

## Minutes

OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET held at Barnet House, N20 0EJ on Tuesday, 27 January 2009.

### 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
MIA	*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 Yannakoudakis BSc
(Hons)	*Wendy Prentice	(Hons) MA
		*Zakia Zubairi

\*denotes Member present

### 142. PRAYER (Agenda Item 1.1):

The Mayor's Chaplain offered prayer.

**143. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1.2):**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sachin Rajput who was away on holiday and from Councillor Marina Yannakoudakis. Apologies for lateness were received for Councillor Brian Gordon and Councillor Colin Rogers.

**144. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2008 (Agenda Item 1.3):**

**RESOLVED –That the minutes of the meeting held on the 16 December 2008 be approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment to minute 131 to the effect that the motion put by Cllr Andrew Harper was carried and formed the Council’s resolution in the matter.**

**145. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 1.4):**

None.

**146. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS (Agenda Item 1.6)**

The following personal and prejudicial interest was declared relating to Agenda Item 3.2 - Motion in the name of Councillor Mike Freer on Heathrow Flightpaths, with the Member concerned leaving the chamber and not taking part in the discussion and vote in respect of the item indicated:

- Councillor Richard Weider as he works for the Department of Transport.

**147. BUSINESS REMAINING FROM LAST MEETING (Agenda Item 1.7):**

None.

**148. QUESTION TIME FOR MEMBERS (Agenda Item 2.1):**

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.

**149. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS**

It was moved under Council Procedure Rule, Section 1, paragraph 10.2.2, that the order of business relating to Agenda Item 3 be varied so that Motions 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 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 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 to be debated and voted upon in advance of votes being taken on the other Motions on the Agenda.**

**150. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR MIKE FREER AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR MATTHEW OFFORD (Agenda Item 3.2)**

Motion 3.2 in the name of Councillor Mike Freer was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Kath McGuirk was moved and also an amendment in the name of Councillor Wayne Casey was moved. A further amendment in the name of Councillor Matthew Offord was moved from the floor. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Kath McGuirk was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name Councillor Wayne Casey was declared lost.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion as amended in the name Councillor Matthew Offord was declared carried.

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

**RESOLVED - Council is proud of our peaceful suburbs with large areas of green open space.**

**Council believes that one of the reasons Barnet is so tranquil is the lack of flightpaths across the Borough.**

**Therefore, Council is dismayed by Government plans to increase the number of flights at Heathrow Airport by altering flightpaths in order to accommodate “mixed mode” on runways. Therefore Council welcomes the victory, aided by local MP Theresa Villiers, ensuring plans for “mixed mode” at Heathrow were defeated.**

**Council understands these plans would have meant planes flying over the Borough on their approach to the airport, creating noise to the detriment of our environment. However, Council further understands that the additional traffic caused by the planned expansion at Heathrow could result in increased aircraft noise in and around our Borough.**

**Accordingly, Council calls on Cabinet to fight any plans in the future that may increase the amount of air traffic and noise over Barnet.**

**151. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR JULIE JOHNSON AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW HARPER (Agenda Item 3.3)**

Motion 3.3 was moved in the name of Councillor Julie Johnson. Councillor Andrew McNeil withdrew his amendment in accordance with Council Procedure Rule, Section 1, paragraph 17.C.1. An amendment in the name of Councillor Andrew Harper was moved from the floor. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the motion as amended in the name of Councillor Andrew Harper was declared carried.

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

**RESOLVED - Council is proud of all Barnet’s Parks, which help to preserve this Borough’s reputation as an attractive and green place to live. Council believes the Premier Parks Policy, established to ensure that every resident enjoys a high quality open space with a full range of facilities within a mile of their home, has been central to this achievement.**

**Therefore Council is proud that an unprecedented seven of the Borough’s Parks were awarded a Green Flag Award last year, recognising the quality of our open spaces and the plans for their future. In addition, Council welcomes work to ensure other parks are maintained to a high standard, and the improvements made to encourage biodiversity in non-Premier parks.**

**Council asks Cabinet to work to ensure that all Barnet’s open and green spaces are protected and enhanced for the good of our local community, including young people, and for the good of the environment**

**152. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR DANIEL THOMAS (Agenda Item 3.4)**

Motion 3.4 was moved in the name of Councillor Daniel Thomas. Councillor Barry Rawlings moved an amendment and a further amendment in the name of Councillor Jack Cohen was moved. Debate ensued.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in name of Councillor Barry Rawlings was declared lost. Upon being put the vote, the amendment in name of Councillor Jack Cohen was declared lost.

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

**RESOLVED - This Council notes with disbelief the Labour Government's plans to increase the NNDR (Business Rate) by an inflation-busting 5% this year. Council further notes that many businesses are struggling in perhaps the worst recession for 25 years, with Woolworth's going bust and Marks & Spencer closing stores.**

**Council understands that Business Rates are the largest cost facing local enterprise after rents. Further, Council notes this hike contrasts with LBB Conservative administration's planned Council Tax increase for residents of just 2.8%, (2.1% after Boris Johnson's freeze is included) below the current rate of inflation.**

**Accordingly, Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government calling for plans to increase the Business Rate by 5% to be scrapped.**

**153. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR DUNCAN MACDONALD AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR WENDY PRENTICE (Agenda Item 3.1)**

Motion 3.1 in the name of Councillor Duncan MacDonald was put to the vote without debate. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in name of Councillor Monroe Palmer was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in name of Councillor Wendy Prentice was declared carried.

**RESOLVED - Council notes the award given to the Leader by the niche magazine *Private Eye*. Council regrets the publication did not check its facts and published an inaccurate report.**

**154. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING.**

In accordance with the Agenda, the Mayor adjourned the meeting.

The meeting reconvened at 8.45pm.

**155. ADMINISTRATION POLICY ITEM: SUBJECTIVE TAXATION (Agenda Item 4.1)**

Councillor Mike Freer proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. An amendment in the name of Councillor Alison Moore was moved from the floor. Debate ensued on the Policy Item. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Alison Moore was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive Policy was declared carried.

**RESOLVED – Background: As outlined by a number of media sources, the Government is reportedly collecting demographic data on every home in the country. It is understood this information includes information on the types of individuals living in certain streets, and the numbers thereof, including company executives, pensioners and students.**

It is claimed that this information is being collated into “localities”, of which there are an average of 28 per local authority, and which, it is understood, could be used to inform future revaluation of the Council Tax bands in the UK.

Barnet, as a comparatively affluent Borough, could see increases in Council Tax banding arrangements, and by implication, bills, if such population statistics were used to influence a future revaluation

#### Recommendations

- (1) That Cabinet opposes any moves by the Government to introduce subjective taxes in Barnet.
- (2) That the Chief Executive is asked to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government requesting an explanation for the reported collation of household demographic data, and seeking assurances that there will not be revaluation of Council Tax bands based on this information.

**156. OPPOSITION POLICY ITEM AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR LYNNE HILLAN: WELFARE RIGHTS (Agenda Item 4.2)**

Councillor Barry Rawlings proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. An amendment in the name of Councillor Lynne Hillan and a further amendment in the name of Councillor Andrew McNeil were moved from the floor. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Lynne Hillan was declared carried. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Andrew McNeil was declared lost.

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

**RESOLVED - Council notes that LBB grant-funds organisations which provide welfare advice and advocacy to the tune of over £1 million a year. In addition, Council believes that we should provide value for money for our taxpayers, especially during a recession. Council notes that many other local authorities provide welfare advice solely by funding voluntary organisations through the Grants Budget.**

**Cabinet is therefore requested to look at re-commissioning the service to provide help and support to vulnerable residents, and consult on this plan through the Budget Consultation process.**

**157. REPORT OF CABINET (Agenda Item 5.1)**

Councillor Melvin Cohen moved reception and recommendation of the report. Debate ensued.

