

Minutes

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET held at Hendon Town Hall, NW4 4BG on Tuesday, 3 November 2009.

PRESENT:

*The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Brian Coleman, AM FRSA)

*The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hugh Rayner)

Councillors:

* Fiona Bulmer	*Andrew Harper	*Wendy Prentice
Maureen Braun	Christopher Harris BA BSc	*Sachin Rajput BA (Hons)
Terry Burton	MPhil	PgD Law
*Anita Campbell	*Helena Hart	*Robert Rams
*Wayne Casey BA (Hons)	*John Hart BA MA	*Barry Rawlings
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
*Geof Cooke	*John Marshall	*Joan Scannell
*Alison Cornelius	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
*Mukesh Depala	*Matthew Offord	*Joanna Tambourides
Claire Farrier	*Charlie O-Macauley	*Daniel Thomas BA (Hons)
*Anthony Finn BSc (Econ)	*Monroe Palmer OBE, BA,	*Jim Tierney
FCA	FCA	*Daniel Webb
*Mike Freer	*Susette Palmer MA	*Marina Yannakoudakis BSc
*Brian Gordon, LL.B	*Bridget Perry	(Hons) MA, MEP
* Eva Greenspan		*Darrel Yawitch
		*Zakia Zubairi

*denotes Member present

- 1. NOTICE OF THE MEETING (Agenda Item 1.1):**
The Worshipful Mayor read the Notice of the Meeting.
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1.2):**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Maureen Braun, Terry Burton, Claire Farrier, Christopher Harris, Linda McFadyen.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS (Agenda Item 1.3)**

There were none

4. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007 – NEW EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS (Report of the Director of Corporate Governance – Agenda Item 1.4)**

The Director of Corporate Governance introduced the report. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote the recommendations were carried.

RESOLVED -

That pursuant to the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Local Government & Housing Act 2007, Council is asked to formally resolve to adopt the ‘new-style’ Leader and Cabinet model of Executive arrangements as its form of executive governance and instruct Officers to implement this in accordance with the proposed timetable including making the necessary reports to the Special Committee (Constitution Review) for consideration of detailed changes to the Council’s Constitution.

The meeting finished at 6.47pm

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*The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hugh Rayner)

Councillors:

* Fiona Bulmer	*Andrew Harper	*Wendy Prentice
Maureen Braun	Christopher Harris BA BSc	*Sachin Rajput BA (Hons)
Terry Burton	MPhil	PgD Law
*Anita Campbell	*Helena Hart	*Robert Rams
*Wayne Casey BA (Hons)	*John Hart BA MA	*Barry Rawlings
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
*Geof Cooke	*John Marshall	*Joan Scannell
*Alison Cornelius	Linda McFadyen	*Alan Schneiderman
*Richard Cornelius	*Kath McGuirk	*Agnes Slocombe SRN RM
*Jeremy Davies BA (Hons),	*Andrew McNeil	*Ansuya Sodha MBA (Middx)
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Claire Farrier	*Charlie O-Macauley	*Daniel Thomas BA (Hons)
*Anthony Finn BSc (Econ)	*Monroe Palmer OBE, BA,	*Jim Tierney
FCA	FCA	*Daniel Webb
*Mike Freer	*Susette Palmer MA	*Marina Yannakoudakis BSc
*Brian Gordon, LL.B	*Bridget Perry	(Hons) MA, MEP
* Eva Greenspan		*Darrel Yawitch
		*Zakia Zubairi

*denotes Member present

75. PRAYER (Agenda Item 1.1):

The Mayor's Chaplin offered prayer.

76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1.2):

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Maureen Braun, Terry Burton, Claire Farrier, Christopher Harris and Linda McFadyen.

77. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2009 (Agenda Item 1.3)

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2009 be approved as a correct record.

78. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 1.4)

The Worshipful Mayor announced there would be various services held around the Borough to commemorate Remembrance Sunday and that he would be leading the wreath laying at the service at Totteridge War Memorial and that the Deputy Mayor would be leading the wreath laying at the Hendon War Memorial. He also announced the continuing success of Town Twinning, citing, the Morphou Rally, which he attended, along with, Councillors Matthew Offord, Lynne Hillan, Andreas and Joanna Tambourides, Alision Moore and Jack Cohen. And secondly, that the Deputy Mayor would be leading , along with Councillors John Hart and Barry Rawlings, a visit to Chaville to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Twinning with Barnet.

79. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS (Agenda Item 1.5)

Member:	Subject:	Interest Declared:
Councillor Barry Rawlings	Agenda Item 5.1.1, Report of Cabinet – Safeguarding in Barnet	Personal and prejudicial interest as Councillor Rawlings was involved in the two audits mentioned in the report. Councillor Rawlings left the Chamber and took no part in the discussion or voting on this item.
Councillor Helen Hart	Agenda Item 5.3.3, Supplemental Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Appointment to Barnet Homes Management Board	Personal and non-prejudicial as Councillor Hart is a Council appointed Director on the Barnet Homes Management Board. Councillor Hart participated in the discussion and voting on this item
Councillor Monroe Palmer	Agenda Item 5.3.3, Supplemental Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Appointment to Barnet Homes Management Board	Personal and non-prejudicial as Councillor Palmer is a Council appointed Director on the Barnet Homes Management Board. Councillor Palmer participated in the discussion and voting on this item.

Councillor Ross Houston	Agenda Item 5.3.3, Supplemental Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Appointment to Barnet Homes Management Board	Personal and non-prejudicial as Councillor Houston is a Council appointed Director on the Barnet Homes Management Board. Councillor Houston participated in the discussion and voting on this item.
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80. BUSINESS REMAINING FROM LAST MEETING (Item 1.6)

There was none.

81. QUESTION TIME FOR MEMBERS (Agenda Item 2.1)

Questions were put to the Leader and Members of the Cabinet. These questions, together with the answers provided and the text of any supplementary questions and answers are set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

82. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Councillor Joan Scannell, duly seconded, moved under Council Procedure Rule, Section 1, paragraph 10.2.2, that the order of business relating to Agenda Item 3 be varied so that Motions 3.1, 3.5 and 3.7 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 3.1, 3.5 and 3.7 to be debated and voted upon in advance of votes being taken on the other Motions on the Agenda.

83. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR GEOFF COOKE AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW HARPER (Agenda Item 3.1)

Motion 3.1 in the name of Councillor Geof Cooke was moved. Amendments in the name of Councillors Andrew Harper and Barry Rawlings were moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Rawlings was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Andrew Harper was declared carried.

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

RESOLVED - This Council recognises the importance of effective and efficient public transport to the success of London’s suburbs. It notes that all London Underground stations and most London Overground and National Rail stations in London receive a Metro-style ‘Turn Up and Go’ service, e.g. at least 4 trains per hour on weekdays between 09:30 and 16:00, but this is not the case on the Great Northern line serving New Southgate, Oakleigh Park and New Barnet stations in the London Borough of Barnet.

Council believes that increased frequency of services on the line is desirable but notes that the line is one of the busiest in the country.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport is requested to work with the London Borough of Enfield, the Mayor of London and Transport for London to;

- 1. Urge negotiation with interested parties to improve service levels on the Great Northern line through Barnet where practicable and affordable.**

2. **Ensure that Oyster Pay-as-You-Go will be implemented from January 2010 at New Southgate, Oakleigh Park, New Barnet, Cricklewood, Hendon and Mill Hill Broadway stations. Council notes that the recent increases in fares is necessary to meet the cost of this improvement going ahead.**

84. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR FIONA BULMER AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR ANNE HUTTON (Agenda Item 3.5)

Motion 3.5 in the name of Councillor Fiona Bulmer was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Anne Hutton was moved. Debate ensued and Councillor Bulmer accepted Councillor Hutton's amendment.

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

RESOLVED - Council welcomes the excellent GCSE and A-Level results, including those of students taking vocational exams, across the Borough, and congratulates Barnet children on their achievements.

60% of Barnet students gained 5 or more GCSEs, including English and mathematics. These results rank Barnet 10th out of 150 local authorities in England.

Barnet's students were placed even higher up the 'A level' league table, achieving an average 'points score' of 219, the sixth best result in the country.

Council believes these achievements are testament to the hard work of pupils and teachers across the Borough, working in partnership with the Council, and supported by parents, to drive up standards.

Council resolves to call on Cabinet to support the ongoing hard work of schools, staff and students across this Borough, and to work to raise standards in Barnet still further.

85. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR JOHN HART (Agenda Items 3.7)

Motion 3.7 in the name of Councillor John Hart was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Kathy McGuirk was moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Kathy McGuirk was lost.

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

RESOLVED - Council firmly believes that uniforms should be worn by pupils in Barnet Schools.

Council notes and appreciates the work of the supermarkets in significantly bringing down the costs of uniforms and sports kit. Council notes that supermarket prices are in sharp contrast to some suppliers that may charge up to £300 for a full set of uniforms for the school year.

Council believes that in these difficult economic times schools should be flexible in their choice of suppliers in order to minimise the cost of uniforms and particularly sports kit for parents.

Council believes that there should be an open market for school uniforms and that forcing parents to purchase clothing from a single supplier places an unacceptable and unnecessary financial burden upon them.

Council instructs the Director for Children's Services to write to all Headteachers and Chairmen of Governors in the Borough, asking them to ensure that they have as many generic items in their school uniform rules as possible, do not force parents to purchase specialist clothing from a single supplier and are flexible with their sport kit policies in order to minimise the cost to parents.

86. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR JACK COHEN AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW HARPER (Agenda Item 3.2)

Motion 3.2 in the name of Councillor Jack Cohen was moved. Amendments in the name of Councillors Andrew Harper and Monroe Palmer were moved. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Palmer was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Andrew Harper was declared carried. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion as amended was declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council notes that the area around Cricklewood Broadway comes under the auspices of Brent, Barnet and Camden. Cricklewood is an important metropolitan diverse local community which deserves a vibrant, sustainable and environmentally strong neighbourhood. Council notes that the people of Cricklewood often have difficulties understanding, appreciating and recognising where each of the three Borough's responsibilities begin and end. Council also believes that all three Boroughs should work together to ensure their local policies complement and support each other. Council requests that Cabinet members encourage departments to work with their counterparts in neighbouring Boroughs to ensure that services are co-ordinated as much as is practical in areas where Borough boundaries meet.

87. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR KATHY McGUIRK AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW HARPER (Agenda Item 3.3)

Motion 3.3 in the name of Councillor Kathy McGuirk was moved. Amendments in the name of Councillors Agnes Slocombe, Susette Palmer and Andrew Harper were moved. Upon being put to the vote, the amendments in the name of Councillor Agnes Slocombe and Susette Palmer were declared lost. Upon being put to the vote the amendment in the name of Councillor Andrew Harper was declared carried. Upon being put to the vote the substantive motion as amended was declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council notes that Mayor Boris Johnson inherited a £1.7 billion funding gap from the previous administration after his predecessor allowed the cost of running the transport system to outstrip combined income and subsidy.

Council notes that 40% of bus passengers will continue to travel free or at a substantial concessionary rate and that virtually all Travelcard prices have been frozen.

Council further notes that at least £5 billion of savings to TfL's back office has been found, reducing the necessary increase in fares.

