

## Minutes

OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET  
held at The Town Hall, Hendon, NW4, on Tuesday, 12 September, 2006.

### PRESENT:

- \*The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Eva Greenspan BA LL.B (Hons))
- \*The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Terry Burton)

### Councillors:

*Maureen Braun	*Christopher Harris BA BSc	*Sachin Rajput BA (Hons)
*Fiona Bulmer	MPhil	PgD Law
Anita Campbell	*Helena Hart	*Robert Rams
*Wayne Casey BA (Hons)	*John Hart BA MA	*Barry Rawlings
MIIA	*Lynne Hillan	*Hugh Rayner
*Danish Chopra	Ross Houston	*Colin Rogers
*Dean Cohen BSc (Hons)	*Anne Hutton	*Lisa Rutter
*Jack Cohen	*Julie Johnson	*Brian Salinger
*Melvin Cohen LLB	*Duncan Macdonald	*Kate Salinger BEd (Hons)
*Brian Coleman, AM, FRSA	Caroline Margo	*Gill Sargeant
*Geof Cooke	*John Marshall	*Joan Scannell
*Richard Cornelius	*Linda McFadyen	*Alan Schneiderman
*Jeremy Davies BA (Hons),	*Kath McGuirk	Agnes Slocombe SRN RM
CPFA	*Andrew McNeil	*Ansuya Sodha MBA (Middx)
*Mukesh Depala	*Alison Moore	Cert Ed, DipM (CIM), AMBA
*Jane Ellison	*Jazmin Naghar	*Andreas Tambourides
*Olwen Evans ACIS	*Matthew Offord	*Daniel Thomas
*Claire Farrier	*Charlie O-Macauley	*Jim Tierney
*Anthony Finn BSc (Econ)	Monroe Palmer OBE, BA,	*Daniel Webb
FCA	FCA	*Richard Weider
*Mike Freer	Susette Palmer MA	*Marina Yannoudakis MA BSc
*Brian Gordon, LL.B	*Bridget Perry	*Zakia Zubairi
*Andrew Harper	*Wendy Prentice	

\*denotes Member present

#### 44. PRAYER (Agenda Item 1):

Lady Jacobovitz offered prayer.

#### 45. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2):

Apologies were received from Councillors Agnes Slocombe, Ross Houston, Caroline Margo, Monroe Palmer, Susette Palmer and Anita Campbell, and for lateness from Councillors Christopher Harris and Brian Coleman.

**46. MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS HELD ON 27 JUNE 2006 (Agenda Item 3):**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting and Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 27 June 2006 be approved.

**47. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 4):**

The Worshipful the Mayor referred to the achievements of Barnet's young athletes in coming 14<sup>th</sup> out of 33 London Boroughs at the London Youth Games, particularly commenting on medals won for boys' basketball and table tennis, girls' squash, backstroke swimming and volleyball and shot put by a person with a disability.

The Worshipful the Mayor went on to announce that Barnet had been given the Silver Gilt Award for its parks, greenspaces and environment at the London in Bloom awards, and that the judges who visited the borough had been very impressed with Barnet's presentations and with the cleanliness of the borough and the organisation of their tour.

The Worshipful the Mayor then announced Barnet's success in receiving Green Flag awards for Old Court House, Oakhill Park, Hendon Park and Mill Hill Park, acknowledging the work of officers from a number of different departments who contributed to this achievement.

Finally, the Worshipful the Mayor confirmed that three of Barnet's teachers, Chris Flathers of The Orion Primary School, Sejal Petal of Barnet Hill Primary School and Maggie Thomas of Northside Primary School, had all won awards at a regional level at last term's teaching awards, and would go forward to a national final later in the year.

The Worshipful the Mayor passed on her congratulations and thanks to everyone who had worked to bring about these achievements.

**48. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS (Agenda Item 5):**

The following Members declared personal and non – prejudicial interests in the items indicated, and remained in the room during the discussion and participated in the decision – making process:

- Councillor Helena Hart in Motion 8.3, as she worked at a dental practice which had a small contract with the Primary Care Trust.
- Councillor Linda McFadyen in Motion 8.3, as she worked for the National Health Service.
- Councillor Sachin Rajput in Motion 8.3, as his partner worked for the National Health Service.

The following Member declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item indicated, left the Chamber during the discussion and did not participate in the decision – making process:

- Councillor Jeremy Davies in Motion 8.3 as he was employed by the Royal Free and Hampstead NHS Trust.

**49. BUSINESS REMAINING FROM LAST MEETING**

None.

**50. 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 an Appendix to these minutes.

**51. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Councillor Joan Scannell, duly seconded, moved that the order of business relating to Agenda Item 8 be varied so that Motions 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 be heard first and in that order.

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

**RESOLVED – That the order of business be varied to allow Motions 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 to be heard first and in that order.**

**52. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR ANDREW MCNEIL (Agenda Items 8.2 and 13.1.8 (ii)):**

Motion 8.2 in the name of Councillor Andrew McNeil was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Matthew Offord was moved orally at the meeting. An amendment in the name of Councillor Geof Cooke was also moved.

Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote the amendment in the name of Councillor Matthew Offord was declared carried and the amendment in the name of Councillor Geof Cooke was declared lost. The substantive motion was declared carried.

**RESOLVED – Council notes the presentation of a petition to the Finchley and Hendon Area Forums on 4 September urging the Council to recycle plastics and cardboard.**

**Council regrets that the previous Labour/Liberal administration locked Barnet Council into an agreement that does not currently allow the collection of either plastic or cardboard.**

**Council notes that the Environment Services Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee found in 2003 that to add plastic and cardboard collection to the scheme before the contract's renewal date would cost this Council and its taxpayers nearly £5 million.**

**Council regrets that the current contract with ECT runs until October 2008, not 2007, as Labour Councillors erroneously believe.**

**Council welcomes the Environment Cabinet Member's position, stated on 21 April 2006, that: "I want to see further improvements in recycling in regard to plastics and cardboard. When our contract comes up for renewal, I will ensure a new one is drafted that includes a provision to collect these materials."**

**Council further welcomes the fact that the Cleaner, Greener, Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be reviewing waste management and believes this can ensure the full involvement of scrutiny members in the process to include plastics and cardboard within the kerbside service.**

**Council calls on Cabinet to ensure that, when the contract comes up for renewal, the new contract will include the collection of plastics and cardboard.**

**53. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR MIKE FREER (Agenda Items 8.3 and 13.1.8 (iii)):**

Motion 8.3 in the name of Councillor Mike Freer was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Linda McFadyen was moved. Debate ensued.

Upon being put to the vote the amendment in the name of Councillor Linda McFadyen was declared lost. The substantive motion was declared carried.

**RESOLVED - Council notes with dismay the decision to cut Barnet PCT's Budget to the tune of £13 million, up from the £11.7 million threatened earlier this year.**

**Council further notes this comes on top of the threat to services at both the Royal Free and Barnet General, with both hospitals under "review", and the possible closure at Chase Farm.**

**Council believes these drastic cuts are part of ongoing moves to tackle a £70 million shortfall in the NHS.**

**Council is appalled that local health services in Barnet are continually being sacrificed to solve the crisis in the London NHS. Council believes this is the result of inaction by the Labour Government that promised no additional help for Hospitals in the Budget this year.**

**Council instructs the Chief Executive to write, as a matter of urgency, to both the Secretary of State for Health and the Chief Executive of the London NHS, calling for the cuts and threats to healthcare services for residents of the London Borough of Barnet to be halted with immediate effect.**

**54. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR BRIAN GORDON (Agenda Item 8.4).**

Motion 8.4 in the name of Councillor Brian Gordon was moved. Debate ensued.

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

**RESOLVED – Council welcomes the close co-ordination that has been taking place recently between Cabinet Members, local Ward Councillors, Neighbourhood organisations and the Police with a view to curbing anti-social behaviour around the Scratchwood and Moat Mount Open Spaces, alongside the A1 Barnet Way.**

**Council further welcomes the action taken by LBB to improve the environment here, including unannounced CCTV visits, and steps to prevent mass picnics with vehicles that damage the greenspace.**

**Council recognises both Scratchwood and Moat Mount to be one of many important leisure spots within the Borough and requests the relevant Cabinet Members and Officers to commit resources as far as possible into improving the facilities at those sites and promoting them as widely as possible among the public.**

**55. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR KATH MCGUIRK (Agenda Items 8.1 and 13.1.8 (i)):**

Motion 8.1 in the name of Councillor Kath McGuirk and amendments in the names of Councillors Linda McFadyen, Matthew Offord and Duncan Macdonald were put to the vote without debate. The amendments in the names of Councillors Linda McFadyen and Duncan Macdonald were declared lost and the amendment in the name of Councillor Matthew Offord was declared carried.

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

**RESOLVED – Council welcomes the new Customer Focused parking policy, one that has frozen CPZ charges, and that will review all Controlled Parking Zones across the Borough.**

**Council further welcomes the Cleaner, Greener, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s establishment of a Working Group to review Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) consultation processes, which is to report in February 2007.**

**Consultation of and engagement with residents, business and ward councillors on the introduction and review of CPZs are a priority for Barnet Council. Council asks the Working Group to consider how the introduction, monitoring and review of CPZs can continue to be transparent and accessible to residents.**

**56. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

In accordance with the Agenda, the Mayor adjourned the meeting for 15 minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 9.02pm

**57. ADMINISTRATION POLICY ITEM: APPRENTICESHIPS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (Agenda Items 9.1 and 13.1.8 (iv))**

Councillor Matthew Offord proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. An amendment in the name of Councillor Barry Rawlings was moved. Debate ensued. Upon being to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Barry Rawlings was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote the substantive motion was declared carried.

**RESOLVED - Council notes that there are currently around 380 children in Barnet’s care.**

**Council regrets that, currently, the level of educational and skills attainment by these young people remains below average.**

**Council is determined to improve the life chances of Looked-After Children, and recognises that it is also a large employer, capable of developing and enhancing the skills of its employees and trainees.**

**Council accordingly asks Cabinet to develop a policy to give Apprenticeships at the Council to Looked-After Children aged 16, so that it may drastically improve their skills, experience, and ultimately, their chances in life.**

**58. OPPOSITION POLICY ITEM: A CLEANER, GREENER AND SAFER WELSH HARP (Agenda Items 9.2, and 13.1.8 (v)).**

Councillor Julie Johnson proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. Amendments in the names of Councillors Brian Coleman and Ansuya Sodha were moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman was declared carried and the amendment in the name of Councillor Ansuya Sodha was declared lost. The substantive motion was declared carried.

