

**Council Questions to Cabinet Members  
26 January 2009  
Questions and Responses**

**Question 1**

**Councillor Jack Cohen**

What has been the cost so far to the Council of defending the Judicial Review of the decision to scrap the Sheltered Housing Wardens?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council**

The additional legal costs incurred by the Council through defending the Judicial Review have totalled £23,000. This represents 5% of the planned efficiency saving for one year.

**Question 2**

**Councillor Dean Cohen**

Can the Cabinet Member inform us what action was taken to keep Barnet moving during the coldest weather in a generation?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

The Council has a formal winter maintenance programme which ensures that the boroughs principal roads, footways and town centres remain clear and free flowing during winter months. The Council's normal procedures for dealing with severe weather conditions such as snow and ice are to grit Priority 1 roads – i.e. major roads and transport hubs across the Borough.

The Council's Priority 1 roads cover a length of approximately 238 kms or 35% of the Council's whole road network. Priority 1 roads are normally gritted when there is frost or snow expected. If the snow is persistent and after the Priority 1 roads have been cleared, the Council may go onto the side roads and pavements (Priority 2 or 3), as necessary. The Council has provided approximately 320 grit bins on the side roads across the Borough, which residents can use to assist themselves and their neighbours.

The Council had been prepared for severe weather, and had stockpiled more salt. As of the week commencing 29 November 2009, the Council's salt barn was at full capacity (2,014 tonnes). This enabled the Council to cope with the snowfall and icy conditions that affected the Borough during December.

Nevertheless, the longest cold snap for 30 years has understandably had a severe impact on salt levels. This has not been helped by the gas outage in East Barnet during December, which absorbed significant resources. Additionally, all side roads in the affected area and their pavements had to be gritted to ensure a safe working environment for the utility companies.

The use of grit this season began during the week ending 6 December. Since then we have used in excess of 2,300 tonnes of salt to treat the road network and the footways of Town Centres and other strategic locations. Some of this salt was spread in order to keep the Council's Refuse Collection service during the week before Christmas and to deal with the emergency conditions created by the gas outage in East Barnet. As of 15 January, the Council has received some 700 tonnes of salt against a total order in excess of 3,000 tonnes. Of the salt orders placed with the Council's supplier during the period 17 December 2009 – 15 January 2010, the majority is therefore still outstanding. This has meant that the Council has had to rely on already depleted supplies and during the week ending on 10 January the salt stock fell to below 100 tonnes.

While the Council has been proactively searching for solutions and dealing with the current situation as effectively as it can, the grit supply is largely out of the Council's control, with the Government responsible for determining who gets further salt supplies. This was done via the established national "Salt Cell" and regionally the London Salt Cell which has been working together with TfL and the London Local Authority Coordination Centre.

During the recent weather all London Councils and Local Authorities have been asked to adopt a reduced or resilient Network in order to save grit. The Council decided to adopt its resilient network on 7 January, a day earlier than the advice that came from London Councils. The Resilient Network adopted by Barnet is estimated at approximately 135 km which is just over half of the Priority 1 network or 20% of the road network. In some cases the Council had to grit roads additional to the Resilient Network following requests from Emergency Services.

Costs are being reported in the CRC report, obviously winter conditions will continue until March.

### **Question 3**

### **Councillor Alison Moore**

What is the latest guidance on apportioning impairments arising from lost deposits in Icelandic Banks, and what contingency is being set aside by the Leader for the £10 million+ losses that are likely to arise from the incompetent deposits that were made under the Leadership of her predecessor?

### **Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council**

Based on information issued from CIPFA in May 2009 (LAAP 82), an impairment adjustment of £4.3m was made in the 2008/09 accounts (without the need to defer the cost to future years under government regulations).

Legal advice from Bevan Brittan, solicitors acting for the Local authority creditors and being co-ordinated through the LGA, stated that they expected all local authority's creditor claims in Icelandic Banks would have preferential creditor status in accordance with Icelandic law.

Following submission of formal claims to the Landsbanki Winding Up Board (WUB) on 30 October, the Landsbanki WUB confirmed it had accepted all local authority claims as having priority status.

On 10 December, the Local Government Association (LGA) advised that the Glitnir Winding Up Board (WUB) had notified Bevan Brittan that all local authority claims had been accepted as general unsecured claims, rather than priority claims.