Council believes that the Mayor of London is taking the unpleasant but necessary steps required to clean up the mess from years of reckless spending by Ken Livingstone, the financial burden of Gordon Brown's Metronet fiasco and the drop in income that has been caused by the recession.

Council notes that the Mayor of London's actions are in sharp contrast to his predecessor whose administration both failed to live within its means and failed to be upfront with Londoners about the financial pressures TfL was under.

Council further notes the excellent long-term approach that the Mayor of London is taking through his Transport Strategy, which will set out a clear plan for the capital.

Council asks that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport work with the Mayor of London to ensure that residents are informed and understand why this difficult decision was necessary.

88. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR ALISON MOORE AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR LYNNE HILLAN (Agenda Item 3.4)

Motion 3.4 in the name of Councillor Alison Moore was moved. Amendments in the name of Councillors Andrew McNeil and Lynne Hillan were moved. 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 amendment in the name of Councillor Lynne Hillan was declared carried. Upon being put to the vote the substantive motion as amended was declared carried.

RESOLVED - This council believes that community sports provision is important in promoting healthy lifestyles and fighting obesity amongst young people, particularly where there are significant levels of deprivation. Council calls on Cabinet to continue to pursue options, either with the current tenant or another provider, to provide facilities for local people in East Finchley and to secure funding for sports/community facilities on the Stanley Road Playing Field site."

89. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR LYNNE HILLAN (Agenda Item 3.6)

Motion 3.6 in the name of Councillor Lynne Hillan was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Alan Schneiderman was moved. Upon being put to the vote the amendment in the name of Councillor Schneiderman was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the motion declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council notes that business rates in London are set to rise by 10% before inflation over the next five years in order to pay for reductions elsewhere in the country. For the average Barnet business this will mean an additional £12,000 and follows a rise last April of 5%.

Council believes that to significantly raise taxes on small businesses as the economy is beginning to come out of recession is deplorable and makes a mockery of the Prime Minister's mantra that his government is 'doing everything we can to help people through the recession'.

Council notes that the Department for Communities and Local Government's plans are based on property valuations as at 1st April 2008, when rental values in London were at their peak, and before the recession took hold. Since that date commercial rents in London have plummeted by up to 40 per cent.

Council notes that business rates in many regions of the United Kingdom are to fall, subsidised by increases in London.

Council believes that there should be an immediate review of rental values to reflect the significant fall since April 2008. In the longer term the business rate tax

system should be overhauled so that councils keep the money they raise, thereby creating an incentive to keep taxes low and encourage enterprise.

Council calls upon the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State stating that;

- **The Council objects to Barnet's businesses being forced to subsidise other parts of the United Kingdom**
- **There should be a review so that rates are not based on valuations at the height of the property bubble**
- **The Local Authority Business Growth Incentives scheme should be reformed and simplified in order for councils to keep more of the money they raise**

90. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING.

In accordance with the Agenda, the Mayor adjourned the meeting. The meeting reconvened at 9.00pm.

91. ADMINISTRATION POLICY ITEM: TRANSPARENT EXPENDITURE (Agenda Item 4.1)

Councillor Lynne Hillan proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. An amendment in the name of Councillor Jack Cohen was moved. Debate ensued on the Policy Item. Upon being put to the vote the amendment in the name of Councillor Jack Cohen was declared lost.

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

RESOLVED - Council notes that technological change has meant information that was previously held by the few can now be moved into the hands of the many at minimum cost.

Council believes that information on how public money is being spent should be freely available to taxpayers, providing that the cost of publication is proportionate.

Council notes that the successful measures taken on opening up the authority to date, such as the Leader Listens programme, have won praise from across the political spectrum, including from the former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Council requests that Cabinet ensure spending over £500 is publicised online quarterly in arrears, where it is not legally prohibited, beginning from the new financial year.

92. OPPOSITION POLICY ITEM: PUBLIC SERVICES IN BARNET AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR MIKE FREER (Agenda Item 4.2)

Councillor Alison Moore proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. Amendments in the name of Councillors Mike Free and Barry Rawlings were moved. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Rawlings was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote the amendment in the name of Councillor Mike Freer was declared carried.

Upon being put to the vote the substantive Policy Item as amended was declared carried.

RESOLVED- Council believes that public services are vital to the wellbeing of Barnet's diverse community, and must be protected and developed to serve the needs of that community.

Council notes that financial planning is considerably more difficult for councils due to the Labour government inexplicably cancelling the next Comprehensive Spending Review and therefore refusing to disclose the future level of grant support.

Council believes that radical change is the only option if services are to be protected from the future budget cuts made necessary by Labour's mismanagement of the public finances. Changing the way services are provided is also necessary to meet residents' expectations for their local government to provide tailored services just as they receive in other walks of life.

Council asks Cabinet to continue to lead the way in local government by providing radical solutions to service provision.

93. REPORT OF CABINET – SAFEGUARDING IN BARNET (Agenda Item 5.1.1)

Councillor Fiona Bulmer moved reception and adoption of the report. Debate ensued.

Report of Cabinet

21 October 2009

Cabinet Members:

* Cllr Mike Freer (Chairman)

Councillors:

* Fiona Bulmer	* Andrew Harper	* Matthew Offord
Melvin Cohen, LL B	* Helena Hart	* Robert Rams
* Richard Cornelius	* Lynne Hillan	* Daniel Thomas

* denotes Member present

SAFEGUARDING IN BARNET (Report of the Cabinet Members for Children's Services and Community Services – Agenda Item 5):

Cabinet considered the attached report of the Cabinet Members for Children's Services and Community Services giving a detailed overview of Council activity in the Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and of the governance structures through which this work is delivered. Noting the detailed responsibilities and work of the individuals, bodies and agencies concerned with Safeguarding, and the current and future issues being addressed, Cabinet fully accepted that

- Safeguarding is a responsibility of the whole Council, not merely of officers or the Executive, and that
- the report should therefore be shared with all members formally through reference to full Council, as the first in a programme of annual reports.

Accordingly and for the reasons given by the Cabinet Members

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND - That Council notes the content of the Cabinet Members' report, in particular the formal governance arrangements that exist to

ensure the Council conducts its statutory Safeguarding responsibilities, and the present Safeguarding activity undertaken by the Council and its partner agencies.

Cabinet's decisions of this date record their instructions in relation to regular annual reports on Safeguarding, induction training in Safeguarding for members and officers and Safeguarding provision in acute care facilities.

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations were agreed.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Report dated the 21 October 2009, be approved and adopted.

94. REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 5.2.1)

Councillor Andreas Tambourides moved adoption and reception of the report. Debate ensued.

REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

9 SEPTEMBER 2009

Members:

Independent Members:

*Reverend Bernd Koschland (Chairman)

* Stephen Ross	* Michael Barber	* Rabbi Dr Jeremy Collick
* Ron Rosenhead	* Deborah Sanders	David Sparrow

Councillors:

* Joan Scannell	* Agnes Slocombe	Jack Cohen
Andreas Tambourides	* Claire Farrier	* Monroe Palmer

*denotes Member present

\$denotes Member absent on Council Business

MEMBERS' PLANNING AND MEMBERS' LICENSING CODES OF PRACTICE (Report of the Director of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer – Agenda item 6):

The Committee heard oral representations by Mr Howard (Chairman of the Federation of Residents' Associations in Barnet (FORAB)), Mr Robert Newton and Mr Daniel Hope, raising concerns about certain aspects of the proposed revision of the Members' Planning Code of Practice especially in relation to paragraph 4.1(e).

The Committee agreed an amendment to the recommendations as reflected in (1) below.

RESOLVED

(1) That the Committee agree to recommend to Council adoption of the proposed revisions to the Members' Licensing and Planning Codes of Practice as set out in the appendices to the report, subject to the amendment

of the following paragraphs of the Members' Planning Code of Practice to read as follows:

- (i) 4.1(e) – “Should determine applications in accordance with good Planning reasons, in knowledge of all 'material considerations' and taking account of the advice of their professional Officers”.
 - (ii) 8. Site Visits – “(The references to Members in this section are to Members who are likely to be involved in taking the decision upon a planning application to which the site visit relates) “
- (2) That subject to adoption by the Council, Officers be instructed to promote awareness of the revised Codes of Practice with Members, relevant Officers and with applicants and objectors.

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations were agreed.

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee Report dated the 9 September, be approved and adopted.

**95. REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE (CONSTITUTION REVIEW)
(Agenda Item 5.2.2)**

Councillor Melvin Cohen moved adoption and reception of the report.

Report of Special Committee (Constitution Review)

12 October 2009

* Chairman: Councillor Melvin Cohen

* Vice-Chairman: Councillor Jean Scannell

Councillors

Jack Cohen

Lynne Hillan

Alan Schneiderman

Richard Cornelius

Alison Moore

*Daniel Webb

Mike Freer

* Barry Rawlings

* denotes Member present

Councillor Monroe Palmer substituted for Councillor Jack Cohen

Councillor Jim Tierney substituted for Councillor Alison Moore

Councillor Robert Rams substituted for Councillor Mike Freer

CONSTITUTION REVIEW: 2009/2010 (Report of the Director of Corporate Governance – Agenda Item 5)

The Committee considered a proposed amendment to Article 14 of the Council's Constitution and Sections 10.4 – 10.7 of the Contract Procedure Rules that the Mayor, Leader and Deputy Mayor should no longer be required to counter-sign documents executed under seal.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND – That the Council approves the amendments to Article 14 of the Constitution and Sections 10.4 – 10.7 of the Contract Procedure Rules as set out the attached Appendix 1 (and instructs the Acting Democratic Services Manager to make the necessary changes to the Constitution).

COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Office – Agenda Item 6)

The Committee considered the attached report of the Overview & Scrutiny Office, proposing an amendment to the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution to ensure compliance with the provisions of Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 relating to Councillor Calls for Action.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND – That Council approves the amendments to the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules as set out in the attached report at Appendix 2 (and instructs the Acting Democratic Services Manager to make the necessary changes to the Constitution).

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations were agreed.

RESOLVED – That the Special Committee (Constitution Review) dated 12 October 2009, be approved and adopted.

96. PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.1)
RESOLVED –

- 1. That the Council Procedure Rules (Section 4, Public Participation, Paragraphs 5.2; 5.5 and 5.14) relating to the maximum number of members of the public permitted to speak on a planning application being considered by the Planning & Environment Committee be suspended for the purpose of consideration of the planning application for Brent Cross/Cricklewood at the proposed meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee on 18th and 19th November 2009. The extent of the suspension shall operate to permit individual members of the public who, at the time of the publication of this report, have signified to the Acting Democratic Services Manager their wish to address the Committee, to do so. The suspension shall not operate to permit any further members of the public to address the Committee.**
- 2. That the provisions relating to the deadline for submitting requests to speak and ask questions at the said Planning & Environment Committee as set out in the Council Procedure Rules - Section 4, Public Participation, Paragraph 6.1 and 6.4 be suspended and that no requests additional to those received at the time of publication of this report shall be accepted by the relevant Area Planning Officer or by the Democratic Services Manager.**

3. That Council Procedure Rules - Section 4, Public Participation, Paragraph 5.13 be varied at the said Planning & Environment Committee so that a maximum time of 20 minutes be permitted for the applicant to address the Committee in responding to points made by members of the public when addressing the Committee upon the planning application relating to Brent Cross/Cricklewood.

