenses in 2000.

Council notes PPG 8, which effectively prohibits planning authorities from considering health concerns.

Council notes Conservative party proposals that would allow local people to have their say over the erection of masts, by making sure that these require full Planning Permission, and allow healthcare concerns to be taken into account.

Council resolves to support such plans.

206. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR MONROE PALMER (Agenda Item 8.3)

Motion 8.3 in the name of Councillor Monroe Palmer was put to the vote without debate and the motion was lost.

207. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR KATH MCGUIRK (Agenda Item 8.4 and 15.2.1a)

Motion 8.4 in the name of Councillor Kath McGuirk and an amendment in the name of Councillor Danish Chopra were put to the vote without debate. The amendment and the substantive the motion were declared lost.

208. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR ALAN SCHNEIDERMAN (Agenda Item 8. and 15.2.1b)

Motion 8.5 in the name of Councillor Alan Schneiderman and an amendment in the name of Councillor Claire Farrier were put to the vote without debate. The amendment and the substantive motion were declared lost.

209. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR MONROE PALMER (Agenda Item 8.6)

Motion 8.6 in the name of Councillor Monroe Palmer was put to the vote without debate and the motion was lost.

210. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR GILL SARGEANT (Agenda Item 8.7)

Motion 8.7 in the name of Councillor Gill Sargeant was put to the vote without debate and the motion was lost.

211. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

In accordance with the Agenda, the Mayor adjourned the meeting for 15 minutes. The meeting reconvened at 9.03pm.

212. ADMINISTRATION POLICY ITEM (Agenda Item 9.1)

Councillor Fiona Bulmer proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. An amendment in the name of Councillor Linda McFadyen was moved. Debate ensued. Upon being to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Linda McFadyen was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – Council notes the superbug MRSA, which every year kills as many as 5,000 people who are admitted to hospital.

Council is dismayed that figures just released show local Barnet General and Chase Farm NHS trust to have the highest infection rate in the UK. This is even worse than last year's result, when the hospital trust had the fourth worst rate in the country. We believe this situation cannot be allowed to continue and urgent action is needed.

Council notes the government's obsession with targets and form filling; we believe this has created a bloated bureaucracy that is undermining patient care nationally and in Barnet in particular.

Council believes our residents deserve the best possible levels of healthcare. We believe this involves cutting back on bureaucracy, investing in technology to keep wards clean, focusing on clinical priorities, and allowing doctors and nurses to use their own professional judgement.

Council notes Conservative policy to reduce wasteful bureaucracy and invest in NHS frontline staff to clean up hospitals. Council calls on Cabinet to encourage the Primary Care Trust (PCT) to support such moves to reduce MRSA in our hospitals. We understand that this can be the only way to ensure that the health of Barnet's residents can be protected should they be admitted to hospital.

213. OPPOSITION POLICY ITEM (Agenda Item 9.2, 15.2.9 and 15.2.11)

Councillor Sean Hooker proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. Amendments in the name of Councillor Susette Palmer, Councillor Matthew Offord and Councillor Jeremy Davies were moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment moved by Councillor Susette Palmer was declared lost. The amendments moved by Councillor Matthew Offord and Councillor Jeremy Davies were declared carried. The substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED - That this Council notes:

The environmental initiatives and actions produced by this administration since 2002 including:

Energy Efficiency

- **Barnet Homes ongoing programme of enhancements to the housing stock, including a range of energy efficiency improvements that will ensure that new homes built as a result of regeneration programmes will usually exceed those they replace in terms of their energy efficiency, reducing CO₂ emissions and residents' fuel bills.**
- **The 2.5% improvement in energy efficiency across all housing types in Barnet, equivalent to a reduction in CO₂ emissions of 17,953 tonnes**
- **Energy Efficiency measures incorporated into the Council's property assets including: Building Energy Management Systems to control the heating in larger buildings, installation of commercial condensing boilers in larger buildings, and Combined Heat and Power in main swimming pools.**
- **20 Council sites supplied with green energy together with the whole of the street lighting portfolio.**
- **Council parking meters powered by solar panels.**
- **This administration's creation of an Energy Efficiency Advisor, focussing on Council and social housing tenants and reducing fuel poverty.**
- **Barnet's active engagement in the Warm Front scheme, the Energy Action Partnership and the Home Repairs Assistance (HRA) grants for energy efficiency improvements.**
- **An energy advice line providing general energy efficiency advice and signposting for sources of grant funding and discounts on energy efficiency measures.**
- **The distribution of 1000 energy efficient light-bulbs to vulnerable households throughout Barnet.**

Renewable Energy

- **School talks on renewable energy and energy efficiency delivered by the Council's Waste & Sustainability Team, as part of a wider environmental educational programme.**
- **The installation of a number of solar thermal panels installed in schools and the successful application of grants under the Clear Skies initiative.**
- **The harvesting of rain water into one school to date.**
- **The success of our bid for funding for a solar panel (photovoltaic panels generating electricity) for St James school, Colindale.**

- The work between the Waste & Sustainability Team, Education Service Architects and REAL to integrate renewable energy into major programmes for school rebuilding works.
- The training event on renewable energy and energy efficiency for planning and other relevant council and Barnet Homes staff in March 2005.

Recycling

- The 8 percent recycling rate achieved under the last administration in 2002 and the 20 percent recycling rate achieved now.
- The successful compulsory recycling pilot, covering 21,000 households, that achieved a recycling increase of 18 percent.
- The comprehensive publicity campaign that has been underway since summer 2003 to promote recycling services.
- An outreach letter sent to 320 Community Groups, Residents' Associations, Faith and Ethnic Groups requesting that they circulate leaflets, display posters and include articles on recycling in their newsletters to reach specific audiences.
- Articles agreed for inclusion in 26 newsletters to date, reaching over 14,000 households.
- Recycling Service displays held at 40 community events, festivals and libraries since January 2004.
- The Schools Recycling Service which provides a free recycling collection service for paper, cans and glass and the participation rate of 88% of Barnet's schools.
- Work is continuing to involve those schools who have yet to make use of the service.
- Barnet Schools Recycling Challenge, designed to increase recycling at school and at home.
- Cycler the rapping robot who visited 2000 school children in Barnet in 2004 and 2005.
- Approximately 25 schools actively working on Barnet Environmental Action for Real in Schools (BEARS) projects.
- The successful BEARS conference held in July 2003 which was attended by over 100 children from 8 schools attended.
- Over 600 school pupils from all over Barnet who learnt more about recycling and sent in their designs and ideas for a recycling poster in a Schools Recycling Poster Competition.
- The setting up of white paper recycling at North London Business Park on 9 April 2004.
- A Waste Audit of Hendon Town Hall carried out with Waste Watch Business Network and facilities managers at the Town Hall to identify areas where the council can improve its own environmental performance.
- A survey by Friends of the Earth published in March 2004 that assessed the quality of kerbside recycling services provided by all English local authorities, in terms of the proportion of households served, the range of materials collected and the frequency of collections. Barnet was ranked the 4th best doorstep collection service in England and the only London Borough in the top ten.

Council recognises the important environmental work on-going within the London Borough of Barnet, this administration's commitment to the environment and resolves to thank its staff for the work they do and further seeks that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport establishes a dialogue with the Carbon Trust in order to establish an environmental audit to assist in the reduction of carbon emissions through the council's work, housing, property and vehicle fleets.

Council requests Cabinet to refer the matter to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

214. COMMENTS ON THE WORK OF THE CABINET (Agenda item 10 and 15.2.10)

Councillor Kath McGuirk commented

I know this might seem a bit repetitive. This is the fifth time in eighteen months I have brought this up in the Council Chamber. It is an important issue, but I think we need to move this issue forward, not backwards, and I hope Councillor Offord is not going to recycle his many speeches and mention, you did not put in the budget, the green ways and compulsory recycling. But I would like to point out to Councillor Offord that the Tories in the past voted against the kerbside recycling. And now a lot of the issues you mentioned in your amendment to the last item were actually initiatives of the former Labour and Lib Dem Administration. And the working schools was actually promoted by the former Councillor Pauline Coakley-Webb so I think it is very hard and a bit mean of you to actually try and claim credit for all this. But let's be honest. This is an important issue for local residents. As I was taking a leisurely stroll through the Garden Suburb this morning, for what reason I do not know, I saw many empty recycling boxes but not totally empty. Many of them still had cardboard in them. So it is clear that residents either believe or want to recycle cardboard within the kerbside collection. The compulsory scheme is all very well but expanding the service to allow residents to recycle plastics and cardboards is the best way of increasing recycling so that people are enthused about it. It is about promoting and enabling people to do what they want.

This Council would then smash its target of 30% recycling of waste easily. All right, it is not cheap. There have been lots of cheap things going on in this Chamber tonight but it is an investment to the future. A Labour Council in Barnet would take this matter forward. We simply have no time to waste. I hope tonight we can get a commitment from Councillor Offord that he will work with his senior officers who have done a splendid job on waste minimisation and promoting recycling in this borough to date. But I hope he can take it forward and there will be an investigation and investment in looking to bring in cardboard and plastic to the kerbside recycling collection.

Councillor Matthew Offord responded

I think that Councillor McGuirk's question demonstrates that Barnet's Labour Group has abandoned trying to achieve a 30% recycling target. I will not do that.

Councillor Gill Sargeant commented:

Thank you very much, and I welcome that I have only got a minute because I think everybody would be asleep beyond one minute, even though I think this is an extremely important issue. It is difficult to check that everybody was still awake.

The key point I wanted to make is what I have to say about the Grahame Park regeneration in fact affects all the regeneration estates in Barnet. The Labour Group supports the regeneration of the Grahame Park Estate but we are concerned about how far it progresses and as quickly as possible, but can I just say, as our support is conditional upon solutions being found to the outstanding problems that must be addressed.

At the Planning meeting, the Labour Committee Members won a public commitment that the plans would change as the detailed planning was undertaken, and most important of these is that the need for the Council to get to grips with improving the local infrastructure.

I am afraid we on this side are very uncertain to the extent at which the local infrastructure will be improved. I had a question earlier about the SRB because at the end of the SRB there is no yet confirmed development on what is going to happen to the infrastructure and I am extremely worried that building these intense estates with increasing numbers that we are just not going to get sufficient infrastructure and despite the lateness of the hour, I think this is an extremely important issue and we are very concerned about what is going to happen in the future.

Councillor Melvin Cohen responded:

Madam Mayor, I am equally concerned about infrastructure and how matters are governed by the Colindale Development Framework. This assesses the area-wide infrastructure requirements including schools, health facilities, open spaces and highways and transport.

The development scheme we provide, in many cases, enhances the infrastructure of Grahame Park, and associated Section 106 Agreements for the scheme and the adjoining East Camp Development will provide over £20million of new infrastructure invested in Colindale. And Choices for Grahame Park will be taking forward the improvements for the community in Grahame Park as part of the approved redevelopment scheme. And the Council's Housing Regeneration Service will be working closely with its partners and Choices to ensure appropriate infrastructure and housing provision.

And I would like to remind Councillor Sargeant about the Priority One bid for Opportunity Borough status that we have now got £12million, £9million for part of the bid and £3million from 106 contributions in connection with the Aerodrome Road bridge. We have got some £5million approximately of public transport and highways improvements. Education £5.5million. Library replacement £2.1million. Health Centre £1.8million. Nursery £1.2million. Welfare centre £2.1million. Log cabin and adventure playground £386,000. Housing Office £506,000. New Grahame Park open space £250,000. Open space maintenance £80,000, £80,000 employment and training. £1million!

Councillor Wayne Casey commented:

Thank you very much Madam Mayor.

Madam Mayor, the Cabinet Member gave an assurance in this Chamber that he would support any reasonable costs associated with the management plan for the sustainable conservation of Sheepwash Pond in Mill Hill. A management plan has been developed at the expense of the London Wildlife Trust and has been contributed to by members of the Mill Hill Preservation Society. I understand that this assurance has now been withdrawn.

If my understanding is correct and I hope it is not, would the Cabinet Member explain the basis for this decision? Either he disputes the costs associated with the management plan or he disputes the details of the plan itself. If he does neither then the costs are by definition reasonable and the only explanation is that he is now going back on his word which, knowing Councillor Offord, I am sure is not the case.

Councillor Matthew Offord responded:

Thank you Madam Mayor, I will rattle through this. It was not actually my word. It was the word of Council.

We are all very pleased to see a copy of the management plan five months after we agreed it and, as previously stated, I am happy for the Council to fund the removal of the terrapins at the cost identified. This initial funding was agreed immediately so that the Trust could deal with this issue without delay. However, I am not sure why the Trust are refusing to apply for this funding via the LA21 Grants Scheme which is for environmental improvements such as this.

It is important that Council money is accounted for correctly and that audit trails are in place. To this end, the Trust were asked to write a letter stating the amount requested and the reason so that the money can be released.

This would be the case whichever fund the money is taken from. The Council motion in September stated that should the Cabinet agree the Council will consider providing reasonable funding. Accepting the offer of funding for the terrapin removal does not exclude further funding of work in the plan. However, Council budgets are limited and I am aware that a figure of £5,000 for five years has been included in the management plan which I believe to be excessive. There are grants available from other sources for work such as this and I would like to see that these options are exhausted first.

215. STATUTORY COUNCIL BUSINESS (Agenda Items 12, 14 and 15)

In accordance with Procedure Rule 43, the Worshipful the Mayor allocated 17 minutes for Agenda Item 12, 17 minutes for Agenda Item 14 and six minutes for Agenda Item 15.

216. REPORT OF CABINET 29 MARCH 2005 (Agenda Item 12):

Councillor Victor Lyon moved reception and adoption of the Report of Cabinet dated 29 March, 2005 with the following recommendations:

**1. SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY 2005 – 2008 (Council 16/04/02)
(Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods & Community Safety – Agenda Item 7):**

(1) That Council approve the amended draft Safer Communities Strategy 2005-2008.

2. LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACT 2004 AND THE PROMOTION OF A NINTH BILL (Council 26/10/04) (Report of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Environment– Agenda Item 10):

(1) That the Resolution of this Council passed at a Meeting of the Council held on 26 October 2004 to promote a Bill in the present Session of Parliament, pursuant to which the Bill entitled “A Bill to confer further powers upon local authorities in London; and for related purposes”; “A Bill to confer further powers upon local authorities in London and upon Transport for London; and for related purposes” and “A Bill to provide for the prohibition of smoking in places of work in Greater London” have been deposited in Parliament, be and the same is hereby confirmed.

(2) That the Head of Committee advise the Association of London Government (ALG) accordingly.

Debate ensued.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED – That the Report of Cabinet dated 29 March 2005 be approved and adopted.

217. REPORT OF THE SPECIAL (CONSTITUTION REVIEW) COMMITTEE 6 APRIL 2005 (Agenda Item 14):

Councillor Victor Lyon moved reception and adoption of the Report of the Special (Constitution Review) Committee dated 6 April, 2005 with the following recommendations:

(1) That the changes to the sections/parts of the Constitution listed below and as set out in detail in Appendix A to the Report be approved:-

Article 9 – The Standards Committee

Article 12 – Table of Chief Officers

Article 14 – Finance Contracts, Land Disposal and Legal matters

Part 3 - Responsibility for Functions

Part 4, Section 3 – Panels and Consultative Bodies

Part 4, Section 4 – Public Participation

Financial Regulations –

▪ **Part 1 Financial Management**

▪ **Part 2 Financial Administration**

(2) **That:**

(i) **subject to the Cabinet Resources Committee agreeing to increase the Members' Allowances budget by £2,333, the number of members comprising the Licensing Panel of Chairman be increased to six and that membership be selected from the Licensing Committee;**

(ii) **the Council make the further appointment**

(iii) **the Cabinet Resources Committee, on 28 April, be requested to increase the Members' Allowances budget.**

(3) **That, with effect from the 2005 Annual Meeting of the Council:-**

(i) **the new Overview and Scrutiny structure comprise one Cabinet Overview and Overview Committee and five standing Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as follows, closely aligned to the Corporate Plan priorities:**

- **Resources, Performance and Partnerships**
- **First Class Education and Children**
- **Cleaner, Greener, Transport and Development**
- **Supporting the Vulnerable in our Community**
- **Tackling Crime and Housing**

(ii) **the Terms of Reference for the new Overview and Scrutiny structure be as set out in Appendix B to this Report;**

(iii) **in relation to "call – in", a system of strengthened "specification of items for debate" which will involve members specifying written reasons for items they wish closely to scrutinise at the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved.**

(4) **That, with effect from the 2005 Annual Meeting of the Council, the introduction of a new, stand alone Audit Committee in the Council's Committee structure, with Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix C to this report be approved.**

(5) **That the Democratic Services Manager be instructed to make the appropriate changes to the Council's Constitution.**

Debate ensued.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED – That the Report of the Special (Constitution Review) Committee dated 6 April 2005 be approved and adopted.

