

Minutes

OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET held at
The Town Hall, Hendon, NW4, on Tuesday, 13 July 2010.

PRESENT:

*The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Anthony Finn BSc (Econ), FCA)

*The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Lisa Rutter)

Councillors:

*Maureen Braun	*Anne Hutton	*Kate Salinger BEd (Hons)
*Alex Brodtkin	*Geoffrey Johnson	Gill Sargeant
*Anita Campbell	*Julie Johnson	*Joan Scannell
*Pauline Coakley Webb	*Sury Khatri BSc (Hons), MSc	*Brian Schama
*Dean Cohen BSc (Hons)	*David Longstaff	*Alan Schneiderman
*Jack Cohen	*John Marshall MA	*Daniel Seal
*Melvin Cohen	*Kath McGuirk	*Mark Shooter
*Brian Coleman AM FRSA	*Andrew McNeil	*Agnes Slocombe SRN, RM
*Geof Cooke	*Alison Moore	*Ansuya Sodha MBA(Middx), Cert Ed, DipM (CIM), AMBA
*Alison Cornelius	*Graham Old	*Stephen Sowerby
*Richard Cornelius	*Charlie O-Macauley	*Andrew Stongolou
*Tom Davey	*Monroe Palmer OBE, BA, PCA	*Andreas Tambourides
*Barry Evangeli	*Susette Palmer MA	*Joanna Tambourides
*Claire Farrier	*Bridget Perry	*Daniel Thomas BA (Hons)
*Brian Gordon LLB	*Wendy Prentice	*Ruben Thompstone
*Eva Greenspan	*Sachin Rajput BA (Hons) PgD Law	*Jim Tierney
*Andrew Harper	*Robert Rams	*Rowan Turner
*Helena Hart	*Hugh Rayner	*Darrel Yawitch
*John Hart BA MA	*Barry Rawlings	*Zakia Zubairi
*Lynne Hillan	Colin Rogers	
*Ross Houston	Brian Salinger	

*denotes Member present

- 1. PRAYERS (Agenda Item 1.1):**
The Mayor's Chaplain offered prayer.
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1.2):**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gill Sargeant, Colin Rogers and Brian Salinger.
- 3. MINUTES (Agenda Item 1.3):**
RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 May 2010 be approved.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1.4):

Member:	Subject:	Interest Declared:
Councillor Helena Hart	Agenda Item 2.1– Council Questions to Cabinet Members – Question 36	Personal but not prejudicial as Councillor Hart is a Dental Practice Manager in a dental practice that has no NHS contract . Councillor Hart remained in the Chamber and participated in the discussion on this item.
Councillor Alan Schneiderman	Agenda Item 4.1 – Administration Policy Item: Academies and Free Schools	Personal but not prejudicial as Councillor Schneiderman works for the Department of Education. Councillor Schneiderman remained in the Chamber and participated in the discussion on this item.

5. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 5):

The Worshipful Mayor regretted to announce the death of Dr Rudi Vis on 30 May 2010. Dr Vis was first elected as Ward Councillor for Woodhouse in 1986 and then represented East Finchley from 1990 to 1998. In his time as Ward Councillor, he served on a number of Committees including Education and Planning. In 1997, Dr Vis was elected as Member of Parliament for Finchley and Golders Green where he served until he stood down at the last general election. During his time in office, he participated in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and the Western European Union in Paris. He also supported Barnet Council's twinning with Morphou in northern Cyprus. Dr Vis leaves a widow Jacqui and his three sons.

At the invitation of the Worshipful Mayor, Councillor Alison Moore, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lynne Hillan and Councillor Jack Cohen spoke in tribute of Dr Vis.

A minute silence was held in remembrance of a departed friend and colleague.

6. BUSINESS REMAINING FROM LAST MEETING (Item 1.6)

There was none

7. 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.

8. 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 3.3, 3.4 and 3.2 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 3.3, 3.4 and 3.2 to be debated and voted upon in advance of votes being taken on the other Motions on the Agenda.

9. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR DANIEL THOMAS AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR SUSETTE PALMER (Agenda Item 3.3)

Motion 3.3 in the name of Councillor Daniel Thomas was moved. Amendments in the name of Councillors Ross Houston and Susette Palmer were moved. Debate ensued. Councillor Thomas accepted Councillor Susette Palmer's amendment. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Houston was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion as amended was declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council believes Benefits should be designed to assist the neediest, and encourage people out of poverty.

Therefore, Council regrets the unsustainable levels of Housing Benefit that was paid to some individuals over a long period of time, which acted as a disincentive to work and provided long-term subsidised accommodation at a cost to hard-working taxpayers, in some of London's and Barnet's most expensive locations.

Accordingly, Council welcomes the new limits on Housing Benefit payments due in 2011 from the Coalition Government that Council believes, in combination with a number of other initiatives to be announced, will help encourage people off dependency and back into work.

Council calls on Cabinet to liaise with the Government in implementing this and other Benefits policies that will help break the cycle of dependency and poverty in Barnet and across the UK.

10. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR LYNNE HILLAN AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR MONROE PALMER (Agenda Item 3.4)

Motion 3.4 in the name of Councillor Lynne Hillan was moved. Amendments in the name of Councillors Alan Schneiderman and Monroe Palmer were moved. Debate ensued. Councillor Hillan accepted Councillor Monroe Palmer's amendment. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Schneiderman was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion as amended was declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council notes the Emergency Budget that was presented on 22 June.

Council regrets the actions of the previous Labour Government that lavished money on bureaucracy, put nothing aside for a rainy day, and left the UK with staggering levels of debt that will affect generations to come.

While Council appreciates the Emergency Budget will be tough, Council believes it represents the only opportunity to restore national finances and put this Country back on a sound economic footing.

Accordingly, Council welcomes the Emergency Budget from the Coalition Government, and calls on Cabinet to work within the new Financial Constraints when setting this Council's Budget for next year.

11. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR GEOF COOKE AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR BRIAN COLEMAN (Agenda Item 3.2)

Motion 3.2 in the name of Councillor Geof Cooke was moved. Amendments in the name of Councillors Brian Coleman and Jim Tierney were moved. Debate ensued. Councillor Cooke accepted Councillor Tierney's amendment. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman was declared carried. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion with the amendment previously agreed by Council was declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council welcomes the fact that fatalities from road traffic accidents have reduced in Barnet over the last year.

Council notes Barnet's significant investment in Safer Routes to School, Vehicle Actuated Signs and general road safety improvement measures, as well as schemes to ease the traffic flow and cut congestion.

Council further notes this Administration's innovative traffic management policies that saw the removal of many so-called traffic calming measures.

In addition, Council notes the millions wasted by the Labour-led administration 1994 – 2002 on failed road safety initiatives, such as those on the A598 Finchley Road.

However, Council welcomes the Conservative Administration's commitment to repair the winter pothole damage to main routes by 31 July and other roads later in the year.

Council also welcomes the Mayor of London's initiative regarding traffic flow and traffic lights, and asks the Cabinet Member to lead the liaison with Transport for London regarding this matter.

12. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR JACK COHEN AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR JOANNA TAMBOURIDES (Agenda Item 3.1)

Motion 3.1 in the name of Councillor Jack Cohen was moved. Amendments in the name of Councillors Joanna Tambourides and Julie Johnson were moved. Upon being to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Joanna Tambourides was declared carried. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Julie Johnson was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion with the amendment previously agreed by Council was declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council supports the objective of making our Town Centres a pleasant, attractive and vibrant shopping experience .Council therefore notes with concern the number of street alcohol drinkers in and around Golders Green Town Centre.

Council believes that drunken and rowdy behaviour can be tackled by the Police using existing laws and existing powers.

Council calls on the Cabinet Member to liaise closely with the local Police and Child's Hill Safer Neighbourhood Team to tackle the problem of street drinking in Golders Green so that the attractiveness of the Town Centre can be preserved for all law-abiding visitors.

13. MOTION 3.5 IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR AGNES SLOCOMBE (Agenda Item 3.5)

Motion 3.5 in the name of Councillor Slocombe was moved. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council notes the precedent set by the naming of Sir Sydney Chapman Way in Hadley to mark the retirement of Sir Sydney Chapman as the MP for Chipping Barnet in 2005.

Council further notes the sad death of Rudi Vis shortly after retiring as the MP for Finchley and Golders Green this year. Council would therefore wish to continue this tradition and mark his nearly 25 years service as a councillor and an MP by naming a road after him in the constituency that he held so dear.

Council asks the Executive to request the Chief Executive to identify a suitable road in the constituency of Finchley and Golders Green and arrange an appropriate ceremony to mark the naming.

14. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING.

In accordance with the Agenda, the Mayor adjourned the meeting. The meeting reconvened at 9.10pm.

15. ADMINISTRATION POLICY ITEM AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR MONROE PALMER: ACADEMIES AND FREE SCHOOLS (Agenda Item 4.1)

Councillor Andrew Harper proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. Amendments in the name of Councillors Anne Hutton and Monroe Palmer were moved. Debate ensued. Councillor Harper accepted Councillor Palmer's amendment. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Hutton was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the Policy Item as amended was declared carried.

RESOLVED - The Government has announced that all schools are being invited to apply for Academy Status and that parents and other interested groups will now be able to set up "Free Schools".

Academies will be autonomous of the local Council and receive their funding direct from the DFE. They will be given greater freedom over their curriculum and financial affairs. LA Maintained Schools rated as Outstanding by OFSTED can apply to be fast-tracked, with a view to becoming an Academy by autumn this year.

In addition, "Free Schools" which will also enjoy Academy status can be set up by parents groups, teachers, charities, trusts and voluntary groups. The planning framework is being liberalised in order to facilitate the location of schools within a variety of buildings.

Accordingly, Council:

1) Welcomes this innovative policy by the Coalition Government, which Council believes will further the Borough's reputation of being the home of First Class Education.

2) Urges Cabinet to ensure Barnet is at the forefront of national education policy, works constructively to assist our schools in becoming Academies and engages with all its partners to guarantee that every school is a good school for every child.