97. **RESPONSE FROM LORD COE, CHAIRMAN OF THE LONDON ORGANISING COMMITTEE OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES (LOCOG) (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.2)**
RESOLVED- Council noted Lord Coe’s response to Motion 3.4 (Council, 8th September 2009) in the name of Councillor Matthew Offord on the 2012 Olympic Road Cycling Route.

98. **APPOINTMENT TO THE BARNET HOME MANAGEMENT BOARD (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.2)**

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Mr Terry Rogers be appointed in place of Ms Charmaine Young CBE as Council-nominated Director on the Board of Barnet Homes. (Ref ALMO 4).
- (2) That Council note the requested changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Management Board of Barnet Homes Limited.

99. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE (Report of the Monitoring Officer – Agenda Item 5.4)**

RESOLVED – Council;

1. note and accept the recommendation of Standards Sub-Committee (B); and
2. instruct the Acting Democratic Services Manager to publish the recommendation as an advisory note with the Members Code of Conduct in the Council’s Constitution.

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

Comment: Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

We have heard from senior Conservative Members talking about passion, equalities and Leader Listens. I will make this very short. From my background, ancestors are from slavery and the rational behind ethnic minority asking questions about Black History. To underline that, why has the Council’s Black History month programme not been celebrated and promoted in September and October? The issue of Barnet First since 2005, when you click on the Council’s Black History Month Page, it says page not found. Is this because there is no longer a comprehensive programme of events to mark the important occasional and if so why not? If we think about William Wilberforce who was an author of slavery, I think we should endorse this.

Response: Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Councillor O-Macauley really ought to have done his homework. First of all about the web that’s an apology because the web link was broken. But, in terms of the work the Council does on Black History Month, we offer supporting guidance to the Schools where most of the work is done in conjunction with our libraries. Our school’s run a range of activities relating to Black History Month with an emphasis on embedding activities across the curriculum throughout the year not just in Black History Month. But, activity is done

on an individual school basis. As far as I'm aware every nursery, every primary school and every secondary school will have had some form of display and work would have involved visits would have been included from, poets, artist, writers and musicians. All of our libraries have themed displays on black literature. The libraries also run themed story times and rhythm times for young children along with themed reading groups for young children, teenagers and adults. That is real commitment to Black History Month.

Comment: Councillor Anne Hutton

After lengthy consultation going back over months and even years, it was at last agreed in writing last May that barriers would be installed at either end of the Glebelands path, leading from the High Road near the leisure centre to the other end in Legion Way. There was no proviso with regards to funding so that must have also been agreed. This was as a result of many complaints by residents to kids riding their motor bikes up and down the path and general anti social behaviour. The Safer Neighbourhood team worked really hard to curtail this including issuing anti social behaviour contracts. These are due to come to an end shortly if they haven't already done so and there is still no sign of the barriers. There is the worry that with no deterrent in place the problems will begin all over again and we will be back to square one. Can you tell me what the hold up is please?

Response: Councillor Andrew Harper

Thank you Mr Mayor. Well I do know that there is now a Coppetts Wood and Glebelands Advisory Committee on which Ward Councillors serve. It meets quarterly and undertakes two site visits per annum. I believe the committee is currently working up a new management plan for the site which involves a number of improvements and is also discussing funding issues. I believe the next site visit is due to take place on 24 November 2009 so no doubt Councillor Hutton and her colleagues will wish to raise these issues there. I am aware that there is a further amount of money available from section 106 funding which is due to be spent during the course of the current financial year so maybe the issues which she is talking about will be included in that.

101. QUESTION TO REPRESENTATIVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Agenda Item 6.2)

There were none

The meeting finished at 10.23pm

**Council Questions to Cabinet Members
3 November 2009
Questions and Responses**

Question 1**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Will the Cabinet Member please update Members on the latest position with regard to the future of Stanley Road Playing Fields?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Discussions with the tenant have been undertaken regarding how the playing fields can be brought back into use. At this point in time no specific proposals are identified.

Supplementary Question 1**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Thank you Mr Mayor, given the number of years this land has been unused and neglected, what time frame does the Cabinet Member have in mind to resolve this issue, and what is her preferred use for this land?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Thank you, we have been working very hard on Stanley Road Playing Fields recently. There is a lease that goes back many years and we have had to negotiate with the leaseholders. We have had to ask them if they will actually provide some community use. It is a difficult situation and we are hoping to sort it out as quickly as we possibly can and if we do manage to we would like to see mixed use sports and housing. Hopefully, the housing will be able to financially support the community use.

Question 2**Councillor Monroe Palmer**

How long does it take to remove a pair of plimsolls hanging on a wire over Golders Green Road?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

It's a good start if Ward Members do their duty and report such matters to the relevant part of the Council.

Supplementary Question 2**Councillor Monroe Palmer**

Can I ask Councillor Harper if he'll do his duty by accepting the fact that the plimsolls hanging on a line over Golders Green Road were reported to the Chief Executive on 27 May and was part of a report back sent by his assistant and also in September, August and July by Susette Palmer reported it to the relevant Officers. I have the copies here if Councillor Harper does not believe me? Will the Member also in reply tell us the significance of plimsolls on the line, I know what they are I would just like to know whether he does? There are other things besides X Factor in this Council and so can I please ask him to do his duty by accepting that we have done more than our duty. Lastly, Mr Mayor, I'm sure you want me to say it, the plimsolls have been removed, so questions have some significance at this Chamber.

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Thank you Mr Mayor, please don't go into the X Factor situation – I have heard more than a basin full in the last few days. Yes, as Councillor Palmer says the plimsolls have been removed and I understand that the problem was that there was difficulty identifying actually whose responsibility the particular cable was over the road. When it was ascertained that it was to do with the provision of Christmas lighting we were then able to ask our street lighting PFI contractor who had the necessary high hoist to remove those plimsolls. I am glad to say that it has been done.

Question 3**Councillor Julie Johnson**

Can the Cabinet Member advise what progress has been made on completing fire risk assessments of Barnet Homes housing blocks, and what the results of those FRAs are?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

There are 1296 Barnet Homes blocks requiring FRAs. Approximately 850 FRAs are currently outstanding, but this is changing daily.

We now have 3 fire risk assessors working full-time undertaking FRAs. Two of these are building surveyors and one is a Chartered Member of the Institute of Buildings, which gives us great confidence in their competence.

Over 770 works orders have been raised from the 450 (approx) FRAs undertaken so far. Any works raised are prioritised as red/amber/green and the fire risk assessor prioritises this work.

Works orders are also sectioned in to 3 areas: operational (e.g. fire door repairs), planned works (e.g. emergency lighting) and housing issues, (such as storage in the corridors/electrical intake cupboards). Operational repairs are collated and orders are raised bi-weekly, planned work items are being collated and costed and will then be commissioned as a programme to ensure value for money. Any housing issues identified are referred to the relevant housing management team for action.

All works identified from the FRAs are logged and progress is monitored until completion. Each FRA is specific to the block and also requires an assessment of the risk in relation to occupants of the building, for example residents with mobility problems or other physical or mental impairments. We will also be cross-checking information held on our systems and will feed this into the FRAs.

All high risk blocks have had their FRA (all scissor style, high rise – 7 floors and over, sheltered and alarm assisted) and we are currently working our way through the low risk (0-2 floors) and medium risk blocks (3-6 floors). All FRAs should be finished by the end of December 2009. We continue to work closely with the London Fire Brigade and are due to meet them again in early November to review a sample of FRAs completed, overall progress and also the plans for future ongoing review.

Supplementary Question 3**Councillor Julie Johnson**

I would like to thank Councillor Cornelius for his detailed reply. Can he tell me why Barnet Council waited for a tragedy to happen before instigating FRAs in their tower blocks?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

In no circumstances did anyone wait for a disaster to happen before attending to this. As soon as it was brought to our attention there was a changing perception of the advice that is give throughout London, we have acted with great vigour to get this done through our partner Barnet Homes.

Question 4**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Will the Cabinet Member please update members on the latest position with regard to the sale or future use of Park House in East Finchley?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

We are currently negotiating with a new tenant for this site. Terms have been exchanged and negotiations are progressing.

Supplementary Question 4

Councillor Brian Salinger

Last time I asked about Park House I was told we were negotiating with another local authority. Can I assume it was not the same local authority we are still negotiating with as months have passed since? When does the Cabinet Member expect to announce a successful outcome to bring this building to beneficial use?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

I would very much hope to make an announcement within the next few weeks. But, as you know it is very difficult at this moment with developers pulling out left, right and centre so it is very hard. Hopefully, in the next few weeks, certainly negotiations are on-going.

Question 5

Councillor Monroe Palmer

Why is it impossible to keep the road in The Vale NW2 free from dirt?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The Vale is used as a 'rat run' by waste hauliers and due to the nature of these operations sand and loose mud does tend to fall from the vehicles and build up on the highway.

The Council does carry out additional sweeps of the lower section of The Vale, mainly due to haulage companies' waste transfer and builder merchant operations in Claremont Road. We have met with residents in the vicinity recently to discuss the issues and assure them that the Council is actively seeking to improve the street scene in the area.

Supplementary Question 5

Councillor Monroe Palmer

Thank you Mr Mayor. Would Councillor Harper please tell us whether there has been enforcement notices against these waste hauliers who are creating this cost to the Borough of Barnet and in an EasyJet style Council one would have though we would be stopping them throwing the earth on the ground rather than forever cleaning it up. And when I say forever we do it rarely, not all the time and are you enforcing it?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Well I am not sure that they are actually throwing the earth on the ground. I am not aware that any enforcement notices have been issued but I am very happy to look into it.

Question 6

Councillor Kath McGuirk

Can the Leader confirm that in the event that a Councillor is found in breach of the Code of Conduct any money paid by the Council towards their legal costs under the Council's indemnity scheme will be repaid by them?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Barnet's Indemnities Policy is publicly available and makes clear that if a breach is proved, costs are incurred by the Member. Councillor McGuirk should perhaps avail herself of these papers.

Question 7

Councillor Brian Salinger

Will the Cabinet Member please update members on the latest position with regard to the future of the former Quinta Club site in High Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

The public inquiry into the village green application will take place on 18 – 20 November 2009. The outcome will determine the future opportunities available to the Council.

Supplementary Question 7**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Thank you Mr Mayor. When does the Member expect an outcome from this? And can we be sure that a beneficial use will be made for the site which is currently an eyesore and has been for several years?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

We thought we had a resolution for this and as you know the residents applied for a village green through an application. Hopefully, that won't take too much long and if it fails then we will be looking to lease it to another football club.

Question 8**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Why is there no answer to a strong request to remove a tree at the junction with The Vale NW11 and Hendon Way, which pedestrians have to climb over its roots to walk the footway?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The issue of the root damage to the pavement was raised on the Chief Executive's ward walk on 27 May and was referred to the Highways section to review the issue. It was not apparent that there was a strong desire to see the tree removed until a request was received from Councillor Susette Palmer on 12 October to re-consider the tree and this subsequent Council question regarding the same matter.

The tree is a mature Silver Maple in a prominent position. Due to its proximity to the A41 there are logistics that will need to be considered in reviewing the appropriate treatment for the tree, with associated costs of a possible lane closure if it was to be felled and consultation with Transport for London and local residents. A Tree Officer is due to inspect the tree and determine an appropriate course of action with consideration for its removal by the end of next week. An update will be provided to ward Councillors on 30 October to advise on the outcome.