218. COLINDALE BY-ELECTION - Report of the Chief Executive (Agenda Item 15.1):

The Chief Executive reported the results of the by-election in the Colindale Ward on 7 April 2005 and confirmed that Zakia Zubairi was elected as Councillor for that Ward.

219. REPORTS EXEMPTED FROM THE CALL-IN PROCESS (Agenda Item 15.2.2):

The Democratic Services Manager reported that, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Rules in the Council's Constitution, the Chairman of the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the decisions detailed in the Democratic Services Manager's report, and had agreed that the decisions proposed were reasonable in the circumstances indicated and that they could be treated as matters of urgency and thus be exempted from the call-in requirements.

220. VACANCIES ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (Report of the Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Item 15.2.3):

The Democratic Services Manager's report set out details of the appointments or nominations to be made.

Nominations in the names of Councillors Joan Scannell and Alison Moore were moved.

RESOLVED – That the following persons be appointed or nominated as the case may require to fill the vacancies referred to for the period indicated:

VACANCY REFERENCE	PARTICULARS OF APPOINTMENT OR NOMINATION	PERSON APPOINTED OR NOMINATED
P2.2	Barnet Hill JMI and Nursery School	Defer
VP33.1	Beis Yaacov Primary School	Defer
P.44.3	Broadfields Primary School	Defer
NP.46.2	Brookhill Nursery School	Ms Janet Renton
P.23.1	Brookland Infant and Brookland Junior Schools	Defer
P.10.3	Brunswick Park Primary School	Defer
P.29.1	Childs Hill School	Defer
P.11.1	Church Hill School	Defer
P.11.2	Church Hill School	Defer
P.14.3	Coppetts Wood Primary School	Ms M Mitchell
P.39.1	Courtland JMI School	Defer
P.41.1	Dollis Infant School	Defer
P.41.4	Dollis Infant School	Defer
Tba	Edgware Junior and Edgware Infant and Nursery Schools	Mr Keith Dyll
Tba	Edgware Junior and Edgware Infant and Nursery Schools	Mrs Barbara Sherling
Tba	Edgware Junior and Edgware Infant and Nursery Schools	Mr Vinay Sharma
Tba	Edgware Junior and Edgware Infant and Nursery Schools	Councillor Joan Scannell
P.45.2	Grasvenor Avenue Infant School	Defer
P.48.2	Hampden Way Nursery School	Defer
P.09.3	Monkfrith JMI School	Defer
SP.02.2	Northway School	Defer
SP.03.2	Oakleigh School	Defer
VP14.2	St Catherines RC JMI School	Defer
VP32.2	St Johns CE Primary, N11	Defer
VP.21a.1	St Johns NW4	Defer
VP.16.1	St Josephs RC Junior School	Defer
P.16.1	Summerside Primary School	Defer
P.33.1	The Hyde Primary School	Defer
P.50.4	The Orion Primary and Goldbeaters Primary Schools	Defer
P.1a.3	Underhill Infant School	Defer
P.27.3	Wessex Gardens Primary School	Defer
S.13.1	Whitefield School	Defer

221. REPRESENTATION OF THE COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Report of the Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Items 15.2.4 and 15.2.6):

The Democratic Services Manager's report set out details of the appointments or nominations to be made.

Upon nominations in the names of Councillors Joan Scannell and Alison Moore, it was

RESOLVED – That the following persons be appointed or nominated as the case may be to fill the vacancies referred to for the period indicated:

VACANCY REFERENCE	PARTICULARS OF APPOINTMENT OR NOMINATION	PERSON APPOINTED OR NOMINATED
1002	Almshouse Charities of Samuel Atkinson and Others	Defer
1167	Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute Council	Defer
9800	School Organisation Committee	Defer (Cllr Barry Rawlings unsuccessful)
1155a	Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education	Cllr Christopher Harris (Cllr Zakia Zubairi unsuccessful)

222. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS – PANEL OF LICENSING CHAIRMEN (Report of the Democratic Services Manager - Agenda item 15.2.8).

A nomination in the name of Councillor Susette Palmer was moved.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Susette Palmer be appointed to the Panel of Licensing Chairmen.

223. PART 7 OF THE COUNCIL’S CONSTITUTION: MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE CHARTS (Report of the Democratic Services Manager - Agenda item 15.2.12).

RESOLVED – That the Democratic Services Manager make the necessary amendments to the Council’s Constitution.

The meeting finished at 10.37pm

Council Questions to Cabinet Members
12 April 2005
Questions and Responses

Question No. 1**Councillor Olwen Evans**

Could the Cabinet member for Environment and Transport please comment on the improvements being made to roads in this Borough?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Repairing roads and pavements is one of the council's key priorities. During the last financial year 2004/05 the Council invested around £11 million, resurfacing a total of 268 roads – over 73 miles of the borough's total 419 mile road length.

This is one of the biggest road improvement programmes in London and has been made possible through the use of Prudential Borrowing. This has made a step change in road condition - that is on target to ensure that by 2007/2008 the backlog of road maintenance inherited from the past Liberal/Labour administration will be eliminated.

The improvement has also seen an overall reduction in the number of potholes being reported to the council's emergency service over recent months. The improvements have been achieved through efficient management systems and supported by effective technical processes.

Supplementary Question No. 1**Councillor Olwen Evans**

Thank you Madam Mayor

Can I ask Councillor Offord, how are the improvement schemes received by the public, have you had any reaction from them?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I have had many reactions Councillor Evans, but am sure she will be pleased to know that the Liberal Democrats in Chipping Barnet recently put out the leaflet, and in that leaflet they said how it was a waste of money resurfacing our roads, and I also understand a letter was actually sent to the Chipping Barnet Liberal Democrats asking them, which roads, were a waste of time resurfacing, so we can explain to the residents in those roads that Liberal Democrats would not have done that, pointing out the good work that we've done. I can tell Councillor Evans that the recent 2004 Annual Resident Survey shows that repairs, approval for repairs have gone up to 41% from 24%; that means it's been a remarkable 17% improvement from members of the public, much better than the London-wide average of 28%.

Question No. 2**Councillor Monroe Palmer**

Could the Cabinet member explain why no members of the Cabinet attended the joint meeting of Cabinet ICT and Performance & Best Value briefing session on 20th January? This meeting was billed as 'a forum for discussion around some of the key issues facing the authority'.

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

I originally accepted the invitation but on the day had an issue at work which delayed me meaning I could not get to the Town Hall in time.

Supplementary Question No. 2**Councillor Monroe Palmer**

Thank you for your answer Councillor Freer, but as Modernising Core Systems and Information Technology are so central to all aspects of Council's activities, do you not Councillor Freer think it strange that not one single Cabinet member turned up, I notice your reasons but not one single cabinet member turned up to a meeting, which was billed as a joint meeting of Cabinet ICT and Performance and Best Value Briefing Session, does that not, Councillor Freer, mean that you are not interested in democracy?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

No.

Question No. 3**Councillor David Mencer**

If the Council will re-open Edgware Library on Sundays to benefit those members of the Jewish community and others that are not able to use their local library at other times?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Edgware Library was opened on Sunday afternoons for the period of time that Hendon Library was closed for re-furbishment and so that customers who use Hendon on Sundays had an alternative library to use in that part of the borough along with Golders Green. When Hendon re-opened last October the temporary arrangement at Edgware ceased.

The resources available to the council are limited and it has been necessary in the current year to reduce opening hours and the Mobile Library fleet from two vehicles to one.

It is therefore not possible to consider extending Sunday opening to other libraries at present. Should it be possible in future to extend opening hours further, Sunday opening may be considered as part of the overall pattern of hours across the network of libraries?

In the meantime members of the Jewish community and others that are not able to use their local library at other times will be referred to the three libraries that offer this service, Hendon, Golders Green and Chipping Barnet.

Supplementary Question No. 3**Councillor David Mencer**

Can I tell the Cabinet Member that this answer comes as a considerable disappointment to many residents in my community? Many Jewish residents found the use of the Library on Sunday as a real boost in the arm because they cannot go there at other times at the weekend, so this is a real disappointment, so that, you know, is a long way of saying no. It also deprives a place for me to hold my surgery, which is a great loss to the people of Hale. The third thing of course, is that our local MP Andrew Dismore is campaigning on this issue and this just one more reason, just one more reason that Jewish residents, non-Jewish residents, Christians, Protestants, Catholics, Asian, where ever in the world they may come from are going to vote for Andrew Dismore when it comes to the election on the 5th May.

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Can I remind Councillor Mencer that he's a councillor he is not the MP yet for Hendon, yet dependent and if he thinks I'm going to make allowances for him to hold his surgeries at the Library then again he's mistaken. I'm sure Madam Mayor that Councillor Mencer doesn't want us to discriminate against other Faiths and communities and can I remind him that Hendon Library and Golders Green Libraries both are open on a Sunday, which is very, very near for your constituent.

Question No. 4**Councillor Robert Newton**

Is the Lead Member for Local Public Service Agreements confident that the Council will deliver on Local Public Service Agreement targets?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

We continue to make excellent progress on LPSAs and look forward to receiving the first tranche of reward monies in the near future. The Council's staff have worked extraordinarily hard to deliver these stretching targets. In particular our highways team who have delivered the best roads in London. We inherited a financial black hole and highways full of potholes. Our excellent work here has delivered remarkable improvements. The use of prudential borrowing has made a step change in the road condition. We are now turning our attention to the footway backlog inherited.

One area of concern is burglary and robberies where our partners in the metropolitan Police are responsible for delivering the target. Regrettably they have been unable to deliver the LPSA target. The target when set was challenged by our colleagues but the ODPM insisted. I am confident that when the Conservative Home Secretary delivers to extra Police to Barnet the rise in crime seen under this Government will be curtailed.

Supplementary Question No. 4**Councillor Robert Newton**

Would the Cabinet Member please join me in thanking the Council's Corporate Performance Office and all the other staff involved, for the excellent results to date?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

Madam Mayor, all of our staff who were involved in delivering these stretching targets need to be congratulated, not least the corporate performance office that monitor them rigidly to deliver the stretched targets and the money that will flow, and I would point out that members of the opposition who continually call for this department to be closed down are seriously misguided as these results show.

Question No. 5**Councillor Susette Palmer**

How many old people's homes are likely to lose the mobile service if one library is sold?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

13 homes will lose their service. These are Eaton Court, Hammers Lane [serves Cottage Homes], Hanover Court, Hertswood Court, Highwood Court, Homestead, Hyde Court, King's Lodge, Livingstone Court, Nazareth House, The Priory, Provincial House and Weston Court.

Supplementary Question No. 5**Councillor Susette Palmer**

Councillor David, what alternative provision are we making for people in Old Peoples' Homes who have lost the mobile library service?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

The home library service Councillor Palmer.

Question No. 6**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

When will the Council take action against motorbikes and mopeds riding around in parks and disturbing residents – particularly around the children's play area in Cressingham Park Road - in the weekends, evenings and at half-term?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

As soon as the issue is brought to its attention. This is a widespread problem across the borough and indeed across the whole of London. The police are aware of this nuisance and do what they can to target offenders. Officers in the Street Enforcement Service will assist them in the preparation of evidence that can be used to secure an Anti-Social Behaviour Order – I can assure you that I will not hesitate for such action to be used around the children's play area in Cressingham Park Road and indeed any other areas in which it occurs.

Question No. 7**Councillor Brian Coleman**

How many pay and display machines have been out of action in the last 6 months and what have been the main causes and what is the average time taken to repair them?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

In the last six-month period for which figures are available (August 2004 to January 2005) 481 individual pay and display machines were out of action at some time. These faulty machines were identified from 3057 inspection requests, arising from the public, parking attendants or on-line reporting systems.

There can be many reasons for machines failing but the more common problems are coins found to be jammed together, which in some cases is deliberate and in others is a result of the machine needing to accept a wide variety of coin sizes leading to thin coins jamming together if they are inserted in rapid succession. Other key issues have related to the ability of the solar cells to keep the accumulator sufficiently charged leading to power failure. A significant problem in some machines being unserviceable for extended periods is that some 50 attacks have taken place - all targeted at a weakness identified in a particular machine. The nature of the attack, which combines force and power tools, is to render the machines unusable and repair with the same components is demonstrated to result in further attack and theft.

The average time to return a machine to service was 1.8 days but the full break down is as follows:

- 1671 were returned to service by a company engineer within 2 working days of the defect report
- 63 in 3 days
- 40 in 4 days
- 30 in 5 days
- 54 in 6 or more days.

Supplementary Question No. 7**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Can the Cabinet Member assure me that he is making all efforts to improve these not particularly good figures, and will he ask his officers to look at the papers when the contract for the supply of parking metres was originally awarded, and perhaps re-examine that contract, and perhaps reverse the decision that I made wrongly under extreme pressure from the officers over the suppliers?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I hope this is the only time that I will actually ever be speechless in the Chamber. Of course, we will certainly look at that and I will discuss that with the officers.

Question No. 8**Councillor Susette Palmer**

How many schools are likely to lose the mobile service if one mobile is sold?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Three schools will lose their service though this needs some refining.

Moss Hall School will lose its service entirely.

Joel Nursery (a pre-school establishment) will lose its service entirely.

Clitterhouse Infant School and Clitterhouse Junior School are very busy sites and are currently visited weekly; the intention is that they would each be visited fortnightly under the proposed new timetable.

Supplementary Question No. 8**Councillor Susette Palmer**

With the renewed worry about children learning to read, can I ask what alternative provision we are able to make for these schools that have lost the mobile library service. I'm particularly concerned about Clitterhouse, which is a small school and which is quite a long way from any fixed library.

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Thank you Madam Mayor

Clitterhouse School, if you read the answer Councillor Palmer says it will have a visit but it will be every two weeks.

Question No. 9**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Could the Cabinet Member confirm when the football pitch on Grahame Park will be opened?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

I have received confirmation that the expected date for which the community can start using the facility will now be 18 April, 2005.

This will allow for the clerk of the works to prepare his report regarding the various 'snagging issues' with the facility and then give time to the contractor to deal with matters. The electricity sub station has been put in place and the building is in the process of being made available for the community to use.

Time will be set aside for the Leisure Services and school based staff to receive the necessary and appropriate training in order to manage the facility as best and as safely as possible.

St James School has been informed that the facility will be available from Monday 18 April and they have already delivered their programme to the Leisure Services which indicates that they will be using the facility from 9.00am – 3.15pm each school day.

Question No. 10**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Could the Cabinet member outline the action he has taken following the information that the Warden Housing Association property in Parklea Close that suffered a serious fire in January did not have a smoke alarm fitted?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

In the light of the fire in Parklea Close, Councillor Coleman (as GLA member for Barnet and Camden and vice chairman of the LFEPA) and I wrote to the Chief Executives of all the RSL's operating in the Borough, making them aware of the fire and of the need to ensure that all had fitted smoke detecting equipment in their premises.

Whilst some replies are still outstanding, most have responded positively and confirmed that they have either fitted alarms or have programmes that will ensure that all are fitted in the near future. Barnet Homes have also confirmed that the programme of installing alarms in properties that the Council own and that they manage has been completed. There are still a small number of properties where they have not been able to obtain access and all of the tenants of those properties have been written to, in an attempt to re-arrange access or to ask the tenants to ensure that they have had one fitted themselves.

In addition Mark Brown from Hendon fire station attended the last meeting of the Housing Association Liaison Group to press the case for installation and to offer the services and advice of the Fire service to all the RSLs that operate in the Borough. I also attended that meeting specifically to reinforce the message that I believe is now getting home.

The Fire service are approaching all RSLs to get a named member of staff responsible for work in the area of fire safety.

A poster has been distributed to all RSLs in the borough, which advertises free home safety checks for all residents. This poster has also been displayed elsewhere across the Borough

We continue to work closely with the Fire service to deliver on our LPSA targets to reduce accidental dwelling fires and associated fire related injuries in the borough.

