

**Council Questions to Cabinet Members  
7 April 2009  
Questions and Responses**

**Question 1**

**Councillor Daniel Thomas**

To ask what the Leader what he is doing to help those local businesses the Council receives services / goods from?

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

The Council has cut its payment terms for local businesses from thirty days to ten days. There was a temporary reduction of on and off-street pay and display charges to as little as 10 pence per hour over the Christmas period which proved highly popular with businesses by generating an increased footfall of shoppers in town centres. The Council has also sent targeted advice and information to those businesses in the borough who are entitled to Small Business Rate Relief. Section 106 monies have also been used to create a new Skills Development Programme Officer post to support small and medium sized local enterprises.

We are also finalising the business seminar to improve access to public sector contracts and access to general advise. It is expected that the London Development Agency; Middlesex University, Barnet College, Job Centre Plus will be in attendance.

**Question 2**

**Councillor Wayne Casey**

Which company operates the facility at Copthall known as "Metro Golf" and by whom is this company owned?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

The operator is Metro Golf School Ltd (Metro Golf) which is a current company registered at Companies House. Its company number is 05980190. Metro Golf operate the facility under a management agreement with the Council's tenant of the property, which is Golf Learning Centres Limited.

**Question 3**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

Does the Leader support guaranteed speaking rights for the trade unions at meetings of the General Functions Committee?

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

On matters pertaining to staff, yes.

**Question 4**

**Councillor Daniel Thomas**

To ask the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport what measures did the Council take before and after February's heavy snowfall to ensure our roads and pavements were as accessible as reasonably possible?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Preparation

As the Met Office predicted severe conditions (which turned out to be the worst snow fall in two decades), Barnet Council's gritting teams were well prepared for the event. The borough had stockpiled 2,000 tons of salt and had tasked a 26-strong team to keep Barnet's 677km of roads and footways clear of snow and ice, with a further 10 on standby. Additionally 70 workers could be diverted from other services in severe snowy conditions.

The Council has nine large gritting vehicles, as well as four manually-operated footway spreading machines. A total of 339 grit bins located across the Borough, including 38 in town centres, were cleared and filled with salt at the end of October.

### Gritting Activity

The snow that fell on the Sunday / Monday (1 and 2 February) had been fairly accurately forecast and in anticipation of its arrival we salted all Priority 1 routes the night before (Saturday) at a spread rate of 40g/m<sup>2</sup>. We repeated this treatment at 4 pm, 9pm and throughout the night on Sunday to keep the main roads clear of ice and snow.

We started to grit the Priority 2 routes in the north of the borough on the morning of Sunday 1 February morning and gritted until such time as the resources were required for re-gritting the Priority 1 networks at 4pm. Thereafter we returned to Priority 2 routes at times when Priority 1 routes were not being gritted. Gritting of all Priority 2 routes was completed on Tuesday 3 February.

On the morning of Monday 2 February, we spread a further 40g/m<sup>2</sup> on all Priority 1 routes and continued to grit Priority 2 routes and side roads throughout the day. Town centre and other Priority 2 footways were also treated.

On Tuesday 3 February morning the compacted snow, partly melted by the sun, had re-frozen and made all side roads treacherous. Once Priority 1 routes were treated we continued throughout the day to treat Priority 2 routes that we knew from experience would be dangerous. We also responded to the hundreds of requests received by the customer care department. While our grit trucks were out trying to make the roads and pavements safe both traffic wardens and refuse crews were out helping to grit the many smaller roads in Barnet.

Between Wednesday 4 and Tuesday 10 February Priority 1 routes were treated on 15 more occasions. Refuse workers and many other employees in Barnet continued to support snow clearance at locations where particular problems were anticipated e.g. community facilities, sheltered housing etc.

A total of 2,186 tonnes of salt has been used so far in this season to grit our roads and footways.

### **Question 5**

### **Councillor Wayne Casey**

What procedure has been put in place to ensure Metro Golf are charged by the Council for regular services supplied by the authority (for example grass cutting)?

### **Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The Council does not provide grass cutting services to Metro Golf. We are not aware that the Council provides any regular services to Metro Golf.

### **Question 6**

### **Councillor Anne Hutton**

What measures has the Council taken to ensure that all girls who are eligible have been invited to receive the HPV (cervical cancer) inoculations?