**RESOLVED - The Welsh Harp (Brent Reservoir) is a regional wetland open space designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Site of Metropolitan Importance and a Local Nature Reserve because of its major conservation status as a wintering and nesting site for wildfowl.**

**The reservoir is owned by British Waterways. The land habitats around the reservoir, shared between Barnet and Brent Councils, support a wide variety of species and are enjoyed by many residents. The site is scientifically important because of the high numbers of birds - including one of the largest breeding colonies of Great Crested Grebes in the country – and the diversity of its wetland and marginal plants.**

**Council is extremely pleased at the work being done by LBB to tackle anti-social behaviour, and improve safety, at the Welsh Harp.**

**This includes:**

- **New Byelaws for the Welsh Harp (to be cleared by Hendon Area Environment Sub), which can be enforced by the Police.**
- **“No Swimming” signs to be supplemented with logos for those for whom English is not a first language.**
- **Constant Cleansing to remove litter and detritus from the site.**

**In addition, Council congratulates Barnet Officers for their prompt action in relation to the planned rave on 5 August 2006, and obtaining the injunction to stop it.**

**Council proudly notes that noise enforcement officers in both Boroughs enforced the injunction, and that parking enforcement officers were also briefed to control nuisance parking.**

**Council further welcomes a meeting, set to take place this month, between Barnet and Brent Council Departments, to deter raves from taking place in the area, and to investigate additional action that can be taken against them.**

**Council calls on Cabinet to ensure this excellent work that is driving the anti-social element out of the Welsh Harp, continues, and thereby ensures that the peace, tranquillity and attractiveness of the Welsh Harp is both preserved and enhanced for law-abiding residents.**

**Council further urges the Cabinet Member for Community Safety to continue to make strenuous efforts to persuade the Police to take action as much of the anti-social behaviour can only be dealt with by them.**

**59. AMENDMENT TO LEADER'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION : (i) CABINET ICT COMMITTEE – WITHDRAWAL OF DELEGATION. (ii) CABINET EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION COMMITTEE – WITHDRAWAL OF DELEGATION (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Items 13.1.1 and 13.1.8 (vi)):**

An amendment to the recommendation in item 1 of the Acting Democratic Services Manager's report was moved by Councillor Ansuya Sodha. Upon being put to the vote the amendment in the name of Councillor Ansuya Sodha was declared lost and the substantive motion was declared carried.

**RESOLVED – That the Acting Democratic Services Manager be instructed to make the appropriate changes to the Council's Constitution.**

**60. JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES – HEALTHY START HEALTHY FUTURES AND HEALTHY HOSPITALS (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Item 13.1.2):**

**RESOLVED – That the Council note that the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to Healthy Start Healthy Futures has been disbanded.**

**61. DECISIONS EXEMPTED FROM THE CALL – IN PROCESS (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager -Agenda Item 13.1.3):**

In accordance with Constitutional requirements the Acting Democratic Services Manager reported on the following decision. The Chairman of the of the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the decision was reasonable in all the circumstances, that it should be treated as a matter of urgency and consequently exempted from the call – in process.

(i) Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council, exercising the executive powers of the Leader of the Council pursuant to his delegation, which, in order to avoid delay in the London Diocesan Board for Schools implementation of a contract to build a new nursery to open in April 2007 and any consequent additional costs or risk to grant aided funding which might arise from a delay, agreed

(a) to assist the governors of St Mary's and St John's Primary School in their statutory duty to implement the provision of a new nursery to open in April 2007, by transferring the freehold title of an area of local authority land to the trustees of the school for the provision of a new nursery; and

(b) to note that the Cabinet Resources Committee had considered a report on the matter on 27 July 2006, but was unable to reach a proper decision due to the omission of an exempt report.

**62. APPEALS COMMITTEE (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Item 13.1.4)**

**RESOLVED –**

**(i) That arrangements for Appeals Committees be amended to enable the Acting Democratic Services Manager to select only four Members for each hearing, and to ensure that the Committees are politically balanced where member availability allows this.**

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

**(iii) That it be noted that the outcome of the selection process for each appeal will be recorded in a delegated powers report.**

**63. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS AND THE OPERATION OF THE CALL-IN AND URGENCY PROCESS - REVIEW (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Item 13.1.5)**

**RESOLVED – That the report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager relating to Executive Decisions and the Operation of the Call-In and Urgency Process - Review be noted.**

**64. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2006/2007 (Supplemental Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Item 13.1.6)**

**RESOLVED – That the proposed forward work programmes for 2006/07 identified by the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees, with the exception of the Cabinet Overview & Scrutiny Committee, be approved.**

**65. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS (Supplemental Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Item 13.1.7)**

**RESOLVED – That Councillor Hugh Rayner replace Councillor Matthew Offord on the Welsh Harp Joint Negotiation Committee.**

**66. REPRESENTATION OF THE COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Supplemental Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Item 13.1.9)**

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

A nomination in the name of Councillor Joan Scannell was moved.

**RESOLVED – That Councillor Kate Salinger be appointed to fill the vacancy 1062 on the Fostering Approvals Panel for the period indicated in the report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager.**

**67. FURTHER AMENDMENT TO THE LEADER'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION (Further Supplemental Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Item 13.1.10)**



**RESOLVED – That the Acting Democratic Services Manager be instructed to make the appropriate changes to the Council’s Constitution.**

**68. CHANGES IN COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS (Further and Third Supplemental Reports of the Acting Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Item 13.1.11 and 13.1.13)**

The Acting Democratic Services Manager amended her report to withdraw proposed changes to the Finchley and Golders Green Area Environment Sub-Committee.

**RESOLVED – That the following changes in Committee Memberships be approved:**

- **Councillor Christopher Harris to replace Councillor Jazmin Naghar as Chairman of the Finchley Area Forum.**
- **Councillor Christopher Harris to replace Councillor Jazmin Naghar as Chairman of the Golders Green and Childs Hill Area Forum.**
- **Councillor Brian Salinger to replace Councillor Andrew Harper as Chairman of the Education and Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- **Councillor Marina Yannakoudakis to replace Councillor Andrew Harper as Vice-Chairman of the Cleaner, Greener, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- **Councillor Christopher Harris to replace Councillor Andrew Harper as a Member of the Cleaner, Greener, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Dean Cohen to replace Councillor Andrew Harper on the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Daniel Thomas to replace Councillor Dean Cohen as substitute on the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- **Councillor Andrew Harper to replace Councillor Christopher Harris on the Corporate Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee.**
- **Councillor Fiona Bulmer to replace Councillor John Marshall as Chairman on the Teachers Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee**
- **Councillor Fiona Bulmer to replace Councillor Christopher Harris as a Member on the Teachers Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee**
- **Councillor Dean Cohen to replace Councillor Terry Burton on the Audit Committee**
- **Councillor Sachin Rajput to replace Councillor Andrew Harper as substitute on the Resources, Performance and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Andrew Harper to be removed as substitute on the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Healthy Hospitals and a Conservative vacancy to remain.**

**69. CHANGES IN THE COUNCIL’S REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Further Supplemental Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Item 13.1.12)**

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

Alternative nominations in the name of Councillor Linda McFadyen were moved in respect of appointment 1155a at the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education and appointment 1033 at the Barnet Community and Police Consultative Group.

**RESOLVED – That the following changes in the Council's representation on Outside Bodies be approved:**

- **Barnet Housing Associations Liaison Group – replace Councillor Fiona Bulmer with Councillor Lynne Hillan**
- **Barnet Community Homes – replace Councillor Fiona Bulmer with Councillor Lynne Hillan**
- **Association of London Government – London Housing Unit Committee – replace Councillor Fiona Bulmer with Councillor Lynne Hillan**
- **Association of London Government - London Housing Unit Executive Sub-Committee – replace Councillor Fiona Bulmer with Councillor Lynne Hillan**
- **LHC – Building Components and Services – replace Councillor Fiona Bulmer with Councillor Lynne Hillan**
- **Association of London Government – Housing Forum – replace Councillor Fiona Bulmer with Councillor Lynne Hillan**
- **Association of London Government – Health and Social Care Forum – replace Councillor Fiona Bulmer with Councillor Lynne Hillan**
- **Association of London Government – Children, Young People and Families Forum – replace Councillor Christopher Harris with Councillor Fiona Bulmer**
- **Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education – replace Councillor Christopher Harris with Councillor Joan Scannell (Councillor Charlie O-Macauley was unsuccessful)**
- **Barnet Community and Police Consultative Group – replace Councillor Christopher Harris with Councillor Fiona Bulmer (Councillor Julie Johnson was unsuccessful)**
- **London Youth Games – replace Councillor Christopher Harris with Councillor Fiona Bulmer**

**70. REPORT OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (Agenda Item 13.2)**

**RESOLVED – That the amendment of the prudential indicators, as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved.**

**71. REPORT OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR (Agenda Item 13.2A)**

**RESOLVED – That Janet Rawlings, Acting Democratic Services Manager be confirmed as statutory proper officer for:**

**All Democratic Services Manager functions in the Constitution**

- **Members' declarations of acceptance of office**
- **Members' notice of resignation**
- **Giving notice of casual vacancies**
- **Convening Council to fill Mayoral casual vacancy**
- **Signing summonses for council meetings and receiving notices as to Members' addresses for summonses**

- **Receiving notification of political groups for the calculation of political balance**
- **Returning Officer for election of parent governor representatives to Committee**
- **Deposit of documents**  
**Certification and authentication of documents, byelaws and copy minutes and signing of other relevant formal notices and documents.**

## **72. COMMENTS RELATING TO THE WORK OF CABINET (Agenda Item 14)**

### **Councillor Claire Farrier commented**

Thank you very much. Goldbeaters School is in need of urgent refurbishment. The design and layout in two separate two-storey buildings diminishes learning opportunities for pupils. The toilet accommodation is, to say the least, unpleasant and possibly also a health hazard. The school is not accessible for people with disabilities and emergency escape routes are unsatisfactory, and it's a really scary scenario if any fire did happen in this school, that pupils and teachers would be trapped on the first floor.

Following consultation with Council officers, the head teacher and chair of governors asked Barkers & Associates to carry out a survey of the work required to bring the school to an acceptable standard, and their recommendations include creating a new entrance area, linking the two school buildings, creating an early years unit, new kitchen facilities, new toilet facilities, accessibility to most school areas and satisfactory emergency escape routes. The estimated cost of this essential work is £600,000.

The school has already identified £180,000 in its budget towards this, which is a third of the total needed. The primary school capital investment programme places Goldbeaters School in the second wave, Phase 4, which will not even be considered until 2010 to 2011. Many of the schools listed in the first wave do not have such an urgent need for refurbishment and we know that the parents of several of these schools have raised objections to the plans for their schools. At a meeting with Council officers in July, the head teacher and chair of governors were told that some funding from a Council bid may be available in September but so far there is no further news. Goldbeaters School is being proactive.