This decision runs contrary to the decision of the Landsbanki Winding Up Board (WUB) and contradicts Bevan Brittan's legal advice that local authority deposits have priority status under Icelandic law, notwithstanding that any such decision would be subject to challenge by other non-priority creditors. Bevan Brittan, are already challenging the Glitnir WUB decision.

The difference in terms of overall recoveries by the local authority creditors from Glitnir is 100% in the event of priority status being secured or around 25-30% if they are deemed to be general unsecured creditors. There is no impact on recovery from Landsbanki, where it remains the case that Councils expect to recover 83% of their deposits.

The LGA and Bevan Brittan believe that the Glitnir WUB's reasoning is unsound and that the decision will eventually be reversed, either by agreement or thorough litigation. The LGA and Bevan Brittan are in continuing dialogue with the Glitnir Winding Up Board (WUB) about the reasons for their decision and potential grounds for appeal.

Bevan Brittan actively challenged the decision of the Glitnir WUB prior to the Creditor's meeting on 17 December 2009, but, it was not possible to reach an agreement. They will now challenge the decision via a mediation process to take place early in 2010. In the event that the mediation is unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the Icelandic courts.

As a precaution, officers submitted a 2009/10 capitalisation request to Central Government on 15 December 2009. This was for the sum of £10.36m using the revised impairment calculator provided by CIPFA. The impairment calculator stipulated that a recovery rate of 83% be used for Landsbanki deposits. Central Government expect to announce their decision on whether to grant the Council's request on 29 January 2010.

At present there is too much uncertainty for any firm indication to be made of the likely monies being returned to authorities or the timing of repayment. As such there are no further impairment figures proposed for 2009/10 or the 2010/11 budget pending further details and clarification from the lead parties involved.

#### **Question 4**

#### **Councillor Jack Cohen**

In the light of High Court Decision will you confirm that you will not proceed with plans to scrap Sheltered Housing Wardens?

#### **Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council**

The High Court judgment referred to the manner in which the decision was taken and not the proposed changes to the sheltered housing which if implemented would provide a service based on need rather than tenure which I believe is the right way to target support to older people in Barnet. Cabinet will be receiving and considering a report setting out the details of the judgment at the next Cabinet meeting on 3 February 2010 which will inform next steps.

#### **Question 5**

#### **Councillor Tom Davey**

Will the Cabinet Member join me in praising the staff of Barnet's libraries, who ensured that the libraries were open during the freezing weather?

#### **Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

The Libraries, Museums and Local Studies service maintained an excellent service during the recent period of snow and freezing weather. Despite reduced staffing levels and difficult transport links, all branch libraries opened each day during the period of adverse weather, opening sites all week and over the weekend. Evening openings were suspended for a small number of sites on three evenings, and the mobile library patterns were inevitably disrupted during this time and we thank our users for their patience and support over this time.

I congratulate the Libraries team who have worked very hard to keep our services open in difficult circumstances, to keep providing an excellent service to our residents, and for making excellent efforts to get to work and co-ordinate the opening of our services.

#### **Question 6**

#### **Councillor Julie Johnson**

What has happened to the Council's review of domestic violence, and what were the findings?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

The findings of the review of Domestic Violence are:

- Conduct a commissioning exercise:
  - Needs analysis;
  - Gap analysis;
  - Identify commissioning options within budgets available; and
  - Implement preferred option.
- Produce a new Domestic Violence strategy incorporating and balancing the following approaches:
  - Prevention;
  - Provision; and
  - Protection.

With a greater focus on prevention.

- Review and implement revised governance arrangements; and
- Review and implement a revised performance management structure.

**Question 7****Councillor Jack Cohen**

Will you provide the latest information regarding the Council's Deposits in the Icelandic Banks?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council**

See answer to Question 3 above.

**Question 8****Councillor Darrel Yawitch**

How has the Council coped with the level of calls received during the recent period of heavy snow and ice?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Webb**

The very significant increase in calls to the Council during this period has put a lot of pressure on our street based services contact centre. A normal week in December would see around 1,500 telephone calls to this contact centre. In the week of 18-24 December the centre took over 4,000 calls. This high volume of calls has continued through the New Year weather problems.