Supplementary Question No. 10

Councillor Brian Coleman

Madam Mayor, can I congratulate Councillor Salinger on his prompt and effective action on this matter. Can I also ask him if he will ask his officers to look at the issue of provision of domestic sprinklers in the massive regeneration schemes that we are proposing across the borough?

Answer by Councillor Salinger

I thank him for his comments and certainly I will look with officers, look at that in the light of advice available at the time.

Question No. 11

Councillor Susette Palmer

The RAF East Camp site has S106 money towards Library services of £250 000 - it is not mentioned if this is towards a new one or existing budget - to be called in by the council within 10 years. Is this likely to be spent on a new library or to enhance services at Grahame Park?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

The Grahame Park Section 106 agreement is to provide that Choices for Grahame Park Limited (Choices), subject to commencing the development permitted by the planning permission, will construct a new library at Grahame Park to cost no more than £1,272,000 (inclusive of fees, expenses and VAT). An additional contribution of £100,000 is to be made by Choices for furnishing and fitting out the new library.

The contribution of £250,000 required by the Council under the RAF East Camp Section 106 agreement is to be used to enhance the services at the new library at Grahame Park. The triggers for the payment of the RAF East Camp library contribution are:

- the identification of the specific use of the contribution by the Council (affording St George reasonable opportunity to comment)
- the giving of notice by the Council to St George that the new library construction at Grahame Park is about to commence.

The 10 year time frame within which the Council can serve the notice to St George requiring the £250,000 is to give sufficient flexibility to the Council, given the likely phasing of the construction of the new library at Grahame Park by Choices.

Question No. 12**Councillor Mark Langton**

Is the Cabinet Member aware of the exorbitant fines being demanded as clamping release fees on the High Street in Tally Ho in front of the Cherry Tree pub? What action can the Council take to remedy this situation and ensure unsuspecting residents are not fleeced?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The Council has no regulatory control over the levels of any fees or charges applied by private companies on private land in connection with the immobilisation of vehicles.

Supplementary Question No. 12**Councillor Mark Langton**

The reply to question 27 is slightly more helpful. I accept it is always going to be the case that some people would try it on, by pretending not to have noticed the signs warning them not to park somewhere, but it is a question of the warnings and the approach being reasonable rather than a rip-off. Can the Cabinet member update us as to what progress is being made with the sites owners?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I can't give you any more information than I have at question 27, and I'm glad that you find that useful, but I will write to you in due course.

Question No. 13**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Has Councillor Salinger and his Officers examined the licensing policy of the London Borough of Wandsworth and the media comments of Councillor Edward Lister, the Leader and does he agree with Councillor Lister in his Opposition to 24 hour Licensing?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

I have read the Wandsworth policy but I do not agree with Councillor Lister.

My fundamental free market belief is that the 'market place' will determine if there is a future for 24-hour licences. To date the Council have not had any applications for 24 hour licences and indeed when the government gave the go ahead for 24 hour drinking over the last two 'new year' celebrations, not a single drinking establishment in Barnet took up the option. I do not anticipate that any pub in Barnet will in fact apply for such a permanent licence, but if any applications are received they will have to be determined by a panel of the licensing committee.

Supplementary Question No. 13**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Well I'm certainly disappointed Madam Mayor to be honest, in Councillor Salinger's answer. Councillor Langton has just referred to a notorious pub in North Finchley, which has since been closed down for rowdy and drunken behaviour. Would Councillor Salinger agree with me that 24-hour licensing will do nothing to improve the Law and Order situation in this Borough?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

Can I just reiterate what I said in the reply. This is my personal view, but I believe that the free market will take care of such issues. That is borne out by the absence of any applications here, as far as I understand it. The pub that closed in Tally Ho may have had problems with rowdiness but the reason it closed was because the owners decided to close it.

Question No. 14**Councillor Susette Palmer**

Does the Cabinet member intend to stagger lunchtime closing hours on different days so that someone working in an area has a chance of using the library service in their lunch hour?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

The closure of small libraries for lunch is not new, and most libraries do not close for lunch. Eleven of the sixteen libraries are open over the full lunch period. Of the smaller community libraries, Osidge and Burnt Oak remain open over the lunch period. The town centre libraries in Edgware, Mill Hill, Church End, North and East Finchley, Golders Green and East Barnet and the two large area libraries at Hendon and Chipping Barnet are also open. There is therefore the opportunity to visit a library between one and two at all these sites as an alternative to a library that is closed between one and two. The libraries that close for lunch are not close to each other, the nearest being South Friern, for which the nearest alternative would be East Finchley, and Friern Barnet for which the nearest alternative would be North Finchley.

Supplementary Question No. 14

Councillor Susette Palmer

Should more money become more available, I hope that the Cabinet member would be prepared to reconsider this lunch hour closing? It just so happens that my ward Library is one of the ones which is shut in the lunch hour, and it is difficult for some of the students and people that work there because there is no where for them to go during that hour.

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Yes, should money come our way, which is very unlikely, but should money come our way, I assure Councillor Palmer that I will be looking into it further.

Question No. 15

Councillor Anita Campbell

If Barnet Football Club are promoted will the Council hold a Civic Reception to recognise this achievement?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

I am sure I join with all members of Council in Congratulating Barnet Football Club on their likely promotion. The matter of a Civic Reception is for the Mayor to decide, but I would remind Members that on the last occasion they were promoted I was Mayor and I provided the Club with a Civic Reception.

Supplementary Question No. 15

Councillor Anita Campbell

Madam Mayor.

Would the Council Leader join me in congratulating Barnet Football Club and their supporters, now that they have secured promotion to the Football League? Will he also join me and Councillor Sean Hooker so that we can all three parties call upon the Mayor to hold out the hand of friendship for the Club by holding a Civic Reception and an open bus top parade, and what is he going to do to ensure the club is not expelled from the league in three years time?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

I thank Councillor Anita Campbell for what she said and also for her supplementary. She will know, unless, perhaps she's forgotten that as well as she seemed to do when she was Mayor, of the various initiatives that we been taking to make sure that there is a long-term future for the Club.

Question No. 16

Councillor Brian Gordon

A resident of my Ward recently received a parking ticket for the very short time that she was obtaining change from a shop to put into a pay and display machine. Isn't this very unfair?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Based on different interpretations of what is considered a "very short time" I find that I cannot give you a qualified answer. However, you might be interested to know that the Conservative Party has recently announced plans that would bring relief for many motorists, including your resident, by introducing a standard five-minute grace period in some restricted parking zones. I hope you agree with me that this would allow motorists to get change for meters in the knowledge that they would not be ticketed for doing so, as both motorists and wardens would be aware that a "very short time" would mean five minutes.

Supplementary Question No. 16

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Offord, I am indeed pleased to note that our party is intending to increase the period for motorists to put their money in the Pay and Display machines. Would you endorse my view, that Controlled Parking Zones are designed to ease traffic flow and make parking fairer rather than to be a device for traffic wardens to lie in wait and pounce on motorists.

Would you also join with me in condemning the Labour party, the Labour party for its nasty anti-car policies?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Yes.

Question No. 17

Councillor Wayne Casey

What efforts is the LEA making to support Copthall School in its opposition to the extension of the existing mobile 'phone mast on its premises?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

As Councillor Casey knows the Labour Government has made it very difficult for the Council successfully to oppose the installation of mobile phone masts. However we have had some successes including several in the Hampstead Garden Suburb Ward.

Currently the Valuer is holding discussions which are aimed at stopping the upgrade of the existing 02 mast and looking to its relocation away from the school. This Council is being fully supportive of the wishes of the school and parents. I only wish the government had been too. Another reason for change on May 5th. I hope that Councillor Casey will congratulate the Council on this positive development.

Supplementary Question No. 17

Councillor Wayne Casey

Thank you very much Madam Mayor.

I do welcome the Cabinet member's assurance that the Council is supporting Copthall School in its opposition to the enhancement of this mobile telephone mast, but could the Cabinet member confirm something for me. Is it not the case that the legislation that governs the planning of mobile phone masts is largely the legislation, although not entirely, but largely the legislation left over from the last Conservative Government and was supported by him when he was the Member of Parliament for Hendon South?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

Can I thank the honourable member for reminding me of better days, but can I point out to him that there's been a Labour Government for eight years. If they wanted to change the legislation, they could have done so, and their failure to do so is another reason for voting Conservative on the 5th May.

Question No. 18**Councillor Colin Rogers**

What was the cost of providing staff who work in the Fenella building with brand new desks in February, and why were new desks provided when staff themselves say there was nothing wrong with the old desks? Although staff were informed the old desks were going to be crushed, how many of these perfectly good desks were offered for re-use by local charities, offered to staff to have at home, or offered to furniture recycling projects and how many were re-used in this way?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

The Council does not apologise for seeking to provide a safe and comfortable working environment for its staff. An in-principle decision to take steps to enhance the poor conditions in which Benefits staff worked was taken when the service moved into Housing. The decision to make this investment in office furniture (desks, chairs and storage furniture) rather than other aspects of the working environment was the result of extensive discussion with staff. There were also Health and Safety considerations. A Health and Safety Officer from HR and a Unison representative had previously carried out a number of work station assessments. None of them complied with the required standards. The specific furniture ordered was also chosen in consultation with staff, Health and Safety and Occupational Health.

The previous desks were not "perfectly good". No-one knows exactly how old they were but many of them moved with the service to Fenella in 1987. Many of them were chipped, splintered or otherwise damaged. Only one member of staff (out of 93) insisted on keeping their old desk. Council tax staff were offered the opportunity to take over any that were in good condition but most had outlived their useful life.

Supplementary Question No. 18**Councillor Colin Rogers**

Thank you Madam Mayor.

The Cabinet member has dodged two or three questions, so we'll try again. I was interested in finding out what was the cost of the new furniture and how many desks were offered to re-use to local charities or furniture recycling projects?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Madam Mayor, when this question came in, I said to myself not because I'm cynical, but I thought this must have something to do with trees, you know, destroying more trees to make more desks and all the rest of it. But I think that they're totally confused on that side and a big bunch of hypocrites, hypocrites! We buy desks for our staff that they say they care for, rubbish! You don't care about the staff what a stupid question to ask. Why don't you ask some of your colleagues to give you some questions to ask Councillor Rogers if you don't know what to ask; yes, we bought desks for our staff because we value them, something that you just don't know what it means.

Question No. 19**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm that he is sympathetic to the idea of a zebra crossing being placed in Hale Lane, Edgware, on the section between The Grove and Priory Field Drive? There are many elderly people and children who cross the road at that section and it can be extremely dangerous at busy times.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I am always sympathetic to road safety measures that protect elderly people and children at locations where they are needed.

The site on Hale Lane will be appraised as part of this year's Traffic Management Budget and reported to the 24th May meeting of the Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee for a decision.

Supplementary Question No. 19

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Offord, thank you for your confirmation that the matter of a possible new zebra crossing in the part of Hale Lane I was referring to, is being considered. Please would you be tempted to push ahead with this idea, with the knowledge that when you do put the new zebra crossing there, I should invite you down, to stand with me for a photograph and we will get lots more votes in Hale. Not that that should be the reason for doing it, but it is worth thinking about.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Thank you Councillor Gordon.

As I made clear, we do everything in terms of road safety for all road users. I, certainly, am quite happy with what you put down and I'm sure that the Area Environment Sub-Committee will come to the same conclusion.

Question No. 20

Councillor Sean Hooker

Given that our top local football club, Barnet FC have secured promotion to the Football League, will the Council be marking this momentous achievement with a traditional open top bus parade and a Civic Reception?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

It will be up to the Mayor to decide in what manner the Council might mark their likely promotion. I would refer Councillor Hooker to my earlier answer.

Supplementary Question No. 20

Councillor Sean Hooker

Thank you Madam Mayor.

I also would like to extend my congratulations to Barnet Football Club and I hope they will have a successful period in the Football League and go from strength to strength. I know that many other Councillors, Councillor Salinger who is a regular person there and Jack Cohen, and of course Terry Burton also are big fans of the Club. Now, I wouldn't usually ask this Councillor Lyon, but because of the disruption that was going on just a minute ago, I didn't quite hear your answer to Councillor Anita Campbell's question, so could you please repeat it, especially in the part about what you want to do with the club in terms of taking it forward, its future in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

Yes.

The question was about an open top bus Madam Mayor, I thought, when I responded, I made it quite clear that not only I congratulated the Club and mentioned what I had done when I was Mayor, but also what the initiatives we have, and will be taking to try to secure the future of the club, which is what the supplementary question was.

Question No. 21

Councillor David Mencer

If the Cabinet Member could explain what action the Council is taking to ensure that Moat Mount Open Space and its car park are not the venue for anti-social behaviour during the evening and night?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

50m of the hedge along the A1 has been laid (a traditional form of management) reducing its height and opening up sight lines into the car park. A group of people from the Youth Referral team have also opened up sight lines along the paths through the site and vision lines through the site, opening up vistas from the paths.

Supplementary Question No. 21

Councillor David Mencer

Thank you Madam Mayor.

Can I thank the Cabinet member for the answer he has given me, but the actions which have been taken have been of some considerable help, but again, they will cause a lot of disappointment to the manager of this excellent facility.

Does he know that a simple lock and key will solve this problem, a simple lock and key? Can you hear me, a simple lock and key will solve this problem, will stop the undesirable activities which are happening there, will stop young children, happening upon things which they shouldn't happen upon. And doesn't it also show a fair bit of hypocrisy from the Conservative side, who got quite a bit of publicity over activities happening on Hampstead Heath, but when this is happening here, in Hale, in my Ward, will do nothing about it.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Thank you for that supplementary.

I'm not quite sure exactly what kind of activities that you're referring to and you didn't actually ask that in your question. But in regard to locking of the gate, that is something that Councillor Gordon has asked me on many occasions, so he has actually jumped the boat on this one. But the problem with locking the gate there in particular, is that it has been tried in the past over the other side of the road and the gate has been super glued, the gate had been knocked off. Also the keys used to lock the gates, you are able to get them very easily from the local hardware store. But in addition, at that particular site, when I've driven past, you can look through the holes in the hedge and a lock and a key wouldn't do anything to prevent the problem you described, so I have considered that but I don't feel that it would be cost-effective to actually put a lock on that particularly gate at the site.

Question No. 22

Councillor Brian Gordon

What efforts are being made by our Council to pressurise the Mayor of London to keep his excessive budget down, as far as it will impact on the Council Tax for 2005/6?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

Events have superseded Councillor Gordon's question. Our GLA Member and the Conservative Group on the GLA worked extremely hard to cut the Mayor of London's budget, but were unsuccessful, as a two-thirds majority of the Members is required. Although I am pleased that the Mayor's original budget came down to 5.5%, which added 0.71% to Barnet's precept, I am very surprised that the Government has not taken action itself because it threatened to cap any Authority which exceeded an increase of 5%.

Supplementary Question No. 22

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Lyon, do you not agree that we cannot separate Ken Livingstone's wasteful and irresponsible policies from those of the Labour Party and that the Government shall stand condemned for failing to clamp-down on the London Mayor's incompetent administration.

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

I can only suggest that possibly the Labour Party is extremely sorry at this stage, that they re-admitted him to membership.

Question No. 23

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

In light of the fact that learning mentors would undoubtedly have the support of all councillors as a positive contribution to the lives of some of our most vulnerable children for whom we are all responsible as corporate parents, what is the specific form of learning mentor for children living in care and when will this begin?

Answer by Councillor Christopher Harris

Councillor Slocombe, we have a variety of mentoring processes for LAC in place.

- All looked after children have a social worker and foster parent / residential kept worker who are trained and expected by us to prioritise their education which is after all one of the council's LPSA
- We have established (with Enfield and Barnardos) an independent Children's Rights service, which is available to support all of our LAC with any issues - including education. This service will (on request) provide individual children with their own 'advocates'
- The care plans and progress of all of our LAC are reviewed regularly by independent Reviewing Officers who we have required to pay particular attention to educational issues.
- Every school has a lead teacher for LAC
- If LAC need extra tuition or support we always provide it

And finally;

- There is of course our much publicised (most recently in the Independent) 'champions scheme'.

This has helped Barnet improve its care for LAC and resulted in external recognition and should also improve the life chances of Looked after Children.

Supplementary Question No. 23

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

Councillor Harris, I thank you for some of the facts that you given me, but you haven't given me the specific question I asked you. I asked you when it will begin; you never said or has it already begun, could you then provide me with the figures that will ensure the performance has improved and also have you got one-to-one mentoring? Thank you.

