

**Council Questions to Cabinet Members
31 January 2006
Questions and Responses**

Question No. 1

Councillor Brian Coleman

Will the Cabinet Member outline the consultation that went on with Headteachers and Trade Unions before the December pay arrangements for Schools staff and others were changed?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

Changes in pay date apply to teachers, who, historically, have been paid early in December and July, i.e., on the last day of term rather than on their usual pay date on the last day of the month.

In December 2004, the development of the Council's new management information system (SAP) identified the early payment of teaching staff in July and December as an anomaly. Trades Unions were briefed on the proposal to cease the early payments on 1 March 2005 at the Leisure and Youth Area JNCC and on 7 April 2005 at the Teachers' Area JNCC. Management agreed to notify headteachers and teachers. Minutes of these meetings were circulated on 6 and 11 July respectively. Neither management side nor staff side picked up that this notification had not been circulated.

On 28 October, all maintained schools were notified of the change. London Academy and Woodhouse College, both of which use the Council's payroll but which are not maintained by the Council, were notified subsequently. Hardship payments were offered to any staff facing particular difficulties

We should have notified staff earlier of the change. This was acknowledged at the Corporate JNCC and the Teachers JNCC and both Cllr David and Cllr Marshall have apologised.

Teachers will receive their July payment at the end of the month. Teachers' Unions will be reminded of this at the next meeting of the JNCC and, subsequently, a notification will be attached to pay slips.

Question No. 2**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Can you confirm that the Coroners Accounts of Haringey 2003-2005 show payments being made for post mortems and private toxicology contractors to Edgware Mortuary? .Is it correct that the Edgware Mortuary has not existed since 1997? If so can you explain why these payments are shown? If this is the case will you support an investigation into all the Coroners Accounts for Haringey and the levies submitted to other North London Boroughs.

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

The position of payments apparently to Edgware Mortuary have been queried with Haringey. They have indicated that there is an error on an old invoice for work done for the Coroner by a laboratory in respect of a sample or specimen. The order is likely to have come from the Coroners Office based at Edgware Police Station, in respect of a post mortem at Barnet Mortuary, which in turn related to a matter at Edgware Hospital. The belief is that the laboratory have mixed up names, such that the invoice refers erroneously to "Edgware Mortuary". There is no dispute over the case in question or that it was a legitimate invoice. It is a minor administrative error.

Question No. 3**Councillor Steve Blomer**

When will the anti-bike gates for Lyndhurst Park be in place?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The gates are being fabricated at present and should be installed within two weeks.

Question No. 4**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Is the Council aware of any significant effect that the Government's new licensing laws have had on alcohol related crime and policing with the London Borough of Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

At this stage there is no information to suggest that there has been an increase in alcohol related violence.

The winter months are however, unlikely to prove the most problematic and it would be wise to await a full year's data before attempting to draw conclusions.

Question No. 5**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Will you confirm that by law Mortuaries have to keep full records of all specimens and body organs removed? Are you satisfied that Barnet Council funded Mortuaries comply with all the statutes and relevant regulations and are open for public scrutiny in particular special access being given to the families of the deceased? If so will you provide evidence that the law is being complied with.

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

The Human Tissue Act 2004 details requirements of permissions required before removal can occur – this is in terms of the need to maintain records, but not the format of them. Under the Coroners Act, the Coroner's officers monitor all cases from start to finish and keep records which are held by the Coroner at the Haringey offices.

When a sudden or suspicious death is admitted to the mortuary for post mortem the pathologist may decide that a certain organ needs further examination to establish the cause of death. The pathologist will ask the Coroner's permission and if the Coroner agrees the organ is collected (usually by the police) and sent for examination. When it is returned the Mortuary Manager at Finchley returns the organ to the body, witnessed by a pathologist who signs confirmation of this fact. No major organs are ever removed from a body or retained without specific permission from the Coroner, and only then to establish a medical cause of death. When this has been established the organ is reunited with the body.

Copies of the relevant forms recording all these actions are kept at Finchley Mortuary, with the Coroner also maintaining his/her own records.

Barnet only runs one Mortuary and that is the Coroner's Mortuary at Dolman Close (Finchley Mortuary), which complies with all the relevant statutes and regulations and is open for scrutiny by the Coroner.

Special access is given to members of the public to view the bodies of deceased relatives if necessary, although it is preferable for a viewing to take place at the undertakers following the involvement of the Mortuary. Access is not given to members of the public just to look around or for any other reason without express permission of the Coroner.

Question No. 6**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

When is the Council proposing to clear the health hazard and unsightly rubbish at the back door of the youth club building at 4a Park Rd, NW4, or will it be left for the next interested tenant or buyer to clear away?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Following a site visit by Property Services, it appears that the land is not in Council ownership, but belongs to Network Rail.

Question No. 7

Councillor Brian Gordon

What measures can the Council officially take in pressing for the rejection of the appeal of LCC UK for a mobile phone mast at the junction between Farm Road and Hale Lane, Edgware, which was previously rejected by our Planning Officers on the original application in March?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

I will not comment on the specifics but in general terms in relation to such appeals the Council can officially take the following action:

The Council refused the application for the mast as unacceptable in planning terms. We have submitted a robust appeal statement justifying the refusal decision. All those residents originally consulted on the application, and those who responded, were informed of the appeal on 12th December 2005 and invited to submit their comments to the Planning Inspectorate by 10th January 2006. Whilst past the official deadline any non-planning committee councillors own submissions in support of the official council position are welcomed but should be sent immediately and directly to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol. The Planning Inspectorate will make its decision based on all the planning evidence and representations received.

Question No.8

Councillor Wayne Casey

With reference to supplementary question 17 tabled at the Council Meeting on 8th November 2005 could the Cabinet Member now confirm, within Barnet, how many maximum fines and custodial sentences have been issued for fly tipping and how many spot fines have been issued to those dropping chewing gum and cigarette butts?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Since 7 June 2005 there have been 428 investigations into littering and fly tipping with 123 Warning Notices issued, 39 Fixed Penalty Notices and 13 being processed for prosecution.