That the Council has continued to provide good telephone service during this period is down to two factors: astute management and utilisation of staff from a number of customer service functions, ensuring we have the right people in the right place at the right time; and admirable staff commitment – for example, working through the weekend of 9 and 10 January to ensure residents had the information they needed and to reduce pressure on the emergency out of hours service.

Inevitably, this huge volume of calls has impacted on the contact centre's ability to answer every call as promptly as we would wish. However, it is testament to staff that despite this difficult period they have actually improved the contact centre's quarter on quarter performance on the time it takes to answer calls.

**Question 9****Councillor Julie Johnson**

What organisations work with schools in Barnet to raise awareness of domestic violence?

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

In Barnet, there are three organisations, the Council, Jewish Women's Aid (JWA) and the Tender Project who are working with schools in the borough to raise awareness of domestic violence. Details of what they do are set out below.

#### LB Barnet

Barnet's Safeguarding Children Board engages with schools through provision of a comprehensive safeguarding programme that incorporates messages regarding domestic violence as a safeguarding concern for children. This is also included in whole school INSET sessions on child protection and safeguarding.

All schools are encouraged to have safeguarding training and the designated safeguarding person in schools is encouraged to attend the safeguarding training provided in Barnet. The local Safeguarding Children Board also host meetings every term for head teachers and designated safeguarding staff in education, which provide an opportunity for dialogue with social care managers to raise any issues of concern including Domestic Violence.

#### Jewish Women's Aid (JWA)

JWA have employed a part time Education Co-ordinator (16 hours per week), funded partly by London Councils and partly through general donations.

Using trained volunteers, JWA run programmes for 12 to 17 year olds in Jewish schools and Jewish children in mainstream schools, many of which are in Barnet. These programmes focus on educating young people about positive and healthy relationships. JWA believe that this is a vital part of the strategic prevention of domestic violence in the upcoming generation.

The sessions are designed to be interactive, informative and, where possible, fun. Different media are used to engage the young people in debate about issues that affect their current peer and intimate relationships, as well as preparing them for adulthood. JWA have learnt from best practice in domestic violence education from Women's Aid, Jewish Women International (a US-based organisation) and colleagues in other London boroughs, like Hounslow, who have been commended for the excellence of their work.

Much of the work undertaken in Jewish schools is as part of a consortium of Jewish charities. This 'Lifeskills' group consists of JWA, Streetwise, Drugsline and JAT.

#### **Activity:**

	<b>2009-10 (Q1&amp;Q2)</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Number of children reached in education programmes	Approx 1,100	2495	Data not collected

In a survey done as part of the routine monitoring for London Councils, 63% of pupils reached over a nine-month period were from the LB Barnet.

#### The Tender Project

Since 2005, the Tender Project have delivered a 12 week education programme to the schools - see chart below:

### Barnet School Participating in the Tender Project 2005-2009

School	Type of class	Year	No. participated in workshops	No. who saw performances	No. who received resources	Total
East Barnet Secondary School		10	12	60		72
Hendon School	Drama	10+ 11	96	309	410	815
Northgate Hospital School		9+	30		100	130
Pavilion PRU	PSHE	10	25	8	40	73
Dollis Valley	Youth Group		11	34	85	130
Copthall School	Drama	11	18	180	100	298
Queen Elizabeth School for Girls	Citizenship	10	24	150	100	274
<b>Total</b>			216	741	835	1792

Tender promote healthy relationships based on equality and respect and have pioneered preventative education programmes in domestic abuse and sexual violence using drama and arts to engage and empower young people. Working with specialist creative workshop leaders, young people develop performance, films, plays, exhibitions, campaigns and resources to raise awareness and actively prevent domestic and sexual violence amongst young people and their wider communities.

The education programme enables young people to explore the early warning signs of abuse, the range of emotional and physical abuse, excuses of the perpetrator and the difficulties in leaving abusive relationships, all underpinned by the latest research and statistics on the issue.

Hendon School was featured in the BBC3 documentary *Dangerous Love* in March 2009.

In 2009, Tender were independently evaluated by CRG Research Ltd and found that:

- 89% enjoyed learning about domestic abuse;
- 90% understood more about the issues of healthy relationships and abuse; and
- 81% recognised that abusers abuse to gain power over their partner.

