

Minutes

OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET held at Barnet House, N20 0EJ on Tuesday, 16 December 2008.

PRESENT:

- *The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor John Marshall)
- *The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mukesh Depala)

Councillors:

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

*denotes Member present

105. PRAYER (Agenda Item 1):

The Mayor's Chaplain offered prayer.

106. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2):

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Danish Chopra who was away on business, Councillor Rayner and Councillor Mukesh Depala who was delayed on Mayoral Business. Apologies for lateness were received for Councillor Jeremy Davies and Councillor Susette Palmer

107. **MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2008 (Agenda Item 3):**
RESOLVED –That the minutes of the meeting and extraordinary meeting held on the 4 November be approved as a correct record.

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

The Worshipful the Mayor expressed his sorrow in formally announcing the death of Mrs Peggy Hedge who was Deputy Mayor of Barnet from 1990 to 1991. He explained that she and former Councillor John Hedge were unique in that they became Mayor and Deputy Mayoress in the first year Mr Hedge sat on the Authority. Mrs Hedge was held in high regard by her colleagues. The Council paid a standing tribute and a minute's silence was held in remembrance of a departed friend and colleague.

The Worshipful the Mayor, announced the departure of the Chief Executive, Leo Boland who was leaving the Authority to take up his new role as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service of the Greater London Authority in the new year. He announced that after seven years as Chief Executive of Barnet, Mr Boland was leaving this Authority as a 4 Star Authority. The Worshipful the Mayor, joined by the Council, thanked him for his hard work and leadership and wished him good luck in his new appointment.

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

The following personal and non - prejudicial interests were declared relating to the items indicated, with the Members concerned participating in the discussion and vote:

- Agenda Item 8.6 Motion in the name of Councillor Lynne Hillan as Councillors Monroe Palmer and Ross Houston are Council appointed Director of Barnet Homes.

110. **BUSINESS REMAINING FROM LAST MEETING (Agenda Item 6):**

None.

120. **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.

121. **VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Councillor Joan Scannell, duly seconded, moved under Council Procedure Rule, Section 1, paragraph 10.2.2, that the order of business relating to Agenda Item 8 be varied so that Motions 8.1, 8.5 and 8.6 be heard first.

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

RESOLVED – That the order of business be varied to allow Motions 8.1, 8.5 and 8.6 to be debated and voted upon in advance of votes being taken on the other Motions on the Agenda.

123. **MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR CHARLIE O-MACAULEY AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR TOM DAVEY (Agenda Items 8.1 and 13.1.7 (i))**

Motion 8.1 in the name of Councillor Charlie O-Macauley was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Jim Tierney was moved and a further amendment in the name of Councillor Tom Davey was moved from the floor. Debate ensued. Upon

being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Jim Tierney was declared lost. Upon being put the vote, the amendment in the name Councillor Tom Davey was declared carried.

Ten Members demanded a Division on the voting on the amendment in the name of Councillor Tom Davey. Upon being taken the results of the Division were declared as follows.

For	Against	Absent
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Bulmer	Campbell	Chopra
Braun	Casey	Depala
Burton	Jack Cohen	Harris
Dean Cohen	Cooke	Naghar
Melvin Cohen	Davies	Rayner
Coleman	Farrier	
Cornelius	Houston	
Davey	Hutton	
Finn	Johnson	
Freer	Macdonald	
Gordon	McFadyen	
Greenspan	McGUIRK	
Harper	McNeil	
Helen Hart	Moore	
John Hart	O-Macauley	
Hillan	Monroe Palmer	
Marshall	Susette Palmer	
Margo	Rawlings	
Offord	Rogers	
Perry	Sargeant	
Prentice	Schneiderman	
Rajput	Slocombe	
Rams	Sodha	
Rutter	Tierney	
Brian Salinger	Zubairi	
Kate Salinger		
Scannell		
Andreas Tambourides		
Joanna Tambourides		
Thomas		
Webb		
Weider		
Yannakoudakis		

For	33
Against	25
Absent	5
TOTAL	63

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

Councillor O-Macauley handed to the Mayor a petition urging the Council to support the Fairtrade campaign.

RESOLVED - Council now believes the Fairtrade campaign is a laudable one, but whose practices are fundamentally flawed.

Council understands that the Fairtrade Cooperative encourages oversupply in the market, and unproductive practices, with little emphasis on mechanisation and diversification.

Further Council believes that only 10% of the premium consumers pay for Fairtrade actually make it to the producer, and that small (often poor) growers who cannot or will not be part of the Fairtrade scheme see their profits suffer as a consequence.

Council notes that, in order to become a “Fairtrade” Borough, taxpayers’ money needs to be diverted from frontline services.

Council believes that, given the continued, chronic underfunding of this Council by the Labour Government, the authority has to prioritise its spending towards frontline services, particularly in light of the impending recession.

Council calls on Cabinet to ensure LBB continues to supply a diversity of products in its premises, promoting choice for consumers and best value for the taxpayers of this Borough.

124. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR MATTHEW OFFORD AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR ANNE HUTTON (Agenda Item 8.5)

Motion 8.5 was moved in the name of Councillor Matthew Offord. An amendment in the name of Councillor Anne Hutton was moved from the floor. Debate ensued. Councillor Matthew Offord accepted Councillor Hutton’s amendment. Upon being put to the vote the motion in the name of Councillor Offord as amended by Councillor Hutton was declared carried

RESOLVED - Council welcomes the success of the care leavers’ apprenticeship scheme where seven young people were offered apprenticeships across different council departments along with support to undertake vocational training to achieve NOVA levels 2 and 3.

In addition, Council also welcomes the support from a range of service areas to the scheme and notes that apprentices were able to take up places in Parks and open spaces; customer services; children’s centres; strategic development; communications and pest control.

Council wholeheartedly congratulates the apprentices who have successfully completed their apprenticeships and wishes them well in their search for permanent positions.

Council requests Cabinet to continue to support and develop this policy so that new apprenticeship places can be created for 2009.

In addition, Council believes that, in order to show ongoing commitment to corporate parenting, the role of all members as corporate parents should be further

developed and asks Cabinet to consider mechanisms for achieving this and implement any proposals.

125. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR LYNNE HILLAN (Agenda Item 8.6)

Motion 8.6 was moved in the name of Councillor Lynne Hillan. Councillor Ross Houston moved an amendment from the floor. Debate ensued.

Upon being put the vote, the amendment in name of Councillor Houston was declared lost.

Ten Members demanded a Division on the voting on the amendment in the name of Councillor Houston. Upon being taken the results of the Division were declared as follows.

For	Against	Absent
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Campbell	Bulmer	Chopra
Casey	Braun	Depala
Jack Cohen	Burton	Harris
Cooke	Dean Cohen	Margo
Davies	Melvin Cohen	Naghar
Farrier	Coleman	Rayner
Houston	Cornelius	
Hutton	Davey	
Johnson	Finn	
Macdonald	Freer	
McFadyen	Gordon	
McGuirk	Greenspan	
McNeil	Harper	
Moore	Helen Hart	
O-Macauley	John Hart	
Monroe Palmer	Hillan	
Susette Palmer	Marshall	
Rawlings	Offord	
Rogers	Perry	
Sargeant	Prentice	
Schneiderman	Rajput	
Slocombe	Rams	
Sodha	Rutter	
Tierney	Brian Salinger	
Zubairi	Kate Salinger	
	Scannell	
	Andreas Tambourides	
	Joanna Tambourides	
	Thomas	
	Webb	
	Weider	
	Yannakoudakis	

For	25
Against	32
Absent	6
TOTAL	63

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

RESOLVED - Council notes the London Housing Strategy, which aims to provide sustainable housing for the future, and promote aspiration and opportunity.

Council welcomes the break with the dictatorial approach followed by the previous Mayor of London, which saw targets enforced on every Borough, whether they were appropriate or not.

Council also notes that Ken Livingstone’s approach saw 1 and 2 bed flats built in the Barnet, when the demand in the Borough is for 3 and 4 bedroom houses.

In contract, Council believes that Boris Johnson’s policy will support and extend home ownership, provide incentives for new development, and lead to the creating of sustainable, attractive communities, particularly important in these difficult times in the housing market.

Accordingly, Council calls on Cabinet to work with Mayor of London to implement polices contained within his housing strategy in Barnet so we can deliver homes to our residents and those who aspire to live here need.

126. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR WAYNE CASEY AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW HARPER AND COUNCILLOR JOHN HART (Agenda Item 8.2 and 13.1.7 (ii))

Motion 8.2 in the name of Councillor Wayne Casey and an amendment in the name of Councillor Jeremy Davies was moved and further amendments in the name of Councillor Andrew Harper and Councillor John Hart were moved from the floor and put to the vote without debate. The amendment in the name of Councillor Jeremy Davies was declared lost.

Ten Members demanded a Division on the voting on the amendment in the name of Councillor Davies. Upon being taken the results of the Division were declared as follows.