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

Whilst the Council supports the availability of this immunisation to all those who wish to take advantage of it, as Cllr Hutton will know, it is actually the responsibility of Barnet Primary Care Trust. I understand that all girls who live or attend school in Barnet have been contacted by the PCT. Only 2 schools have refused to offer immunisation and both have sent letters to girls in their schools advising them about the immunisation.

The PCT states that if a child is not immunised at school, another letter is sent directly to their home asking them to attend a local clinic. The PCT is developing an enhanced scheme for GPs and this will be used for girls who prefer to go to their GP, or whose only option this is.

We will continue to monitor the position with the PCT.

**Question 7**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Can you please comment, from the Council's point of view, on the very disturbing reports about 63 pregnant women being turned away from Barnet hospital last year and sent to other, far less convenient, places to have their babies?

**Answer by Councillor Helena Hart**

Barnet Primary Care Trust has provided the following response following the extremely concerning report that 63 mothers-to-be were turned away from Barnet Hospital during 2008 and sent on to Chase Farm Hospital in Enfield to deliver their babies.

“Whilst it is not always possible for the NHS to provide exactly the service that people want, including a choice of place of service provision, Barnet PCT is concerned that in 2008 a number of women needed to be diverted from one maternity unit to another because of capacity (and thus clinical safety) issues. It is appropriate to transfer people if it is not possible to provide a safe, high quality service at a particular time, but, in terms of service user choice and satisfaction, it is not desirable for this to occur other than in exceptional circumstances.

The Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Clinical Strategy recognises that the population in the three boroughs (particularly Barnet) will increase significantly over the next few years, especially in terms of the number of women of child-bearing age.

The Strategy thus includes provision for the establishment of greater capacity for inpatient maternity services to be created at Barnet and North Middlesex Hospitals to deal with the potential extra demand. This should reduce the need for transfers.”

However, whilst accepting that the PCT obviously shares our concern that 63 women at the most vulnerable and emotionally fragile times of their lives have had to undergo the incredible trauma of being turned away from the Maternity Unit at Barnet where they were due to give birth and then forced to travel some six miles or so to Chase Farm and the PCT's good intentions regarding the Clinical Strategy, I continue to have the very deepest concerns regarding Barnet Hospital's ability to cope with all the extra calls on its In-Patient Maternity Department following the proposed closure of the one at Chase Farm.

The plans to develop a Midwife-led Unit at Chase Farm and the possibility of a number of mothers being diverted from there to Barnet – together with our proposed growth in population – make it even more imperative for us to continue to fight for increased in-patient maternity provision and to oppose any reduction whatsoever in maternity services locally.

The situation will continue to be kept under review both at Cabinet level and by the Supporting the Vulnerable Overview and Scrutiny Committee under the Chairmanship of Councillor Rajput.

**Question 8**

**Councillor Wayne Casey**

What procedure has been put in place to ensure Metro Golf reimburse the Council for emergency works (for example the cleaning out of the gullies and ditches after the recent flooding)?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The lease of the golf course and driving range is the contract between the Council and the tenant. The tenant has covenanted to keep the built and un-built parts of the property in good condition and they are responsible for works on an emergency basis or otherwise in compliance with their lease covenants.

**Question 9**

**Councillor Anne Hutton**

What is the timescale for implementing the recommendations of the joint scrutiny working party on Young Carers?

**Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer**

A Young Carers Strategy is being developed as part of the overall Carers' Strategy, being led by Adult Services. Recommendations from the working party will be considered as part of the overall Carer's Strategy Action Plan and the timescales for implementation will vary.

**Question 10**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Would you please accept my congratulations, and those of numerous Borough residents, on the very high standard of this year's Civic Awards ceremony on 11 February?

**Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman**

Yes. I am sure all Councillors relish the opportunity to celebrate the service and dedication of so many residents of the Borough and for once give the local papers a positive story to report rather than the usual inaccurate doom and gloom that fills their pages.

**Question 11**

**Councillor Wayne Casey**

Does Metro Golf have a programme for the regular cleaning of its ditches, streams and gullies on a regular basis and how does the Council ensure that this programme is carried out?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

It is not known whether Metro Golf has such a programme. However, the Council's tenant has covenanted not to permit anything on the land which may become a danger or nuisance to the Council and it has covenanted to indemnify the Council against claims, demands and payments instituted against the Council.