Question No. 9**Councillor Mark Langton**

When will the Council undertake an urgent review of the traffic system at the entrance to the Great North Leisure Park (Hollywood cinema) with a view to reducing/stopping the increasing number of serious accidents on exiting/entering the site?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Officers have already looked at the personal injury accident history of this entrance and in the last 3 years there have been 3 accidents where someone has been injured (1 Serious in June 2005 and 2 Slight in July 2002).

The Serious accident involved two vehicles turning into the site; one travelling north turning right and the other travelling south turning left. The two slight accidents involved vehicles turning right out of the leisure complex failing to give way to vehicles travelling south on the High Road.

There is a pelican crossing south of the junction, and a pedestrian refuge island to the north of the junction. There have been no reported personal injury accidents involving pedestrians at the junction. This is a location where the level of potential conflict is higher than the level of actual accidents. I will seek that officers continue to monitor this location and if there is an accident trend where an engineering solution can assist a separate report will be submitted to the Finchley and Golders Green Area Environment Sub-Committee for consideration.

Question No. 10**Councillor Brian Gordon**

What improvements are being proposed for Lyndhurst Park, Mill Hill?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The installation of anti-motorcycling kissing gates has been ordered. This should be completed within 14 days.

A 'Friends' group has been formed by some local residents to assist in the management of this green space and the adjacent nature reserve. They have already organised walks and a litter collection by volunteers.

Question No. 11**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Would the Cabinet member for the Environment please inform Council what the full cost of the Mill Hill Broadway local safety scheme is; detailing a breakdown of this cost and including design costs?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The approximate costs are detailed below and are subject to final measures:

- £4,000 surveys.
- £47,000 civil works
- £500 line marking
- £2,000 electrical works
- £2,000 Traffic Management Order making
- £20,000 Design and supervision Fees

Total: £75,500

Question No. 12

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Can the cabinet member please clarify how many modern apprenticeships are in the St Georges section 106 agreement and how many are going to local people?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

The Section 106 Agreement associated with the planning consent for the development of the former RAF East Camp (St George) development issued April last year, identifies an obligation on the developer of 14 apprenticeships to be provided. Within the various employment and training initiatives being considered there is a priority hierarchy targeting first residents of the development, and then residents within the Colindale Framework Area followed by the broader regeneration areas and finally the borough in general. The Section 106 Agreement also provides for a skills survey, work experience placements and a local labour initiative, which the Council is working closely with St George to implement.

Question No. 13

Councillor Brian Gordon

Without committing yourself in anyway, would you please take note of the objection of numerous local residents to the proposed construction of a 3 storey block of flats on the Site 49-53 Selvage Lane, which is currently the subject of a planning application?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

I decline to answer this question. The member should know better than to ask me a question relating to a live planning application. If the respective councillor representing the local residents of Selvage Lane would like to put their concerns in writing to the Planning Service officers will fully take into account these views before reporting or reaching a decision on the planning application in the normal manner.

Question No. 14**Councillor Jack Cohen**

What does Barnet pays under the general levy to Haringey for the Coroners Accounts. Please include all post mortems, forensic and other, toxicology, histopathology etc the use of private contractors, and all other Mortuary services, and everything connected to Inquests for the years 2003-2005. Is Barnet separately invoiced for each item of expenditure, if so will you provide me with this list or make arrangements for me to inspect the invoices?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

The London Borough of Haringey accounts for the Coroner's Court and is responsible for all its expenditure and income. The accounts are audited externally by District Audit (the Audit Commission).

Haringey recovers the cost of the Coroner's Court through a levy on five London Boroughs – Barnet, Brent, Enfield, Harrow and itself. The levy is pro rata to population.

Since Barnet is not, therefore, invoiced for individual services provided, the council holds no information on detailed transactions by the Coroner's Court. At the year end we receive a summary of expenditure against budget, but not details of individual transactions.

Question No. 15**Councillor Colin Rogers**

The Council demolished the Herbert Wilmot youth centre in East Finchley on Monday 16 January. What has become of the contents (chairs, tables, kitchen appliances, pool table and other equipment)?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

Councillor Rogers will not be surprised given Barnet's record in recycling that when Oasis relocated from this Centre to Burnt Oak anything that was serviceable was then moved to Burnt Oak. Before the Centre was demolished a further survey was undertaken. The pool table was regarded as beyond repair and the central heating boiler was so old that it was not sensible to try and save any parts from it. What was left has enjoyed much better days.

Question No. 16**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Would the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport care to comment on reports that the new Five Minute Grace period for unloading will only apply to Estate Vehicles and people carriers?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Vehicles of any type may load and unload (where permitted) for up to 20 minutes. There is no 5 minute "grace period" for loading - the 20 minute concession to load from yellow lines or parking places applies to any vehicle and is not being changed.

Question No. 17**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Would the Cabinet Member for Environment please detail the changes in staff numbers and responsibilities of the Neighbourhood Management Service for the following financial years: 2002/3, 2003/4, 2004/5 and 2005/06 & current changes identified in the General Functions Committee papers for the meeting on 19th January 2006 ?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

In 1998, the Neighbourhood Management Service was formed by combining all the 'street based client monitoring functions';

Ward Officer Service - Highways and Parks
Cleansing and Refuse Contract Monitoring Team
Grounds maintenance monitoring team

The service was structured as follows:

Head of Service x 1
Area Co-ordinators x 3
Principal NMO's x 6
NMO's x 63

Responsibilities:

- Highways Responsive Maintenance including insurance claims
- Highways Regulation including Licensing
- Abandoned Vehicles
- New Roads and Street Works monitoring/supervision
- Parks Patrol including monitoring and reporting
- Parks opening and closing
- Park Keepers supervision and management
- Grounds responsive maintenance
- Grounds contract monitoring
- Cleansing Contract monitoring including EPA responsibilities
- Refuse contract monitoring
- Environmental Enforcement - littering, flytipping
- Graffiti removal
- Out of hours emergency response
- Community Liaison - Area Forums, liaison with residents Assoc's/businesses etc...
- Horizontal integration with other service providers across public estate e.g. Housing

In 2001/2002 Graffiti and Flytip Co-ordinators were recruited to provide focus on delivering against two key priorities - graffiti and flytipping.