### Question 10

### Councillor Jack Cohen

How many residents visited the Budget Simulator on the Council's Website and what the result of their input was?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council**

- To date (7 January 2010) a total of 430 residents have accessed the consultation online tool
- Just over half of the respondents did not complete or change the budgets for the service areas
- The service areas where residents wanted to reduce budgets the *most* were:
  - Democratic Services;
  - Council website;
  - Planning;
  - Mobile CCTV unit; and
  - Planning, Housing and Regeneration Directorate.

The service areas where residents wanted to reduce budgets the *least* were:

- Support for vulnerable children;
- Day services for disabled adults;
- Support for vulnerable families;
- Recycling and refuse collections; and
- Highways and pavements.

The detailed analysis is currently being worked on and will be placed on the Budget page of the Council's website in due course.

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

Can we have an update on how services are being used at the newly refurbished Burnt Oak Library, with particular reference to the Citizens Advice Bureau service incorporated there?

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

Since the opening of Burnt Oak Library and Customer Service Centre in October 2008, over 68,000 customers have visited the centre, with numbers growing by 43% over a year.

The number of payments taken has increased by 82%, steadily growing month by month with an average of 802 payments being taken every month.

The Citizens Advice Bureau has had a presence in the new centre since it opened. Its surgery takes place weekly on a Thursday and is consistently fully booked, receiving 279 visitors in the past 14 months. The surgery also operates a waiting list and as such cancellations can be filled quickly.

Job Centre Plus has been based at the centre since early November 2009 and to date has carried out 307 Parent/Parents work focussed interviews.

Her Majesty Revenue and Customs has also been based at Burnt Oak centre since early November 2009 and to date has carried out 1,035 face to face interviews with a further 374 customers referred to the self-service telephone located on site.

Based on visitor figures across the year, Burnt Oak library is projecting to have over 100,000 visits to the library in 2009/10, an increase of 10,000 visits from 2007/08.

**Question 12****Councillor Julie Johnson**

What is being done by the Council to help meet the different performance targets set to reduce domestic violence?

**Answer by Councillor Matthew Offord**

The integrated approach to tackling Domestic Violence is recommended as supporting victims across the three key areas of *Protection, Provision and Prevention*.

**Protection** – delivering an effective criminal justice system:

Investigation; prosecution; victim support and protection; perpetrator programmes.

**Provision** – helping women and girls to continue with their lives:

Effective provision of services, advice and support; emergency and acute services; refuges and safe accommodation.

**Prevention** – changing attitudes and preventing violence:

Awareness raising campaigns; safeguarding and educating children and young people; early identification/intervention and training.

**Question 13****Councillor Jack Cohen**

Will you provide six examples of how your leadership will differ from that of Councillor Freer?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council**

Councillor Freer and myself are strong supporters of the Conservative Party principles and, as such, do not differ as far as policy is concerned. We believe in:

- ❖ Efficient and effective local Government that is answerable to the residents of Barnet;
- ❖ Protecting, enhancing and growing our Borough to the benefit of Barnet people;
- ❖ Embracing and supporting our small business culture, particularly through the recession;
- ❖ Supporting our elderly and people with disabilities into independent living;
- ❖ Creating an environment to encourage the building of attractive properties that our residents want and need; and
- ❖ Providing first class services at the best possible value for our taxpayers.

If there are any differences in style, it could be due to the feminine touch!

**Question 14****Councillor Brian Gordon**

Could we have some feedback on the free parking arrangements at Council car parks and pay and display sites that operated between 7th December and 3rd January?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

During the operation on street parking and the use of car parks was monitored by Civil Enforcement Officers. Changes in parking revenue were monitored throughout and the Council's communications team are issuing a questionnaire to businesses across the Borough. A report will be prepared bringing together all of this information over the next few weeks.

**Question 15****Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Are the rumours true that the Council will be twinning with Reykjavik?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council**

No.

**Question 16****Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Will the Leader confirm the current provision set aside for the financial impairment (loss) on Icelandic deposits and confirm the position for the next financial year?



**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council**

See answer to Question 3 above.

**Question 17**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

In view of new regulations to co-ordinate and streamline the digging up of roads by utility companies, has there be any noticeable improvement on this within Barnet?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

The Traffic Management Act 2004 made provision for the introduction of permit schemes to control the operation of Utilities and other companies working on the highway. Since then many Highway Authorities have been working to establish such schemes.