16. OPPOSITION POLICY ITEM AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR RUEBEN THOMPSTONE: CHILD POVERTY IN BARNET (Agenda 4.2)

Councillor Anne Hutton proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. Amendments in the name of Councillors Rueben Thompstone and Ansuya Sodha were moved. Debate ensued. Councillor Hutton accepted Councillor Sodha's amendment. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Thompstone was declared carried. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive Policy Item with the amendment previously agreed by Council was declared carried.

RESOLVED - Council regrets the failure of the outgoing Labour Government to properly tackle the root causes Child Poverty in the UK despite being in Office for 13 years.

Council notes the Labour Government spectacularly missed its own target to halve child poverty by 2010.

Council welcomes LBB's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) which contains priorities and measures to tackle Child Poverty in Barnet.

Council requests that the Cabinet Member ensures the effective implementation of the CYPP to ensure that Child Poverty is tackled in Barnet."

17. REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE – STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT (Agenda Item 5.2.1)

Councillor Andreas Tambourides moved reception and adoption of the report.

RESOLVED - Council noted the Standards Committee Annual Report.

18. URGENT ITEM - SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.1)

The Worshipful Mayor informed Council of the following: the item was set out on the published agenda and, as normal, individual papers under that item were circulated to Members and published as soon as they were available. Whilst the officers were satisfied that this met the necessary requirements, a Member raised a concern that it did not. For the avoidance of any doubt, The Worshipful Mayor took the item concerned at 5.3.1 – Member's Allowances, as an urgent item. Problems with IT within the Council contributed to delay in distributing/publication of the paper, but The Worshipful Mayor was satisfied that Council needed to consider the London Councils Independent Remuneration Panel report as soon as possible after its publication in May, particularly given that the next Council meeting is not until 14th September 2010. 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That Council decide whether

(1) It wished to dispense with the services of the local Independent Remuneration Panel and instead have regard to the recommendations made by

the London Councils Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors and, in particular, the most recent report of that panel, published in May 2010.

(2) Subject to the Council deciding that it does wish to dispense with the services of the local Independent Remuneration Panel and instead have regard to the recommendation of the London Council's Independent Panel (LCIP) on the Remuneration of Councillor in London, the Members' Allowance Scheme for the year 2010/11 should be revised for the period from 1 August 2010 to 31 March 2014.

(3) That the revised arrangements should be based upon the following:-

- (i) The recommendations of LCIP as to the amount of the Basic Allowance.
- (ii) That principle of the five bands of Special Responsibility Allowance.
- (iii) The revised attached schedule of Special Responsibility Allowances for the Barnet Scheme of Members Allowances.
- (iv) That no inflation uplift be applied to the Basic or Special Responsibility Allowances before May 2014.
- (v) That, at any given time, a member may only be in receipt of one Special Responsibility Allowance.
- (vi) The recommendations of LCIP regarding payments to members of the Standards Committee.

(4) It wishes to remove the existing arrangements for payment of a lump sum annual travel allowance of £500 "to recognise the cost of all travel within the borough".

(5) That if the changes are introduced, it wishes Cabinet Members be asked to each forgo £5000 of their special responsibility allowances so that there are no additional costs to the overall Members Allowances budget for 2010/11 and that any additional costs do not exceed £15,228 on a full year from 2011/12.

(6) It wishes to follow the recommendation of LCIP be followed for role descriptions to be developed for councillors for all their areas of work; the role descriptions to be placed on council websites; members to report publicly on their activity through a variety of channels as illustrated in the LCIP report; and the introduction of an appraisal system for members.

(7) That the Acting Democratic Services Manager be instructed to give appropriate publicity and make any necessary amendments to the Council's constitution.

Debate ensued. The Leader of Council, Councillor Hillan, moved adoption of the report on the basis of Council giving an affirmative response to each of the issues set out in the recommendations subject to the following amendment to recommendation 5:

(5) That if the changes are introduced, it wishes Cabinet Members be asked to each forgo £7,200 of their special responsibility allowances so that there are no additional costs to the overall Members Allowances budget for 2010/11 and that any additional costs do not exceed £15,228 on a full year from 2011/12.

During the debate of this item Councillor Brain Coleman, moved that the question now be put (to the vote). This was duly seconded. Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED – That the question now be put (to the vote).

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Upon being put to the vote, Recommendation 1 was declared carried:

At least ten Members rose in their places and demanded a formal division on the voting on Recommendation 1. Upon being taken the results of the Division were declared as follows:

For	Against	Abstain	Absent
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Finn	Brodkin	Kate Salinger	Rogers
Rutter	Campbell		Brian Salinger
Braun	Coakley Webb		Sargeant
Dean Cohen	Jack Cohen		
Melvin Cohen	Cooke		
Coleman	Farrier		
Alison Cornelius	Houston		
Richard Cornelius	Hutton		
Davey	Geoffrey Johnson		
Evangeli	Julie Johnson		
Gordon	McGuirk		
Greenspan	McNeil		
Harper	Moore		
Helena Hart	O-Macauley		
John Hart	Monroe Palmer		
Hillan	Susette Palmer		
Khatri	Rawlings		
Longstaff	Schneiderman		
Marshall	Slocombe		
Old	Sodha		
Perry	Tierney		
Prentice	Zubairi		
Rajput			
Rams			
Rayner			
Scannell			
Schama			
Seal			
Shooter			
Sowerby			
Strongolou			
Andreas Tambourides			
Joanna Tambourides			