Answer by Councillor Christopher Harris

Councillor Slocombe, I'm very happy to provide you with up to date figures if I can write to you with those.

Certainly, all of this process has already begun, and yes, perhaps is a little bit about the definition of what you mean by the word mentoring. But I can assure you that every single young person who wants a tutor for one-to-one educational improvement, who is a looked after child in our care does get that tutor. I would also like to add that actually, just so that you are aware, in amongst our efforts to improve the educational attainment of these young people, which we see is very important for them for having decent life chances, we set up a very innovative scheme which the Chief Executive is himself part of, where many of our senior officers are tracking the educational achievement of these young people, that's at the moment for the GCSE year.

We are looking at expanding it to other years and we are also looking at bringing back young people who have achieved extremely well in the Borough. This is an idea I put forward and we are pursuing, for them to come and talk to existing looked after children to inspire them, so the people have gone on to Cambridge or other Universities, we want them to come back and talk to the looked after children so I do take what you say very seriously Councillor Slocombe. I hope we will see the improvement in the results and I will write to you with the current results that we have at the moment. Thank you.

Question No 24

Councillor Brian Gordon

Can more recycling boxes be supplied, free of charge (or larger boxes) to households with large families for whom one or two boxes are just not sufficient for all the items they are being required to place in them?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Yes, additional boxes and lids are provided for free to residents for recycling. If a resident wishes to order additional boxes and lids they should contact ECT on 020 8371 3670 or email barnet@ectrecycling.co.uk.

Supplementary Question No 24

Councillor Brian Gordon

Can the Cabinet member please ensure that the telephone numbers for the new recycling boxes run efficiently, the boxes are properly emptied at all times and that the lids are replaced on them by the refuse collectors, after collection, rather than being thrown all over the pavement as does occasionally happen.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

These are problems that we have been experiencing within the borough, but I would remind Councillor Gordon that this isn't actually a service that the local authority provides itself, but is performed on our behalf by ECT. I have spoken to the Head of Service about this and we are looking at performance indicators and recommendations that ECT actually comply with, in order to prevent the kind of issues that he has described.

Question No. 25

Councillor Gill Sargeant

When is the present date for signing the agreement with Choices for Grahame Park?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

No date has been fixed for the formal signing of a development agreement with Choices for Grahame Park.

Question No. 26

Councillor Brian Gordon

Would you not agree that keeping Barnet's Council Tax to an absolute minimum should be our overriding objective when setting our Budget?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

I agree that it is essential that council tax should be kept as low as possible whilst striving to improve council services in a sound financial environment.

Supplementary Question No. 26

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Finn, would you accept the congratulations of this Council for achieving one of the lowest Council Tax increases in London, and would you join with me in urging the public to bear this in mind when voting in the Barnet Constituencies in the forthcoming general election?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

This is a difficult question to answer Madam Mayor, but I accept the congratulations on behalf of the Cabinet and my group who have endorsed the actions I've taken, and as they say in the classics "I do with a little bit of help from my friends". We will continue to remind the public about it. We haven't got to tell them as are fully aware of what we are doing. They are fully aware of Conservative values and they are fully aware what they will be doing on May the 5th.

Question No. 27

Councillor Mark Langton

Is the Cabinet Member willing to consider the adoption of the area in question outside the Cherry Tree pub to end the profiting at the expense of residents?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The area in question is not owned by the Council and I am not convinced that Council resources would be best employed in seeking its acquisition. In any event, there will be an enforcement issue irrespective of ownership and a more benign management process by the current owners, with more attention to providing drivers with better information, would probably give the result you seek and I have asked officers to pursue this.

Question No. 28

Councillor Brian Gordon

Could you please put in a request on behalf of the motorists of Barnet for all speed and bus lane cameras in the Borough to be turned off for a week in order to give drivers a temporary reprieve from this most despised and unfair form of motorist persecution?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I understand the sentiments you are trying to address but to do so would give a green light for all the 'boy racers' and abusive motorists such cameras were originally intended to identify. Over the past couple of years this Council has preferred to erect speed-actuated warning signs that encourage those drivers travelling at inappropriate speeds to slow down, thus achieving the desired outcome without making criminals out of motorists.

Most bus lane cameras are mounted inside individual buses under the direct control of Transport for London. Rather than switch off the cameras on the roads in Barnet the considered action is to evaluate the effectiveness of bus lanes and remove those where they make congestion worse, like we have done at East Finchley.

Supplementary Question No. 28

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Offord again, I hope you don't consider that I am a boy-racer, but I do confess, I have had more than my fair share of driving penalties and so have many equally responsible drivers who have had to advise, sometimes professionally and I'm not canvassing for that, on these issues. Do you not, I'm sure you will agree, that the obsessive use of cameras has, whether we like it or not, made criminals out of many motorists, to use your language, and has taken away the commonsense and human discretion which Police Officers were previously able to apply.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Thank you Councillor Gordon.

I think you are quite correct that speed cameras have been used in this fashion and is certainly not a way I wish them to be used. I think he should just think himself lucky that he doesn't actually live in North Wales where the Chief Inspector will crackdown on anyone going anything up to 1mph over the speed limit.

Question No. 29**Councillor David Mencer**

What guidance would the Cabinet Member give to my residents who have never had rats on their property before, but now report the infestation of their properties?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

The owners/occupiers of properties infested by rats are themselves responsible for taking action to control infestations. They may choose to treat the infestation themselves but if they do not feel competent to do this I would suggest they engage the services of one of the many professional pest control companies trading in the London area. The latest Barnet/Enfield edition of Yellow Pages carries 45 (forty five) 'box' adverts for companies offering such services and other companies have lineage adverts.

Residents should be aware that recurring problems with rats are commonly a sign of drainage defects and again the owner/occupier of properties will generally be responsible for ensuring that drainage on their property is properly maintained.

They should also ensure that food stuffs are not left lying around in the garden (even if intended for birds) as this encourages rats and enables them to feed.

Supplementary Question No. 29**Councillor David Mencer**

Can the Cabinet member maybe come clean and finally admit now that cancelling the Rat Catchers Service was the most absurd action, he could ever have possibly enacted in his time in this Council. It has come back to bite him, I'm sure that all of us are knocking on the doors, as we are knocking on the doors again and again, and again and again it comes up, the rat catchers, the rat catchers, the rat catchers. Does he not admit, that suggesting to residents of Barnet who have never had rats before, and suddenly are infested with them that they should look in the Yellow Pages, is preposterous. We are letting the people of this borough down and on May the 5th you will be reminded of it again.

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

It might be of interest to Councillor Mencer to know that this Borough was recently inspected by officers from DEFRA who are responsible for the whole question of enforcing the legislation that relates to Pest Control and they have at least verbally, and we are still awaiting for it in writing, confirmed that the actions that this Council takes to deal with pests and with rats in particular, meets the requirements of the Law.

To look in Yellow Pages when dealing with pest control is what most people have done in this borough, probably in the entire 40 years that this borough has been in existence. There are over 45 companies with box ads in yellow pages offering pest control services and it was only ever a small minority of the pest control work that was carried out in this borough that was ever done by Council officers. Now, I accept that there are, there is a growing problem of pest control but it is not one, frankly, that any Council can deal with. Every Council up and down this land is facing a problem. The one thing that we have not had which for many, many years used to do more than anything else to control the rat population in this country, was to have a long hard winter because that used to wipe out large proportions of the rat population and that we haven't had for some time. But to blame the Council for the growing rat population is frankly utter nonsense. People have got to learn that they are a nuisance and that there are measures that they can take around their own homes in terms of public health and public safety that they need to take for themselves.

The Council will carry out controls and baiting where it is on our land and we will make sure that it happens on other peoples' land, and as I said at the last Council meeting we are looking, we are still looking at the possibility of re-introducing a service, but it is going to have to be self-financing and it will be aimed at helping people who are owner/occupiers who genuinely cannot afford to pay for the service themselves.

Question No. 30

Councillor Brian Gordon

Would you please join with me in expressing concern regarding the possibility of a mobile telephone mast being erected at the northern end of Mowbray Road, Edgware, right next to a nursery school?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Yes, I share your concerns in the locating of mobile telephone masts in sensitive residential areas, particularly close to schools and nurseries. I believe that the (past) government has not done nearly enough to deal with genuine environmental and health concerns. It has not done nearly enough to allow councils such as Barnet to deal with the concerns of local people nor has it reacted quickly enough to the expansiveness and mast erecting fever of some of the mobile communications companies.

These masts pose a far more serious threat to the environment now than when planning policy concerning telecommunications was first drafted. Planning guidance should be substantially altered to provide a better balance between the environment and commercial concerns. Operators should have to justify the need for a new mast when environmental; health or safety concerns are raised.

Supplementary Question No. 30

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Offord, thank you for your helpful reply.

Could you join with me in expressing the hope that the electronic equipment, in question, will not be placed on the Mowbray Parade site? Numerous residents have contacted me and I know my colleagues, the Edgware Councillors, on this particular subject, and a letter from yourself to the Installation Company in question to back-off, I'm sure could be very effective. Is there any chance of such a letter, do you think?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Thank you Councillor Gordon

I don't really think it's my place to actually interfere within a democratic process that currently exists; I don't feel that my opinion would have much weight either. However, I do agree with your sentiments. Recently in my own ward we been persistently fighting an application for a mobile mast, and as soon as one is defeated then a second appears. I am particularly concerned with some of the comments that have been said tonight, that it was actually a Conservative government that introduced this legislation. It actually was, and that was fine, because the legislation was appropriate for the time, but since that period, the industry has moved on a great deal and we find now that these masts are appearing everywhere. As Councillor Marshall did actually point out, this Government has had eight years to address the problem, but they were too busy I realise, introducing student tuition fees and also imprisoning people without them going to a trial first, but I'm sure that the next Conservative government will address this issue and it will also allay your concerns.

Question No. 31**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

Given the fact that the inclusion of plastics and cardboard is one of the most frequently requested issues raised by residents, and would allow the Council to build on the existing scheme and really increase our rates of recycling, when will the Council introduce the Labour Group's policy to include plastics and cardboard within the kerbside recycling scheme?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

It would not increase our rate of recycling but more likely reduce it, as the targets imposed on all councils are weight based. What you suggest would result in a lower weight of recyclables being collected and more frequent disposal journeys for the collection vehicles as these items, particularly cardboard, are more bulky making the collection less efficient.

And since when was it Labour Group policy? It was not included in the range of items for collection when the original contract with ECT was agreed under your administration and you failed to include the £4,940,250, costed by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee needed to introduce plastic and cardboard collections in your so called budget at the last council meeting.

Your question demonstrates that Barnet's Labour Group has abandoned trying to achieve a 30% recycling target. I will not do that.

Supplementary Question No. 31**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

(tape inaudible) because there is so much waste of cardboard and plastic in the bins, if somebody is able to do something to use it, whereby the Council would thenthat's why I put the question, not that you won't do it, there has to be some time when somebody will have to look at what the other boroughs do, so what's wrong with this one. Thank you.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Other boroughs do actually do it, I think that Harrow does it but they won't be achieving their target. As you know, it is all about weight. Plastics and cardboard is bulky and it doesn't contain any weight. If we do that it will not be cost-effective and we will not reach the targets imposed upon this Council by the past Labour government, we've repeated this again and again in the Council Chamber. We do take plastics and cardboard at our Summers Lane Civic Amenity Site, residents can take it there.

Question No. 32**Councillor Brian Gordon**

The Leader will no doubt be aware that since the last Council Meeting the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone has once again made highly offensive remarks, by asking a Jewish newspaper journalist whether he was a "German war criminal" and accusing him of behaving like a "concentration camp guard". In view of Barnet's large Jewish community, the many other religious and racial minorities within the Borough, and the amount of money his office extorts from our tax-payers, could the Leader please write to the Mayor expressing his disgust at his continued arrogant and insensitive conduct, for which he invariably refuses to apologise?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

Councillor Gordon is of course correct that I am aware of the Mayor of London's remarks, as indeed is the whole country. I congratulate our GLA Member, Councillor Brian Coleman for the sterling work he did as Chairman of the GLA in attempting to make the Mayor apologise. I feel at this stage it would be pointless to write, as I believe Mr Livingstone must be well aware of the general revulsion his remarks caused. I can only hope that electors in Barnet where there is, of course, a large Jewish population, will remember what Mr Livingstone said, but doggedly refused to apologise.

Supplementary Question No. 32**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Leader, I will join with you in congratulating Councillor Coleman in his well-publicised condemnation of the Mayor for his refusal to apologise, however, I do think we must keep up the campaign against Livingstone's extremism and his offensive and dangerous tongue. Do you not think it essential, I'll ask you again in this context, that we do not allow the activities of Livingstone to be divorced from the Labour Party and that people should remember this when they vote on May the 5th. Livingstone is Labour.

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

Councillor Gordon, I entirely agree and I think that during, not only this campaign, but other campaigns, the residents of this borough will well remember those remarks but particularly the obstinate way, that the Mayor of London refused to apologise and I'm sure will take it into account when they decide how they are going to vote.

Question No. 33**Councillor David Mencer**

What action would the Council take against a supplier to the Council who raised the price of their service, yet at the same time reduced the quantity and quality of the service?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

Each case would be assessed on its merits.

Question No. 34**Councillor Aba Dunner**

Would the Cabinet member consider that a cafe/kiosk/meeting place would benefit the public in respect of Princes Park in the Golders Green Ward?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I believe that a café/kiosk would be a real asset for Princes Park as it would encourage more people to make use of the attractive space, introduce greater investment in the area and allow a 'full-time' presence that would deter vandalism and other anti-social behaviour from occurring. The Council has recently advertised for people to submit tenders to run such a café/kiosk in the Park.

Question No. 35**Councillor David Mencer**

If the Cabinet Member will list the amount paid by Barnet to Logica for each of the last five years and if he will list the amount budgeted to be paid to Logica for the next two years?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

Barnet has not had a contractual relationship with Logica for the majority of the last five years. Logica is a sub contract provider to the HBS partnership following the transfer of some IT services to Hyder Business Services under the previous administration. The amounts paid to Hyder Business Services are set out annually in the council's accounts.

Question No. 36**Councillor Aba Dunner**

Would the Cabinet member care to advise Council what progress has been made in relation to the collection of rents/licence fees in the Council's parks and open spaces.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

For many years there has not been effective management or collection in the rents and fees of many of the kiosks in our parks. Six months ago a dedicated member of staff was assigned to review all such leases and compile a backlog of those who have failed to pay rents due.

These have now been completed and identified some occupiers who entered properties several years ago without even signing a lease and continue in their occupation today without having paid a penny in rent. In addition, action has been taken to ensure the compliance of leases, some of which have been woefully ignored and the Council picking up the financial bill for repairs and renewals that were the responsibility of the leaseholders. There are still some outstanding issues that are being dealt with by the Councils' Property and Valuation officers and I will continue to make these a matter of priority.

Question No. 37

Councillor David Mencer

If the Cabinet Member will list (i) the amount of debt owed by Barnet for each of the last three years, (ii) the amount paid in interest on that debt during the same period, and (iii) the proportion of the Council Budget that is spent on interest?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

Year	Total debt outstanding at 31.March	Interest Paid in year GF and HRA	Interest as proportion of Net Budget Requirement
	£'000	£'000	%
2001/02	39,012	5,408	1.8
2002/03	30,000	4,563	1.5
2003/04	0	3,401	1.0

The Council decided in March 2004 to restructure its long-term debt and as a result we were debt free as at 31 March 2004.

Question No. 38

Councillor Olwen Evans

Will the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport join me in thanking Barnet's Winter Maintenance Team? Does he agree that in the recent "big freeze" they did this Borough proud by ensuring all potentially slippery roads and pavements were comprehensively salted, and accidents therefore avoided?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The recent cold spell lasted 17 days, from 19 February to 7 March 2005, and during all this time the Meteorological Office had a continuous red alert warning flag, indicating the expectation of snow or severe frost. During this period our gritting vehicles gritted the borough's network on a total of 25 occasions:

- 16 times the Council's seven primary, or Priority 1, routes,
- 7 times the seepage routes, (the Council's coldest network and/or with ground water problems) and
- 2 times the secondary routes, our Priority 2 and 3, routes). This is the majority of the Borough's network and takes nearly two days to complete.

In addition we carried out five precautionary grittings on footways in the borough that are heavily used and are on steep gradients. During this time we have spread some 2,000 tonnes of salt.