### **Councillor John Marshall responded**

Can I thank Councillor Farrier for raising this issue. As she well knows, the Authority is seeking to rebuild some schools and would love to have money to refurbish others. As she also knows, the Government has a pot for the refurbishment of primary schools. Councillor Freer and I did go and see Lord Adonis, the Minister for Education, in London and emphasised the fact that Barnet deserved some of that money. He said he would look at it. Whether he will look at it and give us some dosh, we don't know, but obviously if he does then we will look at the schools most in need of refurbishment.

I shall like, however, in the very short time available to me, to pay tribute to Chris Flather, who has been head teacher both of the Orion and Goldbeaters. When I went and had a healthy lunch at the Orion School, I said to one of the children, "what do you like best about the School?" And he said the teachers, and that I think says a great deal about the character of those who teach at both schools. Education provides those children with the opportunity to get out of the vicious cycle of deprivation and that's why I'm very grateful for everything the teachers at both of those schools do to help the children who go there. I should also like to pay tribute to the work of the staff of the education authority. This authority has been transformed in recent years. Earlier this year, Councillor Harris and I were interviewed as part of the JAR. Councillor Bulmer is going to have the pleasure of announcing the results at the JAR in a few weeks time and I'm willing to wager anyone that they will say that this education authority is good. They wouldn't have said that in 2001.

### **Councillor John Hart commented**

To comment on the work of Cabinet with regard to personal action(s) taken by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to forestall the 'rave' expected at the Welsh Harp on Saturday 5th August.

### **Councillor Matthew Offord responded**

Late on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August I received information that a rave was being planned at the Welsh Harp. Early on Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, I met with senior officers from the Greenspaces Team. I wasn't content with some of the proposals they were offering me so I contacted a senior Director and I informed, or rather I directed, him to contact the Police Borough Commander to investigate what actions they were proposing to take.

Secondly, it was rumoured later in the day that Brent were looking at taking out an injunction against the rave. I informed the senior Director that I wished him to not only align ourselves with that but, if they weren't choosing to take that route, that we did so on our own. Fortunately, it was decided that we would go down the route of a joint injunction.

Thirdly, I spoke to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, and he kindly agreed to speak to the Deputy in Brent to ensure coordination between our two authorities, and finally I informed local members of the actions I had taken.

On Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> I visited the site, telephoned the SES at 8pm, and also the Safer Neighbourhood Teams at 11pm, and finally once again on Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> of August. The Police presence and the injunction prevented the rave.

I suggest that the local members conduct themselves in the way that the local members have in Hale, to increase their intelligence and information of the site and play their part in stopping any future raves.

### **Councillor Ansuya Sodha commented**

Madam Mayor, since this Conservative Council took control in May 2006, the agenda for equality has been put on the backburner. The very first thing that Councillor Freer did was to abolish the Equality Committee that was doing some excellent work, then he formed his own Cabinet, and look at the women representation, look at the minority representation in his Cabinet, and you can see what sort of commitment he has got towards equality. He has not actually shown it in practice at all, and if he thinks that he's all for equality then he'd be standing up there and shouting and screaming and saying that 'look since May I worked towards a plan to increase disabled people in Barnet, working for the Borough of Barnet, I have drawn up plans to increase more women at senior level', and he's saying absolutely nothing, all he's saying is 'I'm going to abolish this, I'm going to do this'. He's an absolute dictator and I think that the Borough of Barnet has lost something really great and they've got someone terrible now to put up with for the next four years.

### **Councillor Mike Freer responded**

We'll have no tokenism in my Cabinet, and if Councillor Sodha actually wants to know what I've done rather than just having a rant about what she thinks I ought to have done, let me explain, that I've asked for BVPI's to be updated so that I have a firm grip on what progress we are making on the E and D agenda.

As I've already mentioned, the Chief Executive is exploring with Stonewall to achieve diversity champion status and I am reviewing exemplar status with the Commission for Racial Equality in terms of whether that's something that the Council can achieve. These are practical measures to pursue the agenda, rather than just having another committee meeting.

The meeting finished at 10. 36pm

**Council Questions to Cabinet Members  
12 September 2006  
Questions and Responses**

**Question No. 1**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

During the course of the last Council meeting, certain Councillors openly defied the ruling of the Mayor, causing the Mayor to have to shout, gesticulate and bang her gavel just to be heard. Would the Leader join me in condemning such rebellious behaviour and stress that the Mayor's authority in this Chamber must be obeyed?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

This Administration has worked hard to restore the dignity of the Mayoralty. Failure to respect the Mayor, the first citizen of the Borough, shows a lack of respect for the Council, its Members and the people we serve. All Members must observe the Mayor's rulings.

**Supplementary Question No. 1**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Leader, would you join me in complimenting the Borough Solicitor on the very clear directive he emailed to Members this afternoon with regards to respecting the Mayor's authority and, while referring to the dignity of the Mayoralty, would you also not agree that that dignity was very much enhanced by the very moving civic service last Sunday at Finchley Synagogue and the sumptuous spread that followed.

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Thank you, yes. I do think that the guidance that has been circulated has been very helpful and I hope all Members will abide by it, and certainly I would share the congratulations on the service on Sunday and the very generous hospitality which members of the public enjoyed.

**Question No. 2**

**Councillor Monroe Palmer**

Would Councillor Coleman provide an update on the unsightly and frightening woodstack at Staples Corner? It rises high into the sky and towers over this busy junction. Are we just waiting for yet another major fire in the west of the Borough, right next door to a major regeneration project?

### **Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman**

Councillor Helena Hart (Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Health) and I met with Council and Fire Brigade Officers to agree a plan for dealing with this potential threat to public health and safety. All the avenues opened to us were explored using Health and Safety Legislation and the GLC General Powers Act.

I have personally written to the Chairman of Network Rail, who are the freeholders of the site to remind them of the disruption to their core business of providing rail services caused when this site caught fire. I have received an acknowledgment but not yet a substantive reply. Councillor Hart and I are keeping a close personal eye on this matter and are happy to talk to Ward Members at any time.

### **Question No. 3**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Given the Leader's downgrading of the importance of promoting equalities by scrapping the all-party Cabinet Equalities and Social Inclusion Committee, (a) how will the Council ensure all-party Member oversight of equalities issues, (b) how will officers be held accountable on equalities – not only by Cabinet Members – but also by administration and opposition scrutiny Members, (c) how will council taxpayers be assured that there is equality for all in Barnet if there is a lack of monitoring, and (d) how will black and minority ethnic Members be involved in monitoring equalities issues?

### **Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Equalities has not been downgraded but has in fact been given greater prominence. As Leader I will champion equality and diversity issues. Equality and diversity is integral to everything we do and is not best served by abrogating responsibility to a sub-committee.

Each and every Council report will have to comment on equalities and diversity implications. This Council will deal with equality and diversity and not just talk about it.

The Cabinet Equalities and Social Inclusion Committee was neither a pro-active user forum and nor did it make executive decisions, and therefore its exact nature was unclear.

- (a) all-party oversight will be achieved through Scrutiny Committees as oversight is their core business;
- (b) equalities issues will be mainstreamed through the established channels for monitoring and reporting performance (including Cabinet OSC for executive decisions made by Cabinet). Incidentally the notion of 'officers being held accountable' seems at odds with the constitution in which accountability lies with members of the Council who are advised by officers;
- (c) equalities targets will be embedded in other documents such as Key Priority Plans which will continue to be monitored and scrutinised;
- (d) on the assumption this refers to Members of the Council: BME Members will be involved in monitoring equalities issues in exactly the same way as all Members.

To suggest equality and diversity is only a matter for BME Councillors is ridiculous as Cllr Sodha may be surprised that equality and diversity is not simply a matter of race.

**Supplementary Question No. 3**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

The Leader has said he's now leading on equalities. So could he tell us what he's doing to improve the GSCE results of black boys. Since you are leading equalities, tell us what you're doing?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

As I said I'm leading on equality and diversity, and in terms of progressing education outcomes for all underachievers, rather than specifically picking on black boys, but all underachievers irrespective of their race, colour or religion, then the Cabinet Member for Children's Services will be dealing with that. What I will be doing is ensuring that the Children's Services Cabinet Member delivers on it.

**Question No. 4**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

There are still quite a number of roads within this Borough which have speed humps. This is despite their widespread unpopularity and the lack of statistics to show that they have reduced road accidents. When is the Council going to move those that remain?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

The Council's policy continues to be that when resurfacing or other works are carried out which require the removal of traffic calming measures, we take the opportunity to consider whether the same, or altered, measures need to be reinstated.

**Supplementary Question No. 4**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Councillor Offord, a two-pronged question here. First, would you please explain how the removal of road humps will assist in the improvement of efficiency of the bus service and, secondly, would you join with me in congratulating your predecessor Councillor Coleman on the recent, very personal contribution to road safety?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

Madam Mayor, I choose to take the first part of the question. I'm sure the member will agree with me that some of the issues, particularly in regard to speed bumps and chicanes, often cause problems for buses. He'd be particularly pleased to hear that Transport for London do have a budget line that enables us to undertake work to improve the efficiency of such vehicles. We've recently done that, for example, in Brunswick Park Road where we removed several due to the impact upon buses and we're currently reviewing measures on Church Hill Road in consultation with TFL.



In regard to the road safety contribution by my former predecessor, I'm sure Councillor Coleman joins with this Council in the road measures that we are promoting, and one less car on the road, I'm sure, will contribute to those statistics.

**Question No. 5**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

The Association of London Government is proposing to cut its grants budget by one third and supposedly 'repatriate' a share of this grant budget to Barnet Council from April 2007. Can we have an assurance that the funds supposedly to be 'repatriated' to Barnet will actually be invested in Barnet's voluntary and community sector and not simply cut from this Council's budget; and what consideration will be given by Barnet Council to contributing to London-wide projects and projects with neighbouring boroughs where appropriate to the benefit of Barnet residents?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

In line with Council procedures any repatriated monies will be matched against Council priorities. Clearly the funds would be valuable to our vibrant voluntary sector.

With regard to pan-London organisations, each application would be evaluated on its own merits as to what the organisation could add to the well-being of Barnet residents.

**Supplementary Question No. 5**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

Last week the Association of London Government was forced into a u-turn on Conservative plans to cut £9million from its grants budget to the voluntary sector, and it isn't a laughing matter.

Will the Council Leader give a commitment that Barnet will vote against any future proposals to cut the ALG or, as they are soon to be known, the "London Council's" grant budget?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Thank you Madam Mayor. I'm afraid Councillor Moore is actually out of date because the ALG Leader's Committee decided that that proposal would not proceed, which I am very disappointed at. I have for many years regarded the ALG grants budget as nothing but a scandalous waste of money. It is a grossly inefficient organisation. It scatters money around so-called pan-London organisations, which deliver services of very little benefit to the Borough of Barnet.

We are a gross net contributor. That money can be better spent in Barnet and, I have to tell you, given the quality of the special pleadings that have come across my desk from a variety of groups, not one group has actually persuaded me that being funded through the ALG is a good use of Barnet's money. However, that is my view. The ALG's Leaders Committee as a whole have decided that the Grants Committee will continue to re-prioritise its work programme to ensure that it is relevant to London and that wherever possible the budget is contained, but there will not be, sadly, a third reduction in the budget.