Thomas			
Thompson			
Turner			
Yawitch			

For	37
Against	22
Abstain	1
Absent	3
TOTAL	63

RESOLVED - That the services of the local Independent Remuneration Panel be dispensed with and instead have regard to the recommendations made by the London Councils Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors and, in particular, the most recent report of that panel, published in May 2010.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Upon being put to the vote, Recommendation 2 was declared carried:

At least ten Members rose in their places and demanded a formal division on the voting on Recommendation 2. Upon being taken the results of the Division were declared as follows:

For	Against	Abstain	Absent
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Finn	Brodkin	Kate Salinger	Rogers
Rutter	Campbell		Brian Salinger
Braun	Coakley Webb		Sargeant
Dean Cohen	Jack Cohen		
Melvin Cohen	Cooke		
Coleman	Farrier		
Alison Cornelius	Houston		
Richard Cornelius	Hutton		
Davey	Geoffrey Johnson		
Evangeli	Julie Johnson		
Gordon	McGuirk		
Greenspan	McNeil		
Harper	Moore		
Helena Hart	O-Macauley		
John Hart	Monroe Palmer		
Hillan	Susette Palmer		
Khatri	Rawlings		
Longstaff	Schneiderman		
Marshall	Slocombe		
Old	Sodha		
Perry	Tierney		
Prentice	Zubairi		
Rajput			

Rams			
Rayner			
Scannell			
Schama			
Seal			
Shooter			
Sowerby			
Strongolou			
Andreas Tambourides			
Joanna Tambourides			
Thomas			
Thompstone			
Turner			
Yawitch			

For	37
Against	22
Abstain	1
Absent	3
TOTAL	63

RESOLVED - That the Members' Allowance Scheme for the year 2010/11 be revised for the period from 1 August 2010 to 31 March 2014.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Upon being put to the vote, Recommendation 3 was declared carried:

At least ten Members rose in their places and demanded a formal Division on the voting on Recommendation 3. Upon being taken the results of the Division were declared as follows:

For	Against	Abstain	Absent
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Finn	Brodkin	Kate Salinger	Rogers
Rutter	Campbell		Brian Salinger
Braun	Coakley Webb		Sargeant
Dean Cohen	Jack Cohen		
Melvin Cohen	Cooke		
Coleman	Farrier		
Alison Cornelius	Houston		
Richard Cornelius	Hutton		
Davey	Geoffrey Johnson		
Evangeli	Julie Johnson		
Gordon	McGuirk		
Greenspan	McNeil		
Harper	Moore		
Helena Hart	O-Macauley		
John Hart	Monroe Palmer		

Hillan	Susette Palmer		
Khatri	Rawlings		
Longstaff	Schneiderman		
Marshall	Slocombe		
Old	Sodha		
Perry	Tierney		
Prentice	Zubairi		
Rajput			
Rams			
Rayner			
Scannell			
Schama			
Seal			
Shooter			
Sowerby			
Strongolou			
Andreas Tambourides			
Joanna Tambourides			
Thomas			
Thompstone			
Turner			
Yawitch			

For	37
Against	22
Abstain	1
Absent	3
TOTAL	63

RESOLVED - That the revised arrangements should be based upon the following:-

- (i) The recommendations of LCIP as to the amount of the Basic Allowance.
- (ii) That principle of the five bands of Special Responsibility Allowance.
- (iii) The revised attached schedule of Special Responsibility Allowances for the Barnet Scheme of Members Allowances.
- (iv) That no inflation uplift be applied to the Basic or Special Responsibility Allowances before May 2014.
- (v) That, at any given time, a member may only be in receipt of one Special Responsibility Allowance.
- (vi) The recommendations of LCIP regarding payments to members of the Standards Committee.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

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

RESOLVED - To remove the existing arrangements for payment of a lump sum annual travel allowance of £500 “to recognise the cost of all travel within the borough”.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Hillan was declared carried.

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

RESOLVED - That Cabinet Members be asked to each forgo £7,200 of their special responsibility allowances so that there are no additional costs to the overall Members Allowances budget for 2010/11 and that any additional costs do not exceed £15,228 on a full year from 2011/12.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

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

RESOLVED - That the recommendation of LCIP be followed for role descriptions to be developed for councillors for all their areas of work; the role descriptions to be placed on council websites; Members to report publicly on their activity through a variety of channels as illustrated in the LCIP report; and the introduction of an appraisal system for Members.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

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

RESOLVED - That the Acting Democratic Services Manager give appropriate publicity and make any necessary amendments to the Council’s constitution.

19. LEADERS SCHEME OF DELEGATION – ASSISTANT CABINET MEMBERS (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.2)

RESOLVED – That Council note the following:

- **Councillor Darrel Yawitch has been removed as Assistant Cabinet Member for Resources.**
- **Councillor Brian Gordon has been removed as Assistant Cabinet Member for Policy and Performance.**

20. JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE– ASSISTANT CABINET MEMBERS (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.3).

