

Minutes

OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET
held at The Town Hall, Hendon, NW4, on Tuesday, 23 January 2007.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

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

*denotes Member present

118. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

The Worshipful the Mayor, duly seconded, moved that Council Procedure Rule 3.2, relating to the matters to be dealt with at Ordinary Council Meetings, be suspended, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14.1, to enable Part 1 of the meeting to be extended to enable various tributes to be paid to departed colleagues. The Worshipful the Mayor additionally moved that as a consequence the time allowed for Question Time would be a full 30 minutes.

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

RESOLVED – That Council Procedure Rule 3.2 be suspended to enable Part 1 of the meeting to be extended for as long as necessary to complete the business in this Part, and that a full 30 minutes be allowed for Questions to Cabinet Members in Part 2.

119. PRAYER (Agenda Item 1):

The Mayor's Chaplain offered prayer.

120. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2):

No apologies had been received.

121. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 19 DECEMBER 2006 (Agenda Item 3):

RESOLVED – That, subject to the correction of Minute 101 to show that the late Mr Chand Chopra MBE was a Mayor's escort during the 1998-9 municipal year, the minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2006 be approved.

122. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 4):

The Worshipful the Mayor expressed her sorrow in formally announcing the death of Councillor Olwen Evans on Christmas Day following a long battle with cancer. The Worshipful the Mayor advised that Councillor Evans had been a Councillor from 1978 to 1994 and again from 1998 until her death, serving as a Ward Member for East Barnet and on numerous Committees including former Chairmanship of the Libraries and Arts Committee and current Chairmanship of the Cleaner, Greener, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

At the invitation of the Worshipful the Mayor, Councillors Mike Freer, Kath McGuirk and Monroe Palmer, as representatives of the three political groups, and the Deputy Mayor as a Ward Member colleague, spoke in tribute to Councillor Evans.

The Worshipful the Mayor was also sorry to announce the recent death of Mrs Jemima Usher who had the unique distinction of being a Mayoress on two occasions, during the 1969-70 and 1982-3 municipal years respectively, supporting her husband, former Mayor Victor Usher.

A minute's silence was held in remembrance of departed friends.

The Worshipful the Mayor went on to detail some achievements within the borough, including the shortlisting for the Local Government Chronicle Awards of the Education Champions Scheme in the Children's Services category, and mentioned that the Scottish Executive had commended Barnet's innovative approach. The Worshipful the Mayor also reported on the Barnet Local Strategic Partnership's entry "A fresh approach to focussing on the community to achieve results" in the Partnership Award for Sustainable Communities category.

Finally, the Worshipful the Mayor confirmed that she would be hosting a reception for Barnet's team which took part at the final of the London Interborough Swimming Championships 2006, which Barnet had won for the second year running.

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

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

- Councillor Barry Rawlings in Motion 8.1, as he worked for a charity that might receive some of the funding referred to.

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 Gill Sargeant in Item 9.1, as she worked for a charity which supported the elderly.
- Councillor Joan Scannell in Item 9.1, as her mother received care from the Council.

124. BUSINESS REMAINING FROM LAST MEETING

None.

125. QUESTION TIME FOR MEMBERS (Agenda Items 7 and 13.1.5):

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.

Members noted that an updated response to Question 17 from Councillor Melvin Cohen was set out at Item 5 of the Supplemental Report of the Democratic Services Manager.

126. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR FIONA BULMER (Agenda Items 8.1 and 13.1.6 (i)):

Motion 8.1 in the name of Councillor Fiona Bulmer was moved.

Amendments in the names of Councillor Anne Hutton and Councillor Duncan Macdonald were moved. Debate ensued.

Upon being put to the vote the amendments in the names of Councillor Anne Hutton and Councillor Duncan Macdonald were declared lost. The substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – Council welcomes the £150,000 cash boost secured by this Council from the Edward Harvist Charity that will be used to enhance youth services across the Borough.

Council is proud that the youth service has secured money from a diverse range of sources to improve the range and quality of its services to young people and that it has increased the number of youth workers. It is equally proud of its partnership with Connexions that has been praised for its high quality and effective provision.

Church Farm in East Barnet is a prime example of partnership working in this area, Council believes. The new centre, run by the Police and Hornsey YMCA was secured, Council notes, because of the hard work of local Conservative Councillors (including the late Cllr. Olwen Evans), in liaison with this Authority.

Council is proud that alternative sources of funding for the Youth Service are constantly being found. More than £1,000,000 of

external funding has been secured including funds from Positive Activities for Young People and the Youth Opportunities fund.

Council welcomes the effective way young people in Barnet are administering the youth opportunities fund. This fund has been used to support projects chosen by young people including a contribution to the “Rolling Base”, bus that is travelling around Barnet offering information, recreation and education to youngsters.

Recent research has shown that young people benefit most from structured youth activities and Council notes the excellent provision in Barnet of these kinds of youth opportunities ranging from Barnet’s high performing music service, to scouts to after school clubs. Council is determined to build on this modern, diverse provision.

Council congratulates the Administration on their innovative way of providing and funding Youth Services throughout the Borough. Council further calls on Cabinet to ensure that the youth service continues to work to secure external funding and work in partnership with schools and local community groups to develop further the extensive range of activities that are available to young people across Barnet.

127. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR MATTHEW OFFORD, AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR RICHARD WEIDER (Agenda Items 8.2 and 13.1.6 (ii)):

Motion 8.2 in the name of Councillor Matthew Offord was moved. Amendments in the names of Councillor Alan Schneiderman and Councillor Duncan Macdonald were moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Richard Weider was moved orally. Debate ensued.

Upon being put to the vote the amendments in the names of Councillor Alan Schneiderman and Councillor Duncan Macdonald were declared lost. The amendment in the name of Councillor Richard Weider was declared carried. The substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – Council notes with dismay that bus and tube fares have risen again this year.

Council further notes that a resident of High or East Barnet or Edgware now has to pay £1,592 for an Annual Travelcard, an increase of £80 over last year.

In addition, single bus fares have increased by 33% to £2, which Council believes will hit those on low or fixed incomes, who struggle with the Oyster technology.