**Question No. 6****Councillor Brian Gordon**

Please could you give a brief progress report on the most recent measures being taken to make traffic wardens more user friendly and reduce the number of inappropriate penalty charge notices being imposed?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

By April 2006, the following measures had been introduced:

- charges for residents' parking permits frozen until April 2008;
- a review of all existing controlled parking zones will start during this financial year;
- pay and display users now get a five minute grace period after the expiry of a ticket;
- households buying a resident parking permit are given five free visitor vouchers;
- parking attendants wait and make observations for at least five minutes to check if vehicles likely to be making a delivery from yellow lines or parking places are loading or unloading;
- the council has signed up to the Moovit scheme, which allows delivery drivers to be paged if they are away from their vehicle.

**Supplementary Question No. 6****Councillor Brian Gordon**

Councillor Offord, I know that I've raised this subject and it's rather personal. It may not be Party policy, but is there any prospect, sometime in the future, of letting residents in CPZ's have free permits to park outside their own residences.

Many people do feel that with all the amounts that they pay in Council Taxes and, of course, all the different road charges that they have to bear, they should not have to pay for the privilege of parking outside their own homes.

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

Madam Mayor, I'm sure the member knows that what the CPZ permit actually does is to allow residents an opportunity to park in roads that isn't afforded to other people, who perhaps don't live in that area. He will also recall my recent Customer Focused Parking policy, which also introduced five free visitor permits. I do feel that goes some way towards the measures that he does propose but I think it would be, as he suggests, an impractical measure.

**Question No. 7****Councillor Geof Cooke**

An internal audit report has delivered a damning verdict of 'no assurance' on the Council's Controlled Parking system. In response the Head of Service reported to the Audit Committee on 20 June 2006 that: "4 PA's [parking attendants] have left the Council's service in the last three months and there is no current business case to replace". This appears to confirm that the Cabinet regards parking enforcement not as a means of ensuring the free flow of traffic nor

as a way of giving resident and business purchasers of parking permits value for their money by deterring unauthorised parking, but rather as a way of raising revenue from the long suffering public, to be assessed on a purely financial basis. Do you have an alternative explanation?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

No it does not. This Administration does not needlessly employ people in any service area. As greater compliance occurs in parking then the numbers of PA's should reduce through natural wastage and other reasons.

The Audit Report you refer to was related to the position as it was in March 2005. Under my direction, the Parking Section was already committed to a programme of identifying need for change at that time and significant changes have taken place across the service. As part of a scheduled follow-up, officers are currently preparing feedback responses to the Audit Report that will demonstrate that necessary changes have been implemented.

**Supplementary Question No. 7**

**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Councillor Offord, I note that you draw a distinction between your regime and that of your predecessor, Councillor Coleman, and I think you're probably wise to do that. I just wonder whether you are claiming credit for the increase in the money extracted from residents of the Borough for parking with CPZ charges up 142% since 2002. Are you claiming credit for that or is that somebody else's responsibility?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

Madam Mayor, I am always grateful to former Cabinet Members for giving me their advice and assistance and I'd like to thank the former Cabinet Member, Mr Cooke, for that response.

As he will know, the difference between now and when he was the Cabinet Member, and indeed when Councillor Coleman was the Cabinet Member, was that there has been an increase in the number of CPZ's across the Borough. I think the issue of measurement of how fair we seem to the motorist is to look at our Customer Focused Parking policy which we mentioned in the previous question, and particularly we see a reduction of 800 fewer PCN's being issued each week. I think that's a measure of success and something that I'm sure all members would agree with.

**Question No. 8**

**Councillor Jane Ellison**

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport please advise me about the arrangements for litter picking and cleansing on the stretches of the A1, A41 and A406 that run through various wards in this Borough including, in the case of the A1 and A41, Hale Ward.

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

We aim to sweep nearside channels, footpaths, verges & driveway crossovers 9 times per year. Central reservation and offside channels are normally swept 6 times per year (this operation is subject to TFL providing traffic management to enable safe working) this generally involves fast lane restrictions which TFL refer to as 'Block Closures'. All of the above works are carried out at night to minimise traffic disruption.

Litter removal on nearside verges, footpaths, subways and pedestrian bridges is carried out on a weekly cyclic basis at night. In addition to this, responsive works are carried out for EPA removal of litter and flytipped materials, these works are ongoing.

Litter clearance from central reservation prior to grass cutting is the responsibility of TFL.

**Supplementary Question No. 8**

**Councillor Jane Ellison**

I thank my colleague for the answer tabled. Now, my Hale Ward colleagues and I take great pleasure in the fact, pride in the fact, that many motorists actually enter our Borough in Hale Ward on the A1 and so we're especially keen that the first impression they get of our Borough is a good one.

Can I have Councillor Offord's assurance that the level of litter clearance from the reservations on the A1 and indeed other A-roads in the Borough can be increased?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

Thank you, Madam Mayor. I will certainly look at the issue of litter removal in the Borough. As ever we are very keen to promote Barnet as one of the first class suburbs in London and we're particularly keen to promote that when people enter the Borough. Unfortunately, I will have to disappoint another member tonight by pointing out to Councillor Ellison that we were informed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July that TFL would be cutting its budget for the programme of block closures that we need to enforce or, in particular, we need to ensure the safety of our street sweepers. So I don't think I'm able to accommodate that question.

**Question No. 9**

**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Please provide percentage and actual figures for all four quarters of the 2005/6 financial year for the levels of sickness absence for the Council's parking attendants.

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

Sickness in 2005/6 in the parking enforcement team has been recorded as follows:

1st quarter	424 person-days.	9.0%
2nd quarter	447 person-days.	9.2%
3rd quarter	610 person-days	12.3%
4th quarter	384 person days	8.2%

**Supplementary Question No. 9****Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Thank you. Is the fact that the sickness absence among parking attendants is far higher than the Council average sickness absence, one of the reasons why the Cabinet Member, in spite of the 142% increase, is actually failing to meet its own targets for revenue raising to the parking account? Or is it because the parking attendants are under a great deal of pressure to actually reach the parking ticket targets?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

No, it is not.

**Question No. 10****Councillor Hugh Rayner**

Please could the Cabinet Member confirm what arrangements Barnet Council makes for its parking attendants to take short breaks, meal breaks and toilet breaks when they are on patrol away from Council facilities.

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

The management and supervisory officers in the parking enforcement team identify and review from time to time (taking into account feedback from officers) suitable locations for toilet breaks for each beat covered. These will, where possible, be public facilities, but it may also be the case that suitable private facilities will be agreed for use.

Meal breaks are programmed into an officer's day, and the parking attendant is required to notify their base when they start and finish their meal break.

It would not normally arise that officers take any other "short break" during their working day any more than any other council officer would expect to take breaks other than meal breaks and toilet breaks. However, being in an outdoor environment, severe weather conditions might result in the need for a break to be taken, and in such an event the parking attendant would request such a break and give the reasons for it to their supervisory team with whom they are in contact with by mobile phone.

**Supplementary Question No. 10****Councillor Hugh Rayner**

Thank you, Councillor Offord, for that very complete answer.

Now I am sure that Members from all sides of the Chamber will join me in applauding the work done by the parking attendant team in maintaining safe and legal parking throughout the Borough – they do a magnificent job often with little appreciation.

I would like to ask Councillor Offord for his assurance that he will continue to provide his traffic attendants with reliable recording equipment, with well designed clothing especially for cold weather and, finally, with first class management support so that they can continue to provide the excellent service we all deserve.

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

Madam Mayor, I will certainly give the member, and indeed any other member who wishes to ask me the same question, that assurance.

**Question No. 11**

**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Following the fire at Beaufort Park and the decision of St Georges to rebuild the damaged block with concrete construction what is the Council doing to undertake a full inquiry into what has happened and to urgently review the densities and the standard of construction on the site?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

Timber framed buildings form the majority of residential homes worldwide. It is mainly in Britain that the traditional masonry construction is more popular. The use of timber frame is considered to be less ecologically damaging than masonry because timber is a quickly renewable resource.

Timber frame construction, when complete, has all the fire resistance required of it by our Building Regulations. The problem is that until a building is finished, with its combustible frame not provided with a fire resisting lining, it is vulnerable to accidental conflagration, or even arson.

The Building Regulations do not control the fire protection whilst the building is under construction. If no person is living in the building, then the Regulations consider that there is no risk. The matter of safety before the building is finished is under the control of the Health and Safety Executive who are, I believe, carrying out an investigation. The Fire Brigade is also preparing a report on the fire.

Building Control had checked the plans and had been carrying out regular inspections of the construction to ensure compliance with the Building Regulations. It is not considered that the fire and its spread would have been due to any Building Regulation infringement.

An internal review has disclosed no irregularity in the Building Control Department procedures.

The member can resubmit her question when the results of the Fire Brigade enquiry and the HSE enquiry, both of which are ongoing, are known. Any further action at this time is premature and wholly inappropriate.

As to a review of densities this is with respect a complete red herring there are thousands of higher density units built throughout the country with timber frame construction and I know of no reports that these are all burning to the ground.

**Supplementary Question No. 11****Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Thank you Madam Mayor. The fire at Beaufort Park was the largest fire in London this year, and it is an issue that has concerned all the three Parties here. I'm particularly concerned because the London Fire Brigade have not yet given their full report and yet St Georges have already started rebuilding.

Now I know we have all gained something in the fact that they're not going to rebuild with timber framed and it is going to be concrete framed. However, I am concerned that we are not re-looking at some of the basic issues that would happen if there had been anybody in those buildings as those densities would have been extremely large.

I would have thought that the biggest fire in London merited some action by this Council. I know St Georges have been extremely concerned about it.

I know they have looked very hard at this, however, the question I have is why the Council, and this is a very serious issue, this is something that could have affected many thousands of lives, why is the Council so reluctant to wait and to investigate what went wrong?

The Fire Brigade themselves have not yet undertaken their full investigation and yet rebuilding is happening.

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

Why the developer changed its mind is a question you have to address to the developer. I am not going to start making policy on the hoof. I am waiting to get the report of the Fire Authority and I'm waiting to get the report of the Health and Safety Executive. When I get that, when I have all the facts, that is the appropriate time to consider this matter again and I have invited the Member to redraw that question as and when that situation arises. Until then she will have to wait like everybody else, until the proper facts are known by the professionals.

**Question No. 12****Councillor Brian Gordon**

It has been reported that more than half of motorists who appealed against penalty charge notices between April 2005 and March 2006 won their appeals. Have you got any comments to make on this?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

The first point to bear in mind is that less than 2% of the penalties issued by Barnet's Parking Attendants are the subject of an appeal. With regard to the 'success' of the motorist in having their appeal upheld, it is the case that in 2005/6 51% of appeals considered for penalties issued by Barnet's Parking Attendants were found in the appellant's favour. This is – one would concede – "more than half" but only by a small margin. By comparison, London-wide the equivalent figure was 56% in favour of the motorist.