Councillor Joan Scannell moved the nominations in her name. Councillor Barry Rawlings moved the nominations of Councillor Andrew McNeil and himself. Upon being put to the vote, the nominations in the name of Councillor Scannell were approved.

RESOLVED -

- (1) That the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield and Islington be established.**
- (2) That Councillor Alison Cornelius and Councillor Maureen Braun be appointed to this body.**
- (3) That the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee be reserved the right to make its own representations on behalf of the London Borough of Barnet regarding any matter considered by the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.**
- (4)**

21. MEMBERS IT AND TELEPHONY PANEL (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.4)

Councillors Scannell, Rawlings and Susette Palmer moved nominations in their names.

RESOLVED – That the following Members be appointed to a Members’ IT and Telephony Panel.

Councillors Brian Coleman, Lynne Hillan, Andreas Tambourides, Robert Rams, Andrew McNeil, Anita Campbell and Monroe Palmer.

Substitutes: Councillors Rowan Turner, Andrew Strongolou, Alex Brodtkin, Jim Tierney, Susette Palmer and Jack Cohen

22. CHANGES TO MEMBERS OF OUTSIDE BODIES (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.5)

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Councillor Grahame Old be appointed as a Council representative on the Fostering Approvals Panel.**
- (2) That Council note the resignation of Councillor Monroe Palmer as one of the appointed Members on Barnet Homes Management Board.**

23. CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.6)

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Dean Cohen replaces Councillor Mark Shooter as a Local Authority Governor at Menorah Foundation School.

24. FURTHER CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

- (1) Councillor Joan Scannell moved the following changes to Committee membership from the floor:

RESOLVED – The following changes were approved.

Policy and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Councillor Wendy Prentice be appointed to replace Councillor Kate Salinger as a member of the Committee

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Councillor Sury Khatri be appointed to replace Councillor Kate Salinger as a substitute member of the Committee

Appeals Committee:

- Councillor Maureen Braun be appointed to replace Councillor Kate Salinger as a member of the Committee

Licensing Committee:

- Councillor Alison Cornelius be appointed to replace Councillor Kate Salinger as Vice-Chairman of the Committee
- Councillor Maureen Braun be become a member of the Committee.

Chipping Barnet Resident's Forum:

- Councillor Barry Evangeli be appointed to replace Councillor Kate Salinger as Vice-Chairman of the Forum

- (2) Councillor Monroe Palmer moved the following change from the floor:

RESOLVED – The following change was approved.

Pension Fund Committee

- Councillor Susette Palmer be appointed to replace Councillor Monroe Palmer as a member of the Committee

25. FURTHER CHANGES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

- (1) Councillor Joan Scannell moved the following changes to Outside Bodies from the floor:

RESOLVED – The following changes were approved.

Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE):
Reference 1155c

- Councillor Brian Gordon be appointed to replace Councillor Kate Salinger as a Council representative on the organisation

Friends of Barnet Borough Libraries:

Reference 0075

- Councillor Robert Rams be appointed to replace Councillor Kate Salinger as a Council representative on the organisation

Friern Park Centre Management Committee:

Reference 0165

- Councillor Stephen Sowerby be appointed to replace Councillor Kate Salinger as a Council representative on the organisation

Adoption and Permanency Panel:

Reference 0111

- Councillor Wendy Prentice be appointed to replace Councillor Kate Salinger a Council representative on the organisation

26. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.7)

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Council approve the appointment of Mr. Richard Harbord and Ms. Debra Lewis to be independent Members of the Audit Committee.
- (2) The appointments will be for a fixed term of four years until May 2014, subject to annual re-appointment, which is approved by Council.

27. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (Report of the Acting Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.8)

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Constitution be amended to delete all reference to the post Head of Legal Services and replace with reference to the post of Assistant Director – Legal.
- (2) That the Acting Democratic Services be instructed to make the appropriate amendments to the Council's constitution.

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

Comment: Councillor Geof Cooke

....if they are instructed to see how people view the London Borough of Barnet from outside. This is from a new resident of the Totteridge ward – “Whilst I am a new resident of Barnet I was surprised to learn that Barnet doesn't contribute to open house weekend. A wonderful two-days where interesting buildings not normally open to the public become so. I was amazed to learn that the decision to opt-out was based on cost – a miserable £3,800 was saved”. That is a fraction of the increase in the allowance for a single Member of the Cabinet forced through tonight. So, please oh please would Barnet opt-in to this wonderful annual event if they are interested in buildings in the Borough. I would like to feel proud of living in Barnet!!

Response: Councillor Richard Cornelius

The scheme is known to be of very limited value and no.

Comment: Councillor Zakia Zubairi

Will the Cabinet Member comment on how the loss of homes and communities agency money of £2.2 million from Beaufort Park and £1.5 million from the West Hendon Regeneration Scheme will be made to ensure that these developments are not jeopardised?

Response: Councillor Richard Cornelius

I think it is important that all of us in this Chamber do everything we can to make sure that the level of funding is maintained in so far as is possible. And, frankly, this Administration will be making every effort to get our share of the money from the HCA.