Council notes that the level of inflation is currently 3.9%.

Council believes these fares form part of a massive increase on the cost of living for our residents, assisted by increases both in “stealth” taxes and energy bills.

In contrast, Council notes that Barnet's Council Tax rise this year is to be set below inflation.

Council therefore calls on Cabinet to support the Conservative party's "Live for Less" campaign to find a solution to the massive increases in the cost of living for our residents.

Council further calls on Transport for London to rezone New Barnet Station, High Barnet Station, Cockfosters Station and Edgware Station from Zone 5 to Zone 4, thus providing real benefits to the residents of High and East Barnet and Edgware.

128. ADMINISTRATION POLICY ITEM: BARNET'S VISION FOR THE ELDERLY: CHOICE AND INDEPENDENCE (Agenda Item 9.1)

Councillor Lynne Hillan proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council welcomes the new vision for Adult Social Care: *Choice and Independence*, which Council believes will enable the changing aspirations of our vulnerable residents by offering them control over the services offered to them.

This is intended to increase the numbers of Barnet's clients who will be able to directly purchase their own care and support arrangements, increasing choice for those people.

Council believes this important initiative should form the bedrock of a number of schemes to help the elderly and vulnerable across the Borough.

Council notes that access to IT facilities and the internet also serves to promote independence and choice for our citizens, allowing them to access services, keep in touch with friends and family, compare prices, shop, and meet new people. However, this is not a facility that many elderly people are able to take advantage of. *Help the Aged* revealed in 2006 that over 50% of those aged over 50 had no access to a computer.

Council believes this must change, and that LBB must investigate any scheme that would give over 65s in the Borough access to a computer.

Encouraging more of our elderly to remain in their own homes is also extremely important in promoting independence. Many over 65s (and others) experience extreme difficulties in keeping their homes warm, often the result of poor insulation. However, a scheme run by *British Gas* offers qualifying residents who install insulation in participating authorities, money off their Council Tax bills at little or no cost to the Council.

Council believes this would provide a real boon to the elderly and those on a budget to make their homes more energy efficient and consequently reduce heating bills. This would, in turn, allow more of our elderly residents to remain in their own homes.

Accordingly, Council requests Cabinet to:

- Ratify and agree the vision for adult social services: Choice and Independence when the costings are re-presented to Cabinet.
- Work towards providing access to computers to the over 65s resident in Barnet.
- Investigate the implementation of the British Gas scheme to give residents who install loft or cavity wall insulation money off their next Council Tax bill.

129. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2007-8 (Report of the Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Item 13.1.1):

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Calendar be approved and the Democratic Services Manager be authorised to approve variations in consultation with the Chairman of the body concerned.
- (2) That the Council, at their Annual Meeting, be recommended to agree the dates of the ordinary Council meetings proposed in the attached and that the Democratic Services Manager be instructed to take the appropriate action.

130. CHANGES IN COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS (Supplemental and Further Supplemental Reports of the Democratic Services Manager - Agenda Items 13.1.3 and 13.1.7):

Councillor Joan Scannell moved an amendment to the changes in Committee Memberships shown in the agenda papers, to the effect that Councillor Wendy Prentice would replace Councillor Marina Yannakoudakis as Vice-Chairman of the Cleaner, Greener, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Councillor Joan Scannell would become a member of that Committee.

RESOLVED - That the following changes in Committee Memberships be approved:

- Councillor Marina Yannakoudakis to replace Councillor Olwen Evans as Chairman of the Cleaner, Greener, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Councillor Wendy Prentice to replace Councillor Marina Yannakoudakis as Vice-Chairman of the Cleaner, Greener, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Councillor Joan Scannell to become a Member of the Cleaner, Greener, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

131. AMENDMENT TO THE LEADER'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION (Supplemental Report of the Democratic Services Manager -Agenda Item 13.1.4):

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

132. CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Further Supplemental Report of the Democratic Services Manager -Agenda Item 13.1.8):

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

An alternative nomination in the name of Councillor Linda McFadyen was moved in respect of the appointment.

RESOLVED - That the following change in the Council's representation on Outside Bodies be approved:

- **Community Focus – replace Councillor Lisa Rutter with Councillor Brian Coleman (Councillor Anne Hutton was unsuccessful)**

133. COMMENTS RELATING TO THE WORK OF CABINET (Agenda Items 14 and 13.1.2)

Councillor Monroe Palmer commented

Can the Cabinet Member ensure that cycling racks are placed outside public buildings, I would add to that, purely, that if we are in favour of the healthy sport of cycling outside of gyms then, in fact, we must do our little bit to encourage it. So would whoever replies to this question please confirm that they will be putting cycle racks outside public buildings such as Hendon Library.

Councillor Mike Freer responded

I can reassure Councillor Palmer that the Council will be providing additional facilities, not least for members of staff, in additional showering facilities and bicycle racks so that green travel plans can actually come into effect rather than just being a piece of paper. As a keen cyclist myself I can guarantee that there will be additional facilities in the Hendon complex as well as at NLBP.

Councillor Jane Ellison commented

Thank you, Madam Mayor. I'm sure we're all equally interested in a cleaner greener Barnet and I wonder if the Cabinet Member could specifically comment on how the Council is reducing emissions throughout its fleet.

Councillor Matthew Offord responded

This Council was one of the first local authorities in the country to sign up to the chemical diesel fuel combustion technology. This is added to fuel and affects combustion to reduce the amount of fuel consumed and the level of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide and PM10 particles contained in emissions. I took the decision after reviewing our fuel consumption and emission levels and discovered the environmental and financial benefits of using the chemical technology. Figures released show that from September 2005 to November 2006 there was a reduction of 36,875

litres in fuel consumed and a total of over 102 metric tonnes of fuel emissions of dangerous gases by the Council's fleet.

Councillor Marina Yannakoudakis commented

Thank you, Madam Mayor. The Cabinet Member may be aware that the current junction of Crescent Road and Brookhill Road in East Barnet is very dangerous. Does the Council have any proposals to improve this junction? Also, I gather that some political parties have been trying to claim credit for action on this, could he please explain?