During this cold spell, the mean daytime temperature was only 5 degrees Celsius and this compares with an average temperature of 10 degrees during the same period over the last 10 years. This cold period has made this year's winter maintenance season the coldest in our records.

The total number of grittings for the whole season (from October) so far is 73 and this compares with our second highest in the last 15 years of 54, which was last year.

Our own staff in the Highways Maintenance section indeed “did this Borough proud” during the cold spell switching from their normal daytime highway repairs to looking after the Boroughs 416 miles of roads with a 3 shift system to cover all the fluctuations in weather conditions from rain, frost, ice, sleet and snow in each 24 hour period.

Each shift consisted of a winter maintenance controller, 8 drivers and a loader. During the busiest week there were 30 staff committed to gritting the roads, footways to stations and keeping grit bins topped up. In addition, Street Sweeping staff were switched to gritting Town Centres and Secondary Shopping parades during the worst weather conditions.

Question No. 39

Councillor David Mencer

What was the number of parking tickets issued by LBB parking attendants in:

2004/2005

2003/2004

2002/2003

2001/2002, and

2000/2001?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Year	Monthly output per Parking Attendant
2004/5	327
2003/4	360
2002/3	347
2001/2	349
2000/1	345

Question No. 40

Councillor Brian Gordon

Would the Cabinet Member for the Environment care to comment as to whether Barnet residents believe that the condition of roads and pavements has improved since this administration took office?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Residents’ surveys undertaken following works show that in overall terms 90% of residents welcome the improvements. Residents have frequently added their own compliments such as ‘The road was completed on time with the minimum disruption. The road was left in a very clean state. Well done and thanks to all’ or ‘It makes a great difference to the environment when the road and pavements are in good condition.’

This has been echoed by the recent 2004 annual resident’s survey. Early findings show the satisfaction rating for Road Repairs has gone from 24% to 41%, a remarkable 17% improvement, and compares extremely well with a London Average of 28%.

Question No. 41

Councillor Robert Newton

Would the Cabinet Member please advise, with regard to the 32,742 plus new residential units projected to be built in the Borough by 2016 (Answer to question No. 48 on 14 September 2004):

- a) The estimated cost of the infrastructure provision required to adequately support the projected development both within and outside the Borough, split between the different infrastructure providers.
- b) The proportion of the estimated expenditure that is the responsibility of the Borough and outside authorities/agencies respectively.
- c) What the estimated contribution towards the infrastructure costs from Section 106 Agreements will be.

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

In response to points a, b and c, costs of infrastructure are assessed on either an area by area basis through development frameworks (e.g. Colindale & Cricklewood, Brent Cross, West Hendon) or through individual planning application and impact assessments, which ultimately result in Section 106 planning obligations and contributions towards infrastructure improvements. If the Member would like to be provided with copies of these planning Section 106 agreements, which set out individual section 106 infrastructure contributions, then the planning service will be happy to supply.

The housing provision anticipated in Barnet over the next 10 – 15 years involves many individual developments, which will be the subject of separate planning permissions. Each development will be the subject of infrastructure impact assessments. It is possible to monitor and find out by looking at Section 106 Heads of Agreement, contained within the individual reports to be planning committees. Unfortunately, it is not feasible to aggregate together historic data and anticipate the impact of future schemes in the manner that Councillor Newton sets out above. However, infrastructure assessments are to be drawn up for major regeneration schemes the details of which are to be set out in planning reports or area development frameworks. Infrastructure contributions from outside agencies, such as the PCT, Transport for London, ODPM are also assessed on an area or individual development approach. Until such schemes come forward it is not feasible to provide total estimates of external infrastructure costs. It should also be noted that considerable investment in the borough's infrastructure would be derived from private development and private investment.

Question No. 42

Councillor Robert Newton

Would the Cabinet Member please advise:

- a) How many London Boroughs have "opportunity borough" status, what the criteria are for inclusion and what it means for the Boroughs?
- b) How much funding is available for the Boroughs to bid for?
- c) Which other local authorities outside Greater London are eligible to bid for the same funding source.
- d) What are the rules for bidding and whether there are any restrictions on the number of successful bidders, projects or amount per project?
- e) What the timescale is for making bids and what the estimated cost to the Borough would be of joining in the bidding process.

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

I am pleased to reply that a total of £235m is being made available under the Growth Areas Fund over two years 2006/07 and 2007/08.

The fund is available to the three newest growth areas - Milton Keynes South Midlands; Ashford; and the London Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough corridor; and to the four opportunity boroughs in London, Barnet, Barking & Dagenham, Brent and Islington.

Bidding guidance has been issued. This gives examples of types of projects that might attract support and these include:

Revenue: masterplanning and economic visioning.

Capital: affordable housing, highways and other infrastructure, land acquisition, employment and business development, access to and provision of greenspace, community facilities and transport improvements.

GoL have advised that they expect a maximum of two bids per opportunity borough. There is no express limit to the size of any bid although Revenue bids should be at least £50,000 and capital bids £250,000.

Bidding is a two stage process with initial Expressions of Interest to be submitted by 29 April 2005 and full formal proposals by 3 September 2005. There is no cost as such to join the bidding process over and above the staff time required to prepare the bids.

You will see that Barnet is only one of four London Boroughs to have been successful which reflects the excellent work being done by my Administration.

Question No. 43

Councillor Robert Newton

The Draft Colindale Development Framework (November 2003) states in Paragraph 5.5 that "LUL are concerned about the impact of additional passengers at Colindale on the Northern Line capacity.....LUL consider the line is at capacity through Central London and therefore a line capacity study is required".

Would the Cabinet Member please advise:

- a) Whether a line capacity study has been provided and, if so, with what result.
- b) What increase in line capacity will result from the re-signalling projected for 2011?
- c) Whether the increased capacity arising from the re-signalling will be sufficient to cope with the projected housing development in Colindale and other parts of the Borough of Barnet and in other Boroughs that are served by the Northern Line.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

TfL London Underground Ltd. have stated that the borough will benefit from the Northern Line Upgrade which will improve capacity by 23% by 2012. There is still some uncertainty as to what this will provide in terms of technical solutions. The train service through the central area will go up to around 25 trains per hour during the peaks, although exact timetables have not yet been determined for each branch. There are capacity issues in the central area specific to the Northern Line, however, this is where there are other line choices available with spare capacity.

Train frequency at peak movement periods will increase from 20 to a maximum of 24 trains per hour in the peak periods on each of the High Barnet and Edgware branches.

The envisaged improvements to the Underground service will help to meet the additional movement demands placed by an increased population. This will need to be complemented with increased movement capacity across all transport modes including buses, cycling and walking. Increased capacity will be achieved in an incremental manner and will naturally be focused around the regeneration areas where there will be greatest predicted increase in movements. Transport for London has a key role to play having a strategic transport planning role as well as being a major transport operator of both buses and Tube. They are uniquely placed to overview development trends and aspirations in north-west London and have due regard for events in other boroughs. A dialogue is on-going with them regarding the movement needs of Barnet up to 2016.

Question No. 44**Councillor Robert Newton**

I would refer the Cabinet Member to his predecessor's answers given to Council Policy Conference Questions 40, 42 and 44 on 13 February 2003 and Question 29 at the Council meeting on 13 January 2004 and should be pleased to learn:

- a) How many homes have been built in the Borough since 1997 on land formerly used for business purposes.
- b) What contribution well distributed local employment opportunities in the Borough can make to reducing the length of journeys to work.

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Point a)

The council will be monitoring as part of the Local Development Framework, employment related development and changes of use, including housing developments. This will form part of the Annual Monitoring Report to be submitted to Statutory Consultees and also returns to the Greater London Authority (GLA) as part of the London Development Database. The first AMR will be produced next year.

The adopted UDP policy (Policy EMP 1.1) is that the council will normally resist changes of use from land use generating employment to land uses which do not.

The revised UDP policy (EMP 1 and EMP 2) is to protect employment sites although outside the UDP's identified employment sites, permission may be granted if there is no realistic prospect of re-use, in which case mixed-use development is proposed.

The Planning Service has monitored the Revised UDP policies. None of the identified employment sites in the revised UDP have been redeveloped, apart from proposed residential development at Barnet Trading Estate, Hadley Manor and Bittacy Hill (Gas Works) Site. These total approximately 200 proposed residential units. There are approximately 100 units, which are in various stages of construction on Moon Lane, Lancaster Road and Henry Road.

The primary Industrial sites and business parks are as follows:-

From the table above no residential development has taken place on the sites listed below:

Mill Hill Industrial Estate
Garrick Industrial Estate
Bunns Lane Works
Connaught Business Park
Colindale Business Centre
Colindeep Technology Park
Granard Business Centre
Brunswick Industrial Estate
Finchley Industrial Estate
Falkland Road
Prickler Hill
Grenville Place

Industrial Business Park

Northern Telecom, Brunswick Park

Industrial Estates:

Barnet Trading Estate

Lancaster Road

Park Road, Barnet

Lancaster Road

New Barnet

Hadley Manor Trading Estate

Bunns Lane Works

Moxon Street, Barnet

Bunns Lane, Mill Hill

Bittacy Business Centre

Falkland Road

Bittacy Hill, Mill Hill East

High Barnet

Brunswick Industrial Estate

Queens Road

Brunswick Park Road, Brunswick Park

High Barnet

Mill Hill Industrial Estate

Pricklers Hill

Flower Lane, Mill Hill

High Barnet

Garrick Industrial Estate

Connaught Business Centre

Garrick Road, West Hendon

The Hyde

Finchley Industrial Estate

High Road, North Finchley

Business/Technology Parks:

Colindale Business Centre

Colindale Avenue

Colindeep Technology Park

Colindeep Lane

Grenville Place

The Hale

Granard Business Centre

Bunns Lane, Mill Hill

Point b)

The majority of people who work and live in Barnet do not work on identified employment sites. The largest employment sectors are in retail, hotel, catering, distribution, banking, insurance, finance, and public services and these jobs are mostly located in Barnet's town centres, schools, hospitals, local government offices and university campuses. A growing proportion work from home....approximately 10% according to the 2001 census. People living in Barnet contribute to London's role as a major world city and have jobs in the City and West End.

Employment uses are found throughout the borough and people can choose to live near where they work. This is not a simple equation because in some households different members will make journeys to work that may be in opposite directions, people move jobs and may not want to move home, or alternatively, may move home and not move jobs. For some people the choice of means to travel to work may be critical rather than the length of journey.

The 2001 census indicates that approximately 33% of Barnet residents travel to work or college by car. 25% travel by underground and 10% travel by bus. Approximately 7% walk or cycle.

**Council Questions to Cabinet Members
12 April 2005
Questions and Responses**

Question No. 1

Councillor Olwen Evans

Could the Cabinet member for Environment and Transport please comment on the improvements being made to roads in this Borough?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Repairing roads and pavements is one of the council's key priorities. During the last financial year 2004/05 the Council invested around £11 million, resurfacing a total of 268 roads – over 73 miles of the borough's total 419 mile road length.

This is one of the biggest road improvement programmes in London and has been made possible through the use of Prudential Borrowing. This has made a step change in road condition - that is on target to ensure that by 2007/2008 the backlog of road maintenance inherited from the past Liberal/Labour administration will be eliminated.

The improvement has also seen an overall reduction in the number of potholes being reported to the council's emergency service over recent months. The improvements have been achieved through efficient management systems and supported by effective technical processes.

Supplementary Question No. 1

Councillor Olwen Evans

Thank you Madam Mayor

Can I ask Councillor Offord, how are the improvement schemes received by the public, have you had any reaction from them?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I have had many reactions Councillor Evans, but am sure she will be pleased to know that the Liberal Democrats in Chipping Barnet recently put out the leaflet, and in that leaflet they said how it was a waste of money resurfacing our roads, and I also understand a letter was actually sent to the Chipping Barnet Liberal Democrats asking them, which roads, were a waste of time resurfacing, so we can explain to the residents in those roads that Liberal Democrats would not have done that, pointing out the good work that we've done. I can tell Councillor Evans that the recent 2004 Annual Resident Survey shows that repairs, approval for repairs have gone up to 41% from 24%; that means it's been a remarkable 17% improvement from members of the public, much better than the London-wide average of 28%.

Question No. 2**Councillor Monroe Palmer**

Could the Cabinet member explain why no members of the Cabinet attended the joint meeting of Cabinet ICT and Performance & Best Value briefing session on 20th January? This meeting was billed as 'a forum for discussion around some of the key issues facing the authority'.

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

I originally accepted the invitation but on the day had an issue at work which delayed me meaning I could not get to the Town Hall in time.

Supplementary Question No. 2**Councillor Monroe Palmer**

Thank you for your answer Councillor Freer, but as Modernising Core Systems and Information Technology are so central to all aspects of Council's activities, do you not Councillor Freer think it strange that not one single Cabinet member turned up, I notice your reasons but not one single cabinet member turned up to a meeting, which was billed as a joint meeting of Cabinet ICT and Performance and Best Value Briefing Session, does that not, Councillor Freer, mean that you are not interested in democracy?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

No.

Question No. 3**Councillor David Mencer**

If the Council will re-open Edgware Library on Sundays to benefit those members of the Jewish community and others that are not able to use their local library at other times?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Edgware Library was opened on Sunday afternoons for the period of time that Hendon Library was closed for re-furbishment and so that customers who use Hendon on Sundays had an alternative library to use in that part of the borough along with Golders Green. When Hendon re-opened last October the temporary arrangement at Edgware ceased.

The resources available to the council are limited and it has been necessary in the current year to reduce opening hours and the Mobile Library fleet from two vehicles to one.

It is therefore not possible to consider extending Sunday opening to other libraries at present. Should it be possible in future to extend opening hours further, Sunday opening may be considered as part of the overall pattern of hours across the network of libraries?

In the meantime members of the Jewish community and others that are not able to use their local library at other times will be referred to the three libraries that offer this service, Hendon, Golders Green and Chipping Barnet.

Supplementary Question No. 3**Councillor David Mencer**

Can I tell the Cabinet Member that this answer comes as a considerable disappointment to many residents in my community? Many Jewish residents found the use of the Library on Sunday as a real boost in the arm because they cannot go there at other times at the weekend, so this is a real disappointment, so that, you know, is a long way of saying no. It also deprives a place for me to hold my surgery, which is a great loss to the people of Hale. The third thing of course, is that our local MP Andrew Dismore is campaigning on this issue and this just one more reason, just one more reason that Jewish residents, non-Jewish residents, Christians, Protestants, Catholics, Asian, where ever in the world they may come from are going to vote for Andrew Dismore when it comes to the election on the 5th May.

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Can I remind Councillor Mencer that he's a councillor he is not the MP yet for Hendon, yet dependent and if he thinks I'm going to make allowances for him to hold his surgeries at the Library then again he's mistaken. I'm sure Madam Mayor that Councillor Mencer doesn't want us to discriminate against other Faiths and communities and can I remind him that Hendon Library and Golders Green Libraries both are open on a Sunday, which is very, very near for your constituent.

Question No. 4**Councillor Robert Newton**

Is the Lead Member for Local Public Service Agreements confident that the Council will deliver on Local Public Service Agreement targets?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

We continue to make excellent progress on LPSAs and look forward to receiving the first tranche of reward monies in the near future. The Council's staff have worked extraordinarily hard to deliver these stretching targets. In particular our highways team who have delivered the best roads in London. We inherited a financial black hole and highways full of potholes. Our excellent work here has delivered remarkable improvements. The use of prudential borrowing has made a step change in the road condition. We are now turning our attention to the footway backlog inherited.

One area of concern is burglary and robberies where our partners in the metropolitan Police are responsible for delivering the target. Regrettably they have been unable to deliver the LPSA target. The target when set was challenged by our colleagues but the ODPM insisted. I am confident that when the Conservative Home Secretary delivers to extra Police to Barnet the rise in crime seen under this Government will be curtailed.

Supplementary Question No. 4**Councillor Robert Newton**

Would the Cabinet Member please join me in thanking the Council's Corporate Performance Office and all the other staff involved, for the excellent results to date?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

Madam Mayor, all of our staff who were involved in delivering these stretching targets need to be congratulated, not least the corporate performance office that monitor them rigidly to deliver the stretched targets and the money that will flow, and I would point out that members of the opposition who continually call for this department to be closed down are seriously misguided as these results show.