For	Against	Absent
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Campbell	Bulmer	Chopra
Casey	Braun	Depala
Jack Cohen	Burton	Harris
Cooke	Dean Cohen	Margo
Davies	Melvin Cohen	Naghar
Farrier	Coleman	Rayner
Houston	Cornelius	
Hutton	Davey	
Johnson	Finn	

Macdonald	Freer	
McFadyen	Gordon	
McGuirk	Greenspan	
McNeil	Harper	
Moore	Helen Hart	
O-Macauley	John Hart	
Monroe Palmer	Hillan	
Susette Palmer	Marshall	
Rawlings	Offord	
Rogers	Perry	
Sargeant	Prentice	
Schneiderman	Rajput	
Slocombe	Rams	
Sodha	Rutter	
Tierney	Brian Salinger	
Zubairi	Kate Salinger	
	Scannell	
	Andreas Tambourides	
	Joanna Tambourides	
	Thomas	
	Webb	
	Weider	
	Yannakoudakis	

For	25
Against	32
Absent	6
TOTAL	63

Upon being put to the vote, the amendments in the name of Councillor Andrew Harper and Councillor John Hart were declared carried. Upon being put to the vote the substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council notes that although Barnet suffered from high road casualty rates last year, many of these were on TfL roads which are not the responsibility of LBB.

Council is also pleased to note that early figures for 2008 show a decrease in accidents three times greater than the London average, compared to 2007.

Further, Council understands the Conservative administration is committed to improving safety for all users of Barnet's roads, by encouraging safer behaviours while maintaining smooth traffic flow and improving communication across the Borough.

Accordingly Council calls on Cabinet to continue its balanced approach to road safety in the Borough, while ensuring Barnet is kept on the move.

Further, in light of the Inspectors' adjudication on the Mill Hill East Development, Council notes that no decision had been taken about opening Sanders Lane to through traffic, and welcomes confirmation that there are no such plans on the table.

127. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR JEREMY DAVIES AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR MIKE FREER (Agenda Item 8.3 and 13.1.7 (iii))

Motion 8.3 in the name of Councillor Jeremy Davies and an amendment in the name of Councillor Monroe Palmer was moved and a further amendment in the name of Councillor Mike Freer was moved from the floor and put to the vote without debate. The amendment in the name of Councillor Monroe Palmer was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote the amendment in the name of Councillor Mike Freer was declared carried.

Ten Members demanded a Division on the voting on the amendment in the name of Councillor Mike Freer. Upon being taken the results of the Division were declared as follows.

For	Against	Absent
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Bulmer	Campbell	Chopra
Braun	Casey	Depala
Burton	Jack Cohen	Harris
Dean Cohen	Cooke	Margo
Melvin Cohen	Davies	Naghar
Coleman	Farrier	Rayner
Cornelius	Houston	
Davey	Hutton	
Finn	Johnson	
Freer	Macdonald	
Gordon	McFadyen	
Greenspan	McGuirk	
Harper	McNeil	
Helena Hart	Moore	
John Hart	O-Macauley	
Hillan	Monroe Palmer	
Marshall	Susette Palmer	
Offord	Rawlings	
Perry	Rogers	
Prentice	Sargeant	
Rajput	Schneiderman	
Rams	Slocombe	
Rutter	Sodha	
Brian Salinger	Tierney	
Kate Salinger	Zubairi	
Scannell		
Andreas Tambourides		
Joanna Tambourides		
Thomas		
Webb		
Weider		
Yannakoudakis		

For	32
Against	25
Absent	6
TOTAL	63

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

RESOLVED - Council notes the belated activity by the Chairman of the Audit Committee and notes his request that Cabinet commissions a report on how the guidance issued by CIPFA - Local Authority Accounting Panel 78 – may be implemented.

Council understands that the Chairman of Audit Committee is out of date and the CIPFA advice has been superseded by DCLG Guidance.

Further, Council believes that the Chairman of Audit has failed in his duty to examine the Council’s deposits or Treasury Management Policy and is now trying to shut the stable door.

Council notes that the Chief Finance Officer will follow all available Government guidance, CIPFA guidance and external professional advice in the management of resources, and requests he continue to do so.

128. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR MIKE FREER (Agenda Item 8.4)

Motion 8.4 in the name of Councillor Mike Freer was put to the vote without debate. The motion was carried by unanimous vote

RESOLVED - Council is appalled at the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, where at least 200 people were killed and 300 injured, including men, women and children.

Council notes that this series of brutal attacks included assaults on a railway station, two hotels, a restaurant, a cinema, a Police Station and a Jewish community centre.

Council believes there can be no justification whatsoever for this outrage, which Council regards as an attack not only on India’s people, but also on its free and democratic way of life.

Therefore, Council calls on the international organisations to ensure those responsible are brought swiftly to justice for their murderous actions.

Council further asks the Chief Executive to write to the Indian High Commissioner in London expressing this Council’s condolences for those killed and injured in the atrocities in Mumbai.

The Mayor indicated that he would also write to the Mayor of Mumbai

129. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING.

In accordance with the Agenda, the Mayor adjourned the meeting.
The meeting reconvened at 9.05pm.

130. ADMINISTRATION POLICY ITEM: HIDDEN HOMES (Agenda Item 9.1)

Councillor Lynne Hillan proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. An amendment in the of Councillor Ross Houston was moved from the floor.

Debate ensued on the Policy Item. Upon being put to the vote the amendment in the name of Councillor Ross Houston was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote the substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – Background: While the recent decrease in house prices is making housing nominally more affordable, the lack of availability of mortgages and the stalling of development in many locations continues to make the goal of home ownership difficult to obtain for many, while many people remain on the waiting list for social housing.

One solution, piloted in Wandsworth LB, and now being considered by Harrow LB, is to develop redundant units, such as unused garages, into homes.

The new Homes and Communities Agency, established by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, takes an open approach to funding small housing schemes, and this Council understands that a similar “hidden homes” policy may be able to make use of some of these available resources.

Recommendation

That Cabinet is asked to develop a policy that could see redundant non-residential units converted into housing in order to address local need, subject to Planning.

131. OPPOSITION POLICY ITEM AS AMENDED BY ANDREW HARPER: TRANSPORT IN BARNET (Agenda Item 9.2)

Councillor Kath McGuirk proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. Amendments in the name of Councillor Geof Cooke and Councillor Andrew Harper were move from the floor. Debate ensued.

Upon being put to the vote the amendment in the name of Councillor Geof Cooke was declared lost.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Andrew Harper was declared lost.

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

RESOLVED - Council is pleased that the new Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, is investing heavily in public transport in Barnet and across London as part of TfL’s ten year Business Plan.

Council notes that the plan will help deliver a 30% increase in the capital’s transport network by 2018, delivering improved public transport, greater opportunities for walking and cycling, smoother traffic flows and increased security on the bus and tube network.

Further, Council is pleased this Mayor is progressing improvements to the A406 at Bounds Green, and is engaged with productive talks with LBB on a sustainable scheme for Henly’s Corner, the planned improvements to which were shelved by his predecessor, Ken Livingstone.

Council requests Cabinet continue to work with the Mayor to ensure the Borough receives its share of transport improvements as part of this Business plan.

132. REPORT OF CABINET (Agenda Item 10)

None

133. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 11)

None

134. REPORTS OF OTHER COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 12)

None

135. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION – LEADER’S SCHEME OF DELEGATION (Report of The Director of Corporate Governance – Agenda Item 13.1.1)

In accordance with the Constitution, the Leader of the Council had advised the Director of Corporate Governance that he has amended his Scheme of Delegation to authorise the Director of Resources to cancel penalty charge notices and other sums due to the Council (in addition to individual debts) up to £5,000 as follows.

RESOLVED – That the Director of Corporate Governance be instructed to make the necessary amendment to the Council’s Constitution.

136. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTIONS (Report of The Director of Corporate Governance – Agenda Item 13.1.2)

RESOLVED – That;

- 1. The Director of Corporate Governance be instructed to amend paragraph 3 of the terms of reference of the Planning and Environment Committee which is in the Responsibility for Functions section of the Constitution.**
- 2. The amendment should be the addition of the following words after “town and village greens”:
“including powers of protection and enforcement although in practice these specific functions will be discharged by officers.”**

137. REPORTS EXEMPTED FROM THE CALL-IN PROCESS BECAUSE THEY ARE URGENT (Report of The Director of Corporate Governance – Agenda Item 13.1.3 and Item 13.1.6)

These matters were reported to the Council to meet Constitutional requirements. No action was required by the Council and the decisions had been implemented.

In the cases listed below, the Chairman of the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the decisions proposed were reasonable in all the circumstances, were urgent and therefore had consented to the proposed decisions being exempted from call-in:

- (i) The Leader of the Council approved on 5 December 2008 the increase of the deposit counterparty limits. The decision required this to be implemented with immediate effect and could not await the next meeting of the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 December 2008.
- (ii) The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport approved on 11 December 2008 a proposal for the reduction in pay and daily tariffs across the borough between 20 December 2008 and 4 January 2008 inclusive. A traffic order and other arrangements needed to be in place well in

advance of the 20 December implementation date. The next meeting of the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee to which the decision could be referred was not until 26 January 2008.