Supplementary Question 8**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Thank you Councillor Harper, you say in the final sentence of your reply that an update will be provided to Ward Councillors on 30 October to advise on the outcome. Well 30 October has been and gone and we have still have not had an update. However, I am informed that Council contractors have been seen at this tree and scratching their heads. Does the Cabinet Member have any further information to us on this?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Mr Mayor, I am certainly scratching my head because I have not seen a report but I shall enquire into it. I am sure Officers have been investigating very carefully – we do not just chop trees down in this Borough willy nilly. As my written answer says, this is a mature Silver Maple in a prominent position so I think it needs to be handled carefully.

Question 9**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

In the light of concerns by the Board of Deputies and Stonewall, would the Leader confirm whether or not he supports the Conservative EU Alliance with right wing parties from Poland and Latvia, and if so could he say what impact such support would have on community cohesion in Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

It is sad that you should seek to spread discord in our communities where none exists.

My view on this echoes that of the editor of the Jewish Chronicle, Stephen Pollard who wrote the following in *The Guardian* on 9 October. My only divergence is that unlike Mr Pollard, I have never voted Labour!

Stephen Pollard said "Poland's Kaminski is not an anti-Semite: he's a friend to Jews. Kaminski is – as his record in Brussels shows clearly – one of the greatest friends to the Jews in a town where anti-Semitism and a visceral loathing of Israel are rife.

The National Rebirth of Poland, whose forerunner Kaminski joined as a 15-year-old, is indeed virulently anti-Semitic and neo-fascist. But the group today is very different from 1987. As a schoolboy he could not join Solidarity, and so he joined one of the few Polish nationalist groups. It is simply wrong to say the organization was anti-Semitic during the two years Kaminski was a member.

The president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews has now written to Cameron – true – and so they should have, that is part of their role. That is his job – and he should have done it at the start of the controversy. As it happens, on Wednesday 7 October night the Board president met Mark Francois, the Conservative European spokesman, who happily agreed to hand over the party's dossier on Kaminski – with evidence he is not an anti-Semite.

My understanding is all the parties in the group are signatories to the Prague protocol and believe in a liberal society with human rights and as such the impact on community cohesion in Barnet will be exactly the same as the impact of Labour's association with some of its partners in the European Parliament.

With regard to Stonewall, they are of course right to campaign for equal rights across Europe but accept that the various states are at different stages in their development of social policy. Poland of course remains a deeply Catholic country and whilst I hope that they adopt the UK's approach to equality and diversity, simply belittling a European Partner is unlikely to be helpful. Mr Kaminski is proud that Poland was among the first countries to decriminalise homosexuality; says he would vote for civil partnership legislation. None of the mainstream parties in Poland, including those associated with Labour, embrace the Stonewall agenda.

Labour of course are associated with a Polish party who have members that are fans of Adolf Hitler's and are associated with anti-Semitic publishers. Labour are also associated with Italian politicians who goes round the world claiming that 9/11 was a CIA plot and Labour are sitting with eastern European parties stuffed with former Communists who were hardly known for their tolerance of Jews and Gays.

Supplementary Question 9

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Thank you Mr Mayor. Thanks to Councillor Freer for his detailed reply I think the point is whilst Mr Kaminski can point to periods in his past that are not anti-Semitic the problem is that recollection of the past keeps on changing. He claims he did not wear symbols of the Polish far right nationalism then it turns out he did but we should not misinterpret them.

The question is not really about Mr Kaminsky, the question is why have the Tories gone out of their way to align themselves for reasons of political expediency with parties of the far right in Europe rather than mainstream leaders such as President Sarkozy or Chancellor Merkel. An unwavering commitment to anti-racism and equal rights should not be blurred just for political expediency and for no other reason.

Would Councillor Freer admit on this occasion that he has got his priorities in the wrong order both for the country and the people in this Borough?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Mr Mayor given this rather silly attack from Councillor Schneiderman I hope to be given some latitude for a fulsome response. I don't think we need lessons from the Labour Group on who they sit alongside considering their European partners are sat alongside homophobes. But, they are also sat alongside former Communist bloc members who actually were responsible for the imprisonment of political dissidents, Jews and homosexuals in the former Soviet bloc.

And, of course they are themselves, this Labour Group in the Council, are in fact very good evidence that you do not have to agree with everything your colleagues agree with, because they are sitting alongside people they don't agree with. We all know that the reason why Councillor Moore sits at the front is because it's the only way she gets her Group behind her. We also know that Councillor Schneiderman is closer to the views of Councillor McGuirk than he is to his own leadership. So we do know that you can sit alongside people without agreement. And, we do not need lessons from the Labour Group on having alliances with groups with a dodgy past. They had their own coalition with the Lib-Dems in this Council and they are the party of Jenny Tonge, so we do not need lessons on that.

So lets turn to this scurrilous accusation and lets talk of the recollection. If we are talking about recollection about Kaminsky – the recollection that I will stand by is the recollection of the Chief Rabbi of Poland who said that Mr Kaminsky is a serious ally to the State of Israel and against anti-Semitism. And, if it is good enough for the Chief Rabbi of Poland it is good enough for me.

Question 10

Councillor Brian Salinger

Will the Cabinet Member accept my congratulations on securing the promise of funding for the BSF programme? The proposal includes relocating the PRU away from Chandos Avenue and Burnt Oak Sports Centre to an as yet unknown site. Will the Cabinet Member please list the options that have been considered and those still under consideration?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

I, as I have before, cautiously welcomed the funding through BSF – and hope that the Government has left some money for us to be funded.

The Pupil Referral Unit is included within the BSF wave 1 redevelopment. There is currently an options appraisal underway to identify potential locations giving consideration to the educational requirements and service delivery strategy as part of BSF programme works. It is inappropriate to release details of specific sites before that appraisal is complete. Once complete the recommendations of the report will be shared for comment.

Supplementary Question 10

Councillor Brian Salinger

If I can bring matters back to real issues in the London Borough of Barnet that affect people. If the Cabinet Member cannot tell where is being considered, can he tell me which sites have been excluded and can he tell me what steps he has taken to assess the needs of the PRU?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

This is a long detailed process that will take time and I have not got those details to hand and I am happy to write to him.

Question 11

Councillor Wayne Casey

How much money did the Council originally plan to spend on the street lighting contract by period six (financial year 2009/10) and how much money did it actually spend by the same period?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The original plan month 6 estimate is £2,518,649 (please note that the original planned budget has been revised as it did not take account of the change in the government grant between financial year 07/08 and 08/09 – originally the 07/08 budget had been inflated by 2.5% to derive the 08/09 planned budget – this has now been corrected and the month 6 estimate reflects the true position for 08/09).

Certified payments to month 6 are £2,225,019 (this is 5 months' actual, 1 month estimate).

The Council's financial system (SAP) states the actual spend as £1.46 million at month 6 in SAP which includes £560k grant (PFI credits) received so far, however, this is subject to some processing delays.

The differences between the original plan and the certified payments are due to contractual deductions and adjustments for energy prices.

Deductions are made from the contract on a monthly basis based on performance criteria set within the contract. When entering into the PFI, energy was purchased at a defined rate. This rate is due to change later this month so the profile for energy spend may well increase to the later half of the financial year.

Supplementary Question 11

Councillor Wayne Casey

Thank you very much Mr Mayor, can I thank the Cabinet Member for his answer. Could I ask could any of the money accrued through contractual deductions be invested in extending the heritage lighting scheme in Mill Hill Village? I know Councillor Harper has visited the Village recently so he knows the area I am talking about.

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Yes indeed Mr Mayor I have visited the area recently and I am acquainted with it. By the way, I am grateful for the courtesy of Councillor Casey for giving me notice of the supplementary question he was going to ask. There are issues that arise here in terms in the way monies not spent in the original plans of the PFI contract are actually allocated. I think there are legal and other implications that have to be gone through and possibly a policy decision to be taken. I have not yet gone through with my Officers all the thought processes but am grateful to Councillor Casey for raising this and I will get back to him as soon as I can.

Question 12

Councillor Anne Hutton

Would the Cabinet Member say how many school governors in Barnet come from BAME communities?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

This data is not available.

Supplementary Question 12**Councillor Anne Hutton**

Thank you Mr Mayor, are there any plans to collect the data.

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

No, all I'm concerned about in regard to School Governors is that they have a commitment to the school. I don't think we should be asking people to be putting themselves into endless categories and last time we tried to collect this data under the previous Administration most Governors refused to fill in the forms.

Question 13**Councillor Tom Davey**

What was the outcome of the men's health event at the Mill Hill depot?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Thanks to the sterling efforts and support of all the various agencies involved in setting up this Event, the very first Mill Hill Depot Health Check on Thursday 17 September proved to be extremely successful with some 168 members of staff taking advantage of these checks. As well as having their blood pressure and weight checked, attendees were also able to have their Body Mass Index measured and receive advice and information on weight management and healthy eating from the PCT dietician. In addition there were 32 Referrals to the Stop Smoking Service and with the first Clinic taking place on 3 November it is hoped that even more will sign up.

Based on this success and our aim to help more people become involved in taking responsibility for improving their own health, we would very much like to roll this programme out across the Borough and have already had great interest shown in it with Barnet Homes being one such example.

Supplementary Question 13**Councillor Tom Davey**

I would like to thank Councillor Hart for her response and being there at 6.30 in the morning, myself, along with Councillor Hart and other Members of the Council can vouch to the success of this activity. Given the success and the clear enthusiasm from people, can we rest assured that there will be plans to roll this out into areas that we believe there will be potential high density of participants?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Thank you Mr Mayor and Councillor Davey, not only for his question, but he was actually there at 6.30 when I rolled up rather later. It was very good to see all those people from the Depot turning up at that hour in the morning to have their health checked, to discuss their health needs, and to go forward in taking responsibility for their own health and well-being. And, yes we have every intention of seeking to involve our partner, NHS Barnet. I have to also pay tribute to the Unions, in this respect, who were extremely helpful and yes we will be rolling it out.

Question 14**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Why was the Finchley and Golders Green Residents Forum cancelled?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Residents Forum was postponed to 26 October 2009. It was rearranged as the owner of the venue to be used on 14 October was subject to an outstanding enforcement notice that had not been complied with. The Director of Corporate Governance felt it was inappropriate for the Council to hold a public meeting at the venue and I support his decision. The Leader and Chief Executive were notified. At the time of cancellation no items of business had been submitted.

Supplementary Question 14**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Thank you Councillor Thomas, I do appreciate your embarrassment at having to cancel the Finchley and Golders Green Residents Forum and the reason for that. I notice in your reply that you said that the Leader and the Chief Executive were notified but none of the local Councillors were notified. I had to read about that in the press. However, my actual supplementary is this – when do you going to intend to be at one of these Residents Forums?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Thank you Councillor Cohen, whenever my diary allows.

Question 15**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Does the Cabinet Member support the recent fare hikes announced by Mayor Boris Johnson – and if so what is his advice to Barnet's hard pressed public transport using residents who may have to pay as much as 20% extra for their regular Travelcard?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The Travelcard comment is incorrect. Virtually all Travelcard prices will be frozen. The single exception is the 'Seven Day 2 Zone' Travelcard, which will rise by 15%.