#### **“Report of Cabinet**

20 January 2009

Cabinet Members:

\* Cllr Mike Freer (Chairman)

Councillors:

- |                      |                     |                  |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| * Fiona Bulmer       | * Richard Cornelius | * Helena Hart    |
| * Melvin Cohen, LL B | * Anthony Finn BSc  | * Lynne Hillan   |
| Brian Coleman, AM    | Econ FCA            | * Matthew Offord |
| FRSA                 | * Andrew Harper     |                  |

\* denotes Member present

**MILL HILL EAST AREA ACTION PLAN (Cab Dec 23/01/2008 – 6) (Report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Environmental Protection – Agenda item 5)**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Environmental Protection which is being circulated to all Members of the Council.

For the reasons set out in the Cabinet Member’s report Cabinet

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

1. **That the Area Action Plan (AAP) for Mill Hill East, attached as Appendix A to the Cabinet Member’s report, having been the subject of an Examination in Public, be formally adopted as a statutory Local Development Framework development plan document for the purposes of informing any future proposals or redevelopment of the site and being a material consideration for the purposes of determining future planning applications.**
2. **That the AAP be published on the Barnet web site and hard copies be available for purchase.”**

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations of Cabinet were agreed.

**RESOLVED – That the Report of Cabinet of 20 January 2009 and the recommendations contained therein be approved and adopted.**

**158. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 5.2)**

None.

**159. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC:-**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006):

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Subject</b>
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- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| X1. | Exempt information relating to item 5.3 in public session – Report of The General Functions Committee 14 January 2009 – Budget 2009/10 |
|-----|--|

**160. EXEMPT INFORMATION RELATING TO AGENDA ITEM 5.3 IN PUBLIC SESSION –  
REPORT OF THE GENERAL FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE 14 JANUARY 2009 –  
BUDGET 2009/10**

RESOLVED – That the exempt information be noted.

**161. RE-ADMISSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**162. REPORT OF THE GENERAL FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE 14 JANUARY 2009 (Agenda  
Item 5.3):**

Councillor Mike Freer moved reception and recommendation of the report.

**“REPORT OF THE GENERAL FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE**

14 January 2009

Committee:

\*Councillor Joan Scannell (Chairman)

\*Councillor Mike Freer

Councillors:

* Jeremy Davies	* Ansuya Sodha
* Claire Farrier	* Lynne Hillan
* Robert Rams	

\*denotes Member present

**1. BUDGET 2009/10 (Report of the Director of Resources – Agenda Items 9 and X2  
circulated separately to Members only)**

The Committee considered the reports of the Director of Resources identifying the scale of budget reductions affecting staffing numbers required for the next financial year and the outline of steps required in achieving these reductions. The exempt report lists the posts deleted as part of the 2008/09 budget with the staffing implications identified at this time (Appendix B of the report).

Three members of the Committee required, in accordance with Paragraph 5 of Part 3 of the Constitution, that the Committee make a recommendation to Council on this matter, and the Committee accordingly

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND –**

**1. That the list of posts affected by the budget, as set out in the  
Appendix B to the exempt report, be agreed.**

**2 That following**

**(i) completion of the statutory consultation with staff and the Trade  
Unions and**

**(ii) the selection of staff for redundancy in accordance with the Selection  
Criteria as set out in Appendix A**

**The Head of HR Shared Services be instructed to arrange with the respective Chief Officers for redundancy notices to be served after the completion of the statutory consultation period.**

**2. REVISION OF THE MISCONDUCT PROCEDURE AND THE APPEALS PROCEDURE (Report of the Director of Resources – Agenda Item 15)**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources seeking approval on:

1. Revisions to the Misconduct Procedure in view of the revised Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) Code of Practice and experience and almost three years of operation of the current policy; and
2. The amendments to the appeals procedure which covers Misconduct, Capability and Ill Health Capability so that appeals against dismissal are heard by Chief Officers.

Three members of the Committee required, in accordance with Paragraph 5 of Part 3 of the Constitution, that the Committee make a recommendation to Council on this matter, and the Committee accordingly

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND –**

1. **That the revised Misconduct Policy attached at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.**
2. **That the Head of Human Resources Strategy be instructed to publicise the revision to this policy to all Council employees.**
3. **That Human Resources monitor the application of the Misconduct Policy.**
4. **That the amended to the appeals procedure at Appendix 2 of the3 report which covers Misconduct, Capability and Ill Health Capability, be approved subject to final approval by the Special Committee (Constitutional Review).”**

Upon being put to the vote, the recommendations of the Committee were agreed.

**RESOLVED – That the Report of General Functions Committee of 14 January 2009, and the recommendations contained therein be approved and adopted.**

**163. PROPOSED CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2009/10 (Report of the Director of Corporate Governance – Agenda Item 5.4.1)**

**RESOLVED**

- (1) **That the Calendar 2009/10 be approved and the Democratic Services Manager be authorised to agree variations in consultation with the Chairman of the body concerned.**
- (2) **That the Council, at their Annual Meeting, be recommended to agree the dates of the ordinary Council meetings proposed in the attached Appendix A, in order to meet Constitutional requirements and that the Democratic Services Manager be instructed to take the appropriate action.**

**164. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS (Report of the Director of Corporate Governance – Agenda Item 5.4.3)**



**RESOLVED – That;**

- (i) any matters requiring to be considered under Crime & Disorder Act before the new arrangements come into force be referred to the Tackling Crime and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee**
- (ii) any matters requiring to be considered under Section 119 of the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 be referred to the Resources, Performance and Partnership Overview & Scrutiny Committee**
- (ii) that the scrutiny of the following be referred to the Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee:**
  - Local Strategic Partnerships**
  - Thematic Boards**
  - Partnerships and Sub – Partnerships**
  - Relevant partner associations not covered by any other Committee**

**165. REPORTS FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER (Agenda Item 5.4)**

None.

**166. COMMENTS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE CABINET (Agenda Item 6.1)**

**Comment: Councillor Richard Weider**

Thank you Mr Mayor. The past month has been a difficult time for the Jewish community of this Borough as we have prayed and hoped for a peaceful solution in the Middle East where the State of Israel has had to defend itself against a terrorist organisation that doesn't recognise the State of Israel and is intent on destroying it. However, the presentation of this by the media in this country, especially the BBC, has encouraged the huge rise in anti-Semitism in this country. There has been a huge rise in the number of physical attacks on Jews in this Borough in the last month, and I, and many Jewish members of this Borough, are very worried about the rise in anti-Semitism that is occurring. I therefore ask the Leader of the Council, what the Council is doing to reduce the level of anti-Semitic attacks going on?

**Response: Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Members will know that this Council works very closely with leading members of all of the faith communities, because an attack on one faith community is an attack on them all. But, in particular with the Jewish community, we have co-ordinated very closely with the Police and with the CST and of course both myself and the Deputy Leader met leading members of the community to reassure them as to what we were doing, including our very good graffiti removal service which has dealt with the outbreak of graffiti very quickly and very speedily. On top of that, of course, we are deploying our CCTV on an increased basis and putting increased pressure on the Police to use the SNTs for visible reassurance patrols. It's incumbent on all Members, I think Mr Mayor, to ensure that any racist anti-Semitic attacks or comments are stamped out and not tolerated one iota.

**Comment: Councillor Daniel Webb**

Yes, the Cabinet Member will be aware that Whitings Hill School kicked off the PSCIP programme and my colleague and I were there two weeks ago. I'm told that it looks fantastic. The residents seem to be happy, the governing body is certainly happy. My question really is how are things progressing, are we still on track and what's happening there?

**Response: Councillor Matthew Offord**

Mr Mayor, I'm sure you'll know better than anyone in this Chamber that work is progressing well at Whitings Hill and it was the first PSCIP school in the programme as Councillor Webb said. In fact, work is progressing well on all the sites in Barnet, not only at the primary school in Parkfield in West Hendon where I was formerly a governor, but also the children's centre at Underhill. Most excitingly, the latest project, that of Broadfields School in Edgware, started work very recently and I took the opportunity to visit the contractors to see how the work is going and I can report to the Council the anticipated success in that area.

**Comment: Councillor Joan Scannell**

Thank you Mr Mayor, can the Cabinet Member please explain the strategy as per my question, as I'm sure many residents in the Borough are not aware of this?