138. ACTING UP ARRANGEMENTS (Report of The Director of Corporate Governance – Agenda Item 13.1.4)

RESOLVED - That Council approved the following acting-up arrangements with effect from Monday 22 December 2008:-

- 1. Mr. Brian Reynolds as Acting Chief Executive and Acting Head of Paid Service.**
- 2. Ms. Jill Stansfield, Executive Director for Communities, as Executive Director for Communities and Acting Deputy Chief Executive.**
- 3. Mr. Stewart Murray, Director of Planning, Housing & Regeneration, as Acting Executive Director of Environment and Regeneration.**
- 4. Ms. Pam Wharfe, Head of Housing & Environmental Health, as Acting Director of Planning, Housing & Regeneration.**

139. CHIEF OFFICER APPOINTMENTS PANEL – CHIEF EXECUTIVE Report of The Director of Corporate Governance – Agenda Item 13.1.5)

Nominations were moved in the names of Councillor Joan Scannell, Councillor Barry Rawlings and Councillor Susette Palmer.

RESOLVED – That the Council appoint the following Chief Officers Appointment Panel to carry out the Appointment of the Chief Executive.

Chairman: Councillor Mike Freer

Vice Chairman: Councillor Richard Cornelius

Councillors: Lynne Hillan, Wendy Prentice, Alison Moore, Barry Rawlings, Jack Cohen.

Substitutes Councillor: Melvin Cohen, Joan Scannell, Andrew McNeil, Jim Tierney, Susette Palmer, Wayne Casey

140. REPORTS FROM THE MONITORING OFICER (Agenda Item 13.2)

None.

141. COMMENTS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE CABINET (Agenda Item 14)

Comment: Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Given that our high streets are suffering in the economic downturn, can the Leader please explain what the London Borough of Barnet is doing to encourage shoppers into our shops in the run up to Christmas, and any other help we might give to our small businesses to help them manage.

Response: Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

In addition to the Christmas discounted parking scheme, which has been widely welcomed by our traders, we are also planning to run a seminar in January for local businesses to give them advice on how to access Council, University, London Development Agency and general public sector contracts, as well as giving them direct

contact with Business Link so that our local traders, local SMEs understand what is available in the public sector; practical help to overcome barriers doing business with the public sector, Mr Mayor.

Comment: Councillor Monroe Palmer

The delegated powers report on the reduced parking says the charges are to be notified by public advertisement to be for the period 20 December to 4 January 2009. Sadly, the advertisement which appeared in the Press newspaper says it comes into operation on 20 December but nowhere does it state when it finishes. Since that is part of the delegated powers report which actually says that, it has to be advertised, it has not been advertised in the proper form. Does that mean that cheap parking now cannot end on 4 January 2009 because no end date has been given or are we again going to mislead the public? I would also add in my time, that all the pay and display machines are going to have to be adjusted and new tariffs put on them and it would be useful if we knew what the cost would be for adjusting a machine. In the DPR report, it says in order to maximise useage and therefore assist in the effective management of the surrounding road network, I'm not sure what that means. But, now we do have the situation where parking in my part of the world, Childs Hill, where I live and which includes Golders Green High Street, where parking is at a premium, now and during that period from 20 December, people will be able to park there, shopkeepers, bankers will be able to park there for £1 all day just destroys the whole purpose of getting traders, shoppers into the shops. How are you going to deal with that?

Response: Councillor Andrew Harper

I'm given to understand that finishing on 4 January will still be applicable and we won't have a problem with that. The second point about the costs, I know that the costs are very reasonable and I was happy to agree them. And the third point about the effective management of parking, actually the biggest turnover that we've always found is in those bands that are at the lower end, the sort of 15/30 minutes, 1 hour ones, and I think there's every reason to think that those will continue to be very popular and there will be substantial turnover of vehicles in those price bands.

The meeting finished at 10.12pm

**Council Questions to Cabinet Members
16 December 2008
Questions and Responses**

Question 1**Councillor John Hart**

Would the Cabinet Member consider a discount on parking penalties for retired persons?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

London Boroughs have no individual authority to set a blanket discount rate in the circumstances described. Any change in the levels of charges for penalty charge notices must be agreed by the London Councils Transport and Environment Committee, then approved by the Mayor.

Supplementary Question 1**Councillor John Hart**

The Cabinet Member's answer, for which I'm grateful, contains my supplementary question. Since it falls to the London Councils Transport and Environment Committee he says to discuss my suggestion may I ask him to refer it to that appropriate body. I'm sure the Mayor of London would be sympathetic to an opportunity to help older poorer folk and win a few votes in the process.

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

I shall be very happy to take soundings among my colleagues on the London Councils Transport and Environment Committee, although I have to say I feel I shan't have a great deal of success.

Question 2**Councillor Jack Cohen**

The following is an extract from a posting on "where I live.com":

"Hi, I live in Westcroft Close NW2, and as many other residents I feel we are rather left behind. We, the residents live in the outskirts of the Borough of Barnet and when we walk locally we feel we are forgotten by the Council: Lichfield Road must be the only scruffy street in Barnet, with dislocated pedestrian pavements and holes which are often filled with mud. The road surface is worn out and full of dangerous holes; there are no Zebra crossings, but the one next to Hampstead school. The Millennium Green has not seen a proper children playground area since many years of his creation; walking down the bridge across Cricklewood rail bridge is a daily nightmare we have to face on our way to local shops. Avoiding to be hit by pigeon's excrement's still nesting under the bridge, escaping from the deafening traffic and smog, it's quotidian for us. With the wet weather there is a huge puddle at the bottom of the slope, and most of the time we miserably end up soaked wet splashed with dirty water. Unfortunately for us, there is no other way down. But in the scale of my neighbourhood needs, safety is the issue I would give priority."

Ward Councillors are constantly reporting some of these issues but nothing ever seems to get done. Why not?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Westcroft Close is a private road which is partly in the LB Camden.

Lichfield Road is also partly in Camden and the Barnet section, including the side roads to the east, last had works six years ago.

The Camden section has been resurfaced recently, and the Barnet section has recently been assessed and will be prioritised for footway reconstruction and carriageway resurfacing as part of the 2009/10 programme that will be an item at the March 2009 Finchley and Golders Green Area Environment Sub-Committee.

A407 Cricklewood Lane is a busy road which frequently experiences traffic congestion. However, there are proposals to improve the junction with Claremont Road / Litchfield Road as part of the first phase of the Brent Cross Cricklewood Regeneration scheme, together with the main A5 / A407 junction, which will reduce vehicle queues and improve road user safety.

The Millennium Green is not the responsibility of the Council. The nearest play areas to the Millennium Green are in Childs Hill Park, Basing Hill Park, Clitterhouse Playing Fields and Clarefield Park, all of which are within a 10 minute walk.

The rail bridge was pigeon proofed last year so as far as we were aware pigeons are no longer a problem. Cricklewood bridge was checked on 6 December and is definitely netted.

Question 3

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Currently, 1.46% of the Barnet workforce declares that they have a disability. What is the Council doing to ensure that disabled people have equal access to employment with LB Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

General Comment

A major issue in determining the numbers of disabled employees is the reluctance to declare a disability. Steps have been made to improve data capture and for non schools based staff, 2.0% of this workforce has now declared a disability. Further work is required to improve the schools data, in particular from schools that do not buy in to the HR or Payroll service.

Recruitment

Barnet continues to use the two tick symbol disability symbol on our recruitment advertising. This is to demonstrate that we are positive about employing people with disabilities. The symbol is a recognition given by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have agreed to make certain positive commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled people. Some of the commitments are:

- to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities
- to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment, (e.g. using our *Employee Assistance Officer, return fast track appointments to Occupational Health, using the counselling service, People at Work*)

Website

Improved features for users who are disabled (<http://www.barnet.gov.uk/website-accessibility>).

Partnership

We have set targets to increase the employment of disabled people within Barnet Council and other employers. In order to improve performance levels, dialogue was undertaken with national MENCAP who have received central government support to increase employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities in Councils, building on the WorkRight model. National MENCAP approached Barnet Council to enter into a partnership to increase employment opportunities. The partnership is based on adoption of the Workright model and the employment of a coordinator by MENCAP. This post holder works within HR to identify job vacancies, undertake job carving and match candidates to vacancies. After selection, each candidate has a training period (usually 4-6 weeks, depending on individual needs) to check their suitability. The candidate is then interviewed for the vacant post. The partnership began in June 2008.

Policy

Officers have formulated and agreed a proposed new work experience policy which will enable both able and disabled applicants to gain work experience with the Council. This policy will be presented to General Functions Committee in January for approval.

Question 4

Councillor John Hart

Would the Cabinet Member introduce into the training of traffic wardens an instruction to allow a grace period of, say, 5 minutes to allow a driver to reach a distant paying machine, or collect a prescription, etc. before imposing a penalty ticket?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

It is felt that sufficient time is given to motorists to check signage and purchase a pay and display ticket. An enforcement officer already allows approximately 5 minutes before starting to issue a penalty as the driver may have gone to purchase a pay and display ticket.