Councillor Matthew Offord responded

Madam Mayor, in response to concerns about the traffic use in Brookhill Road near the junction, the Council devised a set of proposals to address the movement of traffic on the major road and seek to improve the cross movement. This was the installation of two vehicle activated signs. Funding was identified from this year's Traffic Management budget and approval to progress the measures was given at the 5th September 2006 Chipping Barnet Area Environment Sub-Committee, chaired by Councillor Olwen Evans. We've also consulted with local residents about the proposals and on the whole, the proposals are generally welcomed. I am aware of the leaflet that the Member refers to where I can read that one of the candidates in the by-election says that if elected they will ensure that this particular problem is addressed.

Councillor Geof Cooke commented

Madam Mayor, I wish to comment on the quantity and quality of the performance of the Council's current contractor for street lighting. There are three parts to this. If faults are not identified and rectified quickly then you have dim areas and there are safety concerns and fear of problems particularly women are affected by this. Secondly we have mains electricity running through lighting columns in a public place, I know they are certified by inspectors but this is a matter of great public concern and thirdly the replacement of old columns, the programme, we've heard earlier from Councillor Offord that there will be 1700 by the end of April this year. If, and it's a big if, that does happen then it will be a thousand less than the number in the programme.

Councillor Matthew Offord responded

Thank you, Madam Mayor. I can reassure the Member that we will complete the work programme as he accurately quotes. The other point that he mentions about the emergency situation and the current PFI contract, I can assure him and members of this Council there is no problem there whatsoever. Public safety has not been compromised in any way and in this particular part the contractor is performing well with all emergency responses completed within one hour.

The meeting finished at 9.24pm

Council Questions to Cabinet Members
23 January 2007
Supplementary Questions and Responses

Question No. 1**Councillor Dan Thomas**

Please could the Cabinet Member outline what arrangements are being made to rebuild the Bowling pavilions (both Men and Ladies) that were destroyed by fire in Victoria Park Finchley and what arrangements are being made to ensure that the 2 Bowling Clubs can continue to function this coming Summer?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Consultation has begun with the Clubs to determine what they want to see from a re-build. Unfortunately, it is not anticipated that a new building will be in position by the start of the 2007 bowls season. However, the Council will undertake to provide limited temporary accommodation and will prepare the bowling greens as normal to allow club matches to be played with as little inconvenience as possible.

Supplementary Question No. 1**Councillor Dan Thomas**

Thank you Madam Mayor. As it appears that the pavilion buildings that burned down were made out of wood and that they burned down as a result of arson please can I ask the Cabinet Member whether the new replacement buildings will be built out of a more robust material such as brick?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Madam Mayor, a settlement is currently being negotiated with the loss adjusters and we are carrying out an option appraisal at this time. I certainly will be pushing that any reconstruction is out of a more sustainable material, such as brick.

Question No. 2**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

One in 40 homes in Barnet are empty, and yet there are more than 2,500 families from the borough living in temporary accommodation. Will the cabinet member tell me how many empty properties it plans to bring back into use each year? What is the cost of temporary accommodation for those 2,551 families compared with the cost of bringing the 2,898 empty properties back in use?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

I presume you are referring to privately owned homes, over which we have little or no control. There are a variety of reasons why these homes are empty and the Council has no wish, or legal power, to intervene in a heavy handed way. However, we do work with the owners to bring these properties back into use and have successfully brought back into use hundreds of homes to be used for temporary accommodation that would otherwise be empty through our leasing schemes. A total of 1270 homes are currently in use in this way.

At the end of 2005/06 there were 100 council homes in the borough currently untenanted. This represents less than 1% of the Council's housing and only 3% of the total empty homes in the borough, whereas Council housing is 10% of the total housing in the borough. The Council has nothing to be embarrassed about and is one of the better performers in London when it comes to filling homes quickly after the previous tenant has left. There is a need for some homes to be empty at any one time, otherwise nobody could move. There are also inevitably works to be done to a property between tenants.

Supplementary Question No. 2**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

Councillor Hillan, thank you for your partial answers. I would like to know, given the chronic housing shortage, 2500 families in temporary accommodation and empty properties – we only have a part time officer. Will you and the administration be looking for a full time officer to do this work? It would speed things up.

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

I'm not sure how many officers we've got but we are pushing very hard for any private landlords to bring the properties back into use. However, I would suggest that maybe Councillor Slocombe could put her energies into the bigger problems that could be addressed, like, for instance, the site gazumping between the RSLs that is pushing up the land prices, that is putting a terrific amount of pressure on build quality and it is reducing the amount of homes that we can now build, in particular family homes. Or maybe she'd like to lobby the Mayor for London about his lack of investment in the North London infrastructure in favour of concentrating on the Thames Gateway, this could also produce the outcome that she wants.

Question No. 3**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Would the Leader like to comment on the way in which he feels Barnet's citizens – or indeed the citizens of London generally – have gained from the Mayor of London's visit last year to Cuba?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, the Leader of the Council

Apart from the benefit of not having Mr Livingstone in London to meddle, I doubt Londoners benefited one iota.

Supplementary Question No. 3**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Very convenient to lead into this question. Leader do you not agree that it is outrageous that the Mayor of London and his entourage have spent thousands and thousands of pounds of our precious taxpayers' money on costly and extravagant foreign junkets, I know Councillor Coleman would agree with this, and he has spoken very eloquently about this on the London Assembly, and these junkets have absolutely nothing to do with running London. May I suggest that you, as Leader of the Council and the next MP for Finchley and Golders Green, I thought you'd like that, that you write to the Mayor of London telling him what this Council thinks and suggesting that the best foreign junket he undertakes should be on a one-way non-returnable ticket.

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Thank you, Madam Mayor, I believe the Mayor of London has taken 216 flights, including his officers, not by himself, over the last two years and of course has given huge carbon emissions into the atmosphere, so far from lecturing at the rest of London on sustainability perhaps Mr Mayor Livingstone might want to stay at home a bit more. In terms of writing to him I will not waste the cost of a stamp, because I think it will be rather a fruitless exercise, however I am meeting Mayor Livingstone on 14 February, I'm looking forward to my Valentines Day appointment, and I will raise the matter with him for you.