In general, my advice to hard pressed residents is never to vote for Ken Livingstone or Labour again. Mayor Johnson inherited a funding gap of £1.7 billion after the previous administration allowed the cost of running the transport system to outstrip combined income and subsidy. The Mayor is now clearing up the mess from years of reckless spending by Ken Livingstone, the financial burden of Gordon Brown's Metronet fiasco and the drop in income that has been caused by the recession.

I support the actions of a responsible Mayor of London who has ensured that efficiencies at TfL have been made before this unfortunate but necessary step was taken. These actions are in sharp contrast to his predecessor whose administration both failed to live within its means and failed to be honest with Londoners about the financial pressures TfL was under.

Supplementary Question 15**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Thank you, I am somewhat rather disappointed in Councillor Harper's reply, I did not think he was such a lemming and follow his route as he seems to have done. But bearing in mind his answer, especially that in the second paragraph, can he answer yes or no does he support the following – funding of Crossrail, improvements to London Underground, the safer neighbourhood team, increases in frequency and numbers of night buses, and investment in cultural activities including festivals such as the opening of Trafalgar Square. Just some of the initiatives started by Ken Livingstone and supported by the Labour Government.

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Well Mr Mayor, I am somewhat disappointed by Councillor McGuirk's supplementary question – the usual rambling list of accusations I suppose. I know that the Labour Group still cannot get over the fact that their candidate lost the Mayoral Election last year. It seems to me Mr Mayor that they want to have their cake and eat it. In the last Council they were asking me to pledge no to cuts in bus services for example and yet now they are saying no to fare increases. Well we can't have an efficient and effective service that meets people's public transport needs if the fares being paid are not appropriate to meet those needs. So, as I said so they can't have their cake and eat it, what do they want?

Question 16**Councillor John Hart**

As waiting lists for allotment plots lengthen, would the Cabinet Member consider extending allotment land, or creating new sites, in areas of high demand?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The Council is working with the Barnet Federation of Allotment holders to identify additional land within current sites that are derelict that could be brought into service. The allotment societies have carried out surveys on sites to grade derelict plots/land in terms of viability to bring them back into service. In addition to this lists of occupied plots have been cross referenced against allotment plot maps to identify any areas of land that may not have been identified in the latter process. For example, Bells Hill are in the process of clearing an area of land which had been derelict with the Payback team which will release approximately 45 allotment plots, we believe there are other areas of land within other sites that can also receive this kind of treatment and we are in the process of identifying these and assessing their viability.

In addition to the above, the management of waiting lists is also being reviewed with a view to improve waiting times through central management and the allocating of plots to a requirement list rather than waiting for a single site, applicants could be considered for a number of sites. Plot sizes have also been reduced from 10 to 5 poles enabling two plots to be let rather than one.

Substantial investment – which unfortunately we cannot afford - would be required to create additional allotment land. A more sustainable approach is to bring into service land within current sites and manage the provision and waiting lists more effectively which should address lengthening waiting lists.

Supplementary Question 16**Councillor John Hart**

I recognise that the Borough does not have the money to buy extra land for those who want to grow their crops. The Queen does, the National Trust does, some other organisations do, the Borough does provide something like 50 sites, and I understand the very detailed reply where there is land not being cultivated by local people. People will not go very far. Is there any hope for improvement for the allotment holders in Barnet – a sizeable amount of people?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Mr Mayor thank you. Firstly, may I say that I am grateful to Councillor John Hart for the continuing interest he has shown in these matters, not least the very significant and helpful role that he plays in liaising between the Council, Council Officers and the Federation which in no small part has helped bring a deepening of a mutually beneficial relationship there. So, I am very grateful for that. He is absolutely right – unfortunately there is no funding available for us to purchase additional land for allotments.

We are, as my written answer says, doing the very best we can with what we have got - trying to use that as efficiently as we can possibly can, where there are plots not being in use or being very sparsely used, trying to ensure that those are in the ownership of people who really will make the best possible use of them and I do know that Councillor Hart is working his own plot as productively as he possibly can.

Question 17**Councillor Jack Cohen**

When will I be sent answers to questions I asked at the last Business Overview Committee (Officers promised to write to me)?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

I understand that Adult Social Services have sent you their response and Strategic Finance has been assembling the information to be sent direct to you with the aim of you receiving it by today's meeting. Please let me know if there have been any problems and I will chase up on your behalf.

Supplementary Question 17**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Thank you Councillor Hillan, Adult Social Services have indeed replied to me but only in the past few days, and I have still not had a reply from Strategic Finance even though I was told that the aim was to have it with me by the time of this meeting. However, Councillor Hillan, the serious point is I raised questions at the Business Overview Committee almost two months ago. Under the new procedure it makes Councillors ask questions in advance in writing in order to give you, as Cabinet Member, a chance to reply in detail. Some of the replies were incomplete, some lacked information and some were misleading. I was promised a written response as soon as possible to answer my questions. The real issue is if Councillors are made to ask questions in advance in order to facilitate your reply – we expect those replies to be consistently correct and if not we expect to see those answers immediately. And, I speak on behalf of all backbenchers, I hope, on this Council, so I would ask you this – would you make sure in future that the Council's procedures are complied with by you and your colleagues?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

First of all, I would like to apologise if you still have not had the answers and for the delay. Obviously that should not have happened. However, I do feel that you can take some responsibility yourself for chasing your questions – it is not my scrutiny committee. The Directors did undertake to send you the answers and unless I or any Cabinet Member knows that they had not been delivered then we could not possibly do anything about it. You should undertake to tell me or chase the Officers.

Question 18**Councillor Alison Moore**

The cancellation of the Finchley and Golders Green Forum scheduled for 14 October caused significant concern amongst local residents in Finchley. Does the Leader agree that it was an unacceptable situation and can I have his assurance that this will not happen again?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Resident Forums come under my portfolio, not the Leader's. Given the reason I have stated in my response to question 14, I do not believe postponing the Forum was unacceptable. I believe it was the right decision to make. The Council should not be holding meetings at a venue if its owner is subject to an enforcement notice. I appreciate this may have caused inconvenience to those residents planning to attend, for which I apologise. We will do our best to ensure future meetings are held at suitable venues to avoid postponements. Arranging these sorts of events include dealing with third parties, therefore, it is difficult to give assurance this will never happen again.

Supplementary Question 18**Councillor Alison Moore**

Thank you very much, Councillor Thomas as portfolio holder, what is unacceptable I think is that it was arranged at a venue like that in the first place as we have fewer and fewer Council buildings those complications will inevitably arise in future. This is not the first time that there have been issues about Finchley and Golders Green Residents Forum venues. So, may I have your assurances as Cabinet Member that you will be more assiduous in your role in checking and ensuring that there no problems with Forum venues in the future.

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Thank you Councillor Moore, I can assure you that I have already spoken to the Director of Corporate Governance about this matter and I'm assured that more checks will take place to ensure venues are suitable and that there be no more postponements.

Question 19

Councillor Dean Cohen

Can the Cabinet Member update Council on the situation regarding squatters at Hendon football stadium?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The Lessees' order for possession was heard at Willesden County Court on 28 October. Following the judgment, relevant action was taken by the lessee to take possession and secure the site.

Question 20

Councillor Jack Cohen

Have you or any other Member of the Administration or any Officer undertaken overseas trips on behalf of the Council in the past 12 months? If so please provide details.

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

I have not undertaken any overseas trip on behalf of the Council in the past twelve months. The only members of the administration who have undertaken a trip overseas on behalf of the Council are Councillor Hillan and Councillor Offord who visited Morphou as part of a town twinning delegation in October 2009. There was no cost to the Council.

Mr Clive Medlam, former Director of Resources, visited Iceland on four occasions for meetings regarding the Council's deposits in Icelandic banks – 14 to 16 November 2008, 11 to 12 December 2008, 17 to 20 February 2009 and 31 March to 3 April 2009.

Trip to attend the MIPIM conference in Cannes, France in March 2009. Attendees were the Acting Director for Environment and Regeneration and the Acting Director of Planning, Housing and Regeneration. MIPIM represents the annual property conference and gathering of all key players in delivering regeneration and development. This includes a London stand and other representatives from a number of Councils and the GLA family. The benefits are considerable beyond the normal networking where individual Borough Councils can secure commitments to regeneration funding and infrastructure plus stronger partnership working with key agencies such as the London Development Agency and private sector partners who are delivering significant investment in the Borough.

Supplementary Question 20

Councillor Jack Cohen

Thank you for confirming in your addendum that Officers attended a conference in Cannes, and I notice you said that the benefits are considerable beyond the normal networking. Well I'm sure the visit to the South of France gives more benefit than the Docklands – I have nothing against the Docklands. But, my question is this, perhaps I did not phrase as I should have done – in relation to the conference in Cannes to your knowledge did any Councillor from the Conservative Party attend that conference?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

I can assure Councillor Cohen that no Councillor of the Conservative Group on this Council attended in his or her official capacity.

Question 21**Councillor Alison Moore**

Given the level of public disappointment with the Council's refusal to support the Open House programme this year, would the Cabinet Member confirm whether the Council will participate in next year's programme?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Participation in the 2009 London Open House programme would have required the Council to make a £3,800 contribution to the Open House organisers. It was felt that this contribution could not be justified in these very difficult economic times and under continuing budgetary constraints.

If sufficient funding can be identified through sponsorship or other sources then involvement in the 2010 programme will be carefully considered.

Supplementary Question 21**Councillor Alison Moore**

Thank you, with all due respect Councillor Cohen, it was a ridiculously small sum and frankly from the Administration that spent £43,000 sending out a letter to all residents on a matter that was not Council business was frankly insulting to the Arts and Community Groups sector. Can I have your assurance that you will ensure that Barnet does take part in the Open House programme next year? It is well appreciated by residents and it is a good advert to the Borough quite frankly.

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Absolutely not, Mr Mayor, what the answer did not say, maybe it should have done, taking into account the cost of opening, overtime, heating, lighting etc of Council buildings with very little public attendance. I cannot justify reinstatement. Unless we can get funding in full it will stay as it is.

Question 22**Councillor Joan Scannell**

Can the Cabinet Member report on the progression of the rebuild of Edgware Junior School's kitchen, including the facilities provided, number of children that can be seated and cost of the rebuild?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The construction project at Edgware Junior School included the building of a dining hall and kitchen, with a link building which integrates the two junior school buildings and redefined the junior school main entrance out into the playground. The junior school's new link building incorporates a new office/reception, meeting and multi-purpose rooms. The dining space has also been developed to facilitate additional curriculum use, community functions and breakfast/after school clubs.

Construction on the scheme started in October 2008 and the project was completed in September 2009. The overall project budget identified for the total works outlined above is £2.8m. The cost cannot be confirmed until final accounts for the projects are agreed and this process is currently underway.

At Edgware Infant and Junior schools there are 630 primary age and 45 nursery age children. These kitchen and dining facilities accommodate their needs for both hot meals and packed lunches during the school day.

Supplementary Question 22**Councillor Joan Scannell**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you Councillor Rams for your detailed information. As a Governor of both Edgware Junior and Infant schools I know that everyone is absolutely delighted that the kitchen has been totally rebuilt and that the awful dangerous ramp has been removed. So, Councillor Rams is this improvement typical of Barnet's first class programme?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Mr Mayor, this is typical of Barnet, Conservative Barnet Council, spending millions on schools throughout Barnet. As you are aware Mr Mayor we recently opened Whitings Hill School which is a clear example of the commitment our Council put into schools in Barnet.