Following application to the Secretary of State for Transport approval was given for Barnet Council, in partnership with 17 other London councils and Transport for London (TfL), to operate the London Permit Scheme (LoPS). The aim of the scheme is to enable the Boroughs to plan and better coordinate the timing of when roadworks take place.

As the scheme only came into operation on 11 January 2010, there will be a period of settling in and overlap with the previous process so it will take some time before the benefits can be identified.

It should be noted that the scheme will not restrict Utilities carrying out emergency works to repair faults such as burst mains and to restore lost services.

**Question 18**

**Councillor Ross Houston**

Has the Council agreed affordable housing targets with the Mayor of London, if so what are they, and if not, why not?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

The affordable housing target has not been finalised with the Mayor of London. Until funding is agreed nobody is in a position to know what is possible.

**Question 19**

**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Will the Cabinet Member confirm the date of closure of the pedestrian crossing in Mill Hill Broadway (the one located outside Boots and Iceland); why it was closed and when it will re-open?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

The works at the pelican crossing started at the beginning of December as planned work relating to modernisation of the signal equipment which had reached the end of its serviceable life, and is being carried out by Transport for London. The works were due to be completed by mid January although this may be delayed due to the adverse weather conditions recently experienced. Whilst such works are normally completed within a week or two, TfL have confirmed that a problem with the signal controller has resulted in the work taking longer than would normally be expected.

**Question 20**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Is it possible to improve upon acoustics at Planning meetings, as members of the public still sometimes complain that they cannot hear what is being said by Committee Members around the table.

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Webb**

Thank you for raising this matter. As a result, the Head of Facilities at Hendon Town Hall is working with technicians to see whether acoustics at meetings can be improved so that the public can follow proceedings more easily.

**Question 21**

**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

What are the current Town Keeper arrangements for Burnt Oak?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

Burnt Oak has one Town Keeper and one full time assistant who work Monday to Friday between 07.00 and 15.00, it is also manned by our late shift sweeper from 14.00 to 22.00. During weekends and bank holidays the town centre is covered by the Town Keeper or his assistant.

**Question 22**

**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm that The Rise in Mill Hill was not gritted in the recent cold weather? Why was this road not gritted when a vehicle skidding out of this road onto the A1/A41 could cause a major accident?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

As described in question 2, all roads in the Borough are prioritised for treatment and this is further adjusted by the requirements detailed in the answer to question 25. There will be a review of winter maintenance operations which will include a review of the priorities. The issue of joining roads has been highlighted and will be specifically considered as part of the review.

**Question 23**

**Councillor Kate Salinger**

Rumours are being spread around Coppetts Ward that Friern Barnet Library is being threatened with closure. Will the Cabinet Member please assure me that this is not the case?

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

The proposed 2010 – 2011 budget headlines considered by Cabinet do not include any savings from Friern Barnet library nor impact on the operating hours of Friern Barnet library. You can tell your constituents that the closure of Friern Barnet is not being considered.

**Question 24**

**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

What is the Council's budget for gritting and winter maintenance each year since 2006, and what will it be in 2010/11?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

The Council's budgets since 2006 are:

2005-06	£570K
2006-07	£480K
2007-08	£435K
2008-09	£600K

The cost for the current year 2009-10 is not known but is currently estimated in excess of £600K, which is more than the 2009/10 winter maintenance budget of £470,770. To date, half way through the winter maintenance season, the variable cost (cost of salt and gritting runs) is estimated to be approximately £250K, which is higher than the whole of the previous year.

As a result of the unprecedented weather, significant additional expenses incurred to date include, for example:

*Street Scene*

- Over time costs for green waste collections – Double refuse and green waste weekday collections have now been completed.
- Overtime costs for Town Centre gritting.

*Parking*

- Loss of income since the snowfall on 6 January. Parking restrictions have not been enforced given the conditions.

There will be further potential costs for E&O, Planning, Housing and Regeneration, and Corporate Services due to burst pipes, potholes and reactive maintenance and costs will increase if the bad weather continues. For E&O, while a certain level of allowance is made within maintenance budgets for ad hoc winter repairs, the duration of the cold weather and the amount of salt applied is likely to exacerbate defects which otherwise would not have required intervention. The cost of this is still being evaluated as the extent of the problem becomes apparent.