If someone who had difficulty walking took longer to get a pay and display ticket, we might consider cancelling it under the mitigation procedure. Processes are in place to ensure fair and transparent enforcement and where justified a five minute grace period is already given to motorists.

Question 5

Councillor Jeremy Davies

How much interest is due on the Council's £27.4m invested in Icelandic banks?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

This financial year £1,513,463.

Supplementary Question 5

Councillor Jeremy Davies

I'd like to thank the Leader for his answer, but maybe he'd like to actually confirm that in fact the interest due on the Icelandic investments is actually £4m. In fact, if you go back a year in 2007/08, we were owed £1m. So, in fact, the Council has £2.5m that is due to date on Icelandic investments. But also there is £1.5m, for next year it's £1m, and for 2010/11 it is £0.5m. So, in fact, the Council is due a total of £4m and maybe the Leader would like to confirm that in fact the outstanding debt from Iceland is not £27.4m, but it's actually £31.4m.

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

No, I can't confirm that.

Question 6

Councillor Julie Johnson

What explanation can the Cabinet Member give for the 14% increase in the reported incidents of domestic violence? What is being done to increase the percentage of domestic violence offences that result in sanctioned detention?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The Police target for detections this year is 43%, this is an increase of 3% from last year. Barnet police are currently on target to achieve this detection rate, performance currently stands at 42.3%. This exceeds the target for an increase in the percentage of Sanctioned Detections as set out in the Local Area Agreement 2007/08 – 2009/10.

In order to achieve the above target a cradle to the grave review of police responses to domestic violence has taken place.

A needs review of Domestic Violence provision in the borough is currently being undertaken and will include looking at the experiences of survivors of domestic violence and their experiences of engaging with services. This will help us improve provision, which in turn will encourage more victims to come forward and report.

Question 7

Councillor Richard Weider

Can the Leader outline which MPs have submitted Freedom of Information requests, and how many to Barnet Council?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

FOI requests on behalf of MP's

Date	Name of MP	Details of request
Oct-06	Mark Prisk	Business Support Schemes
Nov-06	Nick Clegg	ASBO breaches

Apr-07	David Davies	Marriage Stats
Dec-07	Jo Swinson	Packaging
Mar-07	W Wearmouth	Biometrics in schools
Jan-08	Julia Goldsworthy	Telephone Access to council services
Feb-08	Grant Shapps	Homeless provisions
Feb-08	Jeremy Hunt	Lottery Funding
Feb-08	Nigel Fletcher	Building Schools for future programme
Jan-08	Norman Baker	Concessionary Bus fare scheme
Mar-08	Andrew Dismore	Leader's office postage costs etc.
Apr-08	Andrew Dismore	Minority Group events
May-08	Andrew Dismore	Hendon leader listens event
May-08	Andrew Dismore	Cost of events
May-08	Andrew Dismore	Hendon / Edgware events, notes and dates
Jun-08	Julia Goldsworthy	Waste Services
Sep-08	Lynn Featherstone	Youth Services
Oct-08	Andrew Dismore	Mayoral Diaries
Oct-08	Sarah Teather	Debit and Credit Card Usage
Nov-08	Julia Goldsworthy	Iceland Bank Investments
Nov-08	Paul Rowen	Asbestos
Nov-08	Chris Ruane	Out of borough placements

Supplementary Question 7

Councillor Richard Weider

Given that Mr Dismore voted against the FOI requirements applying to MPs – do you think it's cynical of him to ask so many questions under the FOI Act to the Council?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Mr Dismore's depth of cynicism, of course is well known to Members on this side, but it is rather hypocritical for him to vote against legislation for himself, but expect everyone else to abide by it.

Question 8

Councillor Jeremy Davies

What is the impact of the recent fall in interest rates on the interest received on Council investments? In this year and 2009/2010?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Based on current deposit balances the Council will lose around £780,000 for every 1% reduction in interest rates for the year 2008/09. Based on projected deposit balances for 2009/10 a 1% drop in interest rates will result in a drop of £1.8m in deposit interest.

Supplementary Question 8

Councillor Jeremy Davies

I'm rather disappointed with Councillor Freer's last comments because I have seen it in black and white, I have been to look at these papers. But, I'd ask him to comment on the answer he's given me tonight – would he like to confirm that as interest rates have recently dropped by 3% that in fact the Council will lose £6m in interest next year?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

It's not the figure I have Mr Mayor.

Question 9

Councillor Claire Farrier

When will the Council re-open the play area in Silkstream Park that was closed due to vandalism?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Sadly, Silkstream Park has been subject to recurring vandalism following the installation of a new piece of equipment this summer. Within a day of the installation the safety surfacing in the play area had been ripped up and the playground closed for health and safety reasons.

Following the repair of the safety surfacing this was again ripped up at a much greater scale and a piece of equipment burnt. Due to the on-going problems with vandalism the play area has remained closed.

In instances of recurring vandalism, repairs/replacement of equipment are left for a period of time, and in some cases a judgement is made that it won't be repaired / replaced at all, otherwise we simply waste money. However, the play ground at Silkstream is due to be repaired early December after which it will be re-opened.

Question 10

Councillor Tom Davey

Could the Cabinet Member please outline how Barnet can expect to benefit from Mayor Johnson's recently-announced transport plans for London?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Transport for London recently announced (20th November) the funding available to boroughs for the 2009/10 financial year. This funding allocation is based on scheme specific 'bids' with funding allocated only to those projects Transport for London are willing to support.

The attached spreadsheet details the allocation Barnet received, but it should be pointed out that this is only an initial allocation and additional funding is likely to be agreed in areas such as bridge maintenance and bus priority.

In summary, our total allocation is around £3.5m. Of this, nearly £1m is for principal road maintenance, £705k for local safety schemes, £556k for school travel plans and we also have £117k for cycle training.

This is likely to be the last year in which TfL make the decision on which schemes to fund. Work has been taking place between Transport for London and the boroughs to find a simpler and less bureaucratic way of allocating funding to boroughs for local transport projects. The current proposals include moving to a formula allocation which would mean funding is distributed according to need with Boroughs then allowed to determine local spending priorities.

Summary Report		WBS Element	Initial Allocation
		£	£
Borough			
Barnet			3,419,000
BP			650,000
Bus Priority			650,000
1792	Golders Green Road junction with Finchley Road		50,000
1793	Route 221 – Whole route improvements		50,000
1794	Edgware Road approaching Capitol Way		50,000
1795	East Barnet Village		30,000
1796	Route 34 – Whole route improvements		40,000
1797	Routes 43/134 – Colney Hatch Lane		50,000
1801	Borough Administration		15,000
1802	Sector Administration		15,000
1803	Consultant Fees		350,000
LCN		115,000	
LCN		115,000	
4564	Link 5 – Entire length of link		115,000
Not assigned		2,654,000	
Local Area Accessibility		40,000	
13090	LAA Outline Work Programme		40,000

Bridge Assessment and Strengthening		98,000	
834	Park Road Culvert – 2 (Ref:5/1/10)		98,000
Bus Stop Accessibility		50,000	
683	H2/H3 Hampstead Garden Suburb		12,000
693	Bus stop clearway provision		12,000
699	Improving bus stop accessibility		26,000
Non-LCN+ Cycling Schemes		117,000	
161	Cycle training – Primary pupils		48,000
163	Cycle training – Secondary pupils		28,000
176	Cycle training – SEN pupils		9,000
177	Cycle training – adults		22,000
859	Cycle parking		10,000
Environment		0	
Local Safety Schemes		705,000	
65	Mass action – accidents in darkness		120,000
396	A5 / Station Road / Whitchurch Lane		160,000
446	Golders Green Gyratory		160,000
548	Cricklewood Lane Thorverton-Gillingham Rd		25,000
631	A1000 Hadley Highstone / Dury Road		20,000
702	A1000 / Fortis Green Road		150,000
2250	Barnet Lane near opening Oaklands Road		50,000
2251	Osidge Lane junction with West Walk & East Walk		20,000
Principal Road Renewal		968,000	
320	2009-10 PRN A5 The Hyde NW9 Carriageway		409,000
321	2009-10 PRN A1000 High Road N2 Carriageway		111,000
322	2009-10 PRN A5 Cricklewood Broadway Carriageway		90,000
323	2009-10 PRN A1000 Pricklers Hill Carriageway		358,000
Regeneration Area Schemes		0	
School Travel Plans		556,000	
71	STA Post Assistant 1		40,000
73	STA Post Assistant 2		40,000
75	STP Coordinator		20,000
80	STP Development surveys and consultation		10,000
82	STP Development feasibility and design		20,000
84	STP Monitoring and review		40,000
85	STP Implementation – independent school grants		70,000
86	STP Implementation – supply cover		20,000
87	STP Implementation – theatre in education		20,000
88	STP Implementation – small grants		60,000
235	The Mount		80,000
397	WOW		60,000
399	Walk to school week		5,000
680	STP Promotion		1,000
13023	Transition up grade resource		70,000
Walking		120,000	
977	East Finchley – Urban footpaths		60,000
1047	Practical pedestrian training		35,000
2499	New Barnet Station walking access		25,000

Question 11**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

What is the impact of an interest rate reduction to 2.5pc on the Council's budgeted and actual income from interest payments?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

A reduction in rates from 5% (budgeted rate for this year) to 2.5% will result in a reduction in deposit interest of £1.9m for 2008/09.