Question 23**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

How many times has the Council been notified, by TFL, of subway closures on the A1 and A41 in the last year; and what is the longest period of closure?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The Council is not normally notified by TfL when subways are closed and therefore we do not know how many times subways have been closed, nor the length of the longest closure. TfL may be able to prepare this information for Councillor Davies if he would like to know, but I suspect that this is not the point of his question. The Council is aware of a specific issue with the subway under the A41 at Brentfield Gardens (near the Brent Cross Tesco). The subway is regularly affected by foul sewage flooding caused by a Thames Water sewer under the A41 flooding after heavy rainfall. This results in the subway having to be closed until the water is removed and the sewage debris is removed. TfL have been working with Thames Water to identify a solution and have lobbied OFWAT to secure funding for a scheme to address the flooding problem. At present there is no indication when a decision might be made.

Supplementary Question 23**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Thank you Mr Mayor, I found Councillor Harper's answer illuminating as I was not actually referring to this site. I was actually interested to see what you came back with because you may not be aware that at Hendon Central the subway was closed on and off for many months onwards basis to the inconvenience of pedestrians. And I was also at the subway opposite Clyde Walk and that was actually flooded and it is quite clear that these subways are neglected on a regular basis and there are no alternative arrangements for pedestrians. It is very important that the Cabinet Member takes this up with TfL to make sure that these facilities are available and alternative arrangements made if they are to be closed for any period of time.

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Mr Mayor I am always happy to shed light wherever I can as part of my mission in life. However, there is not a lot of light in the subways certainly, particularly at this time. The Council and its Officers try to maintain dialogue with TfL on these difficulties experienced by residents in the Borough and keep them to a minimum.

Question 24**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm what work has been done by Officers since the High Court injunction was granted to prepare for the implementation of Cabinet's decision to remove sheltered housing wardens?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

A detailed project plan is in place concerning implementation of the Cabinet's decisions of 8 June and work on this has proceeded on a wide range of different activities in accordance with the timelines approved by the project board. The Council has not however proceeded with issue of notices to terminate the current contracts with sheltered housing providers following the granting of the injunction.

Question 25

Councillor John Hart

Would the Cabinet Member please let me know how many Tree Preservation Orders were raised in Mill Hill ward in the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 to date and how many were revoked in the same periods?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

2007 – No TPOs made in Mill Hill Ward

2008 – 2 TPOs made in Mill Hill Ward (Provincial House, The Ridgeway, NW7 and Outside Block 25 - 47 Curry Rise, NW7)

2009 – 1 TPO made in Mill Hill Ward (Former Officers' Mess, Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill NW7)

20 TPOs have been made during this period across the Borough, 15% being within the Mill Hill Ward.

No TPOs have been revoked within the Borough over the same period.

Supplementary Question 25

Councillor John Hart

Thank you Mr Mayor, I must say thank you for the information Councillor Cohen. I am very disappointed I must say in the paucity of the reply. No TPOs in 2007 and 2 in 2008, I mean this is a big Borough, a green Borough, our notepaper has a little tree on it. I would had thought that we could do rather better than that.

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Mr Mayor, the Member will know that more than 33% of this Borough is actually Green Belt, and trees in Green Belt are protected in any event. I would have thought for the remaining part of the Borough the number of TPOs that have been made are commensurate to the size of the Borough. I can't quite frankly see the concerns of the Member in relation to TPOs in this Borough.

Question 26

Councillor Jeremy Davies

Has the Cabinet Member been consulted on the recently announced TFL fares increase and the proposed service changes?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

No, and indeed the Mayor of London is not required to carry out a consultation on fares. At the last Council meeting, it was agreed that I would "work with the Mayor of London to ensure that our Borough has the best public transport that finite resources will allow"; this remains the case.

Supplementary Question 26

Councillor Jeremy Davies

Thank you Mr Mayor, I would like to ask Councillor Harper whether he thinks these fare increases are fair and acceptable.

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Mr Mayor, I note that Councillor Davies seems to want to jump onto the same bandwagon as Councillor McGuirk, and you will forgive me if I choose not to do so. I am certain that these fare increases are necessary and are justified, not least given the black hole the Mayor had inherited from the previous Mayoral Administration.

Question 27**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

How many older people were assessed for care services by year since 2002 and do you have data of age, gender, ethnicity and faith where possible? Please include the type of care for different groups e.g. older people, learning disability and whether supported living, domiciliary care, dementia, nursing etc.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

A lot of data is necessary to answer this question.

Clients aged 65+ assessed

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Physical and sensory disability and frailty	2144	1785	1384	1565
Mental Health	262	237	205	201
Learning disability	3	4	1	3
Substance misuse	1	2	2	2
Other vulnerable people	256	250	111	93
Total of above	2666	2278	1703	1864

Note: pre 2005-06 data includes reviews as per RAP definition

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Physical and sensory disability and frailty	4201	2252	2687
Mental Health	92	1071	807
Learning disability	7	42	35
Substance misuse	0	1	2
Other vulnerable people	0	52	203
Total of above	4300	3418	3734

Clients aged 65+ receiving care after assessment

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Physical and sensory disability and frailty	715	867	993	*
Mental Health	126	122	126	*
Learning disability	1	1	1	*
Substance misuse	0	1	2	*
Other vulnerable people	110	95	74	*
Total of above	952	1086	1196	1459

*A breakdown by category was not required for the 2008-09 submission but can be calculated.

Note: pre 2005-06 data includes reviews as per RAP definition

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Physical and sensory disability and frailty	3055	1077	752
Mental Health	51	252	215
Learning disability	1	1	4
Substance misuse	0	0	0
Other vulnerable people	0	31	92
Total of above	3107	1361	1063

Clients aged 65+ assessed by Ethnicity

		2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
White	British	1712	1457	1167	1254
	Irish	92	86	61	62
	Any other white background	345	373	219	249
Mixed	White and Black Carribean	1	3	5	1
	White and Black African	2	1	4	1
	White and Asian	1	0	6	1
	Any other mixed background	3	5	4	4
Asian or Asian British	Indian	160	135	95	119
	Pakistani	7	8	7	8
	Bangladeshi	5	2	3	3
	Any other Asian background	34	38	30	40
Black or Black British	Carribean	24	17	18	22
	African	21	20	12	16
	Any other Black background	2	6	1	6
Chinese or other ethnic group	Chinese	5	8	11	6
	Any other ethnic group	90	41	27	37
Not stated		162	78	33	35
Total of above		2666	2278	1703	1864

Clients aged 65+ receiving care after assessment by Ethnicity

		2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
White	British	630	698	810	994
	Irish	35	45	42	43
	Any other white background	133	184	164	195
Mixed	White and Black Carribean	1	2	2	0
	White and Black African	1	1	2	1
	White and Asian	1	0	6	1
	Any other mixed background	0	2	4	3
Asian or Asian British	Indian	43	66	67	90
	Pakistani	2	3	4	6
	Bangladeshi	3	2	2	2
	Any other Asian background	6	20	26	36
Black or Black British	Carribean	14	6	15	18
	African	5	9	7	11
	Any other Black background	1	2	1	5
Chinese or other ethnic group	Chinese	4	2	6	4
	Any other ethnic group	40	17	20	28
Not stated		33	27	18	22
Total of above		952	1086	1196	1459

Clients aged 65+ assessed

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
65-74	565	386	270	*
75+	2101	1892	1433	*
Total of above	2666	2278	1703	1864

*A breakdown by age was not required for the 2008-09 submission but can be calculated.

Note: pre 2005-06 data includes reviews as per RAP definition

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
65-74	840	531	597
75+	3460	2887	3137
Total of above	4300	3418	3734

Clients aged 65+ receiving care after assessment

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
65-74	160	161	169	*
75+	792	925	1027	*
Total of above	952	1086	1196	1459

*A breakdown by age was not required for the 2008-09 submission but can be calculated.

Note: pre 2005-06 data includes reviews as per RAP definition

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
65-74	586	270	178
75+	2521	1091	885
Total of above	3107	1361	1063

Question 28**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Please could you give details of the stronger action being taken by the Council to deal with anti-social graffiti.

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

The Council has recently used its CCTV system to identify a graffiti vandal committing an offence. Operators contacted the Police who were able to track the individual and when he was arrested further information was given about a number of similar incidents in Burnt Oak and Colindale that contained the same 'tag'. This resulted in the courts giving the man a suspended sentence and a sixth month exclusion notice from the Borough of Barnet.

Such partnership working between the Police and the Council is proving effective in a range of other areas in addition to that of graffiti vandalism.

Supplementary Question 28**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Councillor Offord, thank you very much for all that is being done in regard to combating graffiti. When I was going on a walkabout the other day with the Chief Executive, we noticed in various parts of Hale certain graffiti that we could have done without. I know it is going to be removed, but I would just like to ask, are we intensifying our observance of where graffiti is? And, what sort of time limit can we expect that when somebody complains about graffiti it will actually be removed from those places where we have taken upon ourselves to do this?

Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord

Mr Mayor, we remove graffiti as soon as humanly possible, and in regards to observance of graffiti as my response indicates we are using the CCTV system in addition to other resources in the Council.

Question 29**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Could the Cabinet Member for Planning and Environmental please inform Council what is the process for consulting neighbours on planning applications where the properties are not immediately opposite each other and if there have been any recent changes in the consultation guidelines?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

The Planning Service's practice for publicity and consultation in relation to planning applications was agreed by the Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 March 2003 and updated in November 2006.

Properties opposite an application site which have a view of a development proposal, such as a front or side extension are always consulted. Depending on the type and nature of an application, properties will generally be consulted within either a 50m or 100m radius of the boundary of a site for non-householder proposals. If a development proposal is more significant a site notice may also be erected.

Additional neighbour notification may be undertaken in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Area Planning Manager. It should be noted that Barnet's approach to consultation exceeds that required by the legislation.

Supplementary Question 29**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Thank you Mr Mayor, what I would say to Councillor Cohen is I did have an issue raised to me by one constituent recently where their house is not directly opposite a neighbour who was putting in a planning application and it transpires that one neighbour who I think was to the left was consulted but the neighbour that was marginally to the right who would also have been affected by this application was not consulted. Could the Cabinet Member please give an assurance that this was an one-off and make sure that these procedures are redefined by Officers to make sure that members of the public are fully consulted on planning applications that affect them?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

I am aware of the particular concern of the Member relating to a property in The Reddings. The rules say that properties directly opposite developments are consulted and I will see that wherever possible that this will not happen again.

Question 30**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

In the light of Barnet's changing demographics what plans does the Council have to provide culturally sensitive social care services?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Giving people choice and control of their own social care through individual budgets and direct payments together with targeted investment in third sector community based organisations remains the key way in which culturally appropriate social care services are and will be provided. For example in September 2009, our ethnic monitoring of direct payments shows that 40% of service users aged 18-64 in receipt of direct payments describe themselves as non-white contrasted to 32% of the Borough profile who are aged 18-64.

Question 31**Councillor Brian Gordon**

To what extent is Barnet Council's economic policy consistent with that recently enunciated by London Mayor Boris Johnson – namely cutting spending, reducing or even freezing taxation and still improving the quality of public services?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Absolutely side by side on this one. We are very much ahead of the game with our proposals to provide best quality services for the best possible price.