The meeting finished at 11:00pm

Council Questions to Cabinet Members
13 July 2010
Questions and Responses

Question 1**Councillor Susette Palmer**

I am delighted to hear from a recent Conservative leaflet, under the main heading "Action in Childs Hill", that a Childs Hill park has apparently been awarded £25,000 for youth equipment. Could the Cabinet Member please tell me which is the fortunate park?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Clitterhouse Playing Fields and Lichfield Road Youth Centre.

Supplementary Question 1**Councillor Susette Palmer**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Look Councillor Coleman, I'm really sorry that I'm afraid that Clitterhouse Playing Fields is not in Childs Hill ward and I am unable to trace the Lichfield Road Youth Centre at all. Perhaps you can ask your officers again and give an update next time.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I am well aware where Clitterhouse Playing Fields is, but I know the good folk of Councillor Susette Palmer's ward are clever people and can make their way there and use the excellent new facilities that are being installed for the benefit of residents of Childs Hill ward and indeed Golders Green ward.

Question 2**Councillor Brian Gordon**

How do we anticipate that the change of Government will impact on the allocation of rate support grant for Barnet and other similarly efficient local authorities?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Chancellor, in his Emergency Budget, said there would be a requirement of a 25% real reduction of departmental budgets over the next four years.

Barnet received £94.6m in Formula Grant for 2010/11. Ignoring inflation, a 25% reduction would represent £24m. This is clearly very early days and we need to wait for the Comprehensive Spending Review in October and the provisional Local Government settlement due in December to find out the exact details.

Supplementary Question 2**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Councillor Thomas I note what you say about the Chancellor's recommendation that the budget be reduced by 25% but I would like to know whether you could explain how this might apply to the rates support grant. Does this mean that the entire budget that the Government previously would have allocated to rates support would be reduced by 25% and then it would be allocated fairly amongst the local authorities or does it mean that it is going to be a straight forward position that what local authorities received last year would be reduced by 25%? I hope it is the former rather than the later because we are all very much aware of the unfair and inexplicable way that the previous Government distributed rates support grant.

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, Councillor Gordon raises a few issues there. Firstly, it is my understanding that the 25% decrease for local government as a whole. We have not been notified of the formula in which local government is funded is going to change – hopefully, it will change and that will address Councillor Gordon's concerns. The answer I have put in the paper this evening simply states 25% of what we receive as a Borough.

Our settlement is due in December and we will have to wait and see. This Administration do all we can to prepare ourselves for a 25% reduction. That will hopefully be the worse case scenario.

Question 3

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Why did the Cabinet Member for Health say at the April Council meeting that she would not interfere with Hospital Trusts setting their parking charges and then did so a few weeks later?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Perhaps I should remind Councillor Rawlings of the question actually posed by Councillor Agnes Slocombe namely:

"I was wondering if the Cabinet Member for Health would mind commenting on whether she supports the scrapping of parking charges at hospitals in Barnet – something that Labour has pledged to do."

As I recall, having first drawn attention to the perilous financial position into which our local NHS Trusts had been put by that same Labour Government to which Councillor Slocombe referred – I stated quite clearly that it was up to each individual Trust whether or not they levied parking charges in order to alleviate that position. Trusts must be able to manage their own finances responsibly and how on earth did the former Government intend to finance their free hospital parking scheme – presumably by even greater public borrowing!

My view on this has not changed. Nor has my view on the former Labour Government whose reckless and ill targeted spending has resulted in this Nation's worst financial deficit ever.

The fact is that the flat charge of £4 for a full day's parking at Barnet Hospital is considerably less than at some other local NHS Trusts. Where it does seem to be unfair, however, is for those people intending to stay for far shorter periods – particularly those intending to stay for an hour or less.

I therefore asked the Chief Executive of the Trust to urgently consider reducing the minimum payment for stays of less than an hour and perhaps to also look at some sort of phasing for slightly longer periods.

Supplementary Question 3

Councillor Barry Rawlings

I would like to thank the Cabinet Member for her patronising reply. But, can I ask a supplementary more on the last paragraph. Was the Chief Executive of the Trust surprised seeing that the first action that the Cabinet Member wanted to take was when there was a story in the local paper? But, this review was already happening as the previous Government had asked for a review, the hospital was carrying out a review, and then a couple months later you were asking for a review. Does she worry that being so out-of-date and irrelevant to what is going on in health actually hinders her ability to do the job?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Certainly not, Mr Mayor, and I would say that in contrast with some Members opposite who seem to change their view on the provision of health services according to whether or not their Party is in Government – I have been entirely consistent on these matters. I have not asked the Chief Executive to scrap car parking charges but purely to try and ensure that they are fair and equitable, particularly for those people staying for short periods. And I have to say that she had readily agreed to do so and I call that a result even if Councillor Rawlings wouldn't.

Question 4

Councillor Jack Cohen

How do you intend to reduce the number of casualties on the Borough roads?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

By continuing our successful policies.

Supplementary Question 4**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Well Councillor Coleman you have a strange definition of successful policies. Whilst every other Borough in London has seen a reduction in road traffic accidents in 2009, Barnet has seen an increase of 15% of road traffic accidents. By the by you say you are continuing your successful policies – can you name 6 of those policies?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Why not 5? I could name 66 Councillor Cohen. How long have we got Mr Mayor?