Supplementary Question 11**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Well briefly, I'm getting very brief replies Mr Mayor. I'd like actually a bit more enlightenment and a little bit more detail from the Cabinet Member of Resources, who's also the Leader of the Council. Maybe the Leader would actually like to comment, this answer I get for question 11 contradicts the answer I got to the last question and in fact would he again like to tell us how much the Council is going to lose on interest rates next year in light of the recent drop of 3%?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

I'm delighted to see that Councillor Davies is now taking his duties with more diligence than he has in the past few years. I can't answer his question to the degree that he asks because it depends what the interest rates will be over the next two years, and if he's able to forecast what the Bank of England sets interest rates over the next 12 months I'll be able to give him a forecast of any interest in and any interest lost over the budget.

Question 12**Councillor Alison Moore**

A press release issued by the Conservative Group in September, said that the Administration's response to the credit crunch was to extend its benefits take-up advice, with extra advertising, surgeries, and encouraging pensioner take-up of benefits, and provide Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to claimants experiencing exceptional hardship. Would the Leader provide me with details of how much extra advertising has been undertaken, what benefits they promote, what surgeries or extra surgeries have been laid on, how pensioners have been encouraged to take-up benefits, and what the result of all of these initiatives has been? In addition, given that DHPs are solely Government funding, can the Leader say precisely what the Council is doing outside of and in addition to Government funded schemes to ameliorate the affects of the credit crunch other than through the welfare rights unit?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Not surprisingly in the current economic climate the benefit caseload is rising at an increasing rate. Latest caseload figures are at the highest level since Council Tax was introduced in 1993. Caseloads at the end of the last recession (1993) were c25k, they dropped year on year to c20k in 2000/2001 and have basically been on a constant albeit slow rise ever since. Currently the caseload is c28k and rising at 1% per month over the past quarter (this percentage rise significantly up on averages prior to that). Action taken:

- 1) Pensioner take-up – A joint exercise was recently undertaken with Welfare Rights in which 1931 letters were sent out inviting people to claim. Of these, 187 were returned of which 129 went into payment. The remainder were either not entitled or not liable. In order to find out why there was such a low take up in the first instance, a sample of 50 cases have been extracted and we have written to all to find out why they did not pursue their claims. These results are not yet available.
From January 2009, we will be providing a Pension Service surgery at Burnt Oak library.
- 2) Benefits take –up posters. We have run a series of posters around the borough, both on free standing columns in town centres and on bus stops. Further posters have been ordered and are due to be displayed in libraries, leisure centres, medical centres, village halls and Age Concern within the next 4 weeks.

- 3) We have arranged for Benefit take-up Stands to be set up on two shopping areas in January 2009. The Spires on 14.1.09 and The Broadwalk on 21.1.09. Staff will be available to provide advice and they will be given a bag containing an application form, pen, advice information etc. Details of every application form given will be taken so that we can judge the effectiveness of this type of take-up work.
- 4) We are continuing to advertise the Service in both the Hospital Radio Guide for Barnet Hospital and The Volunteer Magazine which is distributed to both Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals.
- 5) We provide talks on benefit entitlement at the local JCP offices as requested and recently attended the Home Choice day at Barnet House to offer assistance to the public.
- 6) We provide talks on benefit entitlement at the local JCP offices as requested and recently attended the Home Choice day at Barnet House to offer assistance to the public.
- 7) In addition to the advice service at Burnt Oak, we currently provide a surgery at Barnet House for 2.5 days per week and one morning at Finchley JCP office. This surgery will transfer to Hendon JCP office from 081208 at their request. Two officers will be available to provide advice on Benefits.
- 8) We have also recently issued a newsletter to Benefit claimants, providing updates on new legislation, how to apply for benefit etc. A second issue will be produced towards the end of the financial year which will be sent out with the mass recalculation letters.
- 9) We are planning to make use of the GIS system early next year to assist us in identifying areas within the borough where take-up of Benefit is considered to be low.
- 10) Our website is constantly being updated, with all leaflets and relevant information available to Barnet residents.

Supplementary Question 12

Councillor Alison Moore

Councillor Freer, it's good to hear that you're putting lots of effort into promoting benefits advice and that you recognise that there is a significant level of need. I am, however, concerned about rumours that there may be significant cuts to the welfare rights unit budget. In the current financial climate that can't be right, but I'd like you to give me your word, your categorical assurance, that there will be no cuts to the welfare rights unit?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

I don't comment on rumours Mr Mayor.

Question 13

Councillor John Hart

Could the Cabinet Member please give me the number of planning applications received for Mill Hill ward during the first nine months of 2007 compared with the first nine months 2008; could he further indicate the number of applications, in both periods, that were recommend for acceptance by planning officers yet rejected by the Planning Committee; and the cost of such rejections occasioned by subsequent appeals to the inspectorate?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

2008 (first 9 months)

Applications Received: **268**

Total decided at Sub-Committee: **24**

Total refused at Sub-Committee where recommendation was to approve: **8**

Appeals – 5 current

– 2 decided with no award of costs

2007 (first 9 months)

Applications Received: **409**

Total decided at Sub-Committee: **11**

Total refused at Sub-Committee where recommendation was to approve: **2**

Appeals – 2 with no award of costs

On average it costs the Local Planning Authority approximately £250 in Officer time to deal with an appeal.

Supplementary Question 13

Councillor John Hart

Would the Cabinet Member agree with me that we owe this remarkable respite in planning applications, and consequent lull in the over-development of leafy Mill Hill, to the financial acumen of the Prime Minister? And that reflected across London it constitutes a remarkable indicator of the United Kingdom's sagging economy?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

No and yes.

Question 14

Councillor Jeremy Davies

What is the interest rate and value of annual interest on the Council's borrowings?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Annual interest on Council borrowings is £8.8m at an average rate of interest of 4.10%.

Supplementary Question 14

Councillor Jeremy Davies

To follow on, would the Leader like to confirm that in fact this Council's borrowing money at the rate of 4.1% a year and, in fact, now in the current climate, he can only get 3% a year so we're getting a net loss of 1%. So we're borrowing money to invest in losing money. Also, would the Council Leader like to confirm that it is his responsibility as Cabinet Member for Resources to manage the financial resources of this authority and manage them prudently and it's his responsibility for the investment in Iceland.

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

It is the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cabinet Resources Committee to set the policy for the Officers to apply and that policy has been prudently set. It is not the roles and responsibility of any member to make operational decisions on investments, deposits or borrowings. But also, to correct Councillor Davies, this borrowing to fund capital projects in this Borough, because we've had no money from Central Government, was of course significantly re-financed away from significantly higher interest rates we inherited from his Administration when he was, of course, in the pockets of the Labour Party.

Question 15

Councillor Zakia Zubairi

How much income does the Council generate every year from pest control services and how much does the service cost to run?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The Council introduced a Pest Treatment Service in April 2006. This service is a fee paying service for the treatment of pests broadly considered to be of public health significance. The service is required to operate at zero cost to the Council, and covers the full cost of operation, including the full cost of management.

There is a reduced fee for service users who are in receipt of means tested benefits.

It broke even in years one and two of operation, and is projected to make a small surplus of £5k this financial year.

Question 16**Councillor Dean Cohen**

Will the Cabinet Member please outline the Registry Office services available in Barnet to help those families whose faith requires prompt burial?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

We provide service on 363 days per year for the issue of burial certificates. The exceptions are Good Friday and Christmas Day which the faith communities entirely accept. There is a statutory right not to open our offices on those days. Service is provided on:

- Monday to Saturday 9-4
- Sunday on-call 9-11 – the Burial Societies do not bury after 12 noon so any longer opening is pointless.

The faith communities have always been happy with the service we provide.

Supplementary Question 16**Councillor Dean Cohen**

Does the Cabinet Member therefore agree with me and, indeed, Mr Benjamin in his recent letter to the Ham & High, that this Council understands the needs of faith communities to facilitate speedy burials?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Yes.

Question 17**Councillor Duncan Macdonald**

Can Councillor Freer explain the role and function of the Cabinet Resources Committee?

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

Cabinet Committees may discharge the executive functions that fall within their terms of reference, whether or not they are also delegated to officers, except for matters specifically reserved to Cabinet. The Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution may reserve certain decisions to cabinet committees.

3.6 The Cabinet Committees are:

Resources Committee***Functions***

- Capital and revenue finance, forecasting, monitoring, borrowing and taxation.
- To consider reports on treasury management strategy and activity, including creating and maintaining a Treasury Management Policy Statement.
- Grants to voluntary organisations above £20,000.
- Monitor the trading position of appropriate council services, carry out debt analysis and look at income sources and charging policies.
- To write off debt.
- To determine external or cross-boundary trading limit.
- To agree exceptions to standing orders, all decisions relating to approved lists and agreed national registers, authorise post tender negotiations and accept tenders which are not the lowest.
- To agree externalisation contracts including any proposal to appoint external cash investment managers.
- Approval of schemes not in performance management plans but not outside the Council's budget or policy framework.
- All matters relating to land and buildings owned, rented or proposed to be acquired or disposed of by the Council.
- To develop and recommend to Cabinet for adoption an e-Government strategy and associated ICT policies and strategies.
- To submit to Cabinet each year detailed proposals for all council ICT expenditure in the coming year for consideration as part of the budget and forward plan process.