**Question 12**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

Who has ultimate responsibility for signing off the Council's Treasury Management Strategy?

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

The approval for the Council's Treasury Management Strategy is delegated to Cabinet Resources Committee and Cabinet Overview & Scrutiny Committee within the Council's constitution.

**Question 13**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

From time to time I receive complaints about off-street Council-controlled public footways that are not adequately cleared of litter. One example within my Ward is the pathway between Farm Road and Brook Avenue. Could these areas be given a little more attention?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The footpath in question is swept every 4 weeks as part of the neighbourhood street cleaning service and in addition is visited twice weekly by the area hot spot litter crew who empty any litter bins and remove any windblown litter. Any other similar locations should be referred to the street cleaning manager who will investigate and advise on cleaning regimes accordingly.

**Question 14****Councillor Wayne Casey**

Is there programme for the regular cleaning of the ditches, streams and gullies of the Copthall complex as a whole?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Quotes have been obtained to start a ditch clearance programme. Vegetation along the ditch will be pruned back to allow access.

**Question 15****Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Why was the minimum 'Fitch individual' rating downgraded from 'A/B' to 'C' in the Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources' March 2008 Treasury Management Strategy?

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

The individual rating of 'A/B' is very high, the second highest in fact, and was inconsistent with the other three ratings the Council was using at the time. This is demonstrated by there not being a counterparty at that time that held the exact combination of the four minimum ratings in the Treasury Management Strategy and has been reinforced by the Council's treasury management advisors Butlers at the Scrutiny Working Group meetings. Bringing it down to 'C' brought it more in line with the short-term, long-term and support ratings that had been in place since 2005/06.

**Question 16****Councillor Brian Gordon**

How are things progressing regarding the controlled parking zone review in the Edgware area, in particular around Edgwarebury Lane, where there has been confusion regarding the meaning of parking signs?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Analysis of the responses to the Edgware CPZ review are almost complete and any recommendations that arise will be detailed in a report for consideration by me and the Chairman of the Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee. The report is expected to recommend that the Council progress measures considering longer hours of operation in the one hour CPZ, shorter hours of operation in the 'Cinema Zone' CPZ and the inclusion of Fairfield Way within the existing one hour CPZ

Miscellaneous minor changes would also be promoted such as bay changes and provision of loading bays. It will also be proposed that the existing zone boundaries at the junction of Edgwarebury Lane and Edgwarebury Gardens are altered to provide more clarity to motorists in the area, a measure that would complete the rationalisation of waiting restriction signage that has already taken place at this location.

Assuming the recommendations are approved, implementation is anticipated to commence in late April.

**Question 17****Councillor Wayne Casey**

Three masts were erected at the far end of the Metro Golf Driving Range in December 2005 (overlooking the Roman Road) without planning permission. When will this situation be regularised?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

For clarification the masts referred to are support structures for the additional netting put up around the driving range.

Consent was originally given for the facility in 1995 with 10m high netting. This was raised to 18m by the operator 3 years ago following a number of complaints received in relation to golf balls straying onto the adjoining public footpath, sports field and Hendon Golf Club. No formal enforcement action was taken since the land is within Council ownership and the matter raised a number of health and safety issues which have required detailed investigation by planning and property services.

A planning application was invited however and submitted for the retention of the netting and this remains under consideration pending a full assessment of the relevant planning and safety aspects. The Local Planning Authority has also required the applicant to consider the erection of slimmer supports given that these represent the most intrusive elements and to submit a management plan seeking other ways of minimising straying golf balls. This may include for instance ensuring the netting is reinforced and properly maintained, restricting the use of the upper driving bays whilst neighbouring track and field sports are taking place and only permitting the use of certain golf clubs.

Subject to the operator, Playgolf reporting back within the next month a decision on the planning application will be taken shortly after with the intention of regularising the situation.

**Question 18**

**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Why did the Leader say in his press statement on 10 March 2009 that he only found out the previous day that the correct treasury management controls were not being applied to Icelandic deposits when evidence of this fact was in his own 23 October 2008 supplementary report to Cabinet on the Council's deposits in Icelandic Banks?