**Response: Councillor Matthew Offord**

Mr Mayor, the strategy of the Library Service is to be responsive to the residents and the demands that they have for the service. Not only is it a place just to take out books, it has become a place of education and entertainment. Most recently, we have responded to this need through the refurbishment of customer service points at North Finchley Library, Chipping Barnet, Edgware and Golders Green, with refurbishment and implementation work continuing with Hendon in February. In addition to this, I bring attention to the creation of a shared customer service centre at Burnt Oak which has been responsible for an additional 900 users to the library.

**Comment: Councillor Dean Cohen**

Mr Mayor, the Cabinet Member will be aware that although the pilots were withdrawn because not one single Council wanted to take part, the legislation allowing Councils to introduce charges remain in force. Please can Councillor Harper reiterate that this Council will not introduce pay as you throw bin taxes in this Borough.

**Response: Councillor Andrew Harper**

Mr Mayor, I can be very brief. In my first speech since taking on my current portfolio, I pledged that there would be no bin taxes in Barnet. That remains my position and that of this Administration. This proposal by the Labour Government for additional charging for waste collection has been a fiasco from start to finish. No local authorities have chosen to participate in the scheme. We could have predicted it and we won't be going there.

**167. QUESTIONS TO REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Agenda Item 6.2)**

None.

The meeting finished at 10.35pm

**Council Questions to Cabinet Members**

27 January 2009

**Questions and Responses****Question 1****Councillor Monroe Palmer**

In the latest edition of Barnet First it says: that money deposited with Icelandic banks, and other financial institutions 'is made up from money collected from council tax payments, housing rents, Business Rates, Government grants, capital receipts and other income paid to the Council'. Why doesn't it mention the Millions of pounds borrowed from Public Works Loans Board and not spent?

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

The Barnet First article was giving a flavour of the different sources of cash that make up our cash deposits and was not intended to be an exhaustive list.

**Supplementary Question 1****Councillor Monroe Palmer**

How much was borrowed from the Public Works Loans Board and how much was not spent but deposited with banks, including Icelandic banks? Can you also explain why it was not illegal to seek to make a profit between interest paid and received on these government loans?

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

It's quite straight forward Mr Mayor. The Council did not borrow to invest the money to make a return, it is simply good treasury management.

**Question 2****Councillor Brian Gordon**

I recently received a representation by the Hale Association who were concerned about the hasty removal of trees by Council contractors in various roads within the Hale Ward. It does seem that trees are sometimes being removed for reasons that are not clearly explained. Could you please comment on the methods that are employed to ensure that trees are only removed when they are defective, dangerous or problematic or for some other acceptable reason and that the Council will ensure that all proper notices and explanations are given to residents?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

All street trees in Barnet are inspected every three years prior to their cyclical maintenance by Tree Officers employed by the Council. The contractors employed by the Council only implement works on instruction from the Council's Tree Officers. Trees on the highway are only removed when found to be in one or more of the various conditions described in the question. The current policy requires Officers to inform Members when healthy trees are removed as a result of building subsidence or for vehicle crossovers. It does not require officers to advise Members when trees need felling if they are found in a potentially dangerous condition as the notification process may prolong what could be a potentially dangerous situation placing the Council at risk and others in harm's way. Officers will however always advise Members of the need for felling works if there are large numbers of trees being felled, as for example in the case of West Heath Avenue, where a large number of horse chestnuts were felled and the stations replanted.

**Question 3****Councillor Barry Rawlings**

What role has the Future Shape of the Council played in the budget setting process for 2009/10?

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

The budget has a provision for costs that may be incurred in assessing the options for the Future Shape of the Council.

**Supplementary Question 3****Councillor Barry Rawlings**

As you may have noticed Councillor Freer, I actually asked about the role it played and not the cost. Now given that what has come up at scrutiny, is the role of whether we fund things which are statutory or not, wouldn't it be true to say that the Future Shape is already beginning without the report being written, without any vote and by stealth?

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

The Council always has a future shape but that is not the same as the Future Shape project.

**Question 4****Councillor Monroe Palmer**

In the latest edition of Barnet First it states about getting early repayment of the £27.4 million in Icelandic Banks that 'the deposits could not have been recovered or at least without very substantial early redemption penalties'. Could the Leader inform us as to when we requested terms for early repayment, in particular in January, February, March and April 2008 (or at any other time) and what redemption penalties were quoted / offered by Glitnir and Landsbanki?

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

No formal requests were made for the early repayment of deposits from the Icelandic banks. The Council did not receive indication from the Council's treasury advisors of significant concerns that would have led officers to seek such terms. The point is that had we been advised to withdraw our deposits by our advisers this could only have been done by incurring penalties.

**Supplementary Question 4****Councillor Monroe Palmer**

Do you think about the formal request for early withdrawal, made early in 2008, as did other depositors? You say no formal requests were made. Can we have details of informal requests and the memoranda or notes of those requests and answers? Advisers who I've personally asked say that penalties would have been modest at that time. What were the exact details of penalties offered from the informal requests made by Barnet or did you not bother to concern yourself with these matters?

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

I will ask the Treasury Manager who, of course, has that responsibility to write to the Councillor with a detailed response.

**Question 5****Councillor Brian Gordon**

There are still many streets within Barnet that have road humps. Many people would like these humps to be removed altogether. Is there any programme in existence the continued removal of humps?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

There is no budget specifically for the removal of road humps. The Council takes the opportunity, in roads where we are carrying out resurfacing works, to review the effectiveness of existing traffic management measures that include road humps, speed tables and cushions. As part of the resurfacing activity it has always been the case that the existing surface is removed, which includes any features in the road. To assist in the decision whether to replace, a comprehensive consultation exercise is carried out that considers responses from residents / occupiers, emergency services (police, ambulance and fire brigade) and ward councillors supported by a technical assessment of whether the measures are meeting the original objectives and are still appropriate for modern day traffic demands. This is a continuing process and to date there have been no instances of roads being resurfaced followed by reinstatement of road humps.

**Question 6****Councillor Julie Johnson**

Will the Cabinet Member for Crime and Community Safety be pressing to ensure that if the Mayor of London proceeds with the policy to place PCSOs rather than conductors on open platform buses that there will be no reduction in PCSOs in terms of hours or personnel in Barnet to support this policy, and no reduction in Barnet's proportion of the Met's budget as a result?

**Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman**

I know of no such plans.

**Supplementary Question 6**

**Councillor Julie Johnson**

I'm surprised that Councillor Coleman doesn't know about the plans, since they've been reported in the press, actually in the London paper. Will he go away and appraise himself of the facts and then lobby the Mayor to make sure it isn't going to have an impact on Barnet?

**Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman**

I stand by my answer Mr Mayor.

**Question 7**

**Councillor Monroe Palmer**

In the latest edition of Barnet First it says 'the Icelandic deposits were made, up to two years ago'. Would the Leader confirm that a truer and fuller statement would have been that £15 million was invested 15 months ago and is not due to mature until September 2010; that £5.4million was invested in January / February 2007, maturing in February / March 2009; that £7mil was invested in November 2006 and should have matured in November 2008?

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

The article in Barnet First was intended to give residents an overview in that the first monies were deposited with an Icelandic bank in September 2006 and this deposit was subsequently rolled over in September 2007, though the interest on that initial deposit was paid to the Council. As is noted in the question, other deposits were made in November January, February and November 2007. A comprehensive and more technical report is in the public domain for any resident or Councillor seeking the facts.

**Supplementary Question 7**

**Councillor Monroe Palmer**

Since the deposit with an Icelandic bank in 2006 actually matured, that it was reinvested with them is irrelevant, it matured, surely to use that repaid deposit to substantiate the statement that the deposits were made up to 2 years ago was incorrect, misleading and should this misinformation not be due for correction in the next edition of the magazine rather sadly named Barnet First, it should probably be Barnet Greed?

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

The information as published is correct, Mr Mayor.