The Neighbourhood Warden Service was established in 2001 but was not fully operational until October 2002 and ended in 2003 - therefore information only applies up until that period.

The service was structured as follows:

- Head of Service x 1
- Warden Co-ordinator x 1
- Senior wardens x 3
- Neighbourhood Wardens x 30

The report of the General Functions Committee on 19th January 2006 , which you attended, showed there are currently :

29 posts in the Street Enforcement Service and it is proposed to reduce 18 of these - of this number 11 are currently vacant and 4 are administrative.

Question No. 18

Councillor Anne Hutton

One of the reasons the council gave for closing youth centres was that youth facilities could be provisioned in a number of different ways, including detached youth workers. Could the cabinet member please say what services have been provided under this remit and in which wards?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

I should like to thank Councillor Hutton for giving me an opportunity to underline the width of the activities sponsored by the Youth Service. The Youth Service operates with a number of multi disciplinary projects. Thus we link the specialist drugs expertise in Barnet Impact with detached Youth workers. We also link the Centre based work of the Youth Service and the school based Connexions Personal Advisers. Detached Youth workers also work with a number of voluntary organisations. The Youth Service is also expanding the role of the Finchley Youth Theatre. Youth work projects are being undertaken in Underhill, Burnt Oak, Colindale, West Hendon, East Barnet, Childs Hill and Golders Green. I should like to thank Councillor Hutton for giving me an opportunity to thank our Youth workers for the high quality of the work they do. I am pleased so to do.

Question No. 19

Councillor Andrew Harper

Could the Cabinet member for Planning disclose how many applications for permission to install mobile phone masts in Garden Suburb Ward have been refused in the last 12 months

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Seven applications have been refused in the past 12 months within the Garden Suburb Ward, (planning references C16474/05, C16420A/05, C16391/05, C16333/05, C16109/04, C16033A/04, C16421/05). It should be noted that application Ref: C16421/05, although in the Garden Suburb ward, is not within the Conservation Area.

Question No. 20

Councillor Jeremy Davies

Would the Cabinet Member for the Environment detail the proposed work programme and order of priorities for the revised Street Enforcement Service?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The restructured SES will provide a focused service around corporate plan priorities. The core functions will centre on environmental crime and include trade waste compliance, graffiti, fly tipping, problem vehicles, BV199 monitoring and FPN's as well as general duties around Highways Act enforcement.

Question No. 21

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

The Leader said at the last meeting that every appointment is made on merit. Can he therefore confirm that: Every vacancy (especially at Managers level) is advertised? The criteria for appointments are not biased towards particular groups? Appointment is made on the basis of someone's ability to do the job and not just paper qualifications? Groups that are under-represented are made aware of training courses and encouraged to go on such courses to increase their capability?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

All vacancies are advertised internally through the staff vacancy list which is posted on the Intranet with hard copies sent to teams that do not have Intranet access.

Vacancies that are advertised externally are also advertised on the staff vacancy list with copies sent (usually by e-mail) to local job centres and local voluntary organisations. All external vacancies are advertised on the Council Internet site, on the Jobs Go Public Internet site and in the local press.

Dependent on the post, external advertisements are also placed in the national press and appropriate professional/technical journals.

All appointments are made on merit.

All staff are encouraged to seek out developmental opportunities to enhance their skills and abilities. Training needs are identified through one to one supervision and appraisal and relevant courses are brought to the attention of all staff.

Question No. 22**Councillor Andrew Harper**

Would the Cabinet member for Environment and Transport consider reviewing Council policy on pavement parking, notably in respect of the narrow roads in Garden Suburb ward?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I already have Cllr Harper by asking the Head of Highways and Design to develop a strategy for rolling out a programme of footway parking authorisations and consider how this can be resourced and funded in the next financial year. It will be linked as far as practicable to the footway renewal programme to maximise benefits.

Question No. 23**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Would the Cabinet Member for Culture, Community Engagement and HR please detail the current position and likely costs regarding the redundancies proposed at the General Functions Meeting of 19th January 2006?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

Until posts have been deleted, staff effected identified and redeployment opportunities explored there can be no estimation of likely costs.

Question No. 24**Councillor Claire Farrier**

Now that it has been agreed that the Council will consider introducing further Alcohol Free Zones (AFZ's), when will the Council establish an AFZ in Burnt Oak for the Safer Neighbourhood Team to enforce?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

I will be meeting soon with the Police to look at issues in connection with policing current and future additional zones. I will write to Cllr Farrier after that meeting

Question No. 25**Councillor Andrew Harper**

Would the Cabinet member for Education care to join me in congratulating the headteachers, staff and governors of the two infant schools in Garden Suburb ward, Brookland and Garden Suburb, which have both achieved excellent results in recent Ofsted inspections?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

I am pleased to be able to congratulate both schools upon the success of their OFSTED reports. Of course this reflects very highly upon the leadership given by the heads of both schools. I should like to thank them. I should also like to congratulate Brookland School upon their presentation to Scrutiny recently. I hope the whole Council will thank Sheila Abbott for her sterling work at Brookland School and wish her a long and happy retirement.

Question No. 26

Councillor Jeremy Davies

Would the Cabinet member for Resources detail the amount of Prudential Borrowing undertaken in each of the following year :2002/3, 2003/4, 2004/5 and 2005/06 detailing the purpose of the borrowing and the revenue cost to the General Fund?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

Prudential Borrowing may only be used for capital projects and these are clearly laid out in the Capital Strategy, presented to previous Cabinet Resources Committee. I have arranged for a copy of the report to be sent to you.

Borrowing is a standard mechanism for funding infrastructure projects (e.g. meeting the building overspend on Mill Hill County School or the gap between the insurance payout and the final rebuilding cost on Frith Manor school). These two projects alone amount to approx. £5m and could not have been affordable from revenue budgets.

We have recently refinanced our lending book, halving the average interest rate. A good example of pro-active, careful, prudent financial management.

In addition we recently we acquired a £30m tranche of capital funds for future projects, as yet unallocated, to take advantage of low gilt rates. Once again this is careful and prudent financial management. Our Treasury team monitor the markets to ensure we take advantage of favourable rates.