**Supplementary Question No. 12****Councillor Brian Gordon**

If the general statistic of successful parking appeals in London is as high as you indicate, even though I live in Barnet, 56%, then it does seem to me that something is going wrong somewhere. Do we have an aim to try and bring the number of successful appeals down or wouldn't the best policy be to try and ensure that there are not so many mistakes made in the issue of penalty notices in the first place?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

Madam Mayor, of course we aim to get everything right to the extent of our ability. I think training of the parking attendants is the key to what Councillor Gordon is referring to.

We undertake a regular training programme with our parking attendants and, once again, that's something that we can seek to improve.

**Question No. 13****Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

When will 'home loss money' be available to West Hendon estate residents who wish to move because of the regeneration?

**Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn**

The purpose of the home loss payment scheme is to compensate certain categories of occupier who are required to leave their homes permanently because of redevelopment.

The legal framework is set out in the Land Compensation Act 1973.

In order to be eligible for home loss a person must be displaced from their home in consequence of one of several specified events. These include the compulsory acquisition of the premises, the redevelopment of the land or the making of an order for possession under Ground 10 or 10A of the Housing Act 1985.

The person displaced must have occupied the premises for at least one year as his or her only or main residence and must be a secure tenant, secure licensee, leaseholder or freeholder.

The council has discretion to make a home loss payment where a person has been displaced but only met the occupation criteria at the time of the displacement rather than for a full year prior to the displacement.

Where the council obtains possession of a property by agreement, where a ground 10 or 10a possession could have been obtained, the council is able to make a home loss payment.



Home loss payment will only be paid if there is an established link between the displacement and the grounds for displacement. In limited circumstances where a resident makes their own arrangements to move as a result of the regeneration they will be entitled to home loss payment. They will however have to establish that there is a link between them moving and the regeneration scheme.

The regeneration schemes in Barnet are phased over a number of years. Tenants including those living on West Hendon will become eligible for home loss payments at the point when their homes are scheduled for decanting. This is likely to be up to a year before their home is due for demolition.

Leaseholders and freeholders will be eligible for home loss once a Compulsory Purchase Order is in place and they have vacated their homes. However, there is a discretionary power to make a payment to the owner who sells voluntarily (so long as compulsory powers were available).

**Question No. 14**

**Councillor Daniel Webb**

Please could the Cabinet Member outline what progress is being made in improving street lighting in the Borough, and in particular, within Underhill Ward?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

The Street Lighting PFI Core Investment Programme (CIP) is due to commence during September 2006. In the first year an average of 20 roads will have the lighting improved on a monthly basis. The programme increases during the 5 year CIP period with up to 40 roads being relit per month at its peak.

Over the lifetime of the CIP programme, street lighting in the Underhill ward will be replaced as part of a smaller annual programme which will include around 450 columns being replaced each year. These will be prioritised on age, condition and quality of lighting.

**Supplementary Question No. 14**

**Councillor Daniel Webb**

I would like to thank the Member for his lengthy response and also for shedding light on this scheme.

The supplementary is, what would this scheme achieve for the safety of residents of the Borough?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

Madam Mayor, a particular element of the Street Lighting PFI is to decrease the fear of crime within the Borough. I would expect in the years of the contract that the fear of crime, particularly as measured through the residents' satisfaction survey, actually decreases. So we will have a performance indicator of how we are improving on that.

**Question No. 15****Councillor Barry Rawlings**

In the Cabinet Member for Education's response to question 10 at the June council meeting he welcomed the steady improvement in attendance at primary schools. In the Best Value Performance Plan presented at the same meeting it clearly shows that attendance at primary schools got worse [indicator 46]. Which is the truth?

**Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

There is no contradiction between my answer and the figures in the Best Value Performance Plan. The figures in the Plan related to the academic year 2004-05. My comments referred to a briefing I had been supplied with in respect of the school year 2005-06. Although that briefing obviously referred to all the information currently available Council will welcome the fact that the Education department still believes that there was an improvement in 2005-06 as I indicated at the last Council meeting. I should like to thank the Councillor for letting me reiterate this.

**Supplementary Question No. 15****Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Thank you. Councillor Marshall, nice to know you rely so heavily on briefings but we have to wait for those results to be published, to be a public matter, but the target to reduce primary school absences is to 5.23% this year.

Could the Cabinet Member explain what he's doing to achieve this figure?

**Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

I've passed this over to Councillor Bulmer.

**Question No. 16****Councillor Brian Gordon**

Would you please express the solidarity of this Council with the residents of Ramat Gan – and indeed other towns of Israel and Lebanon – who have been so severely troubled by the unprovoked Hezbollah terrorist attacks from South Lebanon and the resultant war, together with our fervent hope that a lasting peace will be achieved in the region?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

The terrorist attacks on Israel are to be condemned and we remain steadfast in our support of our friends in Ramat Gan and those towns of Israel and Lebanon troubled by Hezbollah attacks.

**Supplementary Question No. 16**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Leader, would you join me, in expressing support for those in the free world who recognise that fanatical terrorism is the world's greatest scourge at the present time and if the multi-cultural co-existence and understanding that exists in Barnet were reflected in the wider world in general, and perhaps the United Nations in particular, then the world might be a considerably safer place.

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Thank you Madam Mayor. Yes I do share that. I think that the current situation is obviously troubled and very dangerous. I think we all have to support any moves towards peace, democracy and freedom, particularly the Middle East, and if that means rooting out terrorist organisations then this Council should support any moves.

**Question No. 17**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Which Director / Head of Service is responsible for briefing administration and opposition scrutiny members on equalities issues?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

On a corporate level, Jill Stansfield, Director for Children's Services, but service-related equalities issues are led by the relevant Head of Service.

**Supplementary Question No. 17**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

What discussions has the Leader had with Heads of Service about equalities issues since May?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

I've had several discussions with the Chief Executive about this Council becoming a diversity champion with Stonewall. I've met with the Director of Resources on a regular basis to discuss the equalities agenda and the performance of the HR department in monitoring that. I've had frequent discussions with Ms Stansfield about setting up a new Equalities and Diversity Forum. With regard to the other Heads of Service, I've left that to individual Cabinet Members.

**Question No. 18**

**Councillor Kate Salinger**

Please could the Cabinet Member for Housing provide an update on work being done to tackle homelessness in Barnet?

**Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer**

Over the past three years, the housing service has succeeded in reducing the numbers of people accepted as homeless by 40% and has reduced the number of people in temporary accommodation by 34%. This has been achieved through our pioneering housing options service that helps people to access a range of options to meet their housing need. The reduction in the use of temporary accommodation has also saved council taxpayers more than £2 million a year.

**Supplementary Question No. 18**

**Councillor Kate Salinger**

May I congratulate Councillor Bulmer and her predecessor on their success in reducing the amount of homelessness in our Borough.

Councillor Bulmer, can you confirm or assure me, please, that we continue to have no children in bed and breakfast accommodation?

**Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer**

Thank you. Yes, I can confirm that and that is clearly a very important achievement. Indeed we've gone further than that and I understand that in the last figures there were only 3 single people in bed and breakfast accommodation, which is a real credit to the efforts we have put in. I think this is one of the reasons why Barnet has been designated, by this Government, as a regional champion for tackling homelessness. We will be going out amongst councils in London to show them how it's done.

**Question No. 19**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

On all planning applications for new domestic properties there is a Section 106 levied to cover the impact on education; what was the total sum of money for each year and how has this money been used in 2002/3, 2003/4, 2004/5 and 2005/6?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

The question is predicated on an incorrect understanding of the true position. The Member should know that not all "residential developments" require contributions for education purposes. The criteria regarding the requirements for education contribution are set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance, "Education Contribution from Residential Developments 2000". This is currently being revised and updated.

Essentially schemes involving the provision of small dwelling units such as studios and one bed dwellings are not regarded as family accommodation and therefore do not attract a contribution. Affordable housing and purpose built accommodation such as sheltered housing is also exempt.

The figures below indicate the sums which have been received in total:

2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Total
£238,426	£355,301	£193,554	£1,578,676	£2,365,957

The figures below represent the application of S106 funding on Education projects:

### **S106 funding applied to Education projects financial years 2002 to 2005**

#### **Financial year/Application Amount applied Comment**

##### **2002-03**

Burnt Oak Youth Centre	£	561,000	Upgrade of accommodation
Northway Special School	£	49,650	Transfer of demountable to provide additional accommodation
Mill Hill School	£	403,315	Contribution to expansion works
Year total	£	1,013,965*	

##### **2003-04**

Burnt Oak Youth Centre	£	9,707	Upgrade of accommodation
Hendon Library	£	291,940	Upgrade/refurbishment
Year total	£	301,647	

##### **2004-05**

Frith Manor	£	325,454	Contribution to school rebuild project
Mill Hill County	£	102,907	Contribution to expansion works
Ashmole	£	310,196	Contribution to expansion works
Year total	£	738,558	

##### **2005-06**

Available for PSCIP and other Education schemes	£	311,786	
---	---	---------	--

**Grand total** £ 2,365,957

\* This figure will include S106 monies received in prior years.

#### **Supplementary Question No. 19**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

Councillor Cohen, the monies shown as applied don't add up to the 2.3million total claimed in the written reply, because that's not the way Section 106 works but it was a nice try.

Could the Cabinet Member expand on whether the £311,000 shown for the year 2005-6 was actually used in that financial year and, if so, what for, or whether that money has indeed been carried forward to the current financial year? If that is the case, not a single penny of Section 106 monies were used to improve education in the year 2005-6.

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

So far as I'm concerned the figures do add up. I don't know where the mathematics is wrong. But having said that, maybe rather than criticising the Education Department or the Planning Department, the Member might like to criticise her own Government who are proposing from 2008 to remove the benefit of Section 106 monies for education and transport purposes and in its place would be the Planning Gain Supplement. That's where the danger lies, and not in the criticism of what are, as far as I can see, entirely accurate figures.

**Question No. 20**

**Councillor Richard Weider**

Has the responsible Cabinet Member received any correspondence from the approximately 2000 teenagers from this Borough, who have recently been on their holidays in Israel about how their tour was severely disrupted, as they had to avoid being attacked by the missiles from Lebanon, which is putting northern Israel under constant attack?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

To date I have not received any correspondence but I suspect the teenagers affected by the terrorist attacks would be preoccupied with their safety. We stand firm in support of Barnet residents affected by the terrorist attacks in Israel and Lebanon.