- Hump removal;
- Traffic calming removing;
- Replacing failing road schemes;
- A massive road resurfacing programme;
- Eliminating the potholes in the Borough;
- Improving the pavements.

There's 6, shall I go on Mr Mayor? You've had enough thank you.

Question 5**Councillor Brian Gordon**

What representations could be made (or are being made) by the Council to Transport for London/Highways Agency concerning the appalling flooding that has occurred on some major roads in Barnet caused by defective sewers?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Councillor Gordon will no doubt have seen the question I posed as the Assembly Member for the Borough to the Mayor of London at Mayor's Question Time and the resulting answer which I reproduce below. I shall continue to keep up the pressure on the Mayor, in his role as Chairman of Transport for London and Barnet Officers are continuing to keep up the pressure at an officer level.

Question by Brian Coleman (AM):

Sections of the A1 and A41 consistently flood following heavy rainfall, especially in the Hendon area, leading to road closures and inconvenience for my constituents. Will the Mayor instruct TfL to investigate why this is the case and how drainage can be improved?

Answer by Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):

The answer is, yes, of course TfL is aware of the problem that you mention. It is doing extensive investigations. It is to do with a flaw in a Thames Water sewer. It is not big enough to deal with the water that accumulates. I am raising the matter with Thames Water on 28 May 2010.

Brian Coleman (AM):

I am grateful for that, Mr Mayor. I am sure my constituents are. There have been several occasions in the last six months on the A41, at different points along the A41, but particularly focused at Brent Cross, of flooding. Whilst I recognise you are omnipotent I know you cannot control the weather, but this problem is not new and TfL

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):

We can control the weather. What are we doing with our Mayor's Air Quality Strategy and our climate change? That is exactly what we are trying to do; is to control the weather. I just point that out.

Brian Coleman (AM):

Until the improvements from your strategies come along to the benefit of my constituents, can we just kick TfL where it needs to be kicked to make sure this does not continually happen month in month out?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):

OK. I certainly will kick TfL wherever they need to be kicked on this, though the issue seems to be that £15 million of Thames Water needs to spend on this sewer.

Supplementary Question 5

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Coleman, I am most grateful to you for raising the issue of road flooding with the Mayor of London and if the reason for your raising that question had anything to do with my question to you then I am even more grateful. I know you are very concerned about this. I would like to ask you whether you will undertake to continue to keep a very close eye on what's going on at TfL and Thames Water regarding this sewer because if that's the reason for all the problems then I'm sure all the money that needs to be invested to put right the sewer will be more than compensated by the better roads and by the lack of flooding that would occur this will be much better for Londoners and in the long-term much more cost-effective.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

My Mayor, as much as Councillor Gordon is always ahead of the game, this question to the Mayor of London was prompted by complaints from many constituents about the state of the busy area of Borough every time it rains heavily. I and the Mayor will continue to keep up the pressure on Thames Water and to continue to insist on keeping their promises about investing in replacing the infrastructure in this Borough.

Question 6

Councillor Julie Johnson

Has the West Hendon regeneration project been awarded HCA Kick Start funding, and if not, can the Cabinet Member tell me how and when the estate will be brought up to Decent Homes standard?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The West Hendon Project has not yet been awarded Kick Start Funding. We are still working so that the scheme may proceed as quickly as possible.

Supplementary Question 6

Councillor Julie Johnson

I thank the Cabinet Member for his answer. This development is £4 million short, so how are you going to find this money and when are you going to lay a brick so that people are not left in a constant state of limbo by this Administration?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Mr Mayor, I would love to lay a brick and I look forward to that – but it does depend on achieving the funding which was lamentably lacking from the last Government and the mess that they left makes it very difficult for the current Government.

Question 7

Councillor Jack Cohen

Why was the current issue of Barnet First not delivered to the railway cottages, Cricklewood NW2?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

I understand confusion arose regarding which entrances to push the magazine through. As soon as we were aware of this, we took it up with our distributor who took steps to rectify it. I apologise to those residents of the Terraces who initially missed out on the most recent issue of Barnet First, one that contained a major feature on life in the Railway Terraces.

Question 8**Councillor Brian Gordon**

How will the idea mooted by the new Education Secretary for schools to obtain non-Council academy status affect our education programme within Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Outstanding schools could potentially convert to academies by September 2010. Governing bodies of academies will be responsible for ensuring quality of educational provision, challenging and monitoring performance, managing finances and property, and employing staff. We anticipate that this will enhance the quality of educational provision in the Borough.

We currently have two academies – the Wren Academy and the London Academy. These schools continue to have a positive relationship with Barnet Council and we expect that all schools who chose to convert to academies will continue to work closely with the Council and other schools.

Supplementary Question 8**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Can you please confirm in regard to the academies whether the decision-making as to which schools will become academies will be that of the schools themselves and that there will be no other pressure and any other influence the Council will seek to bring one way or the other? Can you also endorse, and that this will remain the Council's policy, that whether schools are under the control of the Council or whether they are independent of the Council, in any event we completely support the freedom and independence of our schools as much as possible to run their affairs and their administration in the way that they themselves see fit.