Each year all borrowings must meet the affordability and prudence tests set.

Our current borrowings are:

The following debt was repaid in full on 30/03/2004

Provider	£	%	start	maturity
PWLB	10,000,000	9.38	08/06/1988	24/01/2014
PWLB	1,000,000	10.75	29/03/1985	01/09/2010
PWLB	6,000,000	10.13	05/02/1987	01/03/2012
PWLB	9,000,000	9.88	12/01/1990	01/03/2015
PWLB	4,000,000	9.75	27/02/1987	20/09/2013

£	%				
PWLB	22,000,000	4.25	20/11/2005	20/11/2035	
PWLB	6,000,000	4.40	23/05/2005	10/05/2010	
PWLB	1,000,000	4.70	01/04/2004	01/04/2006	
PWLB	1,000,000	4.75	01/04/2004	01/04/2010	
PWLB	1,000,000	4.75	01/04/2004	01/04/2006	
PWLB	2,000,000	4.85	01/04/2004	01/04/2024	
PWLB	14,000,000	4.70	10/11/2004	10/05/2030	
PWLB	14,000,000	4.45	23/05/2005	10/11/2030	
PWLB	20,000,000	3.70	23/01/2006	19/01/2055	

PWLB debt total = 81,000,000

£	%				
Depfa (LOBO)	2,500,000	3.05	29/11/2004	30/11/2054	
Depfa (LOBO)	2,000,000	3.95	29/11/2004	30/11/2054	
Dexia (LOBO)	5,000,000	3.55	01/04/2004	01/04/2054	
EUROHYPO (LOBO)	5,000,000	3.79	30/08/2005	30/08/2065	
Depfa (LOBO)	5,000,000	3.67	19/01/2006	19/01/2066	
EUROHYPO (LOBO)	5,000,000	3.52	19/01/2006	19/01/2066	

LOBO debt total = 24,500,000

Total Debt 105,500,000

Question No. 27

Councillor Zakia Zubairi

How is the Council going to take forward the Government's Respect Action Plan to tackle problem families, reduce school truancy and close "properties from hell"?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

Tackling anti-social behaviour has been a priority for this council well before the Government published it's so called 'Respect Agenda'

The Council is willing to make use of extra powers to tackle these problems, and the Crime KPP (Key Priority Plan) will address the new agenda.

Question No. 28

Councillor Jeremy Davies

Would the Cabinet Member for the Environment detail the number of personal injury accidents and location recorded in Mill Hill Broadway over the last three years?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

In the last three years, there have been 23 Personal Injury Accidents (1 Serious / 22 Slight). 13 of the accidents involved pedestrians with the remaining 10 involving rear-end shunt type incidents.

These have been at the following locations:

1. MILL HILL CIRCUS ROUNDABOUT J/W THE BROADWAY (PED)
2. THE BROADWAY/GOODWYN AVENUE
3. MILL HILL BROADWAY J/W FLOWER LANE
4. THE BROADWAY/HARTLEY AVENUE
5. THE BROADWAY/FLOWER LANE (PED)
6. THE BROADWAY/FLOWER LANE (PED)
7. THE BROADWAY/FLOWER LANE (PED)
8. THE BROADWAY J/W FLOWER LANE
9. THE BROADWAY, 40M SW J/W FLOWER LANE. (BUS PASS. IN BUS)
10. THE BROADWAY 41M. NE J/W BROCKENHURST GARDENS. (PED)
11. THE BROADWAY 37M SW FROM J/W BROCKENHURST GARDENS (PED)
12. THE BROADWAY 25M. SW J/W BROCKENHURST GARDENS.
13. THE BROADWAY, 25M SW J/W BROCKENHURST GARDENS.
14. MILL HILL BROADWAY 30M S J/W BROCKENHURST GARDENS (PED)
15. 29 MILL HILL BROADWAY 30M S J/W BROCKENHURST GARDENS (PED)
16. FLAGGED THE BROADWAY 31M N/E J/W MILL WAY (PED)
17. MILL HILL BROADWAY J/W MILL WAY (PED)
18. THE BROADWAY / MILL WAY.
19. THE BROADWAY J/W MILL WAY
20. THE BROADWAY 13 M. N. E. J/W STATION RD (PED)
21. THE BROADWAY 28M SW FROM J/W STATION RD (PED)
22. MILL HILL BROADWAY J/W STATION ROAD (PED)
23. THE BROADWAY J/W MILL WAY.

Question No. 29

Councillor Danish Chopra

Does the Cabinet Member for Resources believe that the London Borough of Barnet is a good place to do business?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

Yes.

Although unemployment is rising as Labours Tax & Spend policies bite into the Economy, Barnet remains a good place to do business in on all reliable indicators. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates; we have a stable and educated workforce, we have a safe and pleasant environment to work in.

Barnet's VAT registrations are consistently higher than both the UK and London averages.

If you look separately at the self employment rates, Barnet has shown significant growth year on year and is out performing both London and the UK. In 2003 the Barnet rate was double that of the UK.

Even Mayor Livingstone has said that Barnet has led the other 32 London Boroughs in job growth.

Question No. 30

Councillor Duncan Macdonald

Would the Cabinet Member for Resources provide the timetable for sale/tender and proposed uses for the Register Office in High Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

At present there are is no timetable for the sale or tender as we continue to explore uses that would benefit the community as a whole.

Question No. 31

Councillor Alison Moore

How many of the 130,000 pull-out consultation forms sent out via Barnet First magazine to consult residents on the community strategy were returned, and what is this as a percentage response rate?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

The Councillor is mistaken. There was not a pull-out form in Barnet First.

Question No. 32

Councillor Jack Cohen

How many people have been killed or injured in Road Traffic accidents in Childs hill ward in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 2005?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 (first 6 months)
Killed or Seriously Injured [KSI] (Fatal)	18 (1)	13 (1)	15 (2)	5(0)	11(2)	3(1)
Slight	80	79	83	74	80	38
Total	98	92	98	79	91	41
TfL Roads	26 (26.5%)	15 (16.3%)	20 (20.4%)	18 (22.8%)	21 (23.1%)	9 (22.0%)

Question No. 33**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

The 2002 Barnet Conservative Party local council election manifesto promised to: “place Neighbourhood Wardens throughout the borough”. If the Cabinet Member could update Council on progress made, including details of the recruitment process and training so that this manifesto commitment can be kept before 4 May 2006?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The Neighbourhood Warden Service was established by the past Liberal/Labour administration and placed in limited number of wards and whose objective was simply to be a highly visible presence.