**Supplementary Question No. 20**

**Councillor Richard Weider**

Does the Leader agree with me that both national and local leaders should show support for all nation states when attacked by terrorists, including Israel, when its citizens are attacked by Hezbollah, with support from Iran? Does the Leader therefore agree that Israel was right to defend its citizens against these attacks, including our Borough's own residents when they were on holiday this summer and our former residents now living in Israel?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Yes I do.

**Question No. 21**

**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Please tell me: (a) Which community, foundation and voluntary aided schools in the borough have water sprinklers to tackle fire, and (b) which schools is the Council planning to equip with sprinkler systems?

**Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

All the schools which have been rebuilt in the past 4 years have been fitted with sprinkler systems. As the Councillor knows the Council is about to enter a massive school building programme. Clearly I would expect that these new schools will have sprinkler systems.

**Supplementary Question No. 21**

**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Councillor Marshall, you've not answered the first part of my question to name the schools, but from the answer it looks as though there's approximately one school in our Borough which has sprinklers now. And further you expect that the new schools which are going to be built in the current programme will be fitted with sprinklers. Will you as the Lead Member take control of the programme and specify that sprinklers should be included in the rebuilding schemes?

**Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

I can assure you that if they weren't included our good friend Councillor Coleman would take physical action to ensure that they were.

**Question No. 22**

**Councillor Lisa Rutter**

Please could the Cabinet Member for Education tell Council how many children took part in the Libraries Service's Reading Mission this summer?

**Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

I am glad to be able to report that this has been a great success due to the dedication of the Head of Libraries, Tricia Little, and Hannah Richens, Principal Librarian for Children. Last year 3150 children participated. This year we set a target of 3500. In the event 4629 children participated. THIS IS A 50% INCREASE.

**Supplementary Question No. 22**

**Councillor Lisa Rutter**

Could the Cabinet Member for Education tell Council how many children took part in the Library Services reading mission this summer?

**Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

Madam Mayor, I think that this was a very successful service this summer. There was a 50% increase in the number of children who took part compared with last year, and I hope that the Members opposite will congratulate the staff of the Library Services in this magnificent achievement, which underlines the commitment of this side of the House to the future of our libraries.

**Question No. 23**

**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

What was the cost of hiring the QC to prepare for and represent the Council at the Hendon FC lands tribunal hearings, and what has been the total legal cost to the Council of dealing with the Lands Tribunal matter?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

The cost of Leading Counsel in dealing with this matter amounts to £42, 825 to date. The time spent on this matter by the Council's legal officers amounts to 800 hours to date, covering a period of 3 years. Naturally the Council is correct to defend its position. I am sure Councillor McGuirk would agree this expense would have been necessary to handle the Lands Tribunal issues to resolve matters relating to the social housing scheme proposed by the last Labour administration or our private housing and care home scheme.

Such costs will be netted of against any capital receipts from the land sale proceeds

**Supplementary Question No. 23**

**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

The total cost of the Lands Tribunal case is around £80,000 in total. In the process the Council has also alienated the local community, spent millions in compensation to a care home provider, left Hendon Football Club homeless, another football club homeless! And failed to secure the extra investment promised to Copthall. Which of these achievements is the Leader most proud of?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Well I wish I had Councillor McGuirk's ability to re-write history. It must be a great comfort to her.

First of all, we did not make Hendon Football Club homeless. Hendon Football Club was a private organisation owned by the Arbiter Group and only kept afloat by the generosity of Ivor Arbiter personally. Following his sad death, the Arbiter family and the Arbiter Group felt they could no longer pump in the financial support required to keep the Club afloat. That is why Hendon Football Club ceased to be financially viable.

In terms of alienating the local population, I'm not sure that the Councillors for Golders Green would share that analysis, considering that their personal majorities were significantly improved in May and had a ringing endorsement from their Ward.

In terms of the care home, the delay clearly is causing us some concern but we believe it is the right thing to do, and in terms of progressing this with the Lands Tribunal, that's the cost of pursuing the right course of action.

**Question No. 24**

**Councillor Andrew Harper**

Would the Cabinet member for Environment and Transport please give LBB's perspective on the recent National Audit Office report which suggested that at the end of the decade, local authorities across the country would find themselves having to raise taxes in order to pay fines levied by Government as a result of the UK failing to meet EU targets for the amount of waste sent to landfill?



**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

The report highlighted the significant risk that the UK will not meet the target for reduced quantities of biodegradable waste to be landfilled in 2010 and 2013, set out in the Landfill Directive.

The UK has passed these targets to waste disposal authorities by giving them an allowance of biodegradable waste that can be landfilled by year until 2020. For Barnet these targets have been given to the North London Waste Authority, as the joint waste disposal authority for seven London boroughs (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest).

If the UK fails to meet the EU targets on waste disposal then it is very likely that it will be fined by the EU. The Government has indicated that the fine would be passed back to those waste disposal authorities that failed to meet their individual targets. The Government has also said that it would fine those authorities that failed to meet their individual targets £150 per tonne for each tonne that they exceed their target. If the North London Waste Authority was to exceed the targets and be fined, then these costs would be passed back to the seven boroughs – including Barnet.

However it is anticipated that the North London Waste Authority will meet the target for 2010 and that will be in no small part because of the role played by this Council in achieving our statutory 27% recycling target last year and having already made a good start on future levels.

**Question No. 25**

**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Could the borough give a breakdown on the expenditure of the Living Spaces award for Rushgrove Park?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

**Rushgrove Park Living Spaces Scheme**

	Living Spaces funded items	actual spend
Pond area	Refurbish pond and stream	5,164.00
	New pump/waterworks	1,214.00
	Bow-top fencing	7,263.25
	Shrub/tree pruning/re-seeding grass area	2,690.00
	technical problems with pump	350.00
	New trees for the park	838.85
	planting of trees	487.63
	Total	£18,007.73
	LB Barnet funded items	
Play Area	Benches and play equipment	3,640.00
Pond area	Additional works	
	extra works to pond	368.00
	New water supply pipe	900.00

	repair further leaks – due to start Sept 2006	£1,876.00
	Total	£6,784.00
Grand Total		£24,791.73

**Supplementary Question No. 25**

**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

First of all, can I say that the new water pipe and repair to the leaks is very welcome?

However, the Cabinet Member should be aware of the concerns of the residents living around Rushgrove about the state of the park.

My colleague, Councillor Zubairi, raised a number of these issues at the last Hendon Environment Sub-Committee. Will the Cabinet Member ensure that officers look into these problems to see what the Council can do for our second division parks?

We're very pleased that we've won the green flag award but, as colleagues are no doubt aware, there are no parks in Colindale which are able to be a premier park.

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

Madam Mayor, I'm sure that you know, even if the members in Colindale don't, that the Premier Parks are not based on ward boundaries, they're actually based on a geographical distance of approximately one mile to any person's house. That means that residents of Colindale are fortunate enough to be able to visit both Montrose Park in Burnt Oak and also Sunny Hill Park, which is in my own ward.

**Question No. 26**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Will the cabinet member please provide a list of all the sites in the Borough, visible from the road, where the Council is aware of, or has treated within the last 12 months, Japanese Knot Weed?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

The Council does not maintain a register of known locations, visible from the road or otherwise located.

**Supplementary Question No. 26**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Thank you, Madam Mayor. I assume that the Lead Member is aware of the enormous damage that is done by Japanese Knot Weed. Is he satisfied that all members of staff who are out and about in the Borough are able to recognise Japanese Knot Weed and that they are instructed to ensure that action is taken to eradicate it when they do see it?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

Madam Mayor, I am aware of the damage caused by Japanese Knot Weed because recently while I was on holiday I noticed another local authority and the way they tackle the problem. I will bring up the issue with the lead officers and look into the problem, and if there are any issues that we need to bring back to the member, and also to the Council, we shall do so.

**Question No. 27**

**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Looked after children who are the subject of a care order receive priority treatment in the community schools admissions policy, but how does the policy deal with children who have been adopted and are therefore the subject of an adoption order?

**Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

It is widely recognised that Barnet is at the forefront of good practice in respect of looked after children. That is why their results are better than the national average and better than those enjoyed by our London neighbours.

Looked after children are given priority as they may have to leave their family home to go into a foster home. By giving them priority they are assured of stability in their education. Children who are adopted do by definition have that stability. Children who are in the process of being adopted are treated as looked after children until they are adopted and receive that priority.

**Supplementary Question No. 27**

**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Thank you. It's a bit of weak answer compared with Councillor Harris'. Could I refer Councillor Marshall to the question which asks about children who have been adopted and so, therefore, has nothing to do with looked after children, who have been looked after.

And would he recommend to whoever his successor is, that they look at how the Council can give priority to those handful of children that have been adopted as part of the ongoing support system?

**Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

Madam Mayor, I think that the answer made it quite clear why there was a differentiation between looked after children and adopted children. I'm sure that my successor will look at the problem but I think that what Councillor Rawlings ought to do is take pride in the fact that the achievement of looked after children in this Borough is much greater than the achievement of looked after children in London as a whole, or even greater than that of the country as a whole. This shows our commitment as an authority to looked after children, after all they've been failed by their natural parents. We who have become their parents should not fail them.

**Question No. 28****Councillor Brian Salinger**

The Housing Corporation claim that 41% of new homes funded by them are constructed using 'modern methods'. In the light of the fire at Beaufort Park, can the Cabinet Member confirm that such building methods are considered to be safe for their occupants when the buildings are completed?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

Modern methods of construction in this Country, including timber frame, are being promoted by the Government. They are not unique to affordable housing funded by the Housing Corporation and are methods of construction used by many house builders building for private sale and for other uses. Modern methods have been used to build many new developments in other countries, for example European Countries and USA, but in Britain we have been slower to move away from our traditional house build construction of bricks and mortar and low rise, low density, houses.

Any new development has to be built in accordance with the Building Regulations, and these Regulations ensure that the completed building will be fit for purpose and meet safety standards which include fire protection and containment. Given that homes built using modern methods of construction have to meet the Building Regulations, there is nothing to suggest that when completed such buildings are less safe than homes built using traditional methods.

With regards to Beaufort Park, we are still awaiting the results of the investigations by the Fire Authority and the Health and Safety Executive.

Building Control carries out regular inspections to ensure compliance with the safety standards contained in the Building Regulations.

**Supplementary Question No. 28****Councillor Brian Salinger**

Thank you Madam Mayor. I listened carefully to the discussion earlier with Councillor Sargeant and Councillor Cohen on the same question of the fire at Beaufort Park, but the point of my question was about the fire safety of timber framed buildings once they are completed.