Question No. 5

Councillor Susette Palmer

How many old people's homes are likely to lose the mobile service if one library is sold?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

13 homes will lose their service. These are Eaton Court, Hammers Lane [serves Cottage Homes], Hanover Court, Hertswood Court, Highwood Court, Homestead, Hyde Court, King's Lodge, Livingstone Court, Nazareth House, The Priory, Provincial House and Weston Court.

Supplementary Question No. 5

Councillor Susette Palmer

Councillor David, what alternative provision are we making for people in Old Peoples' Homes who have lost the mobile library service?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

The home library service Councillor Palmer.

Question No. 6

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

When will the Council take action against motorbikes and mopeds riding around in parks and disturbing residents – particularly around the children's play area in Cressingham Park Road - in the weekends, evenings and at half-term?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

As soon as the issue is brought to its attention. This is a widespread problem across the borough and indeed across the whole of London. The police are aware of this nuisance and do what they can to target offenders. Officers in the Street Enforcement Service will assist them in the preparation of evidence that can be used to secure an Anti-Social Behaviour Order – I can assure you that I will not hesitate for such action to be used around the children's play area in Cressingham Park Road and indeed any other areas in which it occurs.

Question No. 7**Councillor Brian Coleman**

How many pay and display machines have been out of action in the last 6 months and what have been the main causes and what is the average time taken to repair them?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

In the last six-month period for which figures are available (August 2004 to January 2005) 481 individual pay and display machines were out of action at some time. These faulty machines were identified from 3057 inspection requests, arising from the public, parking attendants or on-line reporting systems.

There can be many reasons for machines failing but the more common problems are coins found to be jammed together, which in some cases is deliberate and in others is a result of the machine needing to accept a wide variety of coin sizes leading to thin coins jamming together if they are inserted in rapid succession. Other key issues have related to the ability of the solar cells to keep the accumulator sufficiently charged leading to power failure. A significant problem in some machines being unserviceable for extended periods is that some 50 attacks have taken place - all targeted at a weakness identified in a particular machine. The nature of the attack, which combines force and power tools, is to render the machines unusable and repair with the same components is demonstrated to result in further attack and theft.

The average time to return a machine to service was 1.8 days but the full break down is as follows:

- 1671 were returned to service by a company engineer within 2 working days of the defect report
- 63 in 3 days
- 40 in 4 days
- 30 in 5 days
- 54 in 6 or more days.

Supplementary Question No. 7**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Can the Cabinet Member assure me that he is making all efforts to improve these not particularly good figures, and will he ask his officers to look at the papers when the contract for the supply of parking metres was originally awarded, and perhaps re-examine that contract, and perhaps reverse the decision that I made wrongly under extreme pressure from the officers over the suppliers?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I hope this is the only time that I will actually ever be speechless in the Chamber. Of course, we will certainly look at that and I will discuss that with the officers.

Question No. 8

Councillor Susette Palmer

How many schools are likely to lose the mobile service if one mobile is sold?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Three schools will lose their service though this needs some refining. Moss Hall School will lose its service entirely. Joel Nursery (a pre-school establishment) will lose its service entirely. Clitterhouse Infant School and Clitterhouse Junior School are very busy sites and are currently visited weekly; the intention is that they would each be visited fortnightly under the proposed new timetable.

Supplementary Question No. 8

Councillor Susette Palmer

With the renewed worry about children learning to read, can I ask what alternative provision we are able to make for these schools that have lost the mobile library service. I'm particularly concerned about Clitterhouse, which is a small school and which is quite a long way from any fixed library.

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Thank you Madam Mayor

Clitterhouse School, if you read the answer Councillor Palmer says it will have a visit but it will be every two weeks.

Question No. 9

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Could the Cabinet Member confirm when the football pitch on Grahame Park will be opened?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

I have received confirmation that the expected date for which the community can start using the facility will now be 18 April, 2005.

This will allow for the clerk of the works to prepare his report regarding the various 'snagging issues' with the facility and then give time to the contractor to deal with matters. The electricity sub station has been put in place and the building is in the process of being made available for the community to use.

Time will be set aside for the Leisure Services and school based staff to receive the necessary and appropriate training in order to manage the facility as best and as safely as possible.

St James School has been informed that the facility will be available from Monday 18 April and they have already delivered their programme to the Leisure Services which indicates that they will be using the facility from 9.00am – 3.15pm each school day.

Question No. 10

Councillor Brian Coleman

Could the Cabinet member outline the action he has taken following the information that the Warden Housing Association property in Parklea Close that suffered a serious fire in January did not have a smoke alarm fitted?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

In the light of the fire in Parklea Close, Councillor Coleman (as GLA member for Barnet and Camden and vice chairman of the LFEPA) and I wrote to the Chief Executives of all the RSL's operating in the Borough, making them aware of the fire and of the need to ensure that all had fitted smoke detecting equipment in their premises. Whilst some replies are still outstanding, most have responded positively and confirmed that they have either fitted alarms or have programmes that will ensure that all are fitted in the near future. Barnet Homes have also confirmed that the programme of installing alarms in properties that the Council own and that they manage has been completed. There are still a small number of properties where they have not been able to obtain access and all of the tenants of those properties have been written to, in an attempt to re-arrange access or to ask the tenants to ensure that they have had one fitted themselves.

In addition Mark Brown from Hendon fire station attended the last meeting of the Housing Association Liaison Group to press the case for installation and to offer the services and advice of the Fire service to all the RSLs that operate in the Borough. I also attended that meeting specifically to reinforce the message that I believe is now getting home.

The Fire service are approaching all RSLs to get a named member of staff responsible for work in the area of fire safety.

A poster has been distributed to all RSLs in the borough, which advertises free home safety checks for all residents. This poster has also been displayed elsewhere across the Borough

We continue to work closely with the Fire service to deliver on our LPSA targets to reduce accidental dwelling fires and associated fire related injuries in the borough.

Supplementary Question No. 10

Councillor Brian Coleman

Madam Mayor, can I congratulate Councillor Salinger on his prompt and effective action on this matter. Can I also ask him if he will ask his officers to look at the issue of provision of domestic sprinklers in the massive regeneration schemes that we are proposing across the borough?

Answer by Councillor Salinger

I thank him for his comments and certainly I will look ,with officers, look at that in the light of advice available at the time.

Question No. 11

Councillor Susette Palmer

The RAF East Camp site has S106 money towards Library services of £250 000 - it is not mentioned if this is towards a new one or existing budget - to be called in by the council within 10 years. Is this likely to be spent on a new library or to enhance services at Grahame Park?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

The Grahame Park Section 106 agreement is to provide that Choices for Grahame Park Limited (Choices), subject to commencing the development permitted by the planning permission, will construct a new library at Grahame Park to cost no more than £1,272,000 (inclusive of fees, expenses and VAT). An additional contribution of £100,000 is to be made by Choices for furnishing and fitting out the new library.

The contribution of £250,000 required by the Council under the RAF East Camp Section 106 agreement is to be used to enhance the services at the new library at Grahame Park. The triggers for the payment of the RAF East Camp library contribution are:

- the identification of the specific use of the contribution by the Council (affording St George reasonable opportunity to comment)
- the giving of notice by the Council to St George that the new library construction at Grahame Park is about to commence.

The 10 year time frame within which the Council can serve the notice to St George requiring the £250,000 is to give sufficient flexibility to the Council, given the likely phasing of the construction of the new library at Grahame Park by Choices.

Question No. 12

Councillor Mark Langton

Is the Cabinet Member aware of the exorbitant fines being demanded as clamping release fees on the High Street in Tally Ho in front of the Cherry Tree pub? What action can the Council take to remedy this situation and ensure unsuspecting residents are not fleeced?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The Council has no regulatory control over the levels of any fees or charges applied by private companies on private land in connection with the immobilisation of vehicles.

Supplementary Question No. 12**Councillor Mark Langton**

The reply to question 27 is slightly more helpful. I accept it is always going to be the case that some people would try it on, by pretending not to have noticed the signs warning them not to park somewhere, but it is a question of the warnings and the approach being reasonable rather than a rip-off. Can the Cabinet member update us as to what progress is being made with the sites owners?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I can't give you any more information than I have at question 27, and I'm glad that you find that useful, but I will write to you in due course.

Question No. 13**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Has Councillor Salinger and his Officers examined the licensing policy of the London Borough of Wandsworth and the media comments of Councillor Edward Lister, the Leader and does he agree with Councillor Lister in his Opposition to 24 hour Licensing?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

I have read the Wandsworth policy but I do not agree with Councillor Lister.

My fundamental free market belief is that the 'market place' will determine if there is a future for 24-hour licences. To date the Council have not had any applications for 24 hour licences and indeed when the government gave the go ahead for 24 hour drinking over the last two 'new year' celebrations, not a single drinking establishment in Barnet took up the option. I do not anticipate that any pub in Barnet will in fact apply for such a permanent licence, but if any applications are received they will have to be determined by a panel of the licensing committee.

Supplementary Question No. 13**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Well I'm certainly disappointed Madam Mayor to be honest, in Councillor Salinger's answer. Councillor Langton has just referred to a notorious pub in North Finchley, which has since been closed down for rowdy and drunken behaviour. Would Councillor Salinger agree with me that 24-hour licensing will do nothing to improve the Law and Order situation in this Borough?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

Can I just reiterate what I said in the reply. This is my personal view, but I believe that the free market will take care of such issues. That is borne out by the absence of any applications here, as far as I understand it. The pub that closed in Tally Ho may have had problems with rowdiness but the reason it closed was because the owners decided to close it.

Question No. 14**Councillor Susette Palmer**

Does the Cabinet member intend to stagger lunchtime closing hours on different days so that someone working in an area has a chance of using the library service in their lunch hour?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

The closure of small libraries for lunch is not new, and most libraries do not close for lunch. Eleven of the sixteen libraries are open over the full lunch period. Of the smaller community libraries, Osidge and Burnt Oak remain open over the lunch period. The town centre libraries in Edgware, Mill Hill, Church End, North and East Finchley, Golders Green and East Barnet and the two large area libraries at Hendon and Chipping Barnet are also open. There is therefore the opportunity to visit a library between one and two at all these sites as an alternative to a library that is closed between one and two. The libraries that close for lunch are not close to each other, the nearest being South Friern, for which the nearest alternative would be East Finchley, and Friern Barnet for which the nearest alternative would be North Finchley.

Supplementary Question No. 14**Councillor Susette Palmer**

Should more money become more available, I hope that the Cabinet member would be prepared to reconsider this lunch hour closing? It just so happens that my ward Library is one of the ones which is shut in the lunch hour, and it is difficult for some of the students and people that work there because there is no where for them to go during that hour.

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Yes, should money come our way, which is very unlikely, but should money come our way, I assure Councillor Palmer that I will be looking into it further.

Question No. 15**Councillor Anita Campbell**

If Barnet Football Club are promoted will the Council hold a Civic Reception to recognise this achievement?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

I am sure I join with all members of Council in Congratulating Barnet Football Club on their likely promotion. The matter of a Civic Reception is for the Mayor to decide, but I would remind Members that on the last occasion they were promoted I was Mayor and I provided the Club with a Civic Reception.

Supplementary Question No. 15**Councillor Anita Campbell**

Madam Mayor.

Would the Council Leader join me in congratulating Barnet Football Club and their supporters, now that they have secured promotion to the Football League? Will he also join me and Councillor Sean Hooker so that we can all three parties call upon the Mayor to hold out the hand of friendship for the Club by holding a Civic Reception and an open bus top parade, and what is he going to do to ensure the club is not expelled from the league in three years time?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

I thank Councillor Anita Campbell for what she said and also for her supplementary. She will know, unless, perhaps she's forgotten that as well as she seemed to do when she was Mayor, of the various initiatives that we been taking to make sure that there is a long-term future for the Club.

Question No. 16

Councillor Brian Gordon

A resident of my Ward recently received a parking ticket for the very short time that she was obtaining change from a shop to put into a pay and display machine. Isn't this very unfair?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Based on different interpretations of what is considered a "very short time" I find that I cannot give you a qualified answer. However, you might be interested to know that the Conservative Party has recently announced plans that would bring relief for many motorists, including your resident, by introducing a standard five-minute grace period in some restricted parking zones. I hope you agree with me that this would allow motorists to get change for meters in the knowledge that they would not be ticketed for doing so, as both motorists and wardens would be aware that a "very short time" would mean five minutes.

Supplementary Question No. 16

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Offord, I am indeed pleased to note that our party is intending to increase the period for motorists to put their money in the Pay and Display machines. Would you endorse my view, that Controlled Parking Zones are designed to ease traffic flow and make parking fairer rather to be a device for traffic wardens to lie in wait and pounce on motorists.

Would you also join with me in condemning the Labour party, the Labour party for its nasty anti-car policies?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Yes.

Question No. 17**Councillor Wayne Casey**

What efforts is the LEA making to support Copthall School in its opposition to the extension of the existing mobile 'phone mast on its premises?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

As Councillor Casey knows the Labour Government has made it very difficult for the Council successfully to oppose the installation of mobile phone masts. However we have had some successes including several in the Hampstead Garden Suburb Ward.

Currently the Valuer is holding discussions which are aimed at stopping the upgrade of the existing 02 mast and looking to its relocation away from the school. This Council is being fully supportive of the wishes of the school and parents. I only wish the government had been too. Another reason for change on May 5th. I hope that Councillor Casey will congratulate the Council on this positive development.

Supplementary Question No. 17**Councillor Wayne Casey**

Thank you very much Madam Mayor.

I do welcome the Cabinet member's assurance that the Council is supporting Copthall School in its opposition to the enhancement of this mobile telephone mast, but could the Cabinet member confirm something for me. Is it not the case that the legislation that governs the planning of mobile phone masts is largely the legislation, although not entirely, but largely the legislation left over from the last Conservative Government and was supported by him when he was the Member of Parliament for Hendon South?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

Can I thank the honourable member for reminding me of better days, but can I point out to him that there's been a Labour Government for eight years. If they wanted to change the legislation, they could have done so, and their failure to do so is another reason for voting Conservative on the 5th May.

Question No. 18**Councillor Colin Rogers**

What was the cost of providing staff who work in the Fenella building with brand new desks in February, and why were new desks provided when staff themselves say there was nothing wrong with the old desks? Although staff were informed the old desks were going to be crushed, how many of these perfectly good desks were offered for re-use by local charities, offered to staff to have at home, or offered to furniture recycling projects and how many were re-used in this way?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

The Council does not apologise for seeking to provide a safe and comfortable working environment for its staff. An in-principle decision to take steps to enhance the poor conditions in which Benefits staff worked was taken when the service moved into Housing. The decision to make this investment in office furniture (desks, chairs and storage furniture) rather than other aspects of the working environment was the result of extensive discussion with staff. There were also Health and Safety considerations. A Health and Safety Officer from HR and a Unison representative had previously carried out a number of work station assessments. None of them complied with the required standards. The specific furniture ordered was also chosen in consultation with staff, Health and Safety and Occupational Health.

The previous desks were not "perfectly good". No-one knows exactly how old they were but many of them moved with the service to Fenella in 1987. Many of them were chipped, splintered or otherwise damaged. Only one member of staff (out of 93) insisted on keeping their old desk. Council tax staff were offered the opportunity to take over any that were in good condition but most had outlived their useful life.

Supplementary Question No. 18

Councillor Colin Rogers

Thank you Madam Mayor.

The Cabinet member has dodged two or three questions, so we'll try again. I was interested in finding out what was the cost of the new furniture and how many desks were offered to re-use to local charities or furniture recycling projects?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Madam Mayor, when this question came in, I said to myself not because I'm cynical, but I thought this must have something to do with trees, you know, destroying more trees to make more desks and all the rest of it. But I think that they're totally confused on that side and a big bunch of hypocrites, hypocrites! We buy desks for our staff that they say they care for, rubbish! You don't care about the staff what a stupid question to ask. Why don't you ask some of your colleagues to give you some questions to ask Councillor Rogers if you don't know what to ask; yes, we bought desks for our staff because we value them, something that you just don't know what it means.

Question No. 19

Councillor Brian Gordon

Would the Cabinet Member confirm that he is sympathetic to the idea of a zebra crossing being placed in Hale Lane, Edgware, on the section between The Grove and Priory Field Drive? There are many elderly people and children who cross the road at that section and it can be extremely dangerous at busy times.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I am always sympathetic to road safety measures that protect elderly people and children at locations where they are needed.