This administration has developed that role into the Street Enforcement Service to focus on specific corporate priorities and introduced modern telecommunications technology to make them more productive and cost effective. A full and comprehensive induction and ongoing training programme is carried out including training from the Police – with whom the Street Enforcement Service work with but who they are not intended to replace. The roll out of neighbourhood policing and PCSOs ensure that we do not need to duplicate such work.

Question No. 34**Councillor Wayne Casey**

Was the Council informed by the Royal Mail of their intention to remove the post box in Burtonhole Lane Mill Hill and what action can be taken to prevent the Royal Mail doing this?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

The issue was taken up with Royal Mail's External Relations service who indicate that there is no intention to remove the Post Box and that it is still in position.

If Councillor Casey would let ME have any information that either he or local residents have I will be happy to take up the matter direct with Royal Mail, and also enlist help of Post Watch”

Question No. 35

Councillor Barry Rawlings

The 2002 Barnet Conservative Party local council election manifesto promised to: “meet parental demand for additional single sex girl’s secondary school”. On what date before 4 May 2006 will the Cabinet Member for Education and the Council Leader be opening this new girls school?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

Councillor Rawlings rightly points out that the Conservative Party seeks to meet the wishes of parents. We have demonstrated this by expanding popular schools such as Compton and Mill Hill. As Councillor Rawlings knows we suggested that there might be an amalgamation of St Mary’s and Christ Church schools with single sex provision. That proposals did not secure the support of parents. However, as part of our policy of expanding popular, oversubscribed schools I expect to announce an expansion of places at two single sex schools in the next municipal year.

Question No. 36

Councillor Wayne Casey

What advice can the cabinet member give to a small trader in Mill Hill Broadway who whilst attempting to load or unload goods in a permitted loading bay has been given multiple parking tickets as he locks his van doors to prevent his goods from being stolen, whilst he is in his shop?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The newly agreed policy of observation means that the vehicle described - a van belonging to a small trader - will be observed for 5 minutes thus increasing the chances of the driver being seen and reducing the likelihood of a penalty being issued and then it being cancelled.

In addition, the driver could ensure that he or she had evidence - such as a receipt from the wholesalers - to demonstrate that goods were purchased that day and around that time and were being transported by themselves to their business.

And finally, that person could put a note on the vehicle to say what they are doing – Parking Wardens are human beings – not clairvoyants.

Question No. 37**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

The 2002 Barnet Conservative Party local council election manifesto promised to: “restore regular intensive street cleaning throughout the borough”. Could the Cabinet Member explain how this manifesto commitment will be achieved before 4 May 2006 given the current budget proposals to cut street cleaning on all residential roads from three times to just twice per year?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Since 2002, the Council has maintained a regular sweeping regime consisting of 7 scheduled sweeps and three block cleanses. This regime will be continued although in support of the Council’s new waste prevention strategy the frequency of the block cleanses will be reduced to two. This cycle coupled with targeting of specific litter hotspots gained through intelligence and customer reporting will ensure that the borough’s streets are maintained to a higher level of cleanliness than in 2002 - a fact recognised by local residents in the annual resident survey results that have shown an 18% increase in satisfaction since 1998/1999. Cleanliness has improved under this Administration after being dragged up from the poor conditions we inherited.

Question No. 38**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Will the Cabinet outline the current situation and timescales involved with the running track refurbishment at Cophall?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

The Council has received the following funds:

£97,500	Sport England
£160,000	The London Marathon Charitable Trust
£97,500	Section 106 Agreements
£20,000	Leisure Budget for 2005 - 2006

Materials Science Consultants Limited has prepared a brief for the resurfacing of the facility. The resurfacing of the track, throwing and jumping areas must be carried out by contractors recommended by Sport And Play Construction Association(SAPCA)

The Council's own Contract Procurement Rules will be followed.

It is planned that the major works will be carried out during July, August and September of this year. It is anticipated that the work will not start until after the schools break up for the summer holidays so that it does not interfere with their athletics programme.

Question No. 39**Councillor Linda McFadyen**

The 2002 Barnet Conservative Party local council election manifesto claimed: "Our elderly are waiting for an unacceptable amount of time for adaptations to their homes." If the Cabinet Member could explain how the current waiting time of seven months is acceptable?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

Waiting times depend on the adaptation and the type of property and for many adaptations there is no waiting time. We will continue to work to meet growing demand in a timely fashion within available resources.

Question No. 40**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

What are the likely consequences for arrangements involving Copthall, with the recent news of the possible withdrawal of the Arbiter Group from Hendon FC?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

None.

The investment in Copthall from any proceeds of the site in Claremont Road is an agreement with Hendon Football Club Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary company of the Arbiter Group, and does not involve Hendon FC which is the organisation which runs the football playing team. The possible move of Hendon FC to a ground share elsewhere does not impact upon the Hendon Football Club Limited/the Arbiter Group commitment as they are separate entities.

Question No. 41**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

Since the Council cannot find the owner of the site next door to the doctor's surgery in Algernon Rd, will the Council clear the dumped rubbish and deal with the rats – which is a health hazard for residents living nearby and patients visiting the surgery - and put up a notice that the Council will prosecute for dumping rubbish outside the gate?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Unfortunately Cllr Slocombe you are incorrect in your assertion that the Council cannot find the owner. After receiving a call from a resident complaining about this particular area on the 3rd January 2006, a Technical Officer visited the site two days later and the complaint was dealt with and closed on the 10th January 2006. The owners have been located and they cleared the land. Since then a boundary fence has also been erected

Question No. 42**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

How much money has been spent so far in reviewing and preparing for the re-opening of Partingdale Lane? What is the breakdown of the costs involved so far, under which budget headings, and what is the estimate for the whole project cost, including costs to date?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The initial consultation carried out by Alpha research (including any printing costs and distribution), and the analysis of findings by officers is approximately £12,000. The current work leading up to and including the current consultation exercise (including the safety audit, printing, distribution and design costs) is costed at approximately £3000.