**Question 25**

**Councillor Jeremy Davies**

Will the Cabinet Member please update Members on the Council's priority regarding gritting of non-major roads and any risk assessment?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

During the recent weather all London Councils and Local Authorities have been asked to adopt a reduced or resilient Network in order to save grit. The Council decided to adopt its resilient network on 7 January, a day earlier than the advice that came from London Councils. The Resilient Network adopted by Barnet is estimated at approximately 135 km which is just over half of the Priority 1 network or 20% of the road network. In some cases the Council had to grit roads additional to the Resilient Network following requests from Emergency Services and to grit roads with water main bursts.

A risk assessment was undertaken of all of our priority 1 routes and those that were identified as high risk were added to the resilient network. The risk assessment included consideration of factors such as steep inclines, seepage routes (water run-off from fields) and major bus routes.

Initially the Resilient network comprised of the core or strategic transport routes which included the roads providing access to the emergency services, bus stations and rail and underground stations. Further priority 1 routes were added during the week ending on Friday 16 January which considered comments received from London Buses.

**Question 26**

**Councillor John Marshall**

Can the Cabinet Member explain what challenges the Council faces in collecting recyclable waste?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

The Council faces a range of challenges in collecting recyclable waste, which include:

- Challenging national targets to recycle 40% of household waste in 2010, 50% in 2020, and potentially more ambitious targets for Barnet as a member of the North London Waste Authority. Barnet's household recycling rate for 2008/9 was 31.18%, against a target of 35%. Barnet households disposed of an average of 732 kgs of waste, against a target of 690 kgs.
- Rising landfill tax costs, which are currently at £40 per tonne but are rising by £8 per tonne each year, creating pressure on Council resources.
- Engaging residents in making full use of existing and future services, and in reducing their waste. With existing services, it is already possible for Barnet residents to recycle or compost 72% of their household waste.

In response to these challenges the council has taken a number of actions:

- A new recycling contract with May Gurney (from October 2008) that has enabled the range of materials collected from houses, flats and schools to be expanded to include:
  - plastic bottles
  - cardboard
  - tetra paks (eg. fruit and milk cartons).

Since the start of the new contract, more than 2,319 tonnes of plastic bottles and 949 tonnes of cardboard have been collected for recycling. Tetra paks have been collected from 14 December 2009. There have been reductions in tonnages of paper and glass presented by residents, which we believe is due to the recession. In Barnet this is partly offset by the fact we have been collecting plastic bottles and cardboard as part of the new contract. All the new materials will be recycled in the UK, and the quality of material being collected is high, and thus helps to maximise the income from the sale of materials. 73% of residents stated they are satisfied with the kerbside service in 2008/9 compared with 68% in 2006/7.

- At the Civic Amenity and Recycling Centre in Summers Lane N12, the proportion of waste diverted for recycling, reuse or composting at the site has risen to 60.4%, against a target of 50%. This is partly due to the collection of MDF and plasterboard, which began during the new contract.
- Flats recycling facilities continue to be rolled out, including additional containers for plastic bottles and cardboard/tetra paks. During the first year of the contract the number of flats sites in the borough with recycling facilities rose to 832 sites. 106 additional frames of wheeled recycling bins were installed, including 57 at Barnet Homes sites during the first year, enabling residents to recycle a wider range of materials.

- A Waste Action Plan is being developed to take forward opportunities to expand the services available to residents, and to engage residents more effectively in making full use of the services already available to them. This will include improved use of intelligence and more effective targeting of communications with residents.

**Question 27**

**Councillor Kathy McGuirk**

Is the Council aware of the surge in the number of people who have injured themselves by falling on ice on Barnet roads or pavements?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

We have recorded 8 slipping on ice claims for the period 1 December 2009 – 18 January 2010 which is an increase of 5 claims from the same period last year.

I am waiting for further information from the local NHS.

**Question 28**

**Councillor Joanna Tambourides**

What action was taken to care for the vulnerable affect when gas supplies were interrupted in East Barnet?

**Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput**

Further to the relevant gas supply issues in East Barnet to which the question relates, adult social services played a significant role in relation to caring for vulnerable persons and worked closely with the Council's incident controller. A coordinated effort ensured that vulnerable persons were identified using a variety of sources. The said vulnerable persons were contacted in person or by telephone and contact was maintained throughout the situation to ensure that those in need of additional support were provided the same. This included but was not limited to providing home meals, additional homecare hours and extra heaters.