- To monitor the implementation of the e-Government and ICT strategies.
- To co-ordinate and decide priorities for the development of e-government and ICT systems and projects to achieve the council's modernisation objectives in accordance with the approved strategies.
- All matters relating to the purchase or leasing of ICT equipment and software, provided that it is in accordance with the approved e-Government and ICT strategies and the Council's budget and policy framework.
- To oversee the performance of the IT service and the balance between internal and external service provision.
- For ICT contracts, to agree exceptions to standing orders, all decisions relating to approved lists and agreed national registers, authorise post tender negotiations and accept tenders including those which are not the lowest.

Supplementary Question 17

Councillor Duncan Macdonald

I'd like to thank Councillor Freer for his answer. I wonder if he could give me some idea what percentage of the functions he's listed here are delegated to Officers?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

I'm not able to answer such a vague question.

Question 18

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

A report published by NUT and NCSL in November raises the issue of underachievement of white working class pupils in schools. Is the Cabinet Member aware of this report, does she believe that there is a problem of this nature in Barnet and if so what is being done to address it?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

Barnet schools have a good record of achievement for pupils from all backgrounds. There is no accepted definition of 'white working class' pupils but one proxy is White British pupils eligible for Free School Meals. This group of pupils performs better in Barnet than similar pupils nationally. At Key stage 2, 72% of the cohort achieved level 4 or above in English in Barnet (2008) compared to 61% nationally (2007). At Key Stage 4, this group of pupils also out-perform similar pupils nationally, with 32.3% gaining 5 GCSEs at A*-C (including English and Maths) compared with 17.1% nationally.

The Local Authority will continue to work with Heads and governing bodies to improve standards even further for all pupils and to address any areas of underachievement.

Question 19

Councillor Daniel Thomas

Would the Leader comment on progress made when the Borough Treasurer attended creditor meetings in Iceland on behalf of Local Authorities?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

The meetings so far have largely been concerned with information gathering, e.g. what the book value of the assets and liabilities in the old banks looks like, where the council might rank in the order of creditor preference etc. The Borough Treasurer is bound by a confidentiality agreement but progress on securing the return of the Council's deposits is encouraging.

Supplementary Question 19

Councillor Daniel Thomas

Would the Leader please tell Council how much the trip to Iceland cost the Barnet taxpayer?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

£6.80.

Question 20

Councillor Wayne Casey

The Leader has echoed the Chancellor of the Exchequer in stating that he is only responsible for what he is responsible for. Could he state for the record what, precisely, he is responsible for?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Specific individual responsibilities:

To lead on budget and policy formulation and implementation in relation to:

- resources (including billing, collection and recovery of local taxation)
- financial forward planning and budgeting
- risk management
- asset management policy
- major corporate contracts
- communications and marketing
- HR, equalities and diversity

The monitoring of the Council's budget and to instigate such interventions as necessary to ensure spending is kept within limits determined by Council. Risk and asset management would include agreeing policies and ensuring they were applied.

Supplementary Question 20

Councillor Wayne Casey

Given the strategic focus of his responsibilities, can the Leader of the Council understand why residents are puzzled that in October of this year, he found time to urge the public to think about the effects the fireworks season has on domestic pets but not to find out where Barnet Council had deposited £27.4m of public money?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Always happy to reflect on anything Councillor Casey contributes to this Council.

Question 21

Councillor Kath McGuirk

What tonnage of residential waste is likely to be composted across Barnet in 2008/9?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The amount of residential waste that is composted has been increasing each year.

Our current projections are that approximately 19,000 tonnes of waste will be composted in 2008/09. This includes organic waste collected from houses on the green bin scheme including those properties taking part in the pilot kitchen caddy scheme, green waste collected from the Civic Amenity and Recycling Centre at Summers Lane and leaf fall collected for composting.

Supplementary Question 21

Councillor Kath McGuirk

It's nice to know that Mum's gone to Iceland. I do welcome the present Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport's sort of conversion to recycling in this Borough with our blue boxes and hairnets but we'll review that at a scrutiny committee later. What I want to know is that despite assurances in PIs over the past 12 months or 18 months that every household has access to kerbside recycling, this isn't true, and when will flats, particularly those in the social housing sector who are quite happy to work with this Council, have access to kerbside recycling, including green waste?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

I can say that I personally have always been a convert to recycling. I think you will find, Councillor McGuirk, that next year the Council will be rolling out further plans to improve coverage of recycling both of the products that go in the blue and black boxes and also the green bins.

Question 22

Councillor Brian Gordon

How has the latest edition to the recycling facilities, in particular the beautiful new blue boxes, been received by the public around the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The improved recycling service has been well received by the residents of Barnet, who have been taking full advantage of it.

The collection of plastic bottles and cardboard, using the new blue box, started on 17 November. In the first week of the new service we collected 225 tonnes more than the average before the new materials were introduced, while in the second week we collected 138 additional tonnes. It's clear that in the first couple of weeks, we've been collecting cardboard and plastic bottles that residents had stockpiled in anticipation of the start of the new service. Once this backlog has been cleared, and we have passed the very busy period after Christmas, we anticipate that we will continue to collect around an extra 100 tonnes of material for recycling a week.

As the contractor, May Gurney, have been collecting high tonnages since 17 November, they have been working longer days. As the initial extra tonnages reduce, while at the same time delivery of new collection vehicles is completed, the collectors should return to finishing times around 2pm.

Question 23

Councillor Wayne Casey

The Community Strategy sets out a vision for the Borough where, by 2018, "*Barnet is known nationally and internationally as a successful city-suburb.*" What specific and measurable benefits are there for the Council Tax payers from Barnet having an *international* reputation?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

In this day and age many places have international reputations whether they like it or not. This certainly applies to Barnet with our high levels of diversity and many citizens who are exposed to the global economy. We need to actively manage this, or we are not serving our public. In particular:

- We need inward investment in Cricklewood;
- We need knowledge based workers – this is a key part of our LAA. Successful economies have always thrived on the benefits of bright immigration and our equalities policy emphasises that we value diversity because it brings economic success. Hence our support for Middlesex University which has a global reach – especially in the BRICs economies specifically India, China and Dubai. Barnet College is also developing links with China. Bright people coming to Barnet has also benefited the Council e.g. social workers.

Successful people coming to Barnet re-inforces the local economy – e.g. shopping, housing (Princess Park Manor is believed to be home to significant number of wealthy foreigners who are here for short stays for work reasons.

Many of our existing communities have global links already. It's important that they and their relatives see Barnet as a good place. This re-inforces the positive traffic.

We need to avoid also having a bad international reputation – for example one that criminals think they can exploit – gangs, fraud etc. This is easy to acquire. This is an area where we work positively with the police and where Corporate Governance have played a key role. Our work is reflected in that Barnet remains on the whole a safe place in comparison with many others with high levels of diversity.

Supplementary Question 23

Councillor Wayne Casey

Have any actions been taken specifically to secure Barnet's international reputation, and if so, what and does he know how much they cost?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Everything the Council does, is there to secure our reputation, so it is not possible to give him individual costs. But, everything we do is there to enhance the reputation of this Council both locally and internationally for the benefits I've highlighted.

Question 24

Councillor Ross Houston

Will the Cabinet Member update me with the current figure for the number of empty homes in the Borough, and the number of empty homes the Council has returned to use this year to date?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

As a snapshot, there are 3725 empty properties across all tenures, of which 2231 have been empty for more than six months

A total of 369 have been brought back into use this year which can be summarised as follows:

Number of Non Local authority owned vacant dwellings returned to occupation or demolished (ex-BVPI 64 definition) 1 April-30 September 2008	Method
300	Private Sector Tenancies
1	Owner Occupied
12	Private Rented
14	Private Sector Leases
42	Home Lets
369	Total

The Council has also approved Compulsory Purchase Order action for seven properties, two of which are already being brought back into use voluntarily.

Question 25**Councillor Joan Scannell**

What can the Council do to assist local businesses weather what is likely to be a deep and long recession?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

We are supporting our residents as highlighted in an earlier question which can assist in ensuring our residents remain as economically active as possible which can assist in helping local traders. We have also announced a drastic discount on parking charges for the main Christmas trading period. In addition in January I will be facilitating an event for local businesses which will provide practical advice on how to bid for Council contracts and London Development Agency Contracts. It is expected that Middlesex University and Business Link will be present.

Question 26**Councillor Wayne Casey**

Do you now know where the Council has deposits of money?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

The Borough Treasurer published a list of counter-parties on the 1 December 2008 detailing where money was deposited.

Supplementary Question 26**Councillor Wayne Casey**

Has the Leader had any meetings with the Acting Director of Resources to examine any or all of these deposits since the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 November 2008?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

I have regular meetings with the Acting Director of Resources to ensure that they treasury management policy is adhered to.