Would the Lead Member agree with me that there is a danger whilst they are in the course of construction and is it not a fact that the reason that St Georges have started again so quickly using concrete rather than timber for the structure is that they have the facilities on site to start straight away with concrete and it would have taken several months to get the timber in to restart with the timber frame construction?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

I have not the slightest idea why St Georges changed their mind. It's a matter for them and, I repeat, if you have that question then you should address it to them and not to me. Having said that, I'm quite satisfied that timber frame construction which is used up and down the country, and I don't have reports of houses, flats or whatever, burning down to the ground every day. So I don't accept that timber frame construction is a form of construction which we shouldn't use. The fire was in respect of a half-finished building before the opportunity arose for it to be properly fire-proofed. Once it had been properly fire-proofed I'm sure that it would have sustained not as great a damage as, well, if it's fire-proofed the fire would not have got hold, so if the Member is asking me, am I happy with timber frame construction, generally, the answer is yes.

**Question No. 29**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Many residents say that the Area Forums are an important point of contact with council officers and Members. Could we please have confirmation on the continuation of the six Area Forums during the lifetime of the present administration (and that they will not be cut to three forums) and an assurance that the six Area Forums will continue to meet on a regular basis every two months?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

The Council will continue to provide area forums across the various wards and communities that make up the Borough and its parliamentary constituencies. It is not currently envisaged that the frequency of the Forums would decrease.

**Supplementary Question No. 29**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

How many times does a Forum Chair have to turn up late before they are replaced?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

I think you'll find that the Forum Chair you're referring to has been replaced this evening.

**Question No. 30**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

In the interests of upholding the law, does the member agree that licensees who breach the terms of their licence, face the real prospect of having the licence revoked if not renewed?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

The Councillor has not stated which of the multitude of licenses he is referring to. However, there are clear provisions in law to allow for the revocation or non-renewal of licences for licensees who breach the terms of their licence. If there is sufficient evidence, breaches will be addressed appropriately.

**Supplementary Question No. 30****Councillor Brian Salinger**

Thank you Madam Mayor. The licences I had in my mind were ones that refer to annual events that take place. Will the Lead Member ensure for those such licences that are issued for annual events, that the people who organise and use those licences are well aware that if they breach that licence they are risking not having it renewed if they want to have a similar licence a year later?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

Yes.

**Question No. 31****Councillor Alison Moore**

If the Cabinet Member could set out the specific details of how the housing commuted payments for new affordable homes have been used that were levied from the former Friern Barnet Town Hall and the Professional Development Centre planning applications?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

PDC – £1,108,000 received

Professional and Development Centre – £1.108 million was received in November 2004. This commuted sum was used to support the Housing Association Capital Programme 2005/6 to fund new affordable homes. £361,000 contributed to the costs of a scheme with Ealing Family Housing Association at Tarling Road, N2 and the remaining £747,000 towards the costs of new affordable homes at New Fieldways, Barnet with Notting Hill Housing Trust.

Friern Barnet Town Hall – £692,000 received

Friern Barnet Town Hall – £692,000 was received in March 2005. £13,000 of this contributed to the costs of the New Fieldways development which was included in the Housing Association Capital Programme 2005/6. The remaining £679,000 will support the Housing Association Capital Programme 2006/7 which contributes towards the costs of new affordable homes.

**Supplementary Question No. 31****Councillor Alison Moore**

Very simple question. What is being done to reduce the period of time between the commuted payments being received and them actually being used to build much needed affordable housing?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

There has indeed been a slight drag in affordable housing in that the schemes, the major regeneration schemes, have yet to come fully on board but, once they are, there's no doubt that every effort will be used to utilise the monies in the best possible way for the benefit of the residents of Barnet.

**Question No. 32****Councillor Andrew Harper**

Would the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning join with me in congratulating Barnet schools and pupils on their achievements in this summer's public examinations – not least, for example, QE Boys, Henrietta Barnett, St Michael's RC Finchley, all of which featured in the top tier of the league tables, but also the other schools where many children did extremely well at GCSE, AS and A level?

**Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

I should like to welcome the great successes of these three schools. I should also like to congratulate ALL Barnet schools, their head teachers and staff upon the excellent results that we achieved this year. I don't want to signal out individual schools. To do so is invidious when the overall results were so good.

**Supplementary Question No. 32****Councillor Andrew Harper**

Thank you Madam Mayor. I agree with Councillor Marshall, perhaps it is invidious to single out individual schools. I fear my enthusiasm for Henrietta Barnett School got the better of me, but of course I have the privilege of being one of the LEA Governors there, as indeed does Madam Mayor. But Councillor Marshall, would you agree with me that there is something to be said for the very effective leadership that we now have in many of our schools in Barnet, ably supported by the governing bodies, and indeed very much supported by the excellent staff we have nowadays in the Local Authority's team?

**Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

Madam Mayor, can I congratulate the two LEA Governors for Henrietta Barnett School, who are here, I'm sure you'll allow me to do that even if it does lengthen my answer.

Councillor Harper is of course right that the head teachers do provide the leadership that is so important in all our schools, primary and secondary, and if you look at the schools which have done very much better in recent years, in nearly every case you can put it down to a change of head teacher. I think that that is very important and I was delighted that you, Madam Mayor, were able to praise the work of Chris Flather, who is Head Teacher of the Orion, and also looks after Goldbeaters School as well, so can I thank you for that?

**Question No. 33****Councillor Kath McGuirk**

If the Cabinet Member could make a statement on the re-introduction of the council's pest control service and how many call-outs have been made and treatments applied since the service resumed in May 2006?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

The new fee paying pest treatment service has conducted 778 visits to 506 properties since coming into operation in early May 2006. There are currently two pest control officers employed in the service. This information is accurate to 29 August 2006. We have introduced Saturday appointments starting 2 September. The service is on target to be self-financing.

**Supplementary Question No. 33**

**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Thank you Madam Mayor. The written answer states that in the four months, the new Hire Charges Pest Control Team has made 778, which would mean around 2,400 visits per year. In 2003, the old Pest Control Team made 28,500 visits. Could the Cabinet Member tell us what difference 26,000 fewer visits will have on the vermin population in Barnet?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

Quite simply that there are no more rats!

**Question No. 34**

**Councillor Olwen Evans**

Please could the Leader of the Council outline the attendance record of the MPA Link Member for Barnet, Mr. Peter Herbert on the various bodies responsible for community safety in the Borough?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

The Community and Police Consultative Group (CPCG) meets quarterly: this is not a council-led forum and is serviced by Barnet Voluntary Service Council, but it does have Member representation.

BVSC advise that Mr Herbert attended once in 2001, twice in 2002 and twice in 2003. He last attended 15 July 2003.

Barnet Safer Communities Partnership is the statutory Crime and Disorder Partnership for Barnet (currently chaired by Cllr Coleman). The MPA has observer status at the Partnership Board. The last record of Mr Herbert attending is 10 November 2004. The Board has met either two monthly or quarterly and therefore has met at least eight times since then.

**Supplementary Question No. 34**

**Councillor Olwen Evans**

I have been a Member of Barnet Police Consultative Committee for at least two years and I have to say, to the best of my knowledge, I have never ever met Mr Herbert or seen him at one of our meetings. What does the Leader think of that?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Who is Mr Herbert?



If the Cabinet Member could make a statement on the kinds of issues and challenges (such as emotional and behavioural difficulties) facing Barnet children who have been adopted and their parents, and how the Council assists parents and children in dealing with these issues both during the adoption placement and after the adoption order has been issued?

**Answer by Councillor Chris Harris**

**Context**

By far the majority of children placed for adoption nationally (and in Barnet) have come through the care system – very few are relinquished babies.

Significant proportion of Barnet adopted children are from multiracial backgrounds and thus require sensitive matching.

Many Barnet adoptive families adopt children from other authorities throughout the country. Some Barnet children are placed outside the authority, either for safety reasons, or in order to find an appropriate match.

There is also a significant flow of adoption from overseas into Barnet.

Recent Adoption Legislation recognises that rather than being a one-off event, adoption is a life-long process for all parties involved – i.e. birth family, adoptive family and the adoptee, and places new duties on local authorities to assess all parties and provide appropriate support at any stage if requested. Adoption remains a lifelong, irreversible measure which transfers full parental rights and responsibilities from the birth parents and local authority to the adoptive parents.

Barnet is a member of the North London Adoption Consortium – with Haringey, Enfield, Camden and Islington and also two voluntary Adoption Agencies, Norwood and Parents for Children.

Where it is not possible to place a Barnet child with our own approved adopters, we seek to find a family within the Consortium if possible. The Consortium works together to:

- share information about waiting children and families,
- provide training and development opportunities for staff and adopters,
- commission services to meet the needs of all those affected by adoption,
- take a joint approach to preparation for adoption.

Common Issues for children being adopted

**Identity and contact with birth family**

It is now recognised that being adopted is an important part of a person's identity which is lifelong, although it may be more of an issue at certain stages. Some children adopted from the Care System remember their birth families clearly and may even continue to have direct contact with them. Others may not think much about having being adopted until adolescence, or even adulthood, when they have their own children or at other significant life events – at any stage they may approach our adoption team for support and advice.

## **Role of Children and Families Service**

During the adoption process, adoptive families are given as much information as is available about the child's background. The child is given a Life Story book, which will have photographs and other information about their birth family – this is usually compiled by the foster carer or social worker. At the time of the adoption, the social worker will write a "Later Life" letter for the child, explaining the council's role in their adoption.

Before the adoption order is made, a contact plan is drawn up – this can be either for letterbox contact between the birth family and the adoptive family, or in some cases it may involve direct contact, either supervised or unsupervised.

The Adoption Team acts as a mediator in these arrangements, if required, and will offer help in writing letters or arranging and supervising meetings.

Specialised counselling can be accessed through the Post Adoption Centre, to which Barnet subscribes. Barnet residents are entitled to four free sessions and may apply for further help if necessary.

## **Specific Health, Education or Behaviour Issues**

Even children placed for adoption as babies may have been subjected to the effects of drug or alcohol abuse during pregnancy, and may have been born addicted themselves. Research indicates that this may be related to disturbances in behaviour or personality which may not become apparent until the child is much older. Often this will become an issue once the child is at school. Adoptive families often find that schools are unaware of specific issues which may affect adopted children. The adoption team supports families in their communication with schools. This is an area which will benefit from increased multi agency working as our children's services become more integrated.

Mental health problems are another very common issue for adoptive families. Older children will often have experienced abusive or distorted relationships and may have had several changes of carers prior to their adoption. They may never have been in a sufficiently safe and consistent family setting to form a healthy relationship with any trusted adult figure, and this often leads to "attachment problems" for children placed for adoption. During our adoption preparation groups and throughout the assessment process these issues are discussed and addressed, but the reality can be very challenging for adoptive parents. The Adoption team supports families experiencing these difficulties by:

- Offering support programs for adoptive parents – such as a 7 module course held one Saturday a month commissioned from Adoption UK. ("A Piece of Cake")
- Offering places on a parenting skills course at Coram Family.
- Referral to our specialist adoption CAMHS workers at Edgware Hospital
- Referral to specialist support agencies such as Post Adoption Centre.

In some circumstances, the adoption team will arrange respite care for a family experiencing extremely distressing and exhausting behaviour.