The estimate for the scheme subject to the recent consultation is £200,000 which includes design and supervision fees. The works, if agreed by Cabinet in April, will be funded through prudential borrowing.

Question No. 43**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

When is the SQW report on the SRB due to be published and how will the recommendations be circulated?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

The SQW report was commissioned by the Council on behalf of the Grahame Park SRB and Cllr. Sargeant as a member of the SRB Board has received a copy of the report. It is normal practice for SRB partnerships to undertake an evaluation of their work towards the end of the programme, as in this case. This evaluation report was not intended for general publication but is available to any Member if they wish.

It is generally acknowledged that the SRB programme had some difficulties and this report provides an opportunity for all those organizations involved to learn some of the lessons.

The evaluation report did not make any formal recommendations but it did make some suggestions for the future which the council will of course take account of in considering how to ensure that Grahame Park becomes a successful and thriving community as the physical regeneration of the area proceeds.

Question No. 44**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Could the Cabinet Member for Planning update Council on the progress of the framework development plan for the Mill Hill East area?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

The Mill Hill East Development Framework study is about to commence in the next few months as masterplanning consultants are formally appointed. The timetable is for a draft framework by the Autumn to be reported to Cabinet and a public consultation exercise including exhibitions when proposals and options emerge from the study. A partnership is being established with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Defence, Notting Hill Housing Trust and others to work towards a high quality sustainable development for Mill Hill East and Inglis Barracks. Local ward and other interested members will be kept informed at key stages of the study. The programme aims to have an approved draft development framework within a year and the holding of an Examination in Public by an independent inspector in Spring 2007. The final approved framework will then become a statutory Area Action Plan document to the emerging Barnet Local Development Framework.

Question No. 45

Councillor Colin Rogers

The Cabinet report of 1 November 2005 regarding the Hebert Wilmot youth centre in East Finchley said (paragraph 3.2): "Asbestos is present within the centre and there is a risk that fibres could be released into the air", yet the London Borough of Barnet design and build report of January 2003 makes no mention of the presence of asbestos. Were those who demolished specialists in handling asbestos, what quantity of asbestos was found, and how was this safely removed from the site?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

I should like to thank Councillor Rogers for reminding the Council that there was asbestos at the Herbert Wilmott Centre. There was 5 square metres of asbestos which was removed by a specialist contractor. The presence of asbestos and the decrepit state of the centre which had neglected during the locust years 1994-2002 underline why the Centre had to be closed.

Question No. 46

Councillor Jeremy Davies

Could the Cabinet Member for Planning update council on the progress made ensuring that there is a road through the Inglis Barracks site?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

The Mill Hill East Development Framework study (as set out in my response to your Q.44) will require the masterplanning consultants to look at a number of key planning and transportation issues and options, including highway options. The brief is broad and at this stage with no specific or firm options so as to ensure optimum transportation and highway solutions and benefits to the future planning and movement of the area. As for the main

development framework proposals local ward members and other councillors will be kept informed of the transportation and highways studies and proposals as they emerge from detailed investigation and analysis. A road through the Inglis Barracks site will be one of the highway issues being looked into. Any final decision will be taken by Cabinet.

Question No. 47

Councillor Anne Hutton

The cost of CPZ business permits has risen 100% (from £150 to £300) this year. Is there any provision for registered charities to be allowed a reduction?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The cost of a business permit - whatever its value - has always been applied equitably to all bodies entitled to them. This includes charities who will generally be paying the same fuel costs, vehicle excise duty and other running costs of a vehicle.

Question No. 48

Councillor Jack Cohen

The Overview and scrutiny rules as set out in the Council's Constitution provide in para.16c that when a decision is made by an individual member of the cabinet, the decision will be published normally within 2 days of being made. You signed the delegated powers in connection with Tarling Road on the 7th December 2005 and you signed the delegated powers decision on New Fieldways on the 14th December 2005. Please explain why these reports were not published until the 12th January 2006?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

The delay in publishing the Delegated Powers Reports was a result of an administrative error within the Housing Service. The reports were published immediately the relevant senior officer became aware of the omission.

It should be noted that both schemes had already been reported to Cabinet, Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Council as part of the approved capital programme in the 2005/2006 budget. Both schemes have been agreed by the Planning and Environment Committee.

I am assured that action is underway both within the Housing Service and at a corporate level to improve staff awareness of the necessary procedures relating to delegated power reports and to introduce more centralised arrangements to monitor the progress of delegated powers through the system.

Question No. 49

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

What action plan has the Leader to bring down the sickness level which at present is above the national average?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

Barnet Council has a sickness rate below the national average. The sickness level for Barnet Council for 2004/5 was 7.8 days below the national average of 8.4 days and the public sector average of 10.3 days (as reported in the 2005 CIPD attendance management survey). In terms of ongoing action, Human Resources have employed an employee assistance officer on secondment from HM Customs and Excise to work with service areas to address staff on long term sickness, in terms of providing advice to managers and facilitating return to work arrangements. Human Resources are also in the process of revising the Council's attendance management procedures to provide clearer guidance to managers and staff.

Question No. 50

Councillor Danish Chopra

How many residents attended the budget consultation open day on Wednesday 18 January 2006 (excluding councillors and officers)?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

Eight members of the public attended the budget open day on Wednesday 18 January. This is about average for each budget open day we have run.

Question No. 51

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

The 2002 Barnet Conservative Party local council election manifesto promised to: "restore Barnet's depleted Youth Service providing support for the young". Does the Cabinet Member consider cutting the youth service budget by £300,000, sacking youth workers, closing youth centres, and spending the second lowest amount on youth services in England and Wales has achieved this manifesto commitment?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

Councillor Schneiderman ignores the success of the Youth Service in winning additional funding from third parties. As he knows total spending did not fall by £300,000 this year. He is quite right to realise that the youth service was in a very poor state in 2002. That is not my responsibility but is that of Councillor Alison Moore who was Labour's Education supremo.