**Question 8**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Can we please have an update on the progress and effectiveness of the new street lights around the Borough?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The new street lighting programme includes the removal and replacement of 16,754 columns which equates to around 69% of the existing lighting columns lighting the Borough's roads. The programme has now been running for 2.5 years including January 2009 and to date 9,375 new lighting columns have been installed and 6,395 existing columns have been removed. Of the new columns installed 7,468 are fully operational. The remaining newly installed columns are in the process of having the electricity supplies connected or are going through the inspection and certification process. All lighting columns which could be deemed as life-expired have been removed and hence any risk in the structural integrity of life-expired equipment has been removed. Where new lighting columns have been installed, the levels of lighting has been greatly improved. Each road now meets the lighting levels recommended in the British Standard Code of Practice for lighting roads and footpaths. This Code of Practice requires the full width of the road and footpath to be lit to designated levels, whereas the lighting which existed previously would have been designed solely to provide a specific lighting level on the road with no consideration given to the footway. Therefore not only has the lighting been improved on the roads but the adjacent footway has now been lit to a desirable standard to ensure safe passage for road users and pedestrians.

Where new lighting has been installed in Town Centre locations the light source has been changed to a pure white light output and this provides benefits in improving the images of the CCTV cameras operating in these locations.

Once installed there is an ongoing requirement under the PFI contract for the lighting levels to be continually checked to ensure that the improved lighting is maintained for the duration of the contract term. To date these checks have confirmed full compliance with the designed and approved lighting levels in all those streets where the new lighting has been installed.

**Question 9**

**Councillor Claire Farrier**

Residents in Burnt Oak and neighbouring wards are as upset about the possibility of a road round the perimeter of Montrose Park as they are about a road through the middle of the park – will the Cabinet Member assure me that there will not be a road over, under, through or around Montrose Park as part of the regeneration plans for the area?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The recent Colindale Area Action Plan Preferred Options paper has identified a number of potential routes that could provide the necessary additional movement capacity to meet the predicted travel needs of the new community. There are no firm proposals at this time and further work is being carried out to identify travel flows and desire lines to assist in the planning of transport services. Future proposals will be fully consulted with the local community.

**Supplementary Question 9**

**Councillor Claire Farrier**

Can Councillor Harper confirm Councillor Melvin Cohen's public and minuted assurance that there will not be a road built through Montrose Park?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

There are no plans at the moment for roads through, or round, or under, or over Montrose Park. Certainly nothing will happen until there is a public consultation. At the moment we're in the very initial stages of determining what the additional transport network requirements might be in that area.

**Question 10**

**Councillor Monroe Palmer**

At the last Council Meeting, I queried why the funds held by Barnet's Pension Fund had, despite external Auditor's recommendation, been pooled with funds held by the Council, resulting in potential losses from balances held in Icelandic banks. I was promised a meeting with The Leader and the Director of Resources to clarify the situation. The meeting did not take place nor had it been arranged by 1 January 2009. Can I now have an answer in public as to why the Auditors recommendation had not been adhered to?

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

The Councillor is, I believe, confused. The Auditor did not require the deposits and investments to be separate for investment purposes but that the accounting of the returns to be in separate bank accounts.

After an investigation of the alternative options for holding the cash of the Barnet Pension Fund, officers have begun work to enable the creation of a separate bank account. This involves a number of process and system changes that require implementation. The creation of a separate account would not, however, have changed the process for pooling the cash of the Barnet Pension Fund with that of the Council.

The Councillor was entirely at liberty to arrange a meeting with the relevant officers had he so wished. I understand that the meeting has been arranged.

**Supplementary Question 10****Councillor Monroe Palmer**

I was offered a meeting, as Councillors may remember from the last Council meeting, with Councillor Freer and Mr Medlam, a date was fixed and cancelled. I then very recently had a helpful meeting with Mr Medlam who explained that Barnet Council and the pension fund now have separate accounts at the Co-Op Bank. However, the pension fund's cash of about £80m was and is pooled daily with Barnet Council money to deposit in Icelandic, Irish, German and Arab banks, amongst others. Will Councillor Freer, as Chairman of the Pension Fund trustees be writing to all members of the Barnet pension fund to explain how a significant proportion of their pension fund is lost or mislaid?

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

No I won't Mr Mayor, because no element of the pension fund has been lost, and as Councillor Palmer full knows as a member of the Pension Fund Committee it is quite normal, and in fact it is good practice to pool our deposits to maximise returns, which of course is the benefit and is the purpose of the Pension Fund Committee is to maximise returns on behalf of the pension fund.

**Question 11****Councillor Brian Gordon**

There have been press reports about a possible Government directive to impose an extra levy on residents for the collection of surplus "uncyclable" rubbish. What would be the Council's response to this?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

In the Climate Change Act 2008 power has been given for local authorities to pilot incentives for household waste minimisation and recycling. This power allows local authorities to recognise the efforts of those who reduce, reuse or recycle their waste, and to incentivise others to change their behaviour such as by charging for waste collection. A maximum of five local authorities will be able to run pilot schemes.

Barnet Council will not be participating in this pilot as the pilots have to be revenue neutral and we believe that this will be impossible to achieve as they will be cumbersome to administer. In addition the council already has an effective scheme to encourage participating in the recycling services, i.e. our Compulsory Recycling. So, the benefits of participating in such a pilot would be less than for other authorities who do not have a Compulsory Recycling scheme.

**Question 12****Councillor Alison Moore**

What consultation with the voluntary sector – particularly the Borough's advice agencies – did the Council undertake prior to publishing the proposal to cut the Welfare Rights Unit?

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

Consultation takes place after the Budget headlines are published.

**Supplementary Question 12****Councillor Alison Moore**

From answers to the questions I've seen it seems that publishing the budget headlines and consulting on the budget headlines are one and the same thing. When do you propose to properly talk to the voluntary sector about taking on clients for the Welfare Rights Unit?

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

It does appear that the opposition failed to understand the difference between budget headlines and the budget. Budget headlines is the start of the consultation process, the officers involved, if they haven't already started, will be doing shortly the formal consultations. The budget headlines are the start of the process and of course no decision is made until the council tax setting meeting later this year.

**Question 13****Councillor Monroe Palmer**

In this time of financial pressure does The Leader feel that regard should be taken of London Councils October 2006 Report of the Independent panel to review the remuneration scheme for Councillors in London which whilst accepting Special Responsibility Allowances, states "We reiterate that not more than 50% of Councillors should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) and that only one SRA should be paid to a Councillor in respect of duties with the same authority".

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

The report to which the Councillor refers came out in October 2006. I am unclear as to why Cllr Monroe Palmer would want to suggest the selective implementation of recommendation number 8 but not the other 13. If we are to be guided by the Report from the Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors in London, then we should take account of the whole range of its findings.

This Council's basic allowance figure is just under the level the London Councils report suggested at the time. But the suggested remuneration for Council Leaders (Band 4 in the LC report) was £51,191, which compares very favourably, at least from the taxpayer's point of view at least, to the Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Leader of Barnet, just over £34,000 in 2008/09.

**Supplementary Question 13****Councillor Monroe Palmer**

Since Councillor Freer has taken my questions about special responsibility allowances personally, because the question wasn't actually aimed at him personally, could he confirm that his Members', Leader's allowance and Chairman of Pension Fund allowance amounts to £51,468. I would just in case help him, his SRA of £34,073, basic £9,735, Pension Fund Chairman £7,301, travel £359, so that's £51,468 and the real question Mr Mayor is, and did you receive anything else from Barnet Council and what other allowances or salaries or fees do you receive from the public sector?

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

I do find this question a bit rich from the smallest group on the Council that receives the highest allowances per head of any group on the Council. If Councillor Palmer wants to talk about the London Council report of independent panels then we have to implement it all, not just the parts that he likes. All of my allowances are fully disclosed in the register of members' interests, as he full knows.

**Question 14****Councillor Hugh Rayner**

Please could the Leader outline the likely impact of the planned increase in National Insurance in 2011 will have on future Council Budgets?

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

£500,000.