The site on Hale Lane will be appraised as part of this year's Traffic Management Budget and reported to the 24th May meeting of the Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee for a decision.

Supplementary Question No. 19

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Offord, thank you for your confirmation that the matter of a possible new zebra crossing in the part of Hale Lane I was referring to, is being considered. Please would you be tempted to push ahead with this idea, with the knowledge that when you do put the new zebra crossing there, I should invite you down, to stand with me for a photograph and we will get lots more votes in Hale. Not that that should be the reason for doing it, but it is worth thinking about.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Thank you Councillor Gordon.

As I made clear, we do everything in terms of road safety for all road users. I, certainly, am quite happy with what you put down and I'm sure that the Area Environment Sub-Committee will come to the same conclusion.

Question No. 20

Councillor Sean Hooker

Given that our top local football club, Barnet FC have secured promotion to the Football League, will the Council be marking this momentous achievement with a traditional open top bus parade and a Civic Reception?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

It will be up to the Mayor to decide in what manner the Council might mark their likely promotion. I would refer Councillor Hooker to my earlier answer.

Supplementary Question No. 20

Councillor Sean Hooker

Thank you Madam Mayor.

I also would like to extend my congratulations to Barnet Football Club and I hope they will have a successful period in the Football League and go from strength to strength. I know that many other Councillors, Councillor Salinger who is a regular person there and Jack Cohen, and of course Terry Burton also are big fans of the Club. Now, I wouldn't usually ask this Councillor Lyon, but because of the disruption that was going on just a minute ago, I didn't quite hear your answer to Councillor Anita Campbell's question, so could you please repeat it, especially in the part about what you want to do with the club in terms of taking it forward, its future in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

Yes.

The question was about an open top bus Madam Mayor, I thought, when I responded, I made it quite clear that not only I congratulated the Club and mentioned what I had done when I was Mayor, but also what the initiatives we have, and will be taking to try to secure the future of the club, which is what the supplementary question was.

Question No. 21

Councillor David Mencer

If the Cabinet Member could explain what action the Council is taking to ensure that Moat Mount Open Space and its car park are not the venue for anti-social behaviour during the evening and night?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

50m of the hedge along the A1 has been laid (a traditional form of management) reducing its height and opening up sight lines into the car park. A group of people from the Youth Referral team have also opened up sight lines along the paths through the site and vision lines through the site, opening up vistas from the paths.

Supplementary Question No. 21

Councillor David Mencer

Thank you Madam Mayor.

Can I thank the Cabinet member for the answer he has given me, but the actions which have been taken have been of some considerable help, but again, they will cause a lot of disappointment to the manager of this excellent facility.

Does he know that a simple lock and key will solve this problem, a simple lock and key? Can you hear me, a simple lock and key will solve this problem, will stop the undesirable activities which are happening there, will stop young children, happening upon things which they shouldn't happen upon. And doesn't it also show a fair bit of hypocrisy from the Conservative side, who got quite a bit of publicity over activities happening on Hampstead Heath, but when this is happening here, in Hale, in my Ward, will do nothing about it.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Thank you for that supplementary.

I'm not quite sure exactly what kind of activities that you're referring to and you didn't actually ask that in your question. But in regard to locking of the gate, that is something that Councillor Gordon has asked me on many occasions, so he has actually jumped the boat on this one. But the problem with locking the gate there in particular, is that it has been tried in the past over the other side of the road and the gate has been super glued, the gate had been knocked off. Also the keys used to lock the gates, you are able to get them very easily from the local hardware store. But in addition, at that particular site, when I've driven past, you can look through the holes in the hedge and a lock and a key wouldn't do anything to prevent the problem you described, so I have considered that but I don't feel that it would be cost-effective to actually put a lock on that particularly gate at the site.

Question No. 22

Councillor Brian Gordon

What efforts are being made by our Council to pressurise the Mayor of London to keep his excessive budget down, as far as it will impact on the Council Tax for 2005/6?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

Events have superseded Councillor Gordon's question. Our GLA Member and the Conservative Group on the GLA worked extremely hard to cut the Mayor of London's budget, but were unsuccessful, as a two-thirds majority of the Members is required. Although I am pleased that the Mayor's original budget came down to 5.5%, which added 0.71% to Barnet's precept, I am very surprised that the Government has not taken action itself because it threatened to cap any Authority which exceeded an increase of 5%.

Supplementary Question No. 22

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Lyon, do you not agree that we cannot separate Ken Livingstone's wasteful and irresponsible policies from those of the Labour Party and that the Government shall stand condemned for failing to clamp-down on the London Mayor's incompetent administration.

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

I can only suggest that possibly the Labour Party is extremely sorry at this stage, that they re-admitted him to membership.

Question No. 23

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

In light of the fact that learning mentors would undoubtedly have the support of all councillors as a positive contribution to the lives of some of our most vulnerable children for whom we are all responsible as corporate parents, what is the specific form of learning mentor for children living in care and when will this begin?

Answer by Councillor Christopher Harris

Councillor Slocombe, we have a variety of mentoring processes for LAC in place.

- All looked after children have a social worker and foster parent / residential kept worker who are trained and expected by us to prioritise their education which is after all one of the council's LPSA
- We have established (with Enfield and Barnardos) an independent Children's Rights service, which is available to support all of our LAC with any issues - including education. This service will (on request) provide individual children with their own 'advocates'
- The care plans and progress of all of our LAC are reviewed regularly by independent Reviewing Officers who we have required to pay particular attention to educational issues.
- Every school has a lead teacher for LAC
- If LAC need extra tuition or support we always provide it

And finally;

- There is of course our much publicised (most recently in the Independent) 'champions scheme'.

This has helped Barnet improve its care for LAC and resulted in external recognition and should also improve the life chances of Looked after Children.

Supplementary Question No. 23

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

Councillor Harris, I thank you for some of the facts that you given me, but you haven't given me the specific question I asked you. I asked you when it will begin; you never said or has it already begun, could you then provide me with the figures that will ensure the performance has improved and also have you got one-to-one mentoring? Thank you.

Answer by Councillor Christopher Harris

Councillor Slocombe, I'm very happy to provide you with up to date figures if I can write to you with those.

Certainly, all of this process has already begun, and yes, perhaps is a little bit about the definition of what you mean by the word mentoring. But I can assure you that every single young person who wants a tutor for one-to-one educational improvement, who is a looked after child in our care does get that tutor. I would also like to add that actually, just so that you are aware, in amongst our efforts to improve the educational attainment of these young people, which we see is very important for them for having decent life chances, we set up a very innovative scheme which the Chief Executive is himself part of, where many of our senior officers are tracking the educational achievement of these young people, that's at the moment for the GCSE year. We are looking at expanding it to other years and we are also looking at bringing back young people who have achieved extremely well in the Borough.

This is an idea I put forward and we are pursuing, for them to come and talk to existing looked after children to inspire them, so the people have gone on to Cambridge or other Universities, we want them to come back and talk to the looked after children so I do take what you say very seriously Councillor Slocombe. I hope we will see the improvement in the results and I will write to you with the current results that we have at the moment. Thank you.

Question No 24

Councillor Brian Gordon

Can more recycling boxes be supplied, free of charge (or larger boxes) to households with large families for whom one or two boxes are just not sufficient for all the items they are being required to place in them?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Yes, additional boxes and lids are provided for free to residents for recycling. If a resident wishes to order additional boxes and lids they should contact ECT on 020 8371 3670 or email barnet@ectrecycling.co.uk

Supplementary Question No 24

Councillor Brian Gordon

Can the Cabinet member please ensure that the telephone numbers for the new recycling boxes run efficiently, the boxes are properly emptied at all times and that the lids are replaced on them by the refuse collectors, after collection, rather than being thrown all over the pavement as does occasionally happen.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

These are problems that we have been experiencing within the borough, but I would remind Councillor Gordon that this isn't actually a service that the local authority provides itself, but is performed on our behalf by ECT. I have spoken to the Head of Service about this and we are looking at performance indicators and recommendations that ECT actually comply with, in order to prevent the kind of issues that he has described.

Question No. 25

Councillor Gill Sargeant

When is the present date for signing the agreement with Choices for Grahame Park?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

No date has been fixed for the formal signing of a development agreement with Choices for Grahame Park.

Question No. 26

Councillor Brian Gordon

Would you not agree that keeping Barnet's Council Tax to an absolute minimum should be our overriding objective when setting our Budget?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

I agree that it is essential that council tax should be kept as low as possible whilst striving to improve council services in a sound financial environment.

Supplementary Question No. 26

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Finn, would you accept the congratulations of this Council for achieving one of the lowest Council Tax increases in London, and would you join with me in urging the public to bear this in mind when voting in the Barnet Constituencies in the forthcoming general election?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

This is a difficult question to answer Madam Mayor, but I accept the congratulations on behalf of the Cabinet and my group who have endorsed the actions I've taken, and as they say in the classics "I do with a little bit of help from my friends". We will continue to remind the public about it. We haven't got to tell them as are fully aware of what we are doing. They are fully aware of Conservative values and they are fully aware what they will be doing on May the 5th.

Question No. 27

Councillor Mark Langton

Is the Cabinet Member willing to consider the adoption of the area in question outside the Cherry Tree pub to end the profiting at the expense of residents?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The area in question is not owned by the Council and I am not convinced that Council resources would be best employed in seeking its acquisition. In any event, there will be an enforcement issue irrespective of ownership and a more benign management process by the current owners, with more attention to providing drivers with better information, would probably give the result you seek and I have asked officers to pursue this.

Question No. 28

Councillor Brian Gordon

Could you please put in a request on behalf of the motorists of Barnet for all speed and bus lane cameras in the Borough to be turned off for a week in order to give drivers a temporary reprieve from this most despised and unfair form of motorist persecution?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I understand the sentiments you are trying to address but to do so would give a green light for all the 'boy racers' and abusive motorists such cameras were originally intended to identify. Over the past couple of years this Council has preferred to erect speed-actuated warning signs that encourage those drivers travelling at inappropriate speeds to slow down, thus achieving the desired outcome without making criminals out of motorists.

Most bus lane cameras are mounted inside individual buses under the direct control of Transport for London. Rather than switch off the cameras on the roads in Barnet the considered action is to evaluate the effectiveness of bus lanes and remove those where they make congestion worse, like we have done at East Finchley.

Supplementary Question No. 28

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Offord again, I hope you don't consider that I am a boy-racer, but I do confess, I have had more than my fair share of driving penalties and so have many equally responsible drivers who have had to advise, sometimes professionally and I'm not canvassing for that, on these issues. Do you not, I'm sure you will agree, that the obsessive use of cameras has, whether we like it or not, made criminals out of many motorists, to use your language, and has taken away the commonsense and human discretion which Police Officers were previously able to apply.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Thank you Councillor Gordon.

I think you are quite correct that speed cameras have been used in this fashion and is certainly not a way I wish them to be used. I think he should just think himself lucky that he doesn't actually live in North Wales where the Chief Inspector will crackdown on anyone going anything up to 1mph over the speed limit.

Question No. 29

Councillor David Mencer

What guidance would the Cabinet Member give to my residents who have never had rats on their property before, but now report the infestation of their properties?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

The owners/occupiers of properties infested by rats are themselves responsible for taking action to control infestations. They may choose to treat the infestation themselves but if they do not feel competent to do this I would suggest they engage the services of one of the many professional pest control companies trading in the London area. The latest Barnet/Enfield edition of Yellow Pages carries 45 (forty five) 'box' adverts for companies offering such services and other companies have lineage adverts.

Residents should be aware that recurring problems with rats are commonly a sign of drainage defects and again the owner/occupier of properties will generally be responsible for ensuring that drainage on their property is properly maintained.

They should also ensure that food stuffs are not left lying around in the garden (even if intended for birds) as this encourages rats and enables them to feed.

Supplementary Question No. 29**Councillor David Mencer**

Can the Cabinet member maybe come clean and finally admit now that cancelling the Rat Catchers Service was the most absurd action, he could ever have possibly enacted in his time in this Council. It has come back to bite him, I'm sure that all of us are knocking on the doors, as we are knocking on the doors again and again, and again and again it comes up, the rat catchers, the rat catchers, the rat catchers. Does he not admit, that suggesting to residents of Barnet who have never had rats before, and suddenly are infested with them that they should look in the Yellow Pages, is preposterous. We are letting the people of this borough down and on May the 5th you will be reminded of it again.

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

It might be of interest to Councillor Mencer to know that this Borough was recently inspected by officers from DEFRA who are responsible for the whole question of enforcing the legislation that relates to Pest Control and they have at least verbally, and we are still awaiting for it in writing, confirmed that the actions that this Council takes to deal with pests and with rats in particular, meets the requirements of the Law.

To look in Yellow Pages when dealing with pest control is what most people have done in this borough, probably in the entire 40 years that this borough has been in existence. There are over 45 companies with box ads in yellow pages offering pest control services and it was only ever a small minority of the pest control work that was carried out in this borough that was ever done by Council officers. Now, I accept that there are, there is a growing problem of pest control but it is not one, frankly, that any Council can deal with. Every Council up and down this land is facing a problem. The one thing that we have not had which for many, many years used to do more than anything else to control the rat population in this country, was to have a long hard winter because that used to wipe out large proportions of the rat population and that we haven't had for some time. But to blame the Council for the growing rat population is frankly utter nonsense. People have got to learn that they are a nuisance and that there are measures that they can take around their own homes in terms of public health and public safety that they need to take for themselves.

The Council will carry out controls and baiting where it is on our land and we will make sure that it happens on other peoples' land, and as I said at the last Council meeting we are looking, we are still looking at the possibility of re-introducing a service, but it is going to have to be self-financing and it will be aimed at helping people who are owner/occupiers who genuinely cannot afford to pay for the service themselves.

Question No. 30**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Would you please join with me in expressing concern regarding the possibility of a mobile telephone mast being erected at the northern end of Mowbray Road, Edgware, right next to a nursery school?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Yes, I share your concerns in the locating of mobile telephone masts in sensitive residential areas, particularly close to schools and nurseries. I believe that the (past) government has not done nearly enough to deal with genuine environmental and health concerns. It has not done nearly enough to allow councils such as Barnet to deal with the concerns of local people nor has it reacted quickly enough to the expansiveness and mast erecting fever of some of the mobile communications companies.

These masts pose a far more serious threat to the environment now than when planning policy concerning telecommunications was first drafted. Planning guidance should be substantially altered to provide a better balance between the environment and commercial concerns. Operators should have to justify the need for a new mast when environmental; health or safety concerns are raised.

Supplementary Question No. 30

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Offord, thank you for your helpful reply.

Could you join with me in expressing the hope that the electronic equipment, in question, will not be placed on the Mowbray Parade site? Numerous residents have contacted me and I know my colleagues, the Edgware Councillors, on this particular subject, and a letter from yourself to the Installation Company in question to back-off, I'm sure could be very effective. Is there any chance of such a letter, do you think?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Thank you Councillor Gordon

I don't really think it's my place to actually interfere within a democratic process that currently exists; I don't feel that my opinion would have much weight either. However, I do agree with your sentiments. Recently in my own ward we been persistently fighting an application for a mobile mast, and as soon as one is defeated then a second appears. I am particularly concerned with some of the comments that have been said tonight, that it was actually a Conservative government that introduced this legislation. It actually was, and that was fine, because the legislation was appropriate for the time, but since that period, the industry has moved on a great deal and we find now that these masts are appearing everywhere. As Councillor Marshall did actually point out, this Government has had eight years to address the problem, but they were too busy I realise, introducing student tuition fees and also imprisoning people without them going to a trial first, but I'm sure that the next Conservative government will address this issue and it will also allay your concerns.

Question No. 31

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

Given the fact that the inclusion of plastics and cardboard is one of the most frequently requested issues raised by residents, and would allow the Council to build on the existing scheme and really increase our rates of recycling, when will the Council introduce the Labour Group's policy to include plastics and cardboard within the kerbside recycling scheme?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

It would not increase our rate of recycling but more likely reduce it, as the targets imposed on all councils are weight based. What you suggest would result in a lower weight of recyclables being collected and more frequent disposal journeys for the collection vehicles as these items, particularly cardboard, are more bulky making the collection less efficient.

And since when was it Labour Group policy? It was not included in the range of items for collection when the original contract with ECT was agreed under your administration and you failed to include the £4,940,250, costed by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee needed to introduce plastic and cardboard collections in your so called budget at the last council meeting.