Question No. 52

Councillor Kath McGuirk

The 2002 Barnet Conservative Party local council election manifesto promised: "a programme to treat all street furniture with anti-graffiti paint will also be started". What proportion of Barnet's street furniture has the Council now covered with anti-graffiti paint?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

To be accurate it said a programme would be started and as I recently corrected you in the Council chamber, the amount of graffiti in town centres has been drastically reduced under this administration and such preventative measures have not be as desperately needed as they were under the last Liberal/Labour administration.

Question No. 53

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Can the cabinet member provide a list of the organisations given Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and inform the council of the criteria for making these recommendations?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

Strategic priorities for the LSP (as expressed through the emergent Community Strategy) and the Council (as expressed through the Corporate Plan)

Backed up by evidence of need in the terms identified by NRU (i.e. impact on deprived people) and contributing towards meeting floor targets

Backed up by evidence that they will deliver results (outcome focused)

Sustainable, i.e. not requiring additional public funds (above those already earmarked) beyond the two year life of the NRF; and providing seed corn funding

Large enough to make a difference and absorb administrative costs, as well as keeping consultancy costs to a minimum

Question No. 54

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

With reference to use of the Youth Club building in Park Road, NW4, can the Member please tell me what community groups he has so far met, and what criteria is he going to use to allocate the use of the building?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

I have met with representatives of the Hendon Mosque.

With regard to the building at Park Road I have instructed Officers to offer the building for lease and we will be encouraging the Hendon Mosque to discuss the suitability of the building with officers.

Question No. 55

Councillor Danish Chopra

The Administration has increased Barnet's share of the council tax by at least 35% since 14 May 2002. What promises did the 2002 Barnet Conservative Party local council election manifesto give on the council tax?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

The Conservative Party manifesto gave no commitment on Council Tax because we knew of the financial black hole we would inherit. I find it hard to believe that the Labour/Liberal Democrat Cabinet did not know the implications of taking significant amount from balances.

Question No. 56

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

The 2002 Barnet Conservative Party local council election manifesto promised to: "press for more police sub-stations so that members of the public can have access to focal points." If the Cabinet Member could describe what actions the Administration has undertaken to achieve this manifesto commitment?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

8 are in place at the moment, most of them all operating in the actual ward-

Edgware - Portakabin in Broadwalk Shopping Centre

Burnt Oak -Edgware Community Hospital

Colindale - Grahame Park Police Office in the Concourse

West Hendon- ditto

Childs Hill- Golders Green Police Station

East Finchley- ditto

High Barnet- High Barnet Police Station

East Barnet- ditto, but moving imminently to shop premises in East Barnet Road.

As you know, the Mayor of London has given a commitment to roll out teams to all wards by April 2006. Initially the Police are likely to have to house the new teams within police stations but the plan is to locate all teams wherever possible in their wards.

Question No. 57

Councillor Kath McGuirk

The 2002 Barnet Conservative Party local council election manifesto promised to: "continue to support Agenda 21". How has this manifesto commitment been delivered and how much extra investment and support is the Council now providing to LA21?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

This administration has increased its support of the principles of Local Agenda 21 and sustainable development. A Sustainable Communities Plan is being presented at Cabinet this month, and all the principles underpinning the Plan are consistent with and supportive of Agenda 21.

A report to Cabinet on 30 August 2005 identified a range of actions taken by the council on energy efficiency, renewable energy and recycling. These included:

Energy Efficiency

- Barnet Homes' programme of improvement in housing stock, including energy efficiency improvements.
- The 2.5% improvement in energy efficiency across all housing types, 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 boiler 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.
- A new post of 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 Home Repairs Assistance (HRA) grants for energy efficiency improvements provided through the council's Care & Repair Service.
- An energy advice line providing general energy efficiency advice and signposting for sources of grants funding and discounts on energy efficiency measures.
- The distribution of 1000 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 in schools and the successful application of grants under the Clear Skies initiative.
- A successful bid for external funding for a solar panel (photovoltaic panels generating electricity) for St James school, Colindale, through work with the REAL (Renewable Energy Action for London) project. This will serve as an example of good practice to encourage similar projects in Barnet, as well as for ongoing educational work about the sustainable technologies involved.
- The harvesting of rain water in one school to date.
- The work between the Waste & Sustainability Team, Education Service Architects and REAL to integrate renewable energy into major programmes for school rebuilding works.
- A training event on renewable energy and energy efficiency for planning and other relevant council and Barnet Homes staff held in March 2005.

Recycling

- The achievement of a recycling rate of 20%.
- The successful compulsory recycling scheme, which has led to an 18% increase in tonnages collected.
- The comprehensive publicity campaign that has been underway since summer 2003 to promote recycling services.
- An outreach letter to 320 Community Groups, Residents' Associations, Faith and Ethnic groups seeking their support in promoting recycling to residents.
- Articles on recycling included in 26 Community 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.
- The Barnet Schools Recycling Challenge, designed to increase recycling at school and at home.
- Approximately 25 schools actively working on Barnet Environmental Action for Real in Schools (BEARS) projects.
- A successful Schools Recycling Poster Competition.
- The setting up of white paper recycling at NLBP in April 2004.
- A Waste Audit of Hendon Town Hall.
- A survey by Friends of the Earth published in March 2004 that ranked Barnet as the 4th best doorstep recycling collection service in England, and the only London Borough in the top ten.

This demonstrates beyond doubt that the council is actively supporting Local Agenda 21 principles in the work delivered by a wide range of service areas.

Question No. 58

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Could the cabinet member inform what plans are being prepared by the borough to ensure that adequate assessments are made of the health care needs of the regeneration areas of Cricklewood, Edgware West Hendon and Colindale?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

Hunt Dobson Stringer was commissioned by the London Borough of Barnet to undertake a study of the implication of the proposed Cricklewood, Brent Cross and West Hendon development for the provision of health care

The study looked at existing policies as well the assessment and mapping the existing on going health care services in the area.
It then set out a range of scenarios for what may be built in the area as a result of the regeneration activity planned in Barnet.

Barnet Primary Care Trust has worked collaboratively with Hunt Dobson Stringer to produce the information relating to the future provision of health care services based within the area of the Cricklewood development.