**Supplementary Question 14****Councillor Hugh Rayner**

Councillor Freer, thank you for your concise answer. When I asked the question I had no idea of the effect of this on council tax payers, that the Government measure would be so great. I thought the measure was meant to help combat the credit crunch. I, for one, could do without such help. Another supposedly helpful measure was the reduction in VAT which has caused so much chaos to small businesses throughout Barnet without tangible benefit. In particular, I'd like to ask about fuel tax. When reducing the VAT level Mr Darling announced there would be a compensatory increase in fuel tax. Can you estimate the cost of this government help to Barnet council tax payers?

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

I will certainly get the information available to the Member, of course, from memory, and I stand to be corrected, VAT of course can be reclaimed, but fuel duty is non-reclaimable so once again a temporary tax cut followed by a permanent tax increase.



**Question 15****Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Will the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport be pressing to ensure that there will be no reduction in TFLs spending in the outer-London Boroughs, including Barnet, as a result of the extra expenditure required for the proposed new open platform buses that will replace articulated buses on a number of London bus routes?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

There is no information available regarding the cost of future bus provision. Meanwhile, Barnet Council takes every opportunity to obtain funding from TfL and other external sources, to invest in the borough's transport network.

**Supplementary Question 15****Councillor Kath McGuirk**

I can assure the Cabinet Member, that if he was inclined to, there's plenty of information out there on the Internet. But can he assure us, in here tonight, that there will be no cuts to any services in Barnet and that we'll have new buses on routes that desperately need them, such as the 210 which I believe he, at the last Council meeting, extolled the virtues of.

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Very much so, and indeed in terms of the funding available from TfL I'm very encouraged that, for example, the monies that we're receiving for local implementation schemes for the coming year will be commensurate with the amounts that we received last year. We're very fortunate that Barnet's needs have again been properly recognised by the current Mayor.

**Question 16****Councillor Wayne Casey**

Would the Leader of the Council confirm what, to the best of his knowledge, are the Nolan Committee's Seven Principles of Public Life?

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

Selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

**Supplementary Question 16****Councillor Wayne Casey**

At the December meeting of the Council the Leader confirmed that he has regular meetings with the Acting Director of Resources to ensure that the treasury management policy is adhered to. With specific reference to the standards of accountability and openness can he confirm that minutes or some form of written record is maintained at these meetings?

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

The Director of Resources may take his own minutes and action points and he will have those available if they are disclosable to members.

**Question 17****Councillor Joan Scannell**

Please could the Cabinet Member tell us where our recycled materials end up?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Over 95 percent of the materials that are collected for recycling, both at the Civic Amenity and Recycling Centre and through the kerbside black and blue recycling box scheme are reprocessed in the UK.

Information on the outlets for all our materials is published on our website ([barnet.gov.uk](http://barnet.gov.uk)). Outlets for materials collected as part of the black and blue box recycling scheme include:

- Paper – this is taken to the Aylesford Newsprint paper mill in Kent, where it is made back into newspapers again.
- Glass – as we collect the three colours of glass separately our glass is able to go back into the container industry. Our glass is taken to O-I Manufacturing (UK) Ltd in Harlow, where it is made back into glass bottles and jars.

- Cardboard – this is taken to Edwards Recycling in Barking, for onward transport to Smurfit Kappa in Kent, where it is made into “Kraft” which is the thick, brown packaging paper that normally lines the inside of cardboard boxes.
- Plastic bottles – these are taken to JayPlas Leicestershire where the plastic bottles are sorted into the different polymer types. They are then granulated and turned into new plastic products such as pipes, in Leicestershire.
- Cans, aerosols and foil – these are taken to South Wales where the steel and aluminium cans are sorted. The steel cans are put into the steel industry to make items such as car parts, and the aluminium cans are taken to Warrington, where they are made back into aluminium cans again.

**Supplementary Question 17**

**Councillor Joan Scannell**

I thank the Cabinet Member for the very helpful reply. However, can he please explain why it is so important that materials are sorted properly?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

One of the reasons, Mr Mayor, why we’re being very successful in terms of the operation of our recycling scheme and our ability to sell the recycling into the market is precisely because we have a system known as source separated collection at kerbside. We do, of course, rely on residents to play their part in helping us to source things properly and put into the different boxes. But, that does mean that the materials that we collect are uncontaminated, as the jargon goes. That enables us to sell much more successfully into the market and achieve very good prices. I have to say that we’re being much more successful at that than are a number of other local authorities around the country and that’s a record I intend to maintain with of course the full support and assistance of residents.

**Question 18**

**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

What is the new date for the completion of Aerodrome Bridge Road?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

There have been delays recently due to the scale of the works undertaken by the statutory undertakers, particularly EDF. The completion date within the current agreed programme is early May.

**Question 19**

**Councillor Wayne Casey**

Would the Leader of the Council confirm the pay range of the Directors, Executive Directors and Chief Executive’s salaries before the General Functions Committee Meeting on 8 December 2008 and after as a result of the decisions taken in relation to the item on the Directors, Executive Directors and Chief Executive’s grading structure?

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

Current Grading Band For Directors

Directors	
Pay Spine	Salary 1/4/07
308	115113
309	117987
310	120939
311	124056
312	127065
313	130155
314	133437
315	136461

Revised Grading Band For Directors (Including The Pending Pay Award)

Directors	
Pay Spine	
308	120000
309	123000
310	126084
311	129240
312	132480
313	135792
314	139200
315	142680
316	146256
317	149916
318	153672
319	157524
320	161460
321	165504
322	169644
323	175000

Current Grading Band For Executive Directors

Executive Directors	
Pay Spine	Salary 1/4/07
401	143703
402	147225
403	150888
404	154569
405	158340
406	162204
407	166161
408	170217

Revised Grading Band For Executive Directors Including The Pending Pay Award)

Executive Directors	
Pay Spine	
404	170026
405	174174
406	178424
407	182777
408	187239

**Supplementary Question 19**

**Councillor Wayne Casey**

Assuming that I've been given a straight answer to what I think is a straight question. What could possibly justify senior staff pay increases of anything up to 10% when frontline staff are being made redundant and when most families in Barnet having to tighten their belts because of the recession? How does the Leader reconcile what's happening in Barnet with the commitment made by Eric Pickles MP, the Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, that a future Conservative government will curb local authority salaries?

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

The basic question is I actually share a great deal of concern with Councillor Casey on top managers' pay and those people who have been blessed with having to deal with me on the weekly one-to-ones with the Chief Executive and the Acting Chief Executive know my views. The difficulty is, as the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group knows, who's sitting just to the right of Councillor Casey, perhaps might want to have a conversation, is the difficulty that we have had in recruiting the Director of Children's Services at a salary that we thought was competitive. The difficulty is in local authorities, senior management of a high calibre are in short supply and when we go out to the market we see what is a competitive rate, however if that rate doesn't attract the quality of candidate, as Councillor Cohen certainly knows from the DCS, we then have to go back out into the market with a higher rate. That is part of dealing in a tight job market. In terms of whether we wanted to have a pay freeze, well of course that is something that I'll be delighted to put forward to all of our staff and unions if I would have the support of all members of this Chamber. Sadly, we are in a national pay system and we're having to deal with a shortage of calibre people, meaning an increase in the bands. But I repeat the offer, if the opposition parties wish to put forward a pay freeze then I think you'll find the whole Council will support that and I look forward to their motion at the next meeting.

**Question 20**

**Councillor Kate Salinger**

How many schools in Barnet were graded outstanding by Ofsted in the academic year 2007/8?

**Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer**

13 schools were graded outstanding last year, more than in any other London Borough. They were; Courtland Primary School, Deansbrook Infant School, Hasmorean Primary School, Independent Jewish day School, Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School, Queen Elizabeth's School, St Margaret's Nursery School, St Michael's Catholic Grammar School, St Vincent's RC School, The Annunciation RC Junior School, The Henrietta Barnett School, The Ravenscroft School and Whitefield School.

**Supplementary Question 20**

**Councillor Kate Salinger**

I thank the Cabinet Member for her reply. Does she agree with me that this is further proof that Barnet is the home of first class education and will she join me in paying tribute to the schools on their achievements?

**Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer**

Indeed, I'm happy to join Councillor Salinger in offering those congratulations to these schools and, indeed, to St Joseph's Junior School which I think was judged outstanding only last week. I would now point out that we have no schools in special measures either in Barnet, so I'm delighted that our schools continue to provide such an excellent education to all children across the Borough.