We recognise that very often adoptive parents and children can offer each other mutual support and understanding of the very special challenges they face. We have set up a programme of social events to enable adults and children to meet each other. We also plan to

set up a series of workshops on issues which are of particular interest – e.g. contact, telling children about adoption.

Finally the following information leaflets are currently being printed:

General information leaflet about adoption  
Preparation Training for Adopters  
Letterbox contact for Adoptive Families  
Adoption Support Services for Adoptive Families  
Letterbox for Birth Families/relatives  
Adoption Support for Birth Families  
Adoption Information for Birth Families  
Adoption Records

**Supplementary Question No. 35**

**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

I need a bit of help here because the actual councillor isn't present. Can I ask for the question to be devolved whether it's for the Leader...

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Madam Mayor, if Councillor Rawlings would like to write to me, I'll ensure that he gets a detailed answer.

**Question No. 36**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Would the lead cabinet member for equality confirm they have an officer team that is actively working on a disability equality scheme and action plan, and could the member please outline what progress has been made?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Yes, there is a team led by the Director of Children's Services and including representatives from the Resources Directorate and Corporate Performance Office.

The Scheme has been out to public consultation between 11 July and 31 August, and will be reported for decision to 16 October Cabinet. The Scheme will be accompanied by a 12 month Action Plan pending the development of a single Equality Scheme in April 2007

**Supplementary Question No. 36**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

I'm grateful for the answer. Could the Leader give his flavour of the feedback through the public consultation which will presumably be reported in full in October?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

I'll give a fuller answer when I've evaluated the full feedback.

**Question No. 37****Councillor Alison Moore**

If the Cabinet Member could present the details of any car leasing scheme and schemes for car pooling and for taxi use by council officers on council business?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council****Car Leasing Scheme**

The Council has not operated a car leasing scheme since 1994 for new staff as it was not felt to be a cost effective way to recruit and retain staff due to increasing operational costs. Staff who had leased cars were able to retain them and a decision was made in 1999 that existing holders of leased car would lose this entitlement on receiving a new contract with the Council. Currently there is only one member of staff who has a leased car, however this arrangement will cease later this year. When their current agreement lapses.

**Car pooling**

There is one existing scheme which operates within our Planning Service. This has operated for 5 years and involves the use of one car by members of staff from our Planning and Property service in undertaking their daily duties.

**Taxi use**

We do not use taxis for staff, other than the option for Democratic Service Officers to be able to use taxis if their Committee meetings continue beyond 9pm of an evening.

Officers from the Resources Directorate are currently formulating a staff questionnaire on the travel plans. This will help formulate an approach to reduce the number of car journeys of staff travelling to and from work and also during the working day.

**Question No. 38****Councillor Kath McGuirk**

When is the Council going to introduce a hot line for residents to report broken pavements and potholes?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

We are concerned to improve our response to the public on a whole range of environmental issues and to make it easier for the public to do this. This will be about publicising and improving the services offered through our recently modernised customer services call centre as well as via email and other more modern ways such as mobile phone. The forthcoming Customer Services Action Plan will set out how we intend to improve our responsiveness still further.

**Question No. 39****Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

How many officers are allocated to monitor the CPZ in West Hendon?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

The Parking Team provides cover for the Hendon CPZ on a "whole area" basis so the figures available are for all of the Hendon Zones taken together rather than West Hendon in isolation:

Monday to Friday, 3 parking attendants a day  
Saturdays, 2  
Sundays, 1

This may be supplemented at any time by mobile officers on motor-scooters if a local need is identified.

**Question No. 40**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

How many planning applications have included a Section 106 agreement in 2004/5 and so far in 2005/6, and what percentage are these of the total planning applications made?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

year	Number of applications approved following S106 agreement	Number of all planning applications determined	percentage
2004/5	50	4394	1.14%
2005/6	37	3889	0.95%
2006/7 to date	12	1724	0.70%

However it should be noted that S.106 are only appropriate to a small percentage of applications: for information 3088 (79%) of planning applications in 2005/6 were others (i.e. householder and other small scale development).

**Question No. 41**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

What support is being offered to those people organising Black History Month events this year, and what is the Council doing itself to organise events?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Black History Month in Barnet is co-ordinated by a steering group which is supported by the Council and we have funded a brochure with details of events. These include performances, children's activities, exhibitions, workshops, celebrations and a schools' programme. This is about acknowledging the positive contributions that people of Asian, African and Caribbean descent have made to British society.

Details of events include:

- In all the libraries there will be a pack of quizzes on Black and Asian authors for children and displays of children's books and there will be a workshop on African dance at Burnt Oak Library.
- At Chipping Barnet Library the charity Adepta will be putting up an exhibition on Mary Seacole.
- In celebration of Diwali, henna painting will be demonstrated at East Barnet Library.
- Surestart families will be involved in activities at Chipping Barnet and Hendon Libraries.
- School classes will be invited to an event in each area by the author Jill Harvey.
- Church Farmhouse Museum will present an exhibition on the presence of Black and Asian people in the Barnet area from the 1760s to the 1960s. This also includes resources for teachers.
- The Minorities Achievement project will be holding a one day event where community groups and specialist book publishers will be available for members of the public to purchase resources and access advice and information.

**Question No. 42**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

How many times has the Council used the CCTV van since 1st April 2006?

**Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman**

29.

**Question No. 43**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Can I congratulate the Cabinet Member for Education on his recent appearance in the *Asian Voice* newspaper praising the Labour Government for awarding the investment that has built the brand new Children's Centre in West Hendon, and would he now care to sign a joint letter with me to the Secretary of State for Education to formally thank the Labour Government for this investment in Barnet's children?

**Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

I should like to thank the Councillor for acting as an unofficial press cuttings agency. Yes we have received some capital from the government but certainly not enough. The Leader, the CEO and I recently met with Lord Adonis and emphasised the need for capital funding. We also invited him to open the Parkfield Children's Centre – an invitation which he accepted in principle. I hope that the Councillor will also attend the official opening.

**Question No. 44**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

If the Cabinet Member could please outline which organisations have been refused grants they applied for during 2005/6 and the current financial year 2006/7 so far, and give the reasons for each refusal?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan**

Only two grant applications were unsuccessful in 2005/06. To date, no organisations have been refused grants in 2006/07.

The two requests that were rejected last year were as follows:

(i) Barnet Mencap

An application (in Nov 2005) for a one-off grant of £1,500 towards the development of a website.

(ii) Greek Parents Association

The application was for a grant of £3,000 towards the cost of running classes in Greek language and dancing, which was not supported on the basis that cultural activities have, for many years, fallen outside the criteria for assistance from the grants programme. Although other work undertaken by the organisation has been grant funded in the past.

**Question No. 45**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

What equalities training has the Council offered to, or is planning to offer to, Cabinet Members and scrutiny chairs, and which members have taken up this opportunity?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

The last formal equalities item in the member development programme was the conference on raising awareness about Disability in December 2004.

However, Officers are currently developing Phase II of the current programme which will have the theme:

"To optimize your abilities, uncover and enhance your under-used skills, to enable you even more effectively to undertake your diverse roles as a community leader and promote better understanding of democratic processes and the role of the council in the borough and beyond."

As part of this, it is proposed to enhance Members' knowledge of the diversity agenda by including work on the Equalities and Disabilities Standard, updates on the new Disability Discrimination Act and Age discrimination legislation as well as workshops on raising awareness around diversity and disability.

**Question No. 46**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Which Director / Head of Service and Cabinet Member is responsible for driving forward work on a disability equality scheme and action plan?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Director of Children's Services with assistance from Director of Resources (on issues relating to equality as an employer).

**Question No. 47**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

The Local Government Race Equality Standard is a very effective barometer for measuring councils' progress in equality. What progress has Barnet made with this?

**Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

The question identifies that the Member is out of touch.

This standard was superseded some while back by the Equality Standard for Local Government. Barnet has recently progressed from level 2 to level 3 and has a target of meeting Level 4 by 2007/2008.

**Question No. 48**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Will there be festive lights for all the communities in West Hendon this year?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

Subject to a request for a token contribution from the traders, etc, as has been the case in previous years, yes.

**Question No. 49**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

If the Cabinet Member could set out the recent changes with regard to pay of teaching assistants in special schools and those in mainstream schools?



### **Answer by Councillor John Marshall**

There was disquiet for many years that the very real contribution made by teaching assistants was not fully recognised. That is why new job descriptions and new pay scales for teaching assistants were implemented in September 2005. There are now 4 levels of teaching assistant job descriptions which provide the opportunity for promotion from one level to another. Teaching assistants in mainstream schools have enjoyed an increase in their pay of some £600 on average. I hope that the Councillor will welcome this as they did and I do.

So far as teaching assistants in special schools are concerned, there was an independent review which resulted in proposals being put forward on 26 June. Although UNISON rejected these proposals at the end of July, negotiations are continuing between the trade unions, the head teachers and council officers. We are confident that we will be able to report progress to the CJNCC. Members of that Committee such as the Councillor might prefer to comment at that meeting rather than now so that they are not held to have prejudged the issue.

### **Question No. 50**

**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

How would the Cabinet Member explain Barnet, against the national trend, having an increasing teenage pregnancy rate and how is she going to reverse this failure?

### **Answer by Councillor Helena Hart**

Whilst unfortunately there has been a significant increase of some 10.3 per 1,000 of 15-17 year olds falling pregnant, the numbers themselves are still low compared to the rest of London.

Having said that, action has already been taken to try and redress the upward trend and is included in the Children & Young Peoples' Plan with Barnet PCT as the lead agency. There is also a local strategy group which involves all partner agencies, including Health, Education, Youth & Connexions, Housing and the Voluntary Sector.

The local strategy and action plan in Barnet has been signed off by the DfES teenage pregnancy unit and includes the following measures:

- Sex and relationship education provided during PHSE in schools. Teachers and community nurses participate in PHSE certificate programmes.
- General advice and information to all young people, including where to access services that provide all advice information, support and contraception. This work is integrated into other relevant work plans. Young people "test" the service for user friendliness and accessibility.
- Improving access to services – there are 4 dedicated young people's clinics in the borough. Two are in designated priority areas.
- Free emergency contraception is available from Boots chemists and selected chemists across the borough, which is advertised.

- Advertising to the young population is updated and distributed regularly.
- Targeted work: In identified priority areas and for high-risk groups. The high-risk groups are:
- Looked after young people, young offenders, those with poor education attainment, absenteeism and dislike of school.
- Work through Youth and Connexions focuses on young people out of school providing a range of support.

As children's centres develop and the local sure start programme is rolled out across the borough, a wider range of services will be provided for teenage parents providing health, education and work support. There will be 3 children's centres by the autumn.

Data is being improved in Barnet as well as nationally to assist analysis of why young people become pregnant and what actions have maximum impact to avoid this.

Support for teenage parents is provided in terms of Housing, Education and Health.