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

The position was only made explicitly aware to me on 9 March 2009. The information and implications of the report had not been picked up by officers or Members (including Cabinet Overview & Scrutiny Committee) or others supplied with the report including the external auditor Grant Thornton and Deloitte working on behalf of the Audit Commission.

**Question 19**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Would you welcome the undertaking (as published in The Press January 29) of the then Acting Borough Commander David Tucker that Barnet Police will "deal robustly with anyone identified as having committed racist, anti-Semitic or other crimes, whatever their alleged justification". Is not the Council's close working relationship with the Police most important on this issue?

**Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman**

Yes. I am glad to say there is real partnership working between this Administration, The Metropolitan Police Authority under the excellent leadership of Boris Johnson and the Voluntary sector not least the Community Security Trust.

**Question 20**

**Councillor Wayne Casey**

Has a full health and safety risk assessment been carried out on the Copthall site and has it reviewed the danger of injury to the athletes performing in the vicinity of Metro Golf Driving Range?

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

It is the duty of each operator on the site to carry out such assessments. Because with the exception of Metro Golf, officers are not aware of raised levels of risk, operators have not been asked to supply copies of risk assessments. In the case of Metro Golf, the problem of golf balls being hit over the fence between the golf driving range and the athletics track, Officers have inspected the area and met a representative of Metro Golf and the manager of the athletics track.

In the light of this inspection, the tenant will be reminded of their lease covenant to comply with statute law, (in this case, Health and Safety statute law) and a formal Health and Safety risk assessment will be asked for, with the view to it being implemented by the tenant.

The site inspection concluded that the existing netting at the rear of the driving range should be retained and for the netting on the boundary with the athletics track to be raised to the same height as the rear netting for approximately two thirds of the length of the boundary, to run from the rear boundary towards the driving range. Less conspicuous ways of holding the high level netting up will be sought. The tenant of the golf premises should be asked to repair the holes in the netting and consider replacement of the higher sections with more durable netting. The tenant will be told that planning consent for the high level netting on the rear boundary and for other alterations to the netting will be required. The conclusion of the site inspection will be weighed against the recommendations of the Health and Safety report, the recommendations of which will take precedence.

**Question 22**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Could the Cabinet member advise how effective the Street Trading Regulations have been in ensuring attractive and accessible shopping areas for our residents and can the Cabinet Member advise the Council of the number of businesses in each ward have been charged for the use of pavements and what is the estimated gross and net income to the Council after deduction the costs of administering the charge?

**Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman**

The Policy has been very effective in decluttering our pavements and ensuring attractive and accessible shopping areas for our residents

By Ward the number of Licences issues is as follows:

Brunswick Park	4
Burnt Oak	4
Childs Hill	15
Colindale	3
Coppetts Ward	1
East Barnet	3
East Finchley	12
Edgware	10
Finchley Church End	3
Garden Suburb	8
Golders Green	2
Hale	2
Hendon	3
Mill Hill	5
Oakleigh	3
Totteridge	4
West Finchley	13
West Hendon	6
Woodhouse	10

Fees:

We have received a total of £22,557 in application fees so far. And £4,933 in renewals.

Under the London Local Authorities Act the fees charged for licensing of street trading must only cover the reasonable costs of the administration of the scheme. These include the cost of:

- Removal and disposal of waste
- Additional street cleansing costs
- Administration cost
- Enforcement costs

Prior to the adoption of this regime the money received from licensing (for permanent pitches and temporary markets) did not cover these costs. The fees that we have received this year are within what we expected we would receive, and they will cover the above costs only.

However as the licensing regime will soon have been in operation for 12 months there will be a review of the amount received by the department in relation to the costs, and the fees amended as appropriate.

**Question 23**

**Councillor Wayne Casey**

What length of lease has been granted to Copthall Management Services?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

No lease has been granted. A lease will be granted subsequent to the award of the management contract which will take place later this year.

**Question 24**

**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

What percentage of deposits during 2005/06 breached any of the criteria set out in the Treasury Management Strategy in force at the time?

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

The data required to undertake this analysis is not readily available to the Council. Whilst a request could be made to the treasury management advisors to obtain it, there is a risk of incurring cost in addition to taking up officer time and I'm unclear as to the value that would be obtained from doing so.