Your question demonstrates that Barnet's Labour Group has abandoned trying to achieve a 30% recycling target. I will not do that.

Supplementary Question No. 31

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

(tape inaudible) because there is so much waste of cardboard and plastic in the bins, if somebody is able to do something to use it, whereby the Council would thenthat's why I put the question, not that you won't do it, there has to be some time when somebody will have to look at what the other boroughs do, so what's wrong with this one. Thank you.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Other boroughs do actually do it, I think that Harrow does it but they won't be achieving their target. As you know, it is all about weight. Plastics and cardboard is bulky and it doesn't contain any weight. If we do that it will not be cost-effective and we will not reach the targets imposed upon this Council by the past Labour government, we've repeated this again and again in the Council Chamber. We do take plastics and cardboard at our Summers Lane Civic Amenity Site, residents can take it there.

Question No. 32**Councillor Brian Gordon**

The Leader will no doubt be aware that since the last Council Meeting the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone has once again made highly offensive remarks, by asking a Jewish newspaper journalist whether he was a “German war criminal” and accusing him of behaving like a “concentration camp guard”. In view of Barnet’s large Jewish community, the many other religious and racial minorities within the Borough, and the amount of money his office extorts from our tax-payers, could the Leader please write to the Mayor expressing his disgust at his continued arrogant and insensitive conduct, for which he invariably refuses to apologise?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

Councillor Gordon is of course correct that I am aware of the Mayor of London’s remarks, as indeed is the whole country. I congratulate our GLA Member, Councillor Brian Coleman for the sterling work he did as Chairman of the GLA in attempting to make the Mayor apologise. I feel at this stage it would be pointless to write, as I believe Mr Livingstone must be well aware of the general revulsion his remarks caused. I can only hope that electors in Barnet where there is, of course, a large Jewish population, will remember what Mr Livingstone said, but doggedly refused to apologise.

Supplementary Question No. 32**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Leader, I will join with you in congratulating Councillor Coleman in his well -publicised condemnation of the Mayor for his refusal to apologise, however, I do think we must keep up the campaign against Livingstone’s extremism and his offensive and dangerous tongue. Do you not think it essential, I’ll ask you again in this context, that we do not allow the activities of Livingstone to be divorced from the Labour Party and that people should remember this when they vote on May the 5th. Livingstone is Labour.

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

Councillor Gordon, I entirely agree and I think that during, not only this campaign, but other campaigns, the residents of this borough will well remember those remarks but particularly the obstinate way, that the Mayor of London refused to apologise and I’m sure will take it into account when they decide how they are going to vote.

Question No. 33**Councillor David Mencer**

What action would the Council take against a supplier to the Council who raised the price of their service, yet at the same time reduced the quantity and quality of the service?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

Each case would be assessed on its merits.

Question No. 34

Councillor Aba Dunner

Would the Cabinet member consider that a cafe/kiosk/meeting place would benefit the public in respect of Princes Park in the Golders Green Ward?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I believe that a café/kiosk would be a real asset for Princes Park as it would encourage more people to make use of the attractive space, introduce greater investment in the area and allow a 'full-time' presence that would deter vandalism and other anti-social behaviour from occurring. The Council has recently advertised for people to submit tenders to run such a café/kiosk in the Park.

Question No. 35

Councillor David Mencer

If the Cabinet Member will list the amount paid by Barnet to Logica for each of the last five years and if he will list the amount budgeted to be paid to Logica for the next two years?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

Barnet **has not** had a contractual relationship with Logica for the majority of the last five years. Logica is a sub contract provider to the HBS partnership following the transfer of some IT services to Hyder Business Services under the previous administration. The amounts paid to Hyder Business Services are set out annually in the council's accounts.

Question No. 36

Councillor Aba Dunner

Would the Cabinet member care to advise Council what progress has been made in relation to the collection of rents/licence fees in the Council's parks and open spaces.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

For many years there has not been effective management or collection in the rents and fees of many of the kiosks in our parks. Six months ago a dedicated member of staff was assigned to review all such leases and compile a backlog of those who have failed to pay rents due. These have now been completed and identified some occupiers who entered properties several years ago without even signing a lease and continue in their occupation today without having paid a penny in rent. In addition, action has been taken to ensure the compliance of leases, some of which have been woefully ignored and the Council picking up the financial bill for repairs and renewals that were the responsibility of the leaseholders. There are still some outstanding issues that are being dealt with by the Councils' Property and Valuation officers and I will continue to make these a matter of priority.

Question No. 37**Councillor David Mencer**

If the Cabinet Member will list (i) the amount of debt owed by Barnet for each of the last three years, (ii) the amount paid in interest on that debt during the same period, and (iii) the proportion of the Council Budget that is spent on interest?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

Year	Total debt outstanding at 31.March	Interest Paid in year GF and HRA	Interest as proportion of Net Budget Requirement
	£'000	£'000	%
2001/02	39,012	5,408	1.8
2002/03	30,000	4,563	1.5
2003/04	0	3,401	1.0

The Council decided in March 2004 to restructure its long-term debt and as a result we were debt free as at 31 March 2004.

Question No. 38**Councillor Olwen Evans**

Will the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport join me in thanking Barnet's Winter Maintenance Team? Does he agree that in the recent "big freeze" they did this Borough proud by ensuring all potentially slippery roads and pavements were comprehensively salted, and accidents therefore avoided?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The recent cold spell lasted 17 days, from 19 February to 7 March 2005, and during all this time the Meteorological Office had a continuous red alert warning flag, indicating the expectation of snow or severe frost. During this period our gritting vehicles gritted the borough's network on a total of 25 occasions:

- 16 times the Council's seven primary, or Priority 1, routes,
- 7 times the seepage routes, (the Council's coldest network and/or with ground water problems) and
- 2 times the secondary routes, our Priority 2 and 3, routes).This is the majority of the Borough's network and takes nearly two days to complete.

In addition we carried out five precautionary grittings on footways in the borough that are heavily used and are on steep gradients. During this time we have spread some 2,000 tonnes of salt.

During this cold spell, the mean daytime temperature was only 5 degrees Celsius and this compares with an average temperature of 10 degrees during the same period over the last 10 years. This cold period has made this year's winter maintenance season the coldest in our records. The total number of grittings for the whole season (from October) so far is 73 and this compares with our second highest in the last 15 years of 54, which was last year.

Our own staff in the Highways Maintenance section indeed "did this Borough proud" during the cold spell switching from their normal daytime highway repairs to looking after the Boroughs 416 miles of roads with a 3 shift system to cover all the fluctuations in weather conditions from rain, frost, ice, sleet and snow in each 24 hour period.

Each shift consisted of a winter maintenance controller, 8 drivers and a loader. During the busiest week there were 30 staff committed to gritting the roads, footways to stations and keeping grit bins topped up. In addition, Street Sweeping staff were switched to gritting Town Centres and Secondary Shopping parades during the worst weather conditions.

Question No. 39

Councillor David Mencer

What was the number of parking tickets issued by LBB parking attendants in:

2004/2005

2003/2004

2002/2003

2001/2002, and

2000/2001?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Year	Monthly output per Parking Attendant
2004/5	327
2003/4	360
2002/3	347
2001/2	349
2000/1	345

Question No. 40

Councillor Brian Gordon

Would the Cabinet Member for the Environment care to comment as to whether Barnet residents believe that the condition of roads and pavements has improved since this administration took office?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Residents' surveys undertaken following works show that in overall terms 90% of residents welcome the improvements. Residents have frequently added their own compliments such as 'The road was completed on time with the minimum disruption. The road was left in a very clean state. Well done and thanks to all' or 'It makes a great difference to the environment when the road and pavements are in good condition.'

This has been echoed by the recent 2004 annual resident's survey. Early findings show the satisfaction rating for Road Repairs has gone from 24% to 41%, a remarkable 17% improvement, and compares extremely well with a London Average of 28%.

Question No. 41

Councillor Robert Newton

Would the Cabinet Member please advise, with regard to the 32,742 plus new residential units projected to be built in the Borough by 2016 (Answer to question No. 48 on 14 September 2004):

- a) The estimated cost of the infrastructure provision required to adequately support the projected development both within and outside the Borough, split between the different infrastructure providers.
- b) The proportion of the estimated expenditure that is the responsibility of the Borough and outside authorities/agencies respectively.
- c) What the estimated contribution towards the infrastructure costs from Section 106 Agreements will be.

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

In response to points a,b and c, costs of infrastructure are assessed on either an area by area basis through development frameworks (e.g. Colindale & Cricklewood, Brent Cross, West Hendon) or through individual planning application and impact assessments, which ultimately result in Section 106 planning obligations and contributions towards infrastructure improvements. If the Member would like to be provided with copies of these planning Section 106 agreements, which set out individual section 106 infrastructure contributions, then the planning service will be happy to supply.

The housing provision anticipated in Barnet over the next 10 – 15 years involves many individual developments, which will be the subject of separate planning permissions. Each development will be the subject of infrastructure impact assessments. It is possible to monitor and find out by looking at Section 106 Heads of Agreement, contained within the individual reports to be planning committees. Unfortunately, it is not feasible to aggregate together historic data and anticipate the impact of future schemes in the manner that Councillor Newton sets out above. However, infrastructure assessments are to be drawn up for major regeneration schemes the details of which are to be set out in planning reports or area development frameworks. Infrastructure contributions from outside agencies, such as the PCT, Transport for London, ODPM are also assessed on an area or individual development approach. Until such schemes come forward it is not feasible to provide total estimates of external infrastructure costs. It should also be noted that considerable investment in the borough's infrastructure would be derived from private development and private investment.

Question No. 42

Councillor Robert Newton

Would the Cabinet Member please advise:

- a) How many London Boroughs have “opportunity borough” status, what the criteria are for inclusion and what it means for the Boroughs?
- b) How much funding is available for the Boroughs to bid for?
- c) Which other local authorities outside Greater London are eligible to bid for the same funding source.
- d) What are the rules for bidding and whether there are any restrictions on the number of successful bidders, projects or amount per project?
- e) What the timescale is for making bids and what the estimated cost to the Borough would be of joining in the bidding process.

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

I am pleased to reply that a total of £235m is being made available under the Growth Areas Fund over two years 2006/07 and 2007/08.

The fund is available to the three newest growth areas - Milton Keynes South Midlands; Ashford; and the London Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough corridor; and to the four opportunity boroughs in London, Barnet, Barking & Dagenham, Brent and Islington.

Bidding guidance has been issued. This gives examples of types of projects that might attract support and these include:

Revenue: masterplanning and economic visioning.

Capital: affordable housing, highways and other infrastructure, land acquisition, employment and business development, access to and provision of greenspace, community facilities and transport improvements.

GoL have advised that they expect a maximum of two bids per opportunity borough. There is no express limit to the size of any bid although Revenue bids should be at least £50,000 and capital bids £250,000.

Bidding is a two stage process with initial Expressions of Interest to be submitted by 29 April 2005 and full formal proposals by 3 September 2005. There is no cost as such to join the bidding process over and above the staff time required to prepare the bids.

You will see that Barnet is only one of four London Boroughs to have been successful which reflects the excellent work being done by my Administration.

Question No. 43**Councillor Robert Newton**

The Draft Colindale Development Framework (November 2003) states in Paragraph 5.5 that “LUL are concerned about the impact of additional passengers at Colindale on the Northern Line capacity.....LUL consider the line is at capacity through Central London and therefore a line capacity study is required”.

Would the Cabinet Member please advise:

- a) Whether a line capacity study has been provided and, if so, with what result.
- b) What increase in line capacity will result from the re-signalling projected for 2011?
- c) Whether the increased capacity arising from the re-signalling will be sufficient to cope with the projected housing development in Colindale and other parts of the Borough of Barnet and in other Boroughs that are served by the Northern Line.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

TfL London Underground Ltd. have stated that the borough will benefit from the Northern Line Upgrade which will improve capacity by 23% by 2012. There is still some uncertainty as to what this will provide in terms of technical solutions. The train service through the central area will go up to around 25 trains per hour during the peaks, although exact timetables have not yet been determined for each branch. There are capacity issues in the central area specific to the Northern Line, however, this is where there are other line choices available with spare capacity.

Train frequency at peak movement periods will increase from 20 to a maximum of 24 trains per hour in the peak periods on each of the High Barnet and Edgware branches.

The envisaged improvements to the Underground service will help to meet the additional movement demands placed by an increased population. This will need to be complemented with increased movement capacity across all transport modes including buses, cycling and walking. Increased capacity will be achieved in an incremental manner and will naturally be focused around the regeneration areas where there will be greatest predicted increase in movements. Transport for London has a key role to play having a strategic transport planning role as well as being a major transport operator of both buses and Tube. They are uniquely placed to overview development trends and aspirations in north-west London and have due regard for events in other boroughs. A dialogue is on-going with them regarding the movement needs of Barnet up to 2016.

Question No. 44**Councillor Robert Newton**

I would refer the Cabinet Member to his predecessor's answers given to Council Policy Conference Questions 40, 42 and 44 on 13 February 2003 and Question 29 at the Council meeting on 13 January 2004 and should be pleased to learn:

- a) How many homes have been built in the Borough since 1997 on land formerly used for business purposes.
- b) What contribution well distributed local employment opportunities in the Borough can make to reducing the length of journeys to work.

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Point a)

The council will be monitoring as part of the Local Development Framework, employment related development and changes of use, including housing developments. This will form part of the Annual Monitoring Report to be submitted to Statutory Consultees and also returns to the Greater London Authority (GLA) as part of the London Development Database. The first AMR will be produced next year.

The adopted UDP policy (Policy EMP 1.1) is that the council will normally resist changes of use from land use generating employment to land uses which do not.

The revised UDP policy (EMP 1 and EMP 2) is to protect employment sites although outside the UDP's identified employment sites, permission may be granted if there is no realistic prospect of re-use, in which case mixed-use development is proposed.

The Planning Service has monitored the Revised UDP policies. None of the identified employment sites in the revised UDP have been redeveloped, apart from proposed residential development at Barnet Trading Estate, Hadley Manor and Bittacy Hill (Gas Works) Site. These total approximately 200 proposed residential units. There are approximately 100 units, which are in various stages of construction on Moon Lane, Lancaster Road and Henry Road.

The primary Industrial sites and business parks are as follows:-

From the table above no residential development has taken place on the sites listed below:

Mill Hill Industrial Estate
Garrick Industrial Estate
Bunns Lane Works
Connaught Business Park
Colindale Business Centre
Colindeep Technology Park
Granard Business Centre
Brunswick Industrial Estate
Finchley Industrial Estate
Falkland Road
Prickler Hill
Grenville Place

Industrial Business Park

Northern Telecom, Brunswick Park

Industrial Estates:

Barnet Trading Estate
Park Road, Barnet

Lancaster Road
Lancaster Road
New Barnet

Hadley Manor Trading Estate
Moxon Street, Barnet

Bunns Lane Works
Bunns Lane, Mill Hill

Bittacy Business Centre
Bittacy Hill, Mill Hill East

Falkland Road
High Barnet

Brunswick Industrial Estate
Brunswick Park Road, Brunswick Park
Mill Hill Industrial Estate
Flower Lane, Mill Hill

Queens Road
High Barnet
Pricklers Hill
High Barnet

Garrick Industrial Estate
Garrick Road, West Hendon

Connaught Business Centre
The Hyde

Finchley Industrial Estate
High Road, North Finchley

Business/Technology Parks:

Colindale Business Centre
Colindale Avenue

Colindeep Technology Park
Colindeep Lane

Grenville Place
The Hale

Granard Business Centre
Bunns Lane, Mill Hill

Point b)

The majority of people who work and live in Barnet do not work on identified employment sites. The largest employment sectors are in retail, hotel, catering, distribution, banking, insurance, finance, and public services and these jobs are mostly located in Barnet's town centres, schools, hospitals, local government offices and university campuses. A growing proportion work from home....approximately 10% according to the 2001 census. People living in Barnet contribute to London's role as a major world city and have jobs in the City and West End.

Employment uses are found throughout the borough and people can choose to live near where they work. This is not a simple equation because in some households different members will make journeys to work that may be in opposite directions, people move jobs and may not want to move home, or alternatively, may move home and not move jobs. For some people the choice of means to travel to work may be critical rather than the length of journey.

The 2001 census indicates that approximately 33% of Barnet residents travel to work or college by car. 25% travel by underground and 10% travel by bus. Approximately 7% walk or cycle.

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