**Question 21**

**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Is the Council drying wet cardboard from re-cycling collections before weighing it?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The council does not dry the cardboard before it is reprocessed. Cardboard is collected from the blue recycling boxes, and taken to the depot in Mill Hill. The collection vehicles are weighed as they enter the site. The cardboard is stored outside before being passed through the baling machine. The bales of cardboard are then stored outside. This is standard industry practise for loose and baled cardboard to be stored outside.

When there is a vehicle load of baled cardboard, approximately once a week, it is sent to a bulking depot in Barking. Before the vehicle leaves the depot it is weighed, and when it arrives at the bulking depot it is weighed again.

At the bulking depot the cardboard is stored outside, before being transported to Kent, where the reprocessing company turn it into 'Kraft', a form of cardboard. There is no harm done to the cardboard in storing it outside and it getting wet, and again, this is standard industry practise.

**Supplementary Question 21****Councillor Geof Cooke**

As I understand it, recycling credit paid to councils by the Government depend on the weight of recycled material. If, as you say, all councils leave their recycled cardboard out in the rain before weighing, it would seem to favour councils in wetter areas over those in the sunny south-east. Have you considered redressing some of the losses in Icelandic banks by soaking all Barnet's cardboard in water before weighing it?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

I'm sure we'll never cease to be amazed by the ingenuity of Councillor Cooke, I don't doubt officers will be happy to have a look at that one.

**Question 22****Councillor Jack Cohen**

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that, as stated in the Action Sheet of the Finchley and Golders Green Residents Forum, a private company by the name of Crown Protection Services (CPS) is carrying out, on behalf of the Council, the functions of section 149 of the relevant Act relating to stray dogs? If so, can he supply details of the company providing such services for the Council under the Act, and its activities, including: the names of principal directors or proprietors; location of kennels and the name under which they are registered; the date the kennels were last inspected; the amounts paid to the Company, and the number of dogs dealt with including those returned to owners and those put down.

**Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman**

Yes.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 149 requires that every Local Authority should appoint an officer to deal with stray dogs; the functions of Section 149, however, may be discharged to another person by a Local Authority. The Council currently employs a private company, (the Crown Protection Service) to deal with stray dogs throughout the borough on its behalf under Section 149 of the EPA 1990.

CPS is located at: The Pound, Cool Oak Lane, London NW9 7NB and is registered as Crown Protection Services Limited, which is part of Crown Group Services. The principal Operations Director is Mr Paul Barnes.

The CPS operate a 24-hour 7-day a week service, providing collection, receiving, kennelling, care and re-homing of dogs. This arrangement has been in operation since May 2004 following the decision to cease the in-house Dog Warden Service. Previous legal advice confirmed that the requirements of the law were being adequately met in discharging the Council's animal warden function to the CPS. CPS also provides canine solutions for various industrial needs such as search and detection dogs.

CPS premises are an animal boarding establishment as they look after dogs on the Council's behalf. This requires a licence which has now been confirmed and issued. Before a licence is granted, animal welfare checks are made on the Council's behalf by the Corporation of London. Once a licence is granted, periodic checks are made to ensure that licence conditions are complied with. The premises were last inspected on 13 January 2009.

From April to December 2008 CPS received 1260 calls, an average 140 calls each month, on various dog management issues. They reunited 207 dogs with owners and re-homed 72 in centres such as Battersea Dog Home.

**Supplementary Question 22****Councillor Jack Cohen**

Thank you Councillor Coleman. You refer to Paul Barnes, the Director of Crown Protection Services, who is the owner of the dog kennels.

Paul Barnes, the Director is quoted in a paper as saying this about Staffordshire Bull Terriers, "There is a different kind of person owning these dogs now. Years ago people got dogs when they were settling in the house as a family. But, how many people own them, to put them in chains and harnesses and bling to show them off as a fashion statement". I don't know if that reminds you of anything Councillor Coleman, but my real question is this, I did ask you how much money we have paid to this company and you have failed to answer that part of my question. How much money do we pay this company?

**Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman**

Mr Mayor, I have been compared to many things in my time, but never a Staffordshire Bull Terrier. I rather see myself as a rather cuddly Golden Retriever.

**Question 23**

**Councillor Tom Davey**

Please could the Cabinet Member inform us how successful the Cashless Parking Pilot has been?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The cashless parking scheme trial was implemented in September 2008. To date, it has been very well received. Our initial assessment expected us to reach a 15 percent take up of cashless parking in off street car parks. So far, almost 10 percent of the weekly revenue taken in car parks is received via the cashless systems. With two and a half months left in the trial, we're confident that the 15 percent expected take up will be achieved.

Initial feedback from officers using the system and from the public has been positive. It is felt that this scheme enhances the payment options available.

**Supplementary Question 23**

**Councillor Tom Davey**

Thank you Councillor Harper. Given the scheme has been so successful, are there any plans to roll it out elsewhere in the Borough?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Yes, I certainly do intend that we should be able to roll this scheme out across the Borough as soon as we possibly can. I am at the moment looking at ways, in which we can do that, looking at how we will tender. Certainly the scheme has been very successful and we will be doing our best to encourage it. More and more people seem to be thinking that's the right way to go.

**Question 24**

**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

What consultation with service users of the Welfare Rights Unit was undertaken prior to the publication of the proposal to cut the Welfare Rights Unit?

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

Consultation takes place after the Budget headlines are published.

**Supplementary Question 24**

**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Can I ask precisely how this consultation with service users on the Welfare Rights Unit is going to take place?

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

We'll write to the Member.

**Question 25**

**Councillor Wayne Casey**

Was the authorisation for the deposit of £27.4M in Icelandic institutions given by a Chief Officer of the Council or a more junior officer?

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

Deposits are made daily and are a routine activity of the Treasury Management Team within Resources. The team is headed up by the Treasury Manager (who is Association of Corporate Treasurers qualified), and reports to the Head of Strategic Finance, who in turn reports to the Chief Finance Officer.

**Supplementary Question 25**

**Councillor Wayne Casey**

Mr Mayor, before I ask the question I want to make it absolutely crystal clear that I have read Section 7 of the Constitution and I want to make it absolutely crystal clear that I am not looking for names in answer to this supplementary question. Mr Mayor, in order to have deposited £27.4m in Icelandic banks one or more officers must have signed their names to the paperwork making the deposit. Were these officers Chief Officers or were they not?

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

Mr Mayor, again I will have to write to the Member because I know that Mr Medlam is a Chief Officer, I do not know at this stage if he signed the paperwork. I know that the Treasury Manager, who was heavily involved in all of the dealings of the treasury team. However, I'm not aware of his individual pay grading or his status. So, that particular detail will have to be provided to Councillor Casey and, of course, on an exempt blue paper basis.

**Question 26**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

For how many successive years has our Council managed to keep Council Tax increases below inflation and how has this been achieved?

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

Unlike the previous Labour / LibDem coalition who increased Council Tax above inflation every year they ran the Council, this will be the 5th year in succession we have delivered a below RPI increase in Council Tax. We are one of only a handful of London Councils to have achieved this.

This has been done by tight budget setting and control. We have consistently reduced the base budget by £10m every year, largely through efficiency measures that protect priority services. We have ensured spending is within budget through rigorous budget monitoring and proactive budget management. All this has been during a period of below inflation grant settlements i.e. real term grant cuts.

**Supplementary Question 26**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Leader, will you accept the commendation of this Council and I'm sure the overwhelming majority of residents in this Borough, in achieving a significantly low increase in this year's council tax despite so many adverse economic circumstances, not least of them, being the spendaholic addictions of the current Labour government.

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

I'll put the accolade on my mantelpiece alongside Banker of the year.

**Question 27**

**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

At the last Council meeting the Leader told me that the Council's Equality Scheme was ambitious and that equalities performance was being monitored by testing the equality impact of key corporate priorities. Which key corporate priority does the cessation of the Welfare Rights Unit come under and what equality impact assessment was undertaken prior to the publication of the proposal?