**Question 25**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Noting the reply given to Q17 by Councillor Harper on 27 January can the Cabinet Member tell Council what happens to the content of 'green bins'?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The green garden and kitchen waste which is collected from the green bins is taken to the LondonWaste Ltd. composting facility in Edmonton. This facility has a capacity of 30,000 tonnes per annum, and is also used by other North London Boroughs. When the facility at Edmonton is full, which happens a couple of times a year, the organic waste is taken to other composting facilities in Kent and Cambridgeshire.

The Edmonton facility uses an indoor composting process to compost the organic waste quickly. The finished compost is accredited with the PAS 100 standard. The compost is available free to the North London boroughs for use on their flower beds and gardens, and is also available to allotments in the Boroughs for free. The final compost is also sold to the horticultural and agricultural sector.



**Question 26****Councillor Wayne Casey**

Where in the Council does responsibility rest for the promotion of Copthall, for example what efforts have been made to publicise the reinstatement of circuit training?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

At present promotion is the responsibility of individual lessees and operators of the Copthall facilities.

**Question 27****Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

In the light of the ineffectiveness of the internal auditing of financial procedures within Treasury Management which failed to pick up breaches of the Treasury Management Strategy, will the Cabinet Member reconsider the £100,000 cut from internal audit in this year's budget?

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

As highlighted in the Scrutiny working group report, Internal Audit has reviewed the treasury management functions every year since 2002/03 and did not highlight any compliance issues to the relevant senior managers. A full investigation is to be initiated of both the internal and external auditing practices regarding treasury management and, as a result, I do not feel able to comment further at this time.

**Question 28****Councillor Brian Salinger**

Actuarial pension revaluation done in 2007 has led to increased contributions to the fund of £850K in 2009/10 and a further £855K planned for 2010/11. What was the value of the fund at the time of that actuarial revaluation and what was the value of the fund at the time of the last meeting of the Pension Fund Committee?

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

As at the 31 March 2007, the Council's appointed actuary valued the liabilities of the Barnet Pension Fund at £757.7m with assets of £539.5m and therefore a net deficit of £218.2m. This translates to a funding level of 71%.

No formal interim valuations are undertaken and therefore no formal valuation was reported to the last meeting of the Pension Fund Committee. The Council receives illustrative funding updates from actuaries based on a typical local government pension scheme fund. At the 31 March 2007, this typical fund had a funding level of 85.0% and this had dropped to 63.7% as at 1 February 2009. Applied simplistically, this implies the funding level of the Barnet Pension Fund will have dropped to close to 50% though there are other variables, such as the composition of the fund membership and fund manager performance, that need to be considered in making this assessment.

**Question 29****Councillor Wayne Casey**

Is there programme for the repair of the large and dangerous pot holes on the Copthall site?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Potholes are repaired when necessary. We will be repairing the existing holes on the areas of council responsibility.

**Question 30****Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Is pension fund cash at risk as a result of the Council's deposits in Icelandic banks?

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

The Council pools funds, including those of the Pension Fund, to maximise the returns on its cash deposits. Therefore, the at risk deposits placed with Icelandic banks will include pooled pension fund cash.

**Question 31****Councillor Brian Salinger**

Has the Cabinet Member yet ascertained if the Stanley Road Association are fulfilling their obligations as a registered charity, and if so what was the result of his enquiries and what actions have been taken since 27 January to bring this land back in to beneficial use?

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

A meeting was held with Mrs Chrysostomou of the Stanley Road Playing Field Association on 19 February. Officers raised concerns about the condition of the premises and advised the tenant that the current arrangement could no longer continue. The tenant was advised that repairing obligations under the lease were not being fulfilled, and the Council would need to consider their position fully if a solution was not found.

The tenant advised that they were in discussions with another party to try and seek a remedy. Officers agreed to give the Association until September to work up their proposals, which would confirm their future intentions for the site. Confirmation from the tenant on their charitable status was also sought; no details have been received to date.

**Question 32****Councillor Wayne Casey**

What action is the Council proposing to take to improve the safety of the mini-roundabout at the Copthall site?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

We were not aware of an issue with the roundabout. New markings will be applied this year.

**Question 33****Councillor Geof Cooke**

How much (both % figure and cash figure) of the Council's total cash deposits come from the pension fund and for each deposit currently in an Icelandic bank how much of the original deposit came from cash belonging to the pension fund?