Question No. 4**Councillor Zakia Zubairi**

The motion I presented to Council on 7th November 2006 asking for Sunday openings of the Graham Park Community Centre was carried unanimously. What has the Cabinet Member done so far to ensure that the motion is enacted and when will Sunday openings of the Graham Park Community Centre come into force as a result?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

The proposal means that some Barnet Homes caretakers have to work on a Sunday to open and close the centre. They currently work to a 6 day rota and of course are entitled to days off. This means that duty rotas have had to be amended and terms and condition negotiated with employee representatives. There are additional overtime payments to be borne which means a pricing structure has to be agreed. We intend to bring a report to the next Cabinet meeting as we reported to Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny on 4th December. Barnet Homes, who are responsible for the management of community centres on estates advise that their preparations are currently on time to meet that deadline. If this is agreed, we are proposing commencing Sunday openings in April 2007.

Question No. 5**Councillor Maureen Braun**

How does the Cabinet member feel this Council can increase access to IT and the internet for over 65s in the digital age?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, the Leader of the Council

I have asked Officers to investigate the potential for recycling the Council's redundant PCs for use in lunch clubs, care settings etc, to combat social exclusion.

Supplementary Question No. 5**Councillor Maureen Braun**

Thank you, Madam Mayor. I thank the Leader for his answer but I would like to ask him if he could expand it a bit more, I mean I can sort of see what he's saying but I'd like to know how he intends the wider community of silver surfers and so forth to get going.

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Thank you Madam Mayor, I think most Members in their ward work will come across many elderly residents who are excluded. They are often trapped in their homes or they struggle to communicate particularly with family who are in far distant parts of either this country or the world. I was struck when I went down to the Finchley Baptist Church Christmas lunch when I met an 82 year old lady who regularly e-mailed her grandchildren in Australia and swapped photographs and news and I thought we must waste a lot of money every 3 or 4 years throwing out computers that could be recycled; and if we could place them in care settings, lunch clubs, even down to youth clubs, it's not just restricted to the elderly, and teach our older residents how to use e-mail, how to shop online, just how to stay in touch. It gives people a reason to come out of the house, but more importantly gives them an opportunity to stay in touch with their extended family. That is the purpose of the initiative and I look forward to it being worked up as a detailed policy by the officers.

Question No. 6**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

The high membership and entrance costs of recreation and leisure centres in Barnet means many hard working families and people on low incomes cannot afford to use them. Can the Cabinet Member tell us how they assist people on low incomes to use our leisure centres?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Barnet has a range of schemes to assist people on low incomes to use our leisure centres. People receiving income support, job seekers allowance, housing benefits and working family tax credits all qualify for concessionary prepaid membership to borough leisure facilities. Students (15 hrs + per week) similarly qualify for concessionary rates. There are currently 6608 adult and junior holders of concessionary rate memberships in the Borough.

Under a new scheme due to start on 1 February, people aged 55 and above will also be able to purchase a Club Wellness membership. If they do not wish to take out this membership they will continue on the normal Wellness membership price, transferring to a concessionary membership when they are 60.

People holding any Wellness concessionary membership will have unlimited access to the borough's leisure centres between 9.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Fridays and on weekends, and will receive up to 50% discount off non member prices on activities during these times. They will also receive up to 30% discount off non member prices on activities outside of these hours.

People currently in possession of a Bonus Card or 50+ Annual Health Ticket will have their card honoured and renewed at any of the centres (as long as it is kept up-to-date) until 31 January 2008.

People currently in possession of a Standard Card will have their card honoured and renewed at the three centres containing swimming pools (as long as the card is kept up-to-date) for the time being. The final date is yet to be decided and will not expire before 31 January 2008.

Supplementary Question No. 6

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

In view of my questions, delinquency and crime, will Councillor Andrew Harper, will he be reducing the fees in the future for the youths and parents in this borough and especially in the deprived wards?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Well Madam Mayor, I think as my rather detailed answer already demonstrates we have very substantial concessionary rates schemes in place for people on low incomes and elderly people and there are also special facilities for disabled users of our sports and leisure facilities, so I'd be interested to know where it is exactly that people are experiencing particular problems. I've given a statistic for the number of people who already enjoy concessionary rates in our sports and leisure centres and, indeed, Councillor O-Macauley may be interested to know that something like 1200 or more of those people are using the benefits or enjoying the benefits of the leisure centre in his own ward in Burnt Oak, and possibly others from some of the neighbouring wards.

Question No. 7

Councillor Brian Gordon

Would you agree with me that it is an absurd rule that applicants of planning applications being heard by Committee can only speak to the Committee if an objector speaks? Is there anything we can do to try and change this?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Public speaking at Committee is governed by Rules contained at Section 4 of the Constitution, sub-section 5. There are specific and additional Rules relating to planning at 5.14 to 5.16.

The purpose of allowing public speaking at Planning Committees is to provide objectors with the opportunity to present their concerns orally to that Committee where an application is recommended for approval. As a matter of equity applicants are provided with the opportunity to *respond to public objections* and have a *right to reply* (5.3.3 and 5.9).

Allowing applicants to speak on an application where there are no speaking objectors would require amendment of the Constitution.

The introduction of such a change raises issues of purpose and practicality.

On the first issue it should be noted that applications recommended for refusal are not reported to Committee and therefore the applicant would only be speaking in support of his application which is being **recommended for approval**; in the circumstance where approval was being recommended and the Committee decided to refuse the application it is almost inevitable that there would be speaking objectors and the applicant would have been provided with the opportunity to respond. The introduction of the requested change would therefore serve no useful purpose.

Several years ago the Constitution allowed applicants to request to speak on an application where there were initially no speaking objectors. However he/she could only speak if objectors also wished to speak. The process was found to be procedurally unworkable and curtailed after a short period.

I understand that Councillor Gordon's question may arise from an application (207 Hale Lane) referred to Hendon Area Planning Sub-Committee by him (with a recommendation for refusal) where the public speaker did not turn up and the applicant was not allowed to speak.