When the rest centre was opened adult social services provided social workers to assess the needs of the vulnerable and worked closely with relevant service providers to ensure proper assessment by them of those persons they are instructed to provide for and for them to inform adult social services of any additional identified need(s) considered to require addressing as a result of the gas supply incident concerned. Additionally, staff from the Learning Disability In House Services offered support at home for the affected users where applicable and adult social services also ensured that extra staff were in place to deal with issues as they arose over the Christmas and New Year period.

**Question 29**

**Councillor Colin Rogers**

Why are there so few grit bins in East Finchley, how often are they filled, how are residents made aware where their nearest grit bin is and how many grit bins have been removed in the last five years?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

There are approximately 20 grit bins in the East Finchley area. We filled these grit bins at least 4 times this season. Grit bin locations have been published on the Barnet website. According to our records no grit bins have been removed from the East Finchley area. A number of grit bins have been added since we last reviewed the locations in 2006.

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

Why is the Administration proposing to spend £3 million next year on a bureaucratic Council re-organisation whilst cutting similar amounts from Children's services and adults' social services?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council**

£2m is identified as restructuring and re-organisation costs as a result of the budget proposals for 2010/11 as well as looking forward to the implementation of the Future Shape programme and workforce review. This includes costs related to redundancy and pensions. It does not therefore related wholly to Future Shape.

£1.5 million is set aside to invest in implementing Future Shape. This is an invest to save provision. This includes establishing a programme office, preparation of business cases and other project related costs. These items reflect the fact that the scale of change envisaged by the Future Shape programme cannot be implemented without cost, but are necessary to deliver the significant savings expected from Future Shape, including the £3 million saving attributed to Future Shape proposals within the budget.

**Question 31****Councillor Alison Moore**

Given the outcome of the Judicial Review that the Administration's decision to remove sheltered housing wardens was illegal, is the Leader now going to abandon those plans, and if not why not?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council**

See answer to Question 4 above.

**Question 32****Councillor Kathy McGuirk**

Has the Administration quietly abandoned its Premier Parks policy?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

I can confirm that The Premier Parks Strategy has not been abandoned. The strategy is under review in favour of a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy; following the recent Scrutiny Review in 2009, declining customer satisfaction and the Strategy being five years old. A decision has been taken not to submit Green Flag Applications for any Barnet Parks in 2010, as the increasing expenditure and resources required to achieve a flag cannot be justified in the current economic climate.

**Question 33****Councillor Alison Moore**

Why has the Administration been promoting the idea of charging extra for people to jump the queue in the planning process when this is clearly not legal?

**Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen**

The Administration has not promoted the notion of additional charging to 'fast track' planning applications as suggested. Planning fees are set by Central Government not locally and Barnet is committed to delivering a fast, effective and high quality service to all applicants. Our planning department's performance in processing applications is consistently in the upper quartile nationally.

**Question 34****Councillor Gill Sargeant**

What is the latest position on the Aerodrome Road bridge over spend?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

The position remains within the profile last reported to Cabinet Resources Committee. A negotiated settlement has also been achieved with regard to the property and land issues. Financial closure is now underway and lessons learned report will be submitted to a future CRC meeting.

**Question 35****Councillor Kathy McGuirk**

Given public confusion about what the Council will and will not grit and clear in adverse weather will the Administration ensure that better publicity is issued at the start of the winter to enable residents to be better prepared?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

The Council has been clear about its prioritisation of road gritting. The Council's gritting routes were published on the website at the start of the season. This includes the location of all grit bins and general advice in dealing with adverse winter conditions. The Council's Resilient Network has also been published on the Council's website as from the evening of 7 January 2010. Regular updates and information bulletins are being posted on the website for the benefit of the residents.

I have asked officers to also publish information in Barnet First ahead of next winter. This issue will also be considered by the review carried out by officers and I welcome proposals for a scrutiny review which will compliment this.

**Question 36****Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

What training is being directed at members with responsibility for governance of the treasury management function?

**Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council**

Proposals for the provision of a customised Member training programme are being commissioned from independent treasury management advisers and it is the intention of the Director of Finance to present a series of options to CRC in February.