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

The Council pools funds, including those of the Pension Fund, to maximise the returns on its cash deposits to maximise returns. As the funds are pooled it is not that case that a specific deposit or specific percentage of a deposit relates to monies from the Pension Fund or other funds. **IF** a loss occurs in the future, the Council will have to estimate the proportion of that loss to the different funds that are pooled in the daily cash flow.

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

What steps is the Cabinet Member taking to resolve the long running issue of the re-grading of NNEBs working in nursery schools and nursery schools, nursery classes and reception classes?

**Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer**

The Acting Director of Children's Services is continuing to discuss this issue with the Trade Unions.

**Question 35****Councillor Wayne Casey**

What action is the Council proposing to take to address the problem of fly-tipping on the Copthall site?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

New width restriction barriers were installed along the entrance from the A1 to help prevent large vehicles from fly-tipping in this area.

**Question 36****Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Is the Cabinet Member happy that the Mayor of London has not agreed to fund the extension of the Freedom Pass to 24 hour operation, and has instead left it to the London Boroughs to fund?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The funding of the 24 Hour freedom pass for elderly people is only one component of a 5 year freedom pass deal agreed between London boroughs and the Mayor. The Boroughs will contribute to the cost of the extension and in so doing are supporting a very positive improvement to the current scheme. However, in return the Boroughs have negotiated concessions with the Mayor that will mean TfL meet the cost of increases in demand and inflation above tight thresholds in future years. The overall scheme protects boroughs against excessive cost increases and may well prove less costly than an agreement that required the Mayor to meet the full cost of the 24 hour extension. The Mayor has also agreed to support change to current legislation whereby disputes as to how the scheme is run are referred to independent arbitration rather than TfL which of course has an interest in the outcome.

I am happy to support a scheme providing improved access to transport for the elderly, a potentially cheaper freedom pass scheme with guarantees limiting cost increases and to know that the Mayor is supporting long overdue change in legislation.

**Question 37****Councillor Brian Salinger**

The Cabinet Member will be aware that amongst the questions asked of job applicants are questions about the applicant's ethnic background and their sexuality. What use is made of the information supplied in answer to these questions?

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

The diversity monitoring sheet attached to all application forms contains a range of questions including questions relating to ethnicity, gender, age and sexuality.

This information is separated from the application form before it is sent to the recruiting manager and is retained by HR. Applicants are encouraged to complete the diversity monitoring form but should it not be completed this would not affect any decision to shortlist.

The information can be analysed manually, should we be challenged by an applicant but this is both time consuming and labour intensive. Once an e-recruitment solution is in place this information will be captured automatically and we will be able to analyse trends to ensure that our workforce is representative and that all staff and applicants are treated fairly.

**Question 38****Councillor Zakia Zubairi**

What will the Council be doing to ensure that take-up of the Freedom Pass is actively promoted by the Council to those eligible for the concession?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The renewal of a Freedom Pass takes place every two years and the publicity is arranged by London Councils. However, we do arrange our own publicity in the local press group, specialist newspapers, local flyers/posters. Posters are provided by London Councils, which we distribute to libraries, public reception areas, sheltered housing, day centres, mental health teams, voluntary groups, GP surgeries, day centres, public receptions etc. There is also information on the Barnet website and the Freedom Pass website.

**Question 39****Councillor Brian Salinger**

Can the Leader tell Members who is carrying out a review of the impact on the vulnerable of the closure of post offices and when and where will the results be published?

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

This is the minute from Supporting the Vulnerable in our Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 18 July 2007.

Councillor Cornelius chaired at the time.

**5. FUTURE OF THE POST OFFICE NETWORK: ISSUES FOR THE COMMUNITY**

The Committee received a report from the Democratic Services Manager outlining plans submitted by the Post Office to reduce the number of post offices by 2,500 by Spring 2009.

The Committee were unanimous in their appreciation of the importance of post offices to community life, but considered that the impact of closures of individual post offices could best be assessed by Ward Members who could make representations to the Post Office in a personal capacity and as a representative of the community. The Democratic Services Manager's report had also highlighted that representations on behalf of the whole Council, was an Executive function. The Committee noted that an item relating to the impact of Post Office closures had been included in their work programme for 2006/07 but having regard to the emerging issues it was felt more appropriate that the Executive consider the desirability of further action, including research into the impact of closures on vulnerable people and, if considered appropriate the effectiveness of the operations "saved" by the Council.