Supplementary Question 31**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Councillor Hillan, thank you for your answer. Would you agree that one of the biggest enemies of efficiency is bureaucracy and an inflated public sector and that is what we have to get to grips with? We'll be debating this later on, but even more so, like Boris Johnson is saying, we in Barnet must wave the flag for getting rid of unnecessary bureaucracy and unnecessary wastage.

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

I just answer yes then.

Question 32**Councillor Alison Moore**

When did the Leader become aware that Councillor Harris – a member of his Group until mid-October – was absent without leave, and, given Councillor Harris' disinclination to return to Barnet, will the Leader join me in publicly calling for Councillor Harris to pay back the allowance he has claimed since going abroad?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

8 October at 16.30; the whip was withdrawn at 17.35 and I have already done so.

Supplementary Question 32**Councillor Alison Moore**

Thank you. Can the Leader tell me whether he is also demanding Councillor Harris' resignation so there can be a By-Election so that the people of Golders Green can be properly represented by three sitting Councillors?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

Councillor Harris is considering his position, but of course the two remaining Conservative Councillors will more than make up. But, it is interesting that Councillor Moore seek to exploit this particular issue – will she equally join me in calling for Dr Rudi Vis to return his expenses on buying a house in Sussex on the taxpayer?

Question 33**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Although it may ultimately be a matter for the Highways Agency, would you be able to use our Council's influence to try and raise the ridiculously low 30 mph speed limit at the flyover over Staples Corner?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Responsibility for traffic on the A5 Staples Corner flyover is split between Brent and Barnet councils. Transport for London are responsible for maintaining the structure, but the Highways Agency have no responsibility at all.

We have previously looked into the possibility of increasing the speed limit on the flyover and the approaches to it. The current limit of 30mph is felt to be too low for a high standard dual carriageway where pedestrians are not normally expected to be present, and is used by very few cyclists. The Police have carried out enforcement here in the past which has resulted in many complaints from the public as there is no obvious reason for the limit to be 30mph. The problem is compounded by the fact that as the flyover is a street lit road, the traffic signs regulations prevent the Council from using conventional "30" speed limit reminder signs.

Previous investigations indicated that a high proportion of drivers were travelling at or around 40mph, with a minority travelling at higher speeds. The A406 flyover passing over the top of the A5 flyover is of a similar standard but has a clearly signed 40mph speed limit.

There are concerns that drivers travelling at high speed over the flyover continue to drive at higher speeds on the A5 at either end – either on the approach to West Hendon Broadway, or to the south where there are numerous side turnings and traffic signals.

The proposal considered was to increase the speed limit to 40mph for the length of the flyover and approaches between the two overhead gantry signs, a distance of around 720m. The gantries would provide a convenient location for the required signs and would enable very prominent signs to be used to show that the speed limit was 30mph either side of the flyover. It was felt that this was likely to help improve compliance with the 30mph speed limit either side, whilst allowing drivers to travel at a higher speed where it was safe to do so. The distance of 720m is also exceeded the Department for Transport minimum recommended length for a change of speed limit. This guidance recommends minimum distances so drivers are not subjected to frequent changes in the speed limit as they follow a particular road.

The proposal was not implemented because it would require the agreement of Brent, and approval by Transport for London as the A5 is a Strategic Road. At the time it was felt that neither organisation would agree to the proposal as it would be seen as 'pro-car' and it is difficult to prove that increasing the speed limit would not result in an increase in the number of accidents.

The situation with TfL has changed now, and they might be more receptive to the proposal if it is also supported by Brent. Further work would be necessary to look at the most recent accident data and vehicle speeds to confirm whether the change would be appropriate. It should also be noted that, if approved, the Brent Cross/Cricklewood proposals would result in changes to the road layout on the A5 to the South of the flyover. It would be important to confirm that these proposed changes would not be affected if the speed limit on the flyover were increased to 40mph.

Supplementary Question 33

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Harper, thank you for letting us know that Barnet is playing its part in trying to raise the speed limit at Staples Corner that is really far far too low. In my opinion it should be 50mph, my colleague on my right disagrees with that. Many people easily get to 50mph and it is perfectly safe to do so. However, whether it is 40 or 50, I would like to know whether it is possible to be a bit more assertive about this. Could I ask that we write a letter, or more than write a letter, make a campaign at Barnet Council to increase the speed limit there? People should know about this, as many many members of the public are angry about it, and if we seem to be reacting in that way it would do us a lot of good.

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Well I would be a little bit more interested from Councillor Gordon when the time comes, to see how popular this measure may be. But, I am happy to become a little more assertive on it.

Question 34

Councillor Alison Moore

Will the Cabinet Member listen to local residents in East Finchley and scrap the current CPZ proposals?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Following the review of the East Finchley CPZ and the advisory letter to residents regarding the outcome of the review and proposed actions, the Council has received a significant number of responses expressing concern with our conclusions. Depending on the origin of the correspondence, the concerns are varied but of course we need to ensure that our intentions do meet with the needs of the local community.

It's very helpful to have people express their opinions so clearly at this stage. So, further analysis of the representations we've received will take place and our original conclusions will be revisited before deciding on what to do next.

Supplementary Question 34

Councillor Alison Moore

Thank you Councillor Harper. The original CPZ was introduced nearly 10 years ago following a very effective piece of co-working between residents, traders, Councillors and, indeed, Officers. But, it is worth noting in that context, the scheme that they had originally proposed was heavy handed and we whittled that down to a scheme that would meet the terms of the problems locally and no-more. So, you then proposed significant changes 5 years ago without consultation, it has taken 4½ years of pressing to get a review. We now have a scheme on the table which is pretty heavy handed and therefore I am asking you whether you will join with me and meet local residents and traders to work on an acceptable outcome for all the local community.

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Thank you Mr Mayor, I have just experienced some political opportunism of the worst possible kind here from Councillor Moore and her East Finchley ward colleagues because they were all supportive of the review when it was undertaken. It was undertaken, by the way, within a cycle of reviews of CPZs across the Borough. Indeed, Councillor Moore and Councillor Rogers asked for some specific issues to be taken into account during the course of the review. So, now what has happened is a perfectly normal piece of process - that having listened to all the views one time round, the Council has now produced a set of proposals. They are still being consulted upon, we are still listening to what people say. In matter of fact, I am already in dialogue with the East Finchley traders, and with Mr Loizou particularly, who is representing them and with some of the residents groups. So, that work is already been done and I am perfectly confident at the end of the day we should come up with an equitable solution that will meet both the parking challenges in the area and also allay the concerns of residents and traders.

Question 35

Councillor John Marshall

How many homes in Barnet are worth £1million or more?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Whilst the Council does not hold this information, the total amount of households in band H is 3864 and I would suggest that the majority of these are now worth 1 million or over.

Supplementary Question 35

Councillor John Marshall

I thank Councillor Hillan for her answer. Would she agree with those Liberal Democrat MPs who have said that Vince Cable's proposals to increase the tax on these houses is ill thought out and should be ignored.

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Absolutely, some people may have bought their houses many years ago and of course they were not worth a £1million, and although they may be worth £1million they may be capital rich and cash poor. It is totally unfair tax and they have paid their taxes once, they should not have that increase again.

Question 36

Councillor Geof Cooke

What does the farce over the Brent Cross/Cricklewood planning meeting show about this Administration's competence?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

The Brent Cross Cricklewood application has been deferred (without discussion) from both the 23 September and 20 October Planning and Environment Committee. It will now be heard at a special two evening meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee to be held on 18 and 19 November. This special meeting will be subject to the approval of 3 November Council meeting which will have to approve a change to standing orders in order to allow more than the usual three public speakers to address the Planning and Environment Committee.

These deferrals have been made to allow full consideration of all issues raised in the planning report appraising this important regeneration project and to enable full public participation in this decision.

The deferral from the 23 September Committee was agreed to allow interested parties more time to study the 800 page report submitted to the Planning and Environment Committee and to deal with some further representations received after the main report had gone to print.

The deferral from the 20 October committee was to allow standing orders to be relaxed to allow more than 3 speakers to address the Planning and Environment Committee. This will need to be agreed by the 3 November full council meeting.

I consider that the arrangements now proposed will allow all interests and issues to be given the fullest consideration. I do not consider that altering and extending the normal procedures for public consideration of this important planning application reflects adversely on this Administration's competence.

On the contrary, I believe it demonstrates that we listen to the public and are committed to a full and transparent debate in the public interest. What is farcical about that?

Supplementary Question 36**Councillor Geof Cooke**

The planning application is for a massive development and is well-known. It is highly controversial, and I understand it has been on the agenda for two meetings and the matter has not been taken, people had turned up and they not heard the deliberations. At what point did the penny drop that these arrangements for public participation were woefully inadequate.

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Mr Mayor, I am speechless, how can that man stand there and have the gall to criticise the planning service, when was he not a member of the Administration that brought the planning department to its knees, and had become a standards authority and practically been taken over by Central Government. I won't stand here to take that criticism from him.

Question 37**Councillor Dean Cohen**

What measures are being taken to ensure Barnet Council is paying its local suppliers promptly?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Barnet Council has always striven to pay all businesses within 30 days and to reinforce this commitment has recently signed up to the Prompt Payment Code. This commits the Council to paying suppliers within 30 days, with independent checks being made at regular intervals with our suppliers by the Institute of Credit Management (ICM) to ensure that this standard is maintained.

Additional measures have also been taken by this authority to stimulate the local economy and increase the cash flow of local businesses. This is being addressed by improving payment terms for local traders, which were reduced in February from 30 days to 10 days. In the last quarter 9 out of 10 invoices submitted from local traders were processed and paid within 10 days.

Question 38

Councillor Ross Houston

Has the Council agreed final affordable housing targets with the Mayor of London yet, and if not, when does he think this will happen? And when will they be published?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Borough has indicated to the GLA that it would be prepared to agree to an affordable housing delivery target in line with the LAA target of 2267 affordable units by 2010/11, subject to receipt of significant HCA Kick Start funding.

Round 1 Kick Start funding has now been formally agreed for Stonegrove/Spur Road but bids for West Hendon and Grahame Park were unsuccessful. The Council has subsequently submitted an application for Kick Start 2 funding for West Hendon and is expecting a decision by December.

Given the continuing uncertainty on the availability of external funding to support delivery the Council will not be in a position able to formally agree our affordable housing target until the end of 2009 at the earliest.

Supplementary Question 38

Councillor Ross Houston

I thank the Cabinet Member for his answer which at long last has admitted this Administration can not even agree an affordable housing target with their own Tory Mayor. Will we even agree the Mayor's target for the halfway point in this term?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

That is a matter that is yet to be decided.

Question 39

Councillor Anne Hutton

What are the problems with using the swimming pool at Whittings Hill School and how and when will they be solved?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

The day to day use and management of the new swimming pool at Whittings Hill School are a matter for the Head Teacher and the Governing body. I understand that an approach to the use of the pool was agreed at a recent governing body meeting.