I cannot concur with Councillor Brian Gordon that the existing rule is absurd and consider amendment of the Constitution to allow applicants to speak other than as right to reply would serve no useful purpose.

Supplementary Question No. 7

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Cohen, in your answer you state that it is almost inevitable that there would be speaking objectors on a planning application which is being refused or where the Committee is going to refuse it, may I put it to you that this is not necessarily the case. There have been occasions where objectors do not turn up when a matter is being recommended for refusal and it happened recently in a particular case which, in fact, you mentioned. But I have had other experiences as well and, as a consequence of that, the applicant is not able to put their case and the Committee are not able to ask the applicant very salient questions which would help them to form a judgement of what is going on. So I wonder how you can say that particular situation is fair, it may not happen very often but there can be situations where an applicant is denied the right to speak when the officers are recommending refusal and I personally think that's very unfair and we should do something to change that.

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Madam Mayor, I recognise that there are possibly legitimate concerns and I'm very happy to arrange for a paper to be brought to an early meeting of the Constitution Review Committee.

Question No. 8

Councillor Barry Rawlings

In his New Years Message [The Press 4/1/07] the Leader boasts of no schools being in special measures [page 8]. In the same edition on page 44 there is an advert for a headteacher, for a Barnet school, part of whose task is to get the school out of special measures. What is the truth? Does Barnet have a school in special measures yet again or not?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

There are two schools in special measures.

Supplementary Question No. 8

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Thank you, hopefully the Cabinet Member can explain how the Leader came to mislead the Barnet public in his statement, but I want also to know under these circumstances how she is justifying the proposal to cut the budget to support schools who are causing concern and the standards and effectiveness division while we've got schools going into special measures.

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

If the Leader has a fault it is only his boundless optimism and I'm sure in his message he was underlining that very shortly we'll have no schools in special measures. With regard to the budget, we're not cutting those particular budgets, the whole point is that the schools are getting the support. I'm personally chairing the interim executive board of one of the schools. I'm absolutely confident that we will very shortly address those issues and that those schools are receiving sufficient support from the local authority.

Question No. 9**Councillor Caroline Margo**

Does the Cabinet Member for Community Services have any ideas as to how this Council can help residents, especially the elderly and infirm, improve energy efficiency and cut their heating bills in their homes?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

We have a variety of initiatives, including the Energy Efficiency Advice Line on our website, a Planning for Winter document and the Decent Homes funding is being utilised to impact on fuel efficiency.

We have also entered into an agreement with British Gas whereby, if a resident has insulation installed in their home, provided by British Gas, they will be entitled to a £50 rebate on their Council Tax. This is a self funding innovative scheme, encourages energy efficiency in homes and ensures that our pensioners keep warm in Winter as well as save money on their fuel bills and Council Tax.

Supplementary Question No. 9**Councillor Caroline Margo**

Thank you Madam Mayor. I thank the Cabinet Member for her answer. I'm particularly pleased with our planned participation in the British Gas scheme. Please could Councillor Hillan outline how much proper insulation typically shaves off heating?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Thank you, according to DEFRA there is a saving of approximately £110 per year. That, together with the £50 would save a lot of our elderly residents £110 per year.

Question No. 10**Councillor Colin Rogers**

Will the Cabinet Member tell me what the Council's total carbon emissions are per year, and what strategy they have in place for reducing these?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The Council has not determined its overall carbon footprint as this would need a reasonably sophisticated audit to take into account the full span of its operational activities and that of its managing agencies.

However, calculation of emissions in broad terms can be undertaken from the energy procurement contracts. For example, the CO2 emissions associated with Electricity, Gas and Heating Oil procurement is approximately 26,619 tonnes (however it does not include sites for which we do not procure energy, such as NLBP or those schools and agencies which procure their own). Emissions associated with LBB transport can also be calculated but potentially need to include mileage covered by staff and contractors as well as our own vehicle fleet.

The strategy of this Administration for dealing with carbon emissions is based upon the audit commissioned from the Carbon Trust in 2005 – long before the issue was popular in UK politics.

Their recent survey was supported by a Capital Bid incorporating the establishment of a new Energy Efficiency Investment Programme for the Council's operational buildings and schools. Other measures also being pursued are:

- procurement of green electricity tariffs with low or zero carbon emissions where financially viable;
- the adoption of sustainable Low or Zero Carbon technology where appropriate, utilising available grants from Clearskies (central government grant scheme) and assistance from delivery partners. Measures implemented have included:
 - i) Good Energy Use Practice, Climate Change Levy (CCL) exempt Combined Heat and Power (CHP) systems installed in Council swimming pools.
 - ii) Solar thermal hot water panels installed at three primary schools and a photovoltaic electricity generating panel at one secondary school.
 - iii) 403 of the 436 pay & display parking machines being photovoltaic solar powered.
 - iv) A 2.5kW wind turbine installed at one secondary school with a second school proposed.
 - v) Incorporation of energy efficiency design features into new-build and refurbishment projects, sustainable design principles within design brief for major projects and programmes.
- improved efficiency in vehicle fleet operation, with recent announcement of an 81 tonne reduction in CO2 emissions;
- introduction of a new Corporate Travel Plan;
- having successfully obtained £460k of grant funding, this Council will work in partnership with an energy supply company to launch a scheme to undertake insulation works in domestic properties for vulnerable residents;
- comprehensive recycling facilities, which collected over 25,426 tonnes of material for recycling in 2005/06;
- council offices recycling schemes which collect paper, cardboard, cans and plastic cups – and with plans to expand this to smaller council offices including libraries in the near future;
- agreement and implementation of the Waste Prevention Strategy in December 2005;
- signing up to the North London Joint Waste Strategy;
- raising awareness with the larger organisations within the borough through the establishment of an Environmental Forum, with the Local Strategic Partnership, and involving both public and private sector organisations;
- the organising of an environmental conference in the summer of this year with all relevant council departments, partners and key players in industry invited to participate in order to raise awareness and share best practice;
- the consideration of planning issues relating to improving the sustainability of construction within the borough through consultation on the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Sustainable Development and Construction.