Question 27**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

One of the commitments that is made to Barnet residents in the Equality Scheme is that 'every resident and service user has equal access to high quality services that meet their needs....' How does the Council know that they are achieving equal access for every single resident and service user?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

The Council's Equality Scheme is ambitious. It wants to build on our success as a high performing local authority and we know that our diversity is a significant contribution to our role as a global city suburb.

Our resident satisfaction has increased consistently over time – currently standing at 72% but we want to ensure this satisfaction and sense of well-being is shared across all our communities.

Therefore we are monitoring our equalities performance through our existing performance management systems by testing the equality impact of our key corporate priorities using a range of performance monitoring tools including:

- Financial Performance Reviews
- The Equality Standard for Local Government
- Self-assessment against Barnet's Race Equality Scheme (as part of our statutory duty)
- Measuring trends in resident satisfaction rates

The Equality Delivery Plan which accompanies the Annual Report of the Equality Scheme was approved by Cabinet on 3 December and sets out our approach to measuring the equality impact of our corporate targets.

Additionally, the Council's performance against the Race Equality Scheme, which is measured annually shows an improvement in the Council's promotion of race equality from 74% in 2006/07 to 84% in 2007/08 due to the widening ethnic profile of service users and increased satisfaction rates among service users from different ethnic groups as measured through the Annual Residents' Survey.

Question 28

Councillor Brian Gordon

Certain faith schools were recently caught out for non-compliance with Government requirements on their Admissions Code. Were the breaches a matter of practical significance or were they really little more than cases of technical wording incorrectness?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

The overwhelming majority of breaches of the code identified by the School's Adjudicator were minor issues relating to the wording of admissions arrangements.

Question 29

Councillor Wayne Casey

If the money deposited by Barnet in Icelandic institutions is not lost, what is the Acting Director of Resources in negotiation with the Icelandic authorities for?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

No money is lost. The process of administration of the Icelandic banks is ongoing. It is normal practice for creditors of any company to attend meetings convened by the Administrators, and for creditors to make comments and suggestions at those meetings about what is in their best interests.

Supplementary Question 29

Councillor Wayne Casey

The interest on this deposit has clearly been lost and we continue to lose money on the cost of borrowing. However, that having been said. If the money isn't lost, where is it and when are we getting it back?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

As Councillor Casey knows, the money is currently tied up whilst the Administrators sort out the affairs of the Icelandic banks in administration whilst they find a way forward.

Question 30

Councillor Ross Houston

What is the Council's response to Boris Johnson's initial affordable housing targets for Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

We support the ambitious housing targets which have been set in the London Plan for the period 2016-17, including the delivery of appropriate levels of affordable housing. As an Opportunity Borough, with an ambitious growth agenda, we are grateful for continued GLA support for our approach to the delivery of high quality city-suburbs through our Three Strands Approach of protection, enhancement and growth.

As Barnet has been proactive in identifying opportunities for substantial levels of new housing, our housing delivery targets are the highest in London outside the Thames Gateway with the targets for our neighbouring boroughs of Enfield and Harrow only one fifth of those for Barnet. Although we are confident of delivery over the London Plan timeframe we are aware that the next three years will be particularly difficult ones across all areas of London. Given the worsening of the economic downturn it is unlikely that Barnet will meet its targets for the provision of new affordable homes.

Barnet does not receive the same levels of government financial support for housing delivery as the Olympic and Thames Gateway Boroughs. In order to be able to continue to deliver affordable housing through the economic downturn the Borough will require significant investment and more generous government grants. We have therefore discussed revising the figures to a more realistic and achievable target.

The GLA recognise that these figures are challenging without additional funding from the HCA London Board.

Supplementary Question 30 **Councillor Ross Houston**

Can the Cabinet Member stop giving excuses and commit to working with the Mayor to deliver his proposed affordable housing target for Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

No excuses, we work extremely well with the Mayor.

Question 31 **Councillor Brian Gordon**

Could the Leader outline how the Unions and other staff groups are being involved in the Future Shape of the Council project?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

The trade unions and staff groups have been extensively involved in the future shape of the Council project since its inception, both in terms of providing information and developing proposals. The most notable engagement has been as follows:

- The programme team have met with the trade unions weekly since June to share latest developments and next steps;
- The programme budget pays the backfill for the Unison representative to give his full-time energy to Future Shape work;
- The programme budget has funded the trade unions for research support;
- A number of workshops with staff have taken place on a range of issues, including the programme as a whole and the strategic role of the Council;
- The Chief Executive met depot staff for face-to-face discussion about the programme;
- The programme team have had a number of one-to-one meetings with staff who have requested meetings about a range of issues;
- The programme team holds a weekly 'meet us' session in North London Business Park that all staff can participate in; and
- We have set up the future shape website to publicise activity and outcomes from discussions, and invite feedback, comment and challenge. This is a completely unfettered and transparent discussion of the issues of concern to staff.

Question 32 **Councillor Wayne Casey**

On average, how much money did local authorities in the United Kingdom have deposited in Icelandic banks?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

We don't have all the data but an average is £7.5m which is depressed by the number of district councils with small budgets. However a more accurate comparator would be deposits per head of population. Barnet being one of the largest authorities in the UK would have more cash to place on deposits.

Council	Population	Deposits	Deposits/Head
Haringey	224,700	37,000,000	164.66
Cheltenham	112,300	11,000,000	97.95
Scottish Borders	111,400	10,000,000	89.77
Barnet	329,700	27,4000	83.11
Hillingdon	250,7000	20,000,000	79.78
Cambridge	120,000	9,000,000	75.00
Ceredigion	77,800	5,500,000	70.69
Brent	270,000	15,000,000	55.56
NE Lincolnshire	158,400	7,000,000	44.19
Ipswich	121,000	5,000,000	41.32
Exeter	122,400	5,000,000	40.85
Restormel	103,000	4,000,000	38.83
Sutton	185,900	5,500,000	29.59
Somerset	905,700	25,000,000	27.60
Colchester	175,500	4,000,000	22.79
Lewes	94,500	1,000,000	10.58
Cornwall	531,600	5,000,000	9.41
Vale of White Horse	117,000	1,000,000	8.55

Supplementary Question 32

Councillor Wayne Casey

I'd like to thank the Leader of the Council for this answer if he'd actually answered the question I'd put in the first place. I didn't ask for the average size of the deposits, I asked for the average amount invested by each of the UK's local authorities. As there are 468 local authorities in the UK and most of them had the sense not to invest any money in Iceland, the average is in fact £1.7m. Barnet's investment being a staggering 16 times higher than the average. Given that the Leader has either misread my question or mis-calculated the answer I would like to ask is he illiterate or innumerate?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

I'm actually neither. I think actually if you'll find on average how much money did local authorities in the United Kingdom have deposited in Icelandic banks, Councillor Casey did not say all councils. It was a reasonable assumption to say that he meant those who had deposited money in Icelandic banks and you'll find that the answer is there, and I'm also trying to be helpful to him, because we know how the Liberal Group have struggled with their responsibilities on the Council within the last few years. To point out that it's all very well saying oh yes Barnet's got a very large sum invested when you're comparing us to district councils with a total budget less than our street sweeping budget. Therefore, it is far better to actually compare it to the size of the population. So that is why I've given him the actual detail which I'm sure he chooses to ignore.

Question 33

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

How much debt has been written off in each of the last 5 years broken down into council tax, business rates, benefit overpayments and other debts?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Total written off by year written off in £000					
Debt Type	2007/8	2006/7	2005/6	2004/5	2003/4
CTAX	1,508	1,393	990	994	1,014
NNDR	1,470	181	1,597	0	0
Income	1,003	843	94	pre SAP data not readily available	
HB o.pmts	131		still compiling data		

Supplementary Question 33**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Does Councillor Freer agree that the level of write-offs has reached a new shocking level, at least £15m since 2003, and will he undertake to reverse this trend and redirect the money into frontline services where it's badly needed?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Write-offs take place after every single legal avenue has been pursued. If people didn't default on their debts, and I expect that due to the crass mismanagement of this Prime Minister of the economy, that we will find more of our Barnet residents getting into default. So if he wants to look for blame I suggest he starts a bit closer to home. This Council pursues every single legal avenue to recoup our money, only when every avenue has been exhausted does the Council have to write it off. What is he suggesting we do, that we simply keep the debts on the books? Perhaps if he took his responsibilities as Shadow Cabinet Member for Resources a little bit more seriously and got Officer briefings a little bit more frequently he might understand his portfolio.

Question 34**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

How will all the services currently at the Mill Hill depot be accommodated between leaving the site in 2010 and a new depot being available in 2013 – could he list any services not expected to be accommodated in the new depot?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The services based at Mill Hill are currently being reviewed as not all will relocate to the new depot. Other Council owned property and satellite locations are being considered to provide the most effective delivery. Those expected not to move to the new depot include the highways service, the green spaces team, parking enforcement and the street cleansing operations. Existing tenants of the Mill Hill depot like Connaught's (Barnet Homes maintenance provider) and the Skills Training Centre will also have to find alternative accommodation.