**RESOLVED –**

- (1) That no further action be taken on the item contained in the Committee's Work programme for 2006/07 relating to the Closure of Post Offices.
- (2) That the Democratic Services Manager be instructed to inform the Executive of the Committee's views on Post Offices generally, as understood by members.
- (3) That the Executive be asked to consider making representations and undertaking further analysis or action, as appropriate, in respect of the forthcoming programme.

**Question 40****Councillor Barry Rawlings**

In the consultation document on the proposal for change in sheltered housing it is stated 'The rest of the savings of £950,000 each year would be used by the Council to enable services for older people in Barnet to be maintained.' [page 12] Is this statement true?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan**

The wording used in the quote was supplied by the Resources Directorate. It is intended to concisely indicate that if the reduction in sheltered housing expenditure were not implemented it would be necessary for the Council to identify alternative savings elsewhere. This would naturally need to include further scrutiny of the very substantial level of expenditure on other kinds of services provided for older people. The Adult Social Services budget represents the largest area of service expenditure (£91M – one-third of the Council's service budget), and expenditure on services for older adults represents the largest single item within the Adult Social Services budget (£48M – 18%).

**Question 41****Councillor Hugh Rayner**

The Conservative Administration of this Council recently confirmed its opposition to charging for rubbish collection in the Borough. Can you further confirm that you will continue to oppose both bin taxes and fortnightly waste collections?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Yes.

**Question 42**

**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Have the Council bid for MyPlace money yet, and if so for what site and what criteria were used to choose it?

**Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer**

The Council submitted a bid for MyPlace funding to develop youth facilities associated with Church Farm Leisure Centre in partnership with GLL. An audit of existing youth provision was carried out in order to identify a suitable location that would both meet local needs and the national criteria set out for the MyPlace scheme.

**Question 43**

**Councillor Robert Rams**

Will the Leader of the Council update the Council on the response he has had to his Leader Listens programme?

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

I am delighted that this Administration's innovation in resident engagement – the Leader Listens and social networking sites has been successful evidenced by the recent accolade from the Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP.

In addition in the 6 months of operation the Leader Listens site has received an average of 150 unique visitors per month (912 in total), with in excess of 1000 page views per month. Residents also seem to appreciate the effort the Council is making.

**Question 44**

**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Why did Barnet's Domestic Violence Forum not meet between October 2008 and March 2009?

**Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman**

Councillor Rawlings is mistaken. It is a quarterly meeting, it met on 9 September, 9 December and 10 March.

**Question 45**

**Councillor Maureen Braun**

Barnet's success in winning £400,000 from Mayor Johnson's Priority Parks Scheme, to support the Dollis Valley Green Walk, is hugely welcome. Could the Cabinet Member provide more detail on how the money will be spent?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The outline submitted to the Mayor's office when we applied for the grant comprised of improvements to the walk between Brent Park and Brook Farm, as follows:

- New and improved play facilities at Brent Park, Windsor Open Space and Riverside Walk;
- Footpath improvements;
- Landscaping works to open up sightlines;
- Improvements to park entrances including fencing;
- New signage and information boards;
- Improvements to current wildlife areas and development of new habitats.

An initial schedule of specific improvements is currently being drawn up for consultation with residents and key stakeholders. We're expecting correspondence from the Mayor's office later this month, with details of the grant conditions.

**Question 46****Councillor Gill Sargeant**

What is the estimated date for the completion of the works on Aerodrome Road?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The completion date in the contractors' programme is currently second week in August. However, during project close negotiations the contractor has indicated the potential for this date to be brought forward. This option is currently being evaluated by the project team.

**Question 47****Councillor Gill Sargeant**

What plans are there for health provision within the Beaufort Park site?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

The outline planning consent granted in April 2005 for the development of Beaufort Park made provision for potential healthcare facilities on site following consultation with the Primary Care Trust (PCT). The PCT have since however reviewed their strategy in Colindale in light of more detailed analysis and the emerging Area Action Plan (AAP) and consider that a specific provision on Beaufort Park is now not necessary.