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

An equality impact assessment has just been completed and the results will inform the final decision following the publication of the draft budget. Targeting resources to achieve maximum effective use of resources cuts across all priorities.

**Supplementary Question 27****Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Can you please let me have a copy of the completed equality impact assessment when it's ready?

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

The good Councillor as an esteemed Member of this Council will of course be entitled to all the documentation once it's available to Members.

**Question 28****Councillor Bridget Perry**

What grade did Barnet Children's Services receive in its Annual Performance Assessment?

**Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer**

Barnet Children's services received a good grade in its annual performance assessment with an outstanding grade for the enjoy and achieve element of the assessment. This maintains last year's excellent performance and underlines that Barnet's children's services are among the best in the country.

**Supplementary Question 28****Councillor Bridget Perry**

Will the Cabinet Member pay tribute to the staff involved in this excellent result for Children's Services?

**Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer**

Yes, I'm very happy to pay tribute to members of staff and I would particularly like to single out those members of staff in the safeguarding and social care divisions who have dealt with recent pressure, certainly pressure late last year, on the service with exemplary commitment to safeguarding children and I do think we should pay tribute to them.

**Question 29****Councillor Ross Houston**

Has the Mayor of London replied to Barnet Council's submission on his indicative affordable housing targets for the Borough, and if so what is his response?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan**

As a result of our submission, Officers met with officers of the GLA on 24 November where it was recognised that Barnet's affordable housing targets were extremely challenging, particularly without additional funding from the HCA London board. It was agreed that additional investment opportunities would be explored. Further discussions will be held over the next few weeks.

**Supplementary Question 29****Councillor Ross Houston**

The Mayor of London has considerable clout on the new HCA London Board, perhaps Councillor Hillan can use her influence to persuade him to provide additional funding for Barnet out of the considerable funds available, and can she let me have a copy of the Mayor's official response once this has been obtained?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan**

We have had the HCA visit West Hendon and we are looking forward to a positive outcome and we've also got Richard Blakeway coming down so there is a lot of negotiation going on and yes, of course, you'll be entitled to a copy of the response.

**Question 30****Councillor Brian Gordon**

Can the Leader please comment on the latest Government Formula Grant Settlement for the Borough?

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

Barnet's grant increase is 2.2% below the national settlement of 2.8%.

The percentages cannot hide the poor settlement for London in particular where grant increases will not be enough to meet inflationary pressures let alone new service demands.



In fact, it is likely that the NLWA levy increase alone will exceed the grant increase. The current minister has made it quite clear his intention to help his northern supporters by continuing to drain grant away from the economic capital of the UK to the less successful regions. As evidence I need only refer to the flawed changes made in the last couple of years to grant allocations for adult social services that have deprived London of much needed resources to support the vulnerable.

**Supplementary Question 30**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Mr Leader, do you think we and other Boroughs are lobbying hard enough to try and change the Government's totally disproportionate and inequitable policies towards the allocation of its formula grants settlement around the country? Is this Government, do you think deliberately targeting Conservative controlled authorities for a raw deal?

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

I think one of the problems is that because most of local government is controlled by the Conservative Party, then, of course, the Government is targeting Conservative Councils because they can't do anything else. In terms of negotiations with DCLG, it is rather like negotiating with the speaking clock, because every time we say we are being under funded we simply get you've got enough money to do everything we ask you of. So, it really is a rather circuitous exercise of negotiation and, at the end of the day, the Government give us what they wanted to give. So as you say, we are negotiating but we are negotiating with those who don't wish to talk to us.

**Question 31**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

When will a suitable pedestrian facility be introduced at Henlys Corner so that all members of the community can cross the road in safety?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The Council and TfL are working together to further develop a scheme which would provide pedestrian crossings on all arms of the junction whilst minimising delay to traffic. There are several statutory processes TfL will need to complete, including tendering for the construction contract. Assuming all statutory processes and approvals are achieved, and current timescales are met, the scheme will be completed in 2011.

**Supplementary Question 31**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

A very simple supplementary. When will the junction be made safer for motorists?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

I think I heard Councillor Moore say for motorists. The junction improvements for the benefit of both motorists and pedestrians are scheduled to be completed in 2011, according to both the promise by the Mayor of London and what is set out in Transport for London's business plan.

**Question 32**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

What steps has the Cabinet Member taken to ascertain if the Stanley Road Association still exists and if it has complied with the requirements of a registered charity? It is acknowledged that the Trust have not complied with the terms of the lease. What action does the Cabinet Member propose taking and when, to bring this land back in to beneficial use?

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

The Association who are holding over under a lease are claiming charitable relief from rates on the land. Investigations with the charities commission are in hand to determine the status of the charity. Property services were already arranging to meet with the Association to discuss their plans for the site in the next few weeks, as the indicated at a meeting in the summer that they did not wish to relinquish possession and intended that the site would be used. If appropriate proposals for the use are not forthcoming the option of enforcing the covenants in the lease is available to the Council.

**Supplementary Question 32****Councillor Brian Salinger**

I have looked at the Charity Commission's website and I can't find any trace of the Stanley Road Association. Can I ask the Leader, if the Association is not registered, what action will the Cabinet Member take to move this matter forward given that the land has been unused in any form by anyone for several years and will the Member ensure that it is brought back into beneficial use as soon as possible?

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

The property team are seeking to ensure that the charitable trust actually fulfil their duties. If they are unable to fulfil their duties then of course the lease will revert to the Council, I believe is the current situation, either way we will ensure that the land is brought out of its current stagnant state.

**Question 33****Councillor Andrew McNeil**

What is being done to help progress the development of 432 Long Lane and the adjoining land?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

Terms were agreed with Home group for the disposal and development of the site and draft contracts have been drawn up. A delay occurred due to Home group having to re-finance all their proposed schemes as a consequence of the downturn in the market. This re-financing has now been undertaken and approved and the contracts have been sent to them for engrossment and completion, which is anticipated to be imminent.

The development which received planning permission for 4x4 bed houses, 1x5 bed house, and 1x3 bed wheelchair unit is scheduled to start on site this year. The Council will get nomination rights on the completed units.

**Question 34****Councillor Brian Salinger**

Will the Cabinet Member tell the Council what steps are being taken to either dispose of Park House in East Finchley or to find an alternative use for the building? How much has been spent to date on securing the property and how much (per week or month) is being spent on security and other outgoings?

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

Members will recall this site has had a chequered history following the collapse of the secret deal by the previous Labour / Lib Dem Administration to close East Finchley Library and relocate it to this site together with a Waitrose Supermarket. Since then the site has been rented by The Institute and following their relocation was remarketed for sale.

The sale of this site did not complete due to legal problems over claims of rights of access benefiting the adjoining property. While these are resolved the property is being secured by the company "Camelot" and the costs involved are detailed below. The property has been marketed for a short term letting and expressions of interest have been received from various groups. Another London Borough are currently assessing the viability of taking it for the temporary relocation of one of their educational uses. They will give us a firmer indication of their intentions at the end of January. We also have interest from organisations who would consider occupying part, however this could require significant management.

The total costs incurred since October 2007, are £33,087, which include the security costs, utilities and costs associated with the abortive marketing.

**Supplementary Question 34****Councillor Brian Salinger**

Can I ask if the proposed purchaser is still interested in acquiring the property?

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

At the moment we have no proposed purchaser but we do have interest from another local authority taking it on a rental basis and then of course once the property market recovers, which of course may take some time, it will be remarketed. Of course, we continue to market it in the hope that a buyer will emerge. But, given the state of the current property market that is increasingly unlikely in the short term.

**Question 35**

**Councillor Zakia Zubairi**

What is the Cabinet Member doing to press the Mayor to extend the 24 hour Freedom Pass to national overground rail services in London?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

I would not wish to tread on the toes of our excellent GLA member, Councillor Brian Coleman; I suggest this is taken up with him.

**Supplementary Question 35**

**Councillor Zakia Zubairi**

What is the GLA member doing to press the Mayor to extend the 24 hour Freedom Pass to national overground rail services in London?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

I suggest the Councillor asks the GLA member himself direct.