Question No. 59

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

How many former council staff that have been made redundant/took early retirement or voluntary redundancy and are now working as consultants/temporary/agency staff?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

One member of staff in facilities management was made redundant in 2004 and was subsequently employed through an agency to carry out short term work. Due to a lack of in house expertise he was subsequently re-engaged on a part time basis as a consultant to carry discrete work on facilities issues.

Question No. 60

Councillor Kath McGuirk

The 2002 Barnet Conservative Party local council election manifesto promised to: “protect and preserve our parks”. What plans has the Council to uphold this manifesto commitment by protecting and preserving Montrose Park in Burnt Oak?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Montrose playing fields are used primarily for organised sport. The Council has been effectively managing the playing fields in line with this primary purpose. This has included sensor lighting in the pavilion to save energy and visits from the Probation Service to clear undergrowth from around the pavilion and from the stream and drainage ditches. New Gaelic football posts are on order and should be installed this week.

The Council has recently suggested that part of the playing fields might prove a suitable location for a new stadium for Barnet Football Club. Such a case would reinforce the sporting heritage of the site and provide an additional recreational attraction in the west of the borough adjacent to the Colindale area of regeneration.

If the Football Club show interest in the proposal, which would also include enhancements in the park to improve public access and useability, informed consultation will take place with interested parties.

At the time of drafting this reply, I am not aware that the club has responded or even arranged a date to see the Leader to discuss the matter.

Question No. 61

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

What is the total number of consultants employed by the Council?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

There are no problems in SAP regarding identifying the spend analysis reports by category for consultants with reports on any category set within the system. Names of consultants cannot be produced as SAP will only capture the information on the purchase order which is normally the company name, the activity they have been recruited to perform, the cost of the activity and duration of the activity.

In October 2005, a paper analysis was carried out on the number of consultants currently working with 68 identified.

Question No. 62

Councillor Kath McGuirk

The 2002 Barnet Conservative Party local council election manifesto promised to: "review parking charges and fines to ensure that schemes are reasonable." How does a 142% increase in revenue from total parking income from 2002-2005 - including a 100% increase in income from parking fines, 316% increase in income from CPZ permits and 170% increase in income from parking charges - deliver the manifesto commitment for parking schemes to be reasonable?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

It is reasonable as the motorist now receives a service which they had previously been paying for but which they did not receive. The fact that appears to be lost in these statistics is the increase in the number of Controlled Parking Zones – which are now properly regulated and enforced.

Question No. 63

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

What is the total number of staff made redundant since 14 May 2002?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

258 employees have left the Council through voluntary and compulsory redundancy since 14 May 2002.

Question No. 64

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Which services have been cut as a result of the redundancies since 14 May 2002?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

The only service not now provided by the Council is Pest Control. Residents now access this service through local providers. Other services are provided by different means, for example the occupational health service is now provided through a contract with a local clinic.

Question No. 65

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Can the Member please tell me how many hand held computers - meant to improve quality of services - are now working?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer

All of them.

Question No. 66

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Can the cabinet member please tell me approximately how much are the current redundancies going to cost?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

There are now 83 staff at risk of redundancy which will reduce further following redeployment. Until all staff have been identified it is not possible to provide accurate costs for redundancy and pensions.

Question No. 67**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Will the redundancies meet your main objective of saving money and if so how much money it will save?

Answer by Council Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

The impact of the Government Formula Grant Settlement was to provide the Council with an extra £5.204 million to fund all increases in expenditure. Set against this there has been a loss of specific grants totalling £4.625 million and pressures from budget increases, pay awards and inflation.

The situation has left the Council with no alternative but to identify a level of budget reductions. Budget reductions which have an impact on staff total £3.716 million with the 126 posts being removed from the establishment.

Question No. 68**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Can Cllr Bulmer please tell me what would be her reaction if she was told she could not have a shower for a year?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

This is an absurd question which is clearly not intended to elicit a serious reply.

Question No. 69**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Can the member please tell me how is the school cleaning service going to be monitored if the Council abolishes the post of school cleaning monitoring officer and who will schools complain to when they have problems with their school cleaning?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

The quality of school cleaning will be initially monitored by each school. The schools will then report any problems to a new unit being established within Resources which will be responsible for all contracts.

Question No. 70**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Do you think it is fair on residents to have cuts in their mobile library service when their council tax has gone up by nearly 30%?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

I have visited the mobile library service and am most impressed with the quality of service provided. The nature of the service has changed by eliminating stops which were heavily underused. Councillor Sodha might have been willing to point out the great work done by the library service provided for the housebound. In order to allay fears I can confirm that the mobile library service will seek to serve the needs of the users of the Friern library whilst the new library is being built. The need for the increased Council Tax is due to parsimony of the government and the fact that the last Labour Liberal administration left a huge black hole. The former leader of the Council, Alan Williams warned his colleagues in 2002 that there would have to be a double digit increase in Council tax in 2003. That forecast was 100% accurate which may explain why it was said *socce voce*.

Question No. 71

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Can the cabinet member please tell me the number of staff that have left the service of the Council since this administration took charge?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

Since May 2002, 5050 employees have left the service of the Council. The main reasons for leaving were;

Resignation 3750
Termination of fixed term contract 495
Retirement 273
Voluntary/Compulsory redundancy 258
Ill health retirement 142
Dismissal 99

Question No. 72

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Can you please give me a list of services that have been cut or affected as a result of job redundancies?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of the Council

The only service not now provided by the Council is Pest Control. Residents now access this service through local providers. Other services are provided by different means, for example the occupational health service is now provided through a contract with a local clinic.

Service delivery is paramount, with any reductions in posts balanced against the requirement to provide the same level of service, sometimes by other working methods such as the introduction of new technology.

Question No. 73**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

What will be the impact on schools and vulnerable children if the Council abolishes the post of school psychologist?

Answer by Councillor John Marshall

I should like to thank the councillor for allowing me to emphasise that the quality of the SEN service has improved dramatically since 2002. In 2003 there was a structural change in the service which led to an increase from 2 to 4 in the number of senior psychologists. This has helped recruitment and led to an improvement in the service. I am advised that the service will be able to fulfil all its commitments despite this change.