Supplementary Question No. 10

Councillor Colin Rogers

Thank you, Madam Mayor. Thank you to Councillor Offord for his tour of the horizon. Given the Cabinet Member's apparent commitment to reducing emissions, could he explain why he is continuing to encourage speeding motorists to pollute our atmosphere excessively by removing Barnet's road safety and speed restriction measures?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Madam Mayor, as the Member said it's apparent, well it's not – it's actual, and I certainly haven't encouraged anyone to be speeding in any part of the borough. As we've determined before, the removal of speed bumps actually decreases the amount of emissions into the atmosphere.

I would welcome the question though because I always welcome Johnny Come Lately's to an agenda that I, and also some other colleagues within this chamber, have been promoting. And I notice how the Labour Party nationally have now picked up upon the agenda that we were leading in Barnet a long, long time ago.

Question No. 11

Councillor Brian Gordon

Lord Adonis, the Schools Minister, has called for pupils to be given a bigger say in how their schools are run – including being involved in the appointment of staff. What is our administration's view on this rather zany idea?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

We shall continue to take an approach that is suitable for Barnet rather than responding to the constant distractions provided by ministers at the Department for Education. Our approach is to involve pupils in the running of their schools, where it is appropriate, through bodies such as schools councils.

Supplementary Question No. 11

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Bulmer I'm very pleased to see as I didn't imagine for a moment it would not be the case, that we are going to continue to have a responsible approach towards our schools. Would you not agree with me that the idea of having full serving pupils on school governor bodies, which is what is proposed by one of the Government Ministers, is absolutely ludicrous and is a recipe for anarchy and disaster in a school and it completely undermines authority, and we would never wish to see that sort of thing in Barnet.

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

That does seem to be a rather unlikely idea, I mean as I've said in my answer schools councils work very effectively. I think they do give pupils a sense of civic responsibility and understanding and that they work very effectively in Barnet schools and I would hope that we would continue along that route rather than trying to invent something new that, as you say, carries considerable risks.

Question No. 12

Councillor Kath McGuirk

The Tory manifesto for the May elections last year listed maintaining the conditions of roads and improving the condition of pavements as key election pledges. Will the Cabinet Member explain why the planned Highways structural programme and the maintenance programme are both being reduced?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The budget for highway and footway maintenance for 2007/08 has been improved to a higher level than last year¹, despite a reduction in the level of support received from Transport for London² with a 40% increase in funding for pavement works. This includes town centre improvements in Brent Street and East Finchley, with two more planned each year thereafter.

This Council is committed to further improvements to the condition of Carriageways and Footways as set out within the Corporate Plan. Next year's funding (07/08) is likely to involve a shift in the balance to reflect greater investment in Footways, with funding levels likely to match Carriageways.

This includes £500k specifically identified for Town Centre Footways that will improve those areas experiencing the greatest foot fall. The opportunity will also be taken to return our footways to pedestrians by reducing street clutter. Furthermore there will be a focus on reducing litter traps in support of the signature cleansing service.

¹	2006/07		2007/08	
	Carriageway	£2.798m	Principal Roads	£1.073m
	Footway	£1.821m	Carriageway/Footway	£2.00m
	TOTAL	£4.619m	Planned Maintenance	£1.476m
			Town Centre Footways	£0.5m
			TOTAL	£5.059m

² **£1.271m** for Principal Roads in 06/07, compared to **£1.073m** for 07/08.

³ BVPI 223 Principal Roads **71%** in 2001/02 ~> **92%** in 05/06
 BVPI 224a Non-Principal Road (classified) **49%** in 2002/03 ~> **90%** in 05/06
 BVPI 224b Non-Principal Road (unclassified) **81%** in 2002/03 ~> **92%** in 05/06

⁴ BVPI 187 Footway Network **81%** in 2003/04 ~> **84%** in 05/06

Supplementary Question No. 12

Councillor Kath McGuirk

I just want to say Councillor Offord you really ought to do your homework. I think it's you who is the Johnny Come Lately, certainly not Councillor Colin Rogers, as any one of your colleagues will tell you. I appreciate though, on this question, this particular question, that he may not have the figures to hand but can he give me, let me know what TfL monies were received in 2005/06 and 2006/07 and give a detailed breakdown of what exactly these monies have been spent on?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Madam Mayor, I'm sure that's the kind of information that I'm sure Councillor McGuirk could ask her Political Assistant to advise upon.

Question No. 13

Councillor Bridget Perry

Please could the Cabinet Member outline what plans he has to improve town centres across the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Physical improvements are in hand for town centres whereby pavements are renewed to a higher standard and street clutter removed and reduced. This is a programme that commenced in North Finchley and is now underway in Golders Green. Plans are in place for 2 town centres per year from 2007/8 with Brent Street and East Finchley the next 2 in line. These works, besides providing a safe secure and attractive trading environment, also allow for improvements in cleansing to be made which is a further vital factor in local trading.

Supplementary Question No. 13

Councillor Bridget Perry

Madam Mayor I thank the Cabinet Member for his answer. Please could he outline the improvements this will mean in my town centre of High Barnet.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The main improvement that we will see Councillor are those of the decluttering of the town centres. We'll also see cleaner pavements as we remove the traps that dirt and other refuse and litter accumulates in – and I hope that we will see an economic development occurring in your particular town centre and all the others where we undertake this important work.

Question No. 14

Councillor Alison Moore

Will the Leader of the Council tell us if he supports the scrapping of free bus travel for under 18's in Barnet as reportedly proposed by the Tory Member of the London Assembly Mr Roger Evans?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Free bus pass for school travel is of course to be welcomed, whether unlimited free travel without restriction is wise in the long term is another matter.

Supplementary Question No. 14**Councillor Alison Moore**

Thank you Madam Mayor. As Councillor Freer may well be aware, in fact – there are restrictions in place against those who abuse the scheme. Putting these aside, precisely which other reductions in access to free bus travel for under 18s in full time education would Councillor Freer support, given that the fares policies that have been put in place save Barnet families with school age children up to £300 per child every year and give them access to local libraries, youth clubs and leisure centres, not to mention access to facilities all the way across London?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Thank you Madam Mayor. It's one thing to actually withdraw the cards through abuse and I believe a sum total of 10 have been withdrawn through abuse, it's quite another to provide unlimited free travel 24 hours a day. I have no problem with free travel for under 18s during normal hours, whatever they may be, but 11 o'clock at night, I don't think so. Using our buses as a mobile meeting place, I don't think so. Using our buses as a mobile anti-social behaviour magnet, I don't think so. Moving our youths around to legitimate exercise or activities, I do think so, that is quite different from what Councillor Moore is proposing.