**Question 36**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

The former registry office in High Barnet has been empty for some years and I understand it is now the responsibility of the Coroners office. Does the Cabinet Member know when the building will be brought back in beneficial use?

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

The refurbishment works are imminent and expected to be completed mid 2009.

**Question 37**

**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

What implications are there for the Fairview development at the Colindale Hospital site of the difficulties encountered on the Aerodrome Bridge Road project?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

The answer is none. The Aerodrome Road project to replace two rail bridges and lower the road is progressing to completion this year. The scale of the works is unaltered and when finished will enable scheduled bus services to use Aerodrome Road for the first time, significantly improving public transport accessibility and permeability especially to the eastern part of the regeneration area.

**Supplementary Question 37**

**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

When is the Aerodrome Road project likely to be scheduled to finish now?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

I'm not quite sure I understand the question. I do not know when the Aerodrome Road project is going to finish, it's not within my portfolio. Perhaps that question ought to be addressed to Councillor Harper.

**Question 38**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

How does the Cabinet Member propose to evaluate the effectiveness of the reduction in parking fees over Christmas to ascertain if it achieved to stated objective of the move? It was estimated that the reductions and the associated expenses would cost the Council £170,000. Can the Cabinet Member give a breakdown for this figure or the actual costs if they are known?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Original assessments of the reduced pay and display charges over the Christmas period were assessed as:

Loss of revenue for on street pay and display income	£88,000
Loss of revenue for off street pay and display income	£18,000
Expenditure to implement the scheme, including drafting of traffic management orders and the necessary approval process.	£60,000

In fact, the results of the trial show total costs as:

Loss of revenue for on street pay and display income	£77,265
Loss of revenue for off street pay and display income	£29,241
Expenditure to implement the scheme, including drafting of traffic management orders and the necessary approval process.	£35,055

The total project costs for the reduced charges over the Christmas period are £141,561. In order to assess the success of the scheme the Parking Section carried out occupancy and duration surveys before, during and after the scheme was implemented. The results of the survey show an increase in short term parking occupancy on street and an overall increase in occupancy and duration in off street car parks. The surveys indicate that traffic flow was not impeded during the scheme.

**Supplementary Question 38**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Does the Cabinet Member really believe that this expenditure was the best use of Council resources and will the reduction be repeated next year?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

It's far too early to tell whether we're going to do the same thing again next year. But, I do believe it was a very helpful gesture at a time when people felt that something would be appropriate and the statistics that I'm in the process of receiving at the moment show that there was benefit in terms of higher usage of some of the on-street parking and also some of the off-street car parks. I was very pleased to see a note from the Chief Executive Officer of the North London Chamber of Commerce who congratulated the Council on taking this lead in London during this difficult period for the retail sector, resulting in more visitors to the shops in Barnet.

**Question 39**

**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Would the Cabinet Member advise how many commuters not eligible for the Freedom Pass in Barnet will see a net cash benefit from Boris Johnson's first Mayoral precept?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

I don't have that data and I don't intend diverting Council resources to try to find the answer.

**Supplementary Question 39**

**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

I'm a bit surprised that Councillor Harper couldn't answer this one. Isn't the answer actually clearly none. The fares increase will mean the average Barnet couple going to and from work will be £90 a year worse off from the increased transport charges despite the freeze in the Mayor's precept. Does the Cabinet Member agree with Boris Johnson's latest con?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

I don't share the view that Boris Johnson is conning everybody, anybody at all. But, I have to say, what an unfortunate slip of the tongue, but anyway I stand by the answer I give I don't intend to spend time looking into this.

**Question 40**

**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Could the Cabinet Member inform me of the results of the consultation regarding youth provision in the new Colindale Area Action Plan?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

Approximately 9000 brochures were delivered to households and businesses in the local area in relation to the Colindale Area Action Plan Preferred Options along with notices and articles in the local press and a two day public exhibition at the RAF Museum. A total of 54 representation forms were received from residents and local groups and 9 e-mails / letters were submitted.

Residents' comments focused on the existing parks in the area which are highly valued and they wished to see these improved and enhanced. Verbal comments from residents at the exhibition highlighted the importance of the existing youth centre for the people who live on Grahame Park Estate. In terms of specific representations on youth provision, the Head Teacher at St James' Catholic School and the Wright Trust both sought a clear commitment to the replacement / re-provision of the existing youth centre on the Barnet College site.

Officers will take all of the representations received on the Preferred Options report into account as they consider the next stage of the Area Action Plan process which will be to prepare the Publication Draft. This will include setting out a strategy for youth provision in the Colindale area.

**Question 41**

**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Will the Cabinet Member confirm what cash increase on Band D council tax £180k represents?

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

£1.32 per annum.

**Supplementary Question 41**

**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Now obviously the Leader recognises that the amount there is about the Welfare Rights Unit. Given that this works out 11p extra per month or 2½ p per week on a Band D, or roughly a penny a resident per week, would the Leader consider that money well saved?

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

Mr Mayor, yes, if and when that decision is actually taken.

**Question 42**

**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

How will an increase in parking charges in 2009/10 help boost Barnet's local economy?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Parking charges have been fixed for three years, prior to this increase. The expenditure costs associated with these charges have increased year on year and have been maintained within the Special Parking Account budget. The charges for pay and display are being increased proportionately to encourage short term parking and to encourage turn over of parking spaces.

This is within the overall context of our setting a Council budget that will enable a below-inflation Council Tax increase, benefiting all residents across the Borough.

**Supplementary Question 42**

**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Bearing in mind yours and the Leader's fanfare of publicity over the reduced parking charges over Christmas, will you repeat this again next year using the increase in parking charges that strangely add up exactly to the exact sum that this scheme cost, proving that this council are quite happy to give with one hand while taking away with another.

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Well I think Mr Mayor I just answered the point about next year in answer to Councillor Schneiderman's earlier question, but I have to say that it's worth bearing in mind that the parking fees and charges for this borough were frozen for a period of 3 years and so what we are doing now is just as it were doing some catch up to ensure that the service does indeed properly pay for itself and can be delivered at the level that our residents and customers require.

And of course the other point to make is, as I've said in my written answer, that increasing these fees and charges in the way that we are doing is making a very helpful contribution in terms of allowing us overall to bring in a below inflation council tax increase next year, which will more widely benefit, I believe, the residents of Barnet.

**Question 43**

**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Which advice agencies or other voluntary sector organisations are currently assisting members of the community with benefit appeals and advocacy at tribunals?

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

Citizens Advice Bureau and Barnet Law Service.

**Supplementary Question 43**

**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

If the Welfare Rights Unit is removed, how will the organisations he lists deal cope with the additional clients without uplift in their grant?

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

The answer I gave on the paper there is somewhat brief. I'd like to, with your indulgence, just add to that. In terms of the list of organisations which are involved in appeals and advocacy and then I will come back to the supplementary. There is, of course in addition to those listed, the Sickle Cell Society, the Disability Law Service, the Holy Cross Centre Trust, Women in Prison, Detention Advice Service, Afro-Asian Advisory Service, Chinese Community Centre, the Children's Society, Islington Law Centre, Royal Association for the Deaf, Asylum Aid, Action for Social Integration, Advice UK, Asylum Support Appeals Project, Tower Hamlets Law Centre, Inquest Charitable Trust, Lambeth Law Centre, London Discrimination Unit, the Disability Law Service, Barnet Law Service, Law Centres Federation, Tower Hamlets Law Centre, Royal Courts of Justice Advice Bureau, London Advice Services Alliance, Barnet Law Service, Barnet Citizens Advice Bureau, East Finchley Advice Service, Mind in Barnet, Disability Action in Borough of Barnet, Barnet Carers Centre, Advocacy in Barnet, Age Concern, the Council's Benefit Advice Team, the Income & Assessment Team, the Pensions Service, SANGAM, Barnet Refugees Service and the Mary Ward Legal Centre. In terms of adding to those budgets what, of course, this administration will be doing following the budget headlines consultation is a full review of the commissioning of welfare advice in this Borough to ensure that the most appropriate bodies deliver the most appropriate advice in the most appropriate way.