Supplementary Question 39

Councillor Anne Hutton

Thank you Mr Mayor, and thank you for your reply. As I understand it there are possible proposals for the public to use this particular swimming pool. Perhaps, that can be confirmed or denied. And, if that is the case, as I understand it, there is a problem with the type of glass that has been put in that causes a shadow across the pool and has a possible implication for health and safety in that the swimming instructors or the life guards cannot actually see people in the pool. I don't know whether you can enlighten me on that?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

It is a magnificent pool and certainly there are plans to get the public and members of the community to use the excellent new facilities at the school.

I'm sure any particular issues surrounding the building are being dealt with by the building team and as I said the Governing Body I believe have discussed some of the other issues and they'll be being addressed and I am sure the community and the school will continue to enjoy this wonderful new facility provided by a Conservative Administration.

Question 40

Councillor Barry Rawlings

How successful is the new South Friern Library with regard to new members, usage, etc?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The Conservative Council has invested £1.24m in a programme to modernise and improve Libraries across Barnet. As part of this programme, South Friern library has been completely rebuilt, opening its doors to the public on 15 September 2009, and with a formal opening by the Mayor of Barnet, which was held on 23 October. The new library has some excellent features, including customer self-service terminals, WiFi throughout the building, modern community rooms, and provides excellent services to a wide range of customers.

The library has proved very popular with local residents, as over 1,000 new members have signed up to use the new library. In addition, over 200 'lapsed' borrowers who have not used a library for a number of years have also rejoined the library. South Friern is averaging almost 1,000 customer visits per week, though we do anticipate further growth over coming months.

Supplementary Question 40

Councillor Barry Rawlings

I would like to thank Councillor Rams for his answer, which comes as no surprise. Could he perhaps enlighten us as to why he thinks the previous Conservative Administration were so determined to close it given that the obvious demand is there from local people?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

This is a wonderful new library paid for by a Conservative Council. Over a thousand people have already re-used the library so far. We have no plans to close it and we hope it goes from strength to strength.

Question 41

Councillor Barry Rawlings

After almost 8 years in power why does the majority of Friern Village still have unadopted roads and can the Cabinet Member explain why his Administration has failed to get this sorted out?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

On Friern Village Development, the Council is not able to progress road adoption agreements because the developer has not negotiated a sewer adoption agreement with Thames Water Utilities Ltd (TWUL) for the adoption of sewers on this estate. The adoption of sewers are a prerequisite condition to progress road adoption on any development.

Barratt North London (BNL) being the Consortium leader for the whole development is currently negotiating with TWUL for the maintenance arrangements of the balancing pond within the development at the bottom of Kettlewell Close. Once this is agreed, progress will be made by BNL to get all the sewers adopted on Phases 1 and 2 of this development.

The Council will progress road adoption agreement with BNL soon after the sewer adoption agreements have been concluded.

Question 42**Councillor Anne Hutton**

Does the Cabinet Member believe the outreach workers in Children Centres are doing a good job?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

The children's service is currently undertaking a review of all aspects of Children's Centres, including the outreach team, to ensure that all their work is effective and is reaching families in need. Once that review is complete it will be possible to make a judgement on the work being carried out by the outreach team.

Supplementary Question 42**Councillor Anne Hutton**

Again thank you for your reply. Do you have a date for when this piece of work will be completed, and are there any proposals to restore funding to that?

Answer by Councillor Fiona Bulmer

The review will be completed during this autumn and any proposals that emerge from that will be reported in the usual way.

Question 43**Councillor Geof Cooke**

When does the Cabinet Member expect to bring invoicing up-to-date for meals on wheels and home care?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Current client billing for meals is up to date and bills have been sent out covering the period up to 27 September 2009.

In relation to billing for homecare, we expect invoicing to be up to date in three weeks' time. This means that all homecare providers will be an average of six weeks in arrears.

Supplementary Question 43**Councillor Geof Cooke**

The Audit Committee was told that one of the reasons why the invoicing for meals at home had been so much delayed was specifically for getting data out of Enfield Council. And, the delay has been something in the order of two years bringing it up to the date it is now. My question is have you or your predecessor interceded with Enfield Council, under the same political control as this one, in order to resolve the difficulties?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The situation has now been remedied so there is no need to speak to Enfield Council. If there were any issues with Enfield Council we would do so.

Question 44**Councillor Geof Cooke**

When will all risks identified by Audit for Housing Revenue Account monitoring be fully mitigated?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Planning, Housing and Regeneration Service has completed the actions agreed in the Audit. This will be subject to a follow up Audit, which will, itself be completed by the end of December 2009.

One of the actions was about ensuring that there were robust arrangements for recovering cost associated with the regeneration schemes from regeneration partners. Detailed time sheets are being completed with notification of costs collated monthly and with 3 monthly invoicing to partners.

Supplementary Question 44**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Well again this again is an audit problem that has been brought to the Audit Committee and the question is – why has it taken so long to resolve and what action has the present or previous lead Member taken to get it resolved more quickly?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Obviously, we have taken corrective action in that it has been brought to a satisfactory situation and the action taken has taken a long time, but these were difficult things to put right.

Question 45**Councillor Alison Moore**

Could the Leader tell Council what, in the context of Ryanair Barnet, he believes constitutes a core or basic service?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

There is no such thing as ‘Ryanair Barnet’ and so the question is irrelevant.

Question 46**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

What are the PwC costs to date on the Future Shape programme?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Total costs to date are £195,138.

Question 47**Councillor Ross Houston**

According to Caroline Spellman Tory councils should delay housing projects until any Conservative government is elected – does the Leader and/or Cabinet Member agree with this proposal? Did the Leader receive a copy of this letter, and if so how did he respond to Ms Spellman?

Answer by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of the Council

The letter from Caroline Spelman sent to Conservative councillors makes no such assertion. It outlines how a Conservative administration, if elected, would dismantle the regional planning process in England outside London, and let local authorities decide the right level of development for their area. Many of the Regional Spatial Strategies are seeking to delete Green Belt protection contrary to the views of local people and local councils. Labour and the LibDems remain ambivalent to protecting the green belt, where we will continue to robustly defend the green belt from housing development.

It is wrong that councils are forced into pushing forward with unsustainable development that will increase carbon emissions and congestion.

Under Labour, the regional planning process is currently in disarray – with a succession of successful legal challenges against the flawed process. Even the Government has no confidence in the regional planning process – given its plans to create new Integrated Regional Plans to replace the Regional Spatial Strategies.

London has a different constitutional settlement to the rest of England, as a consequence of the 1998 GLA referendum.

Question 48**Councillor Jim Tierney**

Has the Cabinet Member looked into the Hillingdon proposals to bring their ALMO back in-house in order to analyse whether this might be an option for Barnet Homes, and if so when will such a proposal come before Cabinet for a decision?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

We are aware of the decisions taken about ALMOs both by Hillingdon and Ealing Councils. The Council has no plans to bring Barnet Homes back in-house as it is satisfied with the progress in delivering the Decent Homes programme and with most areas of service supplied by Barnet Homes.

Question 49**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

What is the policy for trimming or pruning trees around Barnet when trees are overgrown or grow wild?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

We have a cyclical pruning programme which means that all street trees are inspected proactively and works identified every three years. This stems directly from a Policy document from 1995, Management of Street Trees in Close Proximity to Buildings. Essentially this document addresses our subsidence risk as a Borough but has the side benefit of ensuring our trees are also inspected for safety and any general issues that may be causing with neighbouring properties.

We also respond to over 2000 resident requests regarding trees and if they are found to be in a condition that warrants extra expenditure above the cyclical programme, the Tree Officer will authorise this.

Trees in parks are inspected annually, primarily for safety reasons, and we have a different approach to trees in these situations and carry out minimal works to parks trees.

Question 50**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

What scope is there within the street lighting contract to address street lighting in areas where community safety, security or health and safety issues emerge or where there is new building?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Any roads or areas having street lighting replaced by the PFI contract are or will be lit to modern standards which provide a good level of lighting. This represents an improvement on the existing levels. Areas of existing poor lighting are to be addressed in the first five years of the contract. Although the PFI contract is geared to replace the majority of the existing stock, we have provision within the contract to accommodate new developments and carry out additional works. Both of these activities are not and could not be budgeted for and would incur an additional cost.

Question 51**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

What are the conditions or policies in Barnet Council for providing support accommodation for residents with mental health difficulties when it comes to discharging them into the community?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

People are assessed by multi-disciplinary teams in hospital, prior to discharge according to the Care Plan Approach policy (CPA). The approach requires that health and social services assess need, provide a written care plan, allocate a care coordinator, and then regularly review the plan.

Should social care needs be identified, these will be assessed under the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990. Services are tailored to the individual needs of each person with both users and carers closely involved in deciding what they need.

Question 52

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

What has been done in the space of recession for traders and businesses in Barnet especially in deprived areas or wards and what measures have been taken by Barnet council to assist small traders/businesses?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Cabinet received a report on 20 October outlining the support to small and medium enterprises. It highlighted the following initiatives.

Supporting town centres – the Council has analysed the impact that the recession has had on businesses in the town centres and a number of targeted actions to support town centres have been proposed, such as piloting parking initiatives that will boost visitor numbers and working with local traders to support them in setting up initiatives to attract people into town centres. A report is being submitted to a future Cabinet meeting.

‘Leader listens’ with business – The Leader of the Council has been running a series of ‘Leader Listens’ events with local businesses across Barnet. These events aim to engage with the local community and gain a more fine grained understanding of their needs and concerns during the recession. Members of the council’s corporate procurement team were also there to offer advice to businesses on how to do business with the Council.

Business Support officer – The Council created a new post of ‘Business Support Officer, whose role is funded by s106 monies in order to strengthen dialogue with local businesses in the borough. This post will help the Council to:

- understand more about the experience of local businesses in the current economic climate;
- support local SMEs and enable them to be more aware of, and bid for, contracts from local developers;
- act as a conduit for support and advice;
- understand the skills needs of local businesses;
- encourage links between business and education – support contractors in the preparation and implementation of their Local Procurement Strategy documents (as per below) which will act as a frame of reference for the resulting partnership between the Council, developers and local businesses.

Section 106 – Cabinet on 2 September agreed an interim guidance note formalising how the Council will support development through the recession. This includes the requirement that any developer receiving flexible arrangements over the S106 contributions will need to submit a Local Procurement Strategy, which will be reviewed by the Business Support Officer, to support its implementation.

Prompt payments to businesses– The Council has signed up to the Government’s Prompt Payment Code (PPC). This demonstrates to our suppliers that we are serious about treating them fairly and paying them on time as it requires us to:

- Pay suppliers on time within the agreed terms;
- Give clear guidance to suppliers on payment procedures and ensuring that there is a system for dealing with complaints and disputes;

- Encourage good practice by encouraging our lead suppliers to adopt the code throughout their supply chains.

Business rate relief – The Council has sent targeted advice and information to those businesses in the Borough that are entitled to Small Business Rate Relief. As well as actively encouraging the take-up of rate relief, the Council has been providing help to struggling local businesses to arrange payment plans. Traders can make payments over 12 months instead of the usual ten. In addition if people are struggling with paying rents on commercial tenancies in council properties payment terms are being negotiated.

Reduction of street parking charges – Over the Christmas period the Council reduced on and off street pay and display charges to as low as 10 pence per hour to £1 per day for a two week period. The move was an attempt to increase the usage of parking spaces, generating increased footfall in town centres and provide a boost to retail trading and the local economy over the Christmas period. Analysis showed that short term parking increased significantly with some car parks showing a 35 per cent increase in their occupancy rate.