Question No. 15**Councillor Dan Thomas**

Please could the Cabinet Member tell me whether the Council is undertaking a Best Value Review this year, and if so what is the theme?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

I am pleased to report that this year (2006/07), the Council is undertaking a Best Value Review of Sport and Physical Activity. The objective of the review is:

“Making Barnet fit for the future: maximising sport facilities in the borough and increasing participation in both sports and physical activity to support a healthy community”.

The review responds to an ambitious and challenging national agenda to make England the most active and successful sporting nation in the world. Equally, the review seeks to address local issues such as low satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities (39%, 2003/04 [tri-annual indicator]) and support the achievement of the Strong and Healthy Corporate Priority.

It's intended that the review will help to identify residents' priorities in relation to sport and physical activity, and define how we can best match resources to those priorities. The review will also seek to establish the ways in which the council can most effectively engage with partners and providers to improve participation and sport and physical activity services.

Supplementary Question No. 15**Councillor Dan Thomas**

Madam Mayor, I'd like to ask the Cabinet Member whether the review he mentioned in his answer would look at the way that our contract with Greenwich Leisure is working and what is envisaged for their role in the future.

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Thank you, Madam Mayor, I'm pleased to say that the Best Value Review will indeed include a look at the way the contract with Greenwich Leisure is working for us. I have to say that the evidence thus far is extremely good.

If we look back over the nearly four year period that Greenwich Leisure have been running 7 of our sports and leisure facilities in this borough, we'll see that they have spent something in excess of £2.5m on important improvements, notably in 4 of those centres, and I'm very pleased indeed that the discussions that I and my officers are having with Greenwich Leisure are proving to be extremely constructive as we look at how we will further enhance the offer that we make to Barnet residents. I have to say that I believe that the partnership we have in place is a very good example of how value can be delivered to all of our people.

Question No. 16

Councillor Andrew McNeil

Will the Leader of the Council confirm that there are no plans to scrap the Area Forums?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

There are no plans to scrap the Area Forums.

Supplementary Question No. 16

Councillor Andrew McNeil

Thank you, Madam Mayor, I'm grateful to the Leader of the Council for his very full reply. The Area Forums have proved to be a valuable mechanism for Barnet residents and helped them to feel involved in the work of the Council. I hope that Councillor Freer will continue to ensure that Members on his side of the Chamber treat both the Forums and the residents with respect, including punctual attendance and ungrudging commitment.

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

I'm grateful for Councillor McNeil's comments on the quality of the answer, I always try and give an answer that the question deserves. In terms of the attendance of our Members and the respect that they are due then I can assure the Councillor that the Conservative Members do give the Area Forums all the respect that the attendees and the institution deserves.

Question No. 17

Councillor Jim Tierney

Will the Cabinet Member please confirm that there are no plans to further curtail the public speaking rights at planning committees?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

I refer the Member to the committee papers of the Constitutional Review Committee to be held on 29 January 2007.

Supplementary Question No. 17

Councillor Jim Tierney

In the November 21 Constitution Review Committee papers it said we were going to reduce the number of speakers on planning applications and introduce a limit of three minutes for questions to speakers. Three minutes is too short in some instances. Is this still current thinking? It's not in the new papers but is in the action sheet for 21 November.

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

I refer the Member to my answer as amended by the supplementary, by the answer contained in the supplementary report of the Democratic Services Manager, I'm not so arrogant as to pre-judge the decision of the Committee and no doubt the Member will see in due course what those papers are containing.

Question No. 18

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Given the concern about energy efficient homes, what is being done to make existing plans for redevelopment more energy efficient?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Barnet's adopted UDP encourages energy efficient design and seeks forms of layout, design, landscaping and materials used in development that conserve energy. The UDP expects new development to meet high standards of energy efficiency.

Barnet has now produced an innovative SPD on Sustainable Design and Construction which supplements policy in the UDP. On energy efficiency it clearly sets out design and construction principles and expects applicants to be guided by the principles of being lean, being green and being clean. The SPD sets out generic environmental standards (BREEAM Standards) which are nationally managed by the Building Research Establishment. Barnet's minimum standard for all new development as stated in the SPD is to achieve a Very Good rating. After the consultation period, the SPD will be revised to take on board the recently published Code for Sustainable Homes which are equivalent to the BREEAM Standards.

In Barnet there are 2 recent examples of new build RSL schemes with high environmental standards:

- Notting Hill Housing Trust's Gold Lane development of 10 green roofed houses which won a Civic Trust award as well as a Grand Design Award and a RIBA Housing Design award for its environmental and energy efficiency. Materials such as cedar cladding and galvanised steel were employed for their low maintenance attributes.
- Home Group's Hillside development of 20 new homes incorporate solar water heaters, sedum roofs, south facing sun rooms, thermal massing to the floors and timber frame panels providing high levels of insulation. Also the orientation of the buildings will allow the integration of passive solar design to occur within the design.

All new Housing Association schemes will have to achieve the Eco Homes "very good" standard to qualify for Housing Corporation funding. Examples of the Eco Homes standard include the following recommendations:

- ☐ To minimise emissions of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere arising from the operation of a home and its services.
- ☐ To reduce the potential global warming from substances used in the manufacture or composition of insulating materials.
- ☐ To reduce surface runoff.
- ☐ To encourage the recycling of rainwater taken from the mains, for use in landscape/garden watering.

Supplementary Question No. 18**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Thank you very much, Madam Mayor. I note the answer with interest and I also note that two of the developments are going to bring in high environmental standards, however we're talking about two very, very small schemes, one of which is Home Group Hillside which only has 20 new homes but has been able to incorporate solar water heaters, sedum roofs, south facing sun rooms, thermal matting to the floors and timber framed panels providing high levels of insulation. I wonder which of the new larger scale developments are going to achieve this standard and by when.