The new depot facility will be primarily for the refuse and recycling operations, vehicle maintenance, winter maintenance fleet and additional parking for passenger transport vehicles. Temporary accommodation close to the existing Mill Hill site has been identified as possibly being suitable while the new depot is being constructed and a feasibility study is underway.

Supplementary Question 34**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Thanks for your answer Councillor Harper. My main concern is actually Barnet Community Transport that provide a service for a lot of the very vulnerable members of the community that aren't mentioned here. Now when it was set up the Council offered, if you like, Mill Hill Depot as their contribution towards it. Will that contribution continue either in kind or in money terms?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Certainly, Barnet Community Transport, is well known to me as one of the users of Mill Hill Depot. We will be looking at the situation on a case-by-case basis with all of the services that are currently based there, BCT included, and we'll be working with them all to find solutions to their accommodation challenges.

Question 35**Councillor Anne Hutton**

Could the Cabinet Member give the Council an estimate of the expected Building Schools for the Future money the Government will be giving Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The Government will not be 'giving' any money to Barnet, as it does not have any money of its own. However, it will be allocating tax payers money.

As part of the BSF process Barnet, along with all local authorities not yet in the BSF programme, recently submitted a revised BSF Expression of Interest to the DCSF. In line with Government guidance, Barnet's secondary schools were packaged into 3 projects: one priority project with a capital value of around £80m, and two follow-on projects with capital value of around £100m-£120m each. We await the departmental decision on the allocation of funding with interest.

Question 36

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Can the Cabinet Member explain the need for the Council to print at a level of 8 million copies per year from NLBP alone?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

A recent report to Resources Committee about replacing MFDs at NLBP provides possible solutions to reducing levels of printing in the Council. Barnet is upgrading software that has the ability to use rules as a way of controlling print volume. We are able to limit volumes and re-direct work to the Document Centre. These initiatives will help in the bid to reduce print and reduce costs as it is cheaper printing through the Document Centre than via MFDs and individual printers. The 8 million is spread between nearly 2000 staff, which works at 16 pages per day. When broken down this level of print seems much more reasonable especially as this printing will provide support for Councillor and Public Committee papers, planning applications and consultations, CPZ consultations, formal responses to Government returns and target monitoring to name a few.

Supplementary Question 36

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Will the Council Leader undertake to make sure that at least as they're printing such huge amounts of paper that all that is recycled paper?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

We will recycle as much as practical.

Question 37

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Could the Leader explain what he means when he says in one of his reports that the failure to let the new removals and storage contract was "due to the failure of the Housing Service and Strategic Procurement Team to work effectively" – doesn't this squabbling show a failure of leadership?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

This is not a case of squabbling or an indicator of leadership failure. It is a statement of fact and was included to explain the causal circumstances of the failure to renew the contract in the original extension period. Both the Housing Service and Strategic Procurement Team were in a process of major change, this disrupted communications and information flow. Officers felt that a true representation of the failure to renew was required and stated the facts accordingly.

Question 38

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Could the Cabinet Member for Resources explain why, despite being told of this before, that in the Monitoring 2008/9 projected variations analysis he still does not know the difference between £thousands and £millions?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

This was a simple typing error.

Supplementary Question 38

Councillor Barry Rawlings

This came up at the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee and I have brought it up 3 times so far about the fact that the Council and the Officers don't seem to know the difference between thousands and millions. How many times does it take to get a simple typing error right with this Council?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Clearly, three times.

Question 39**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Is BT in the frame as the strategic partner for the Council's proposed SPV?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Cabinet has decided that further detailed assessments should be carried out as regards the Future Shape Programme. No decision has been taken that there will be either an SPV or a strategic partner.

Question 40**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Will the Leader confirm that the Chief Executive attended the same BT Vital Vision Conference at the same time as he did? And if so, why does the DPR agreeing the Leader's attendance say that "opportunities of this quality for leadership development are rare and were the Leader unable to participate then a valuable development resource funded by the private sector would have been foregone" – does the Administration not class the Chief Executive's attendance as "valuable"?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

The Chief Executive did not attend the BT Vital Vision programme at the same time as I did. He attended a separate program.

Question 41**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Could the Cabinet Member update me on youth provision in the Colindale Area Action programme?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

The Colindale Area Action Plan has reached draft preferred options stage following extensive local consultation recently. The emerging plan identifies the need for a range of new and improved youth facilities including sports and recreational provision and accommodation to serve youth based activities. The action plan fully recognises the importance of catering for the needs of younger people in this area to enhance community opportunity and engagement.

The delivery of such improvements will depend to a large extent on the major developments sites identified coming forward including the former hospital site and Barnet College. The Council is working very closely with its key stakeholders from the development industry and Local Strategic Partnership to ensure the right conditions are created to encourage high quality, sustainable and locally responsive development during this challenging economic period. In addition Council Officers continue to liaise with key community groups and representatives to identify and prioritise youth provision and funding streams.

A thorough review of the representations received following public consultation is currently being undertaken and the Area Action Plan will then be revised and taken forward to final draft preferred options ready for submission to the Planning Inspectorate in Spring / Summer of next year.

Supplementary Question 41**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

I just wanted to know in my supplementary about the consultation with community groups over the Colindale Area Action Plan, just what was the date for completion of discussions with community groups leading up to the preferred options. I'd just like to know if there was a date by which this needs to be completed by?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

The date for the consultation end was 8 December and I note that the observations of the Labour Group were received on 9 December.

Question 42**Councillor Alison Moore**

What is the percentage breakdown, by polling district, of electoral registration in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Hendon	
Ward/Polling District	2008
Hale	
HOA	75.10%
HOB	78.38%
HOC	73.66%
HOD	81.32%
HOE	76.44%
Sub total	76.29%

Mill Hill	
HPA	83.95%
HPB	81.12%
HPC	70.26%
HPD	75.79%
HPE	95.91%
Sub total	78.75%

Hendon	
HQA	63.91%
HQB	75.35%
HQC	63.63%
HQD	64.28%
Sub total	67.63%

West Hendon	
HRA	64.99%
HRB	74.19%
HRC	66.47%
HRD	59.02%
HRE	64.85%
Sub total	64.93%

Colindale	
HAS	98.28%
HSB	62.16%
HSC	70.73%
Sub total	72.11%

Burnt Oak	
HTA	65.80%
HTB	64.18%
HTC	87.66%
HTD	92.66%
Sub total	75.88%

Edgware	
HUA	83.81%
HUB	78.11%
HUC	72.45%
Sub total	78.60%

Finchley and Golders Green	
Ward/Polling District	2008
Woodhouse	
FHA	92.67%
FHB	73.94%
FHC	68.96%
FHD	72.86%
Sub total	78.51%

East Finchley	
FIA	68.21%
FIB	72.85%
FIC	73.71%
FID	76.21%
Sub total	72.86%

Garden Suburb	
FJA	75.55%
FJB	77.99%
FJC	76.96%
FJD	85.50%
FJE	70.04%
FJF	77.12%
Sub total	77.16%

Childs Hill	
FKA	90.83%
FKB	92.43%
FKC	87.70%
FKD	85.83%
Sub total	89.94%

Golders Green	
FLA	70.93%
FLB	71.62%
FLC	66.97%
Sub total	69.80%

Finchley Church End	
FMA	75.90%
FMB	92.29%
FMC	69.51%
FMD	77.08%
FME	77.34%
Sub total	77.78%

West Finchley	
FNA	89.71%
FNB	69.67%
FND	72.22%
Sub total	76.23%

Chipping Barnet	
Ward/Polling District	2008
High Barnet	
CAA	84.42%
CAB	79.13%
CAC	87.40%
CAD	88.97%
CAE	81.47%
Sub total	81.32%

East Barnet	
CBA	75.55%
CBB	85.04%
CBC	85.07%
CBD	79.22%
CBE	93.24%
Sub total	84.77%

Brunswick Park	
CCA	85.27%
CCB	80.18%
CCC	75.05%
CCD	80.40%
Sub total	79.81%

Coppetts	
CDA	74.34%
CDB	85.28%
CDC	79.17%
CDD	75.34%
Sub total	79.05%

Oakleigh	
CEA	80.31%
CEB	79.73%
CEC	80.96%
CED	76.08%
Sub total	79.05%

Totteridge	
CFA	88.59%
CFB	88.70%
CFC	70.73%
CFD	83.59%
CFE	83.99%
Sub total	81.37%

Underhill	
CGA	82.02%
CGB	76.87%
CGC	76.38%
CGD	86.44%
CGE	72.09%
Sub total	77.69%

Supplementary Question 42

Councillor Alison Moore

There's clearly a lot of variation from polling district to polling district in the level of electoral registration. What is the Council doing to bring those where the registration level is lower up to the average level?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

This is something I will tread carefully on because this is not an executive function of the council nor is it something that members of the Council are able to instruct officers on, this is strictly a role of the ERO. The Council undertakes a range of activities including employing canvassers, it also includes anybody who registers for Council Tax gets a registration form, new tenants into Barnet Homes as part of their welcome pack get a new registration form, and those are the three primary actions that this Council takes alongside most councils in London.