Their preferred approach, as set out in the Draft Preferred Options AAP published recently for consultation purposes is to establish new health facilities in more accessible locations close to Colindale Tube Station. Provision is therefore being made on the former hospital site as part of the current Fairview planning application and on other sites coming forward nearby and this will compliment the redevelopment of an expanded centre in Grahame Park in due course.

The AAP will ensure that the necessary community facilities are secured to meet the growing demand arising in the area whilst maintaining service provision for existing residents and officers will continue to work closely with the PCT to monitor delivery.

**Question 48****Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Leaseholders on Barnet homes are obliged to pay for the removal of household rubbish and yet free skips are provided for other residents. When will this policy be altered?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan**

This is a long-standing policy. To provide free skips would mean passing the cost on to the General Fund.

**Question 49****Councillor Gill Sargeant**

How many residents of the Borough are in Temporary Housing?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan**

There were 2,223 households living in temporary accommodation at the end of February 2009.

**Question 50****Councillor Ross Houston**

Can the Cabinet Member give me the latest update on Barnet's affordable housing target negotiations with the Mayor of London?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan**

There has not yet been any formal agreement with the Mayor on a revised affordable housing target for Barnet. We continue to be consistent in our view that the target is overly ambitious, particularly in the economic downturn.

**Question 51****Councillor Alison Moore**

Could the Cabinet Member provide details of the pay structure for Barnet's "traffic wardens" and confirm whether or not they operate a bonus scheme?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Civil Enforcement Officers do not get any bonuses for carrying out their duties; they receive an annual salary only. The salary that has been evaluated for these posts is spinal point 20 – 23 # 26 (# means that there is a bar at this point and a member of staff cannot progress past this point without have a career review), which is £19,947 – £21,671 # £26,663 respectively as at 2008-9 pay grades.

**Question 52****Councillor Alison Moore**

Will the Cabinet Member tell us when the "experimental" 10 am – 6.30 pm CPZ zone in East Finchley will finally be reviewed?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

In August 2004, the Council increased the operational periods of some roads within the East Finchley CPZ due to the relocation of Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute from Central Square, Hampstead Garden Suburb to the Park House site at 16 High Road, East Finchley. It was felt that an increase in the parking restrictions was necessary to ensure that local residents and those working and operating in the area could continue to park near to their properties while the Institute was operational.

The changes, which increased the operational hours of roads in the south of the CPZ from Monday to Friday 2pm to 3pm, to Monday to Saturday 10am to 6.30pm, were originally implemented on an experimental basis, which meant any comments received for at least the first 6 months of its operation would have to be considered before a decision was made on whether to retain the new restrictions, amend the restrictions, or revert back to the original restrictions.

The Council considered all objections and comments received to the scheme in early 2006, and came to the conclusion that the restrictions should remain, and therefore the decision was made to make the restrictions permanent, which the Council duly did in February 2006.

Councillor Moore will be aware that an informal consultation was carried out in July 2008 within the whole of the East Finchley CPZ, as part of the Council's rolling CPZ Review programme. This entailed questionnaires being delivered to all properties within the CPZ's boundary, in order to establish the community's views on how they feel the CPZ is operating.

Approval is currently being sought on subsequent actions which Officers consider appropriate, based on the community's views, and if agreed, consultation on any proposed measures will take place early in this new Council year.

**Question 53****Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

Can the Cabinet Member advise whether the Council is putting cycle paths in Parkfield Road and Dallas Road, and referring to my Council question in July last year on the same issue, can he confirm when TfL recommended that these roads be used as cycle routes? Many schools are trying to encourage children to cycle to school, but if the necessary infrastructure is not there how is this possible and safe?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The question from July 2008 (Q33) related to the provision for cyclists using the A5 West Hendon Broadway. The response referred to the London cycle maps which are published by TfL.

The maps show Park Road and Dallas Road as routes "recommended by cyclists" and the Council would consider the quieter conditions on these roads make them more suitable for cycling than the A5.

It is important to note that the recommended status of these and similar roads on the maps is only on the basis they are quieter or more convenient than alternatives. They are not specifically identified as cycle routes. We do not know exactly when they were identified, but understand it pre-dates TfL (the routes were originally identified by cycling groups).

The Council does not propose to provide cycle paths on these roads, not least because the roads are identified for being quieter with less traffic making it unnecessary to provide dedicated facilities.