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

I'm afraid I have to refer the Member to the supplementary planning document which is currently out for consultation and once that is in place I'm sure that you will see the aspirations that you've just indicated coming, flying free and far.

Question No. 19**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Transport for London have allocated £4.295m to Barnet in 2007/8. Would the Cabinet Member detail what this money will be spent on?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Programme Area	Allocation (£K)	Comment
Principal Road Renewal	1073	Scheme programme to be finalised following review of priority
Bridge assessment and strengthening	73	
Local Safety Schemes	725	
Walking	35	Practical pedestrian training
Non-LCN Cycling	35	Cycle training
LCN+	40	Contribution to corridor studies - studies required as part of LIP
Bus Stop Accessibility	65	Introduction of new bus stop clearways and accessibility improvements
LBPN Management	1300	Management of North-West London sector (includes consultant fees)
LBPN Borough Schemes	526	
School Travel Plans	333	Support for development and scheme implementation
Travel Awareness	15	Walk on Wednesday pilot with STP schools
Environment	25	Tree planting
Parallel initiatives	50	Review of congestion bottlenecks
Total	£4,295	

Question No. 20**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Will the Cabinet Member tell me which green space facilities are being removed as a result of the proposed efficiency savings across the Greenspaces budget?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Underused cricket tables that will allow a small increase in the number of football pitches to satisfy some of the increased demand for football.

Supplementary Question No. 20**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Thank you, Madam Mayor, I'm a bit concerned whether to ask Councillor Offord a supplementary because he seems to have contradicted himself already tonight. When I asked him about the street works in Golders Green last time he said economic development survey will not be his priority although his answer to Councillor Braun he seemed to indicate that the economic development of town centres was. But the question I would like to ask Councillor Offord was can the Cabinet Member confirm how many cricket tables and where?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

No, I'm not going to at this point in time.

Question No. 21**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

Will the Cabinet Member tell me how many skip hiring companies were prosecuted for breaching the conditions of their licence in the last financial year? What was the cost to the Council for undertaking these prosecutions? How much money in penalties was re-gained by the Council?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The last prosecution of a skip company was in 2005 when two prosecutions were made. As prosecution through the courts is very time consuming, I prefer that officers seek resolutions which avoid the need to take this action.

Supplementary Question No. 21**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

Councillor Offord, you always seem to cut the answers I want short – I think you do it on purpose. I wanted to know how much money the Council made on these skips last year.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

I always endeavour to answer the questions to the best of my ability so I'm very happy to prepare that information for the Councillor and I will respond to her in the fullness of time.

Question No. 22**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

How long will it take for the re-placement of street lights to be rolled out across the whole borough? When does the Cabinet Member anticipate that (a) Burnt Oak ward and (b) Montrose Avenue and Lanacre Avenue will be completed?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The Core Investment Programme which includes the replacement of 16,754 lighting columns (63%) is a five year programme. The programme commenced in September 2006.

There are 23 roads within the Burnt Oak ward which have been included in the year 1 programme and this includes Montrose Avenue.

The programme is developed based on a number of criteria including:

- Age of Equipment
- Quality of Lighting
- Structural and Electrical Inspection and testing results
- Crime Statistics
- Accident Statistics

When the above considerations are taken into account a priority order is developed by the contractor and those columns which are identified as having the highest priority are included in the next 12 month programme.

The contractor is currently preparing the data to inform the priorities for the second 12 month programme period. Once this has been received and reviewed by officers, the contractor will write to all Ward Councillors enclosing a copy of the programme.

Supplementary Question No. 22

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

Thanks very much Madam Mayor, again I will direct this question to Councillor Matthew Offord, can the Cabinet Member say what areas are being delayed as a result of the evident difficulties experienced in the implementation of the street lighting programme and guarantee that the year 1 programme will be completed by the end of this financial year? Thank you very much, Madam Mayor.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Madam Mayor, no particular area is being held up. Some of the lamp columns have been implemented slower than we had expected but I can give him assurances that we will have the 1700 lampposts in place by the end of April.

Question No. 23

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

A local resident has complained to me about the placing of a street lighting column in front of his driveway. What criteria are being used for the positioning of new and replacement street lighting columns, and what consultation with local residents does the council do?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The contract requires the contractor to produce the lighting designs and in so doing they should consider the affect the positioning of columns will have on local residents. As there is a requirement to improve the lighting to meet European standards this will lead to an increase in the number of columns in most roads and in many cases the positioning of columns will be changed from those that exist at present. As a general rule lighting columns should be placed at property boundaries, however this is not practical in all cases. Columns should not interfere with existing driveways and should not be placed in locations which will cause obstruction.

The contractor is required to submit designs to council officers for comment. These designs should clearly identify existing driveways and officers will check that columns are not located within a driveway.

The contractor is required to write to all residents and ward members identifying that the lighting is to be renewed in their road and this will include providing a plan which will show the proposed column positions. The letter will identify who residents should contact if they have any questions, queries, complaints or concerns. All correspondence received will be dealt with by the contractor prior to any installation works taking place.

Question No. 24

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Advice is given to developers regarding treatment of surfaces for graffiti. Will the Cabinet Member tell me which surfaces are proving more effective for the removal of graffiti?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

It is more efficient to remove graffiti from non-porous surfaces than porous surfaces such as brickwork and wooden fencing.

Supplementary Question No. 24**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Thank you very much, Madam Mayor, I asked for, my question was will the Cabinet Member tell me which surfaces are proving more effective for the removal of graffiti and I got the answer which is more efficient to remove graffiti from non-porous surfaces. I wanted to ask what was more effective for the removal of graffiti. I know it's very easy to wipe from porous surfaces but it doesn't seem to be in the long run the most effective. Could you answer me please?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Madam Mayor, a surface isn't effective in the removal of graffiti and that's why I've answered the question to say which surfaces are more effective in not adhering graffiti paints and marker pens. In regards to what is most effective, it's to use a solvent based remover to get graffiti off particular surfaces.