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Mr Mayor, I am happy to give that pledge to Councillor Gordon and indeed he will see when I speak in the Administration policy item later this evening, which I am sure he will support, that I will be developing this in more detail. He is absolutely right, the Council stands ready to assist those schools that wish to become academies, but the decision is down entirely to the schools themselves.

Question 9**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

When are the contracts for the rebuild of Finchley Memorial Hospital due to be signed?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

At this stage the application is currently being considered by the Department of Health. All questions and queries have been responded to correctly and a decision is expected to allow contracts to be signed by the end of July – on schedule.

Question 10**Councillor Mark Shooter**

Will the Leader join me in congratulating the Conservative-led Government in scrapping the CAA?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

Absolutely. Councils such as Barnet should be free to determine their priorities according to what local people need and not the whim of Whitehall bureaucrats.

Supplementary Question 10**Councillor Mark Shooter**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Regarding the CAA, please can the Leader outline how much this wasteful Labour inspection regime has cost our tax payers?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

I am absolutely delighted that the CAA is being scrapped. It was nothing short of centralised expensive bureaucracy.

It cost us absolute fortune – £245,000 for Barnet’s auditor fees, in addition we funded the cost of an Audit Commission CAA lead for which we paid £20,000. The Local Government Association found that in the first year the CAA had not met many of its stated objectives and I don’t think it has since. It is about time we scrapped it – its only one of the diktats from Central Government that are being scrapped and I hope that they are all torn up very soon.

Question 11

Councillor Anne Hutton

Is the Council committed to providing decent Youth Services, or will they take money away from children and young people once the ring fence for grants like Capital Ambition and the Youth Opportunity Fund are removed?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The Barnet Children and Young People Plan clearly sets out our commitment to ensure that children and young people engage with positive activities, are actively involved in decision-making, and are supported to access education, employment and training. Youth services in Barnet help to make this possible.

As you will appreciate, we are having to scrutinise all our services, especially those that are grant funded, to ensure they are effective and continue to provide value for money. This is not to say that those services which cease to be ring fenced will be cut. However, resources will have to be reallocated across the Children’s Service and indeed across the Council. We are in the process of reaching conclusions about this. No decisions on the levels of funding available to our services have yet been made.

Question 12

Councillor Tom Davey

Will the Cabinet Member for Housing outline how the Council is responding to planned changes in Housing Benefit?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The main changes will be:

- Caps on the total amount payable;
- Reduced benefit for families with adult children; and
- Reducing housing benefit to 90% after receipt of 12 months jobseekers allowance.

The Council is planning to help those in need move to less expensive properties. Barnet will work with partners to encourage Adults back in to work and away from benefit dependency.

Supplementary Question 12

Councillor Tom Davey

I would like to thank Councillor Cornelius for his response and ask him to join me in praising the decision to ensure that more reasonable levels of benefits are paid to prevent people being trapped in a benefits dependency culture.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Mr Mayor, absolutely.

Question 13

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Why wasn’t a council tax freeze for two years (as opposed to just one) included in the emergency budget on 22 June, and will this mean the Barnet Tories renegeing on their promise of a freeze for two years?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

It is not for me to explain the rationale behind central Government budgets. Our manifesto stated this Administration would work with a Conservative Government to freeze Council Tax for two years and this was inline with national Conservative Party policy.

We do not have an outright Conservative Government to work with, however, this Administration, as always, will endeavour to keep Council Tax as low as possible.

Supplementary Question 13

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

I thank Councillor Thomas for his answer. But, his Administration promised before the election a two-year council tax freeze. So, we have got a Tory Council and a Tory Government, albeit supported by the Liberal Democrats, will he now agree to deliver the promised freeze or is this just another broken promise?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, Councillor Schneiderman seemed very selective about which part of the manifesto that he is quoting. The manifesto said we would work with a Conservative Government. We do not have a Conservative Government, we have a Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition, and in that coalition there were compromises. The reality of the compromises, different policy pieces were disbanded, we have adopted some and, of course, compromise means that we have had to change our policies. Councillor Schneiderman knows that full well and is just trying to score party points.

Question 14

Councillor Barry Evangelini

Does the Leader agree with me, that while tough, the Emergency Budget was the only way to deal with the problems affecting the UK and our residents?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

As the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, it falls upon me to answer budget related questions.

I agree that the Emergency Budget was the only way to deal with the aftermath of the reckless manner in which the previous Labour Government dealt with public finance.

Supplementary Question 14

Councillor Barry Evangelini

Will the Cabinet Member join me in condemning the mess left by the Labour Party?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Of course.

Question 15

Councillor Ross Houston

What impact will the cuts to the HCA have on Barnet's ability to build new affordable homes in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Clearly the HCA funding reductions will reduce the numbers of affordable homes that will be built nationally. As we do not know precisely how monies will be distributed it is not possible to give a quantitative answer for Barnet. However, we will ensure that Barnet receives its share of the money available.

Supplementary Question 15

Councillor Ross Houston

Thank you for your answer. What precisely is the Cabinet Member going to do to ensure that Barnet receives its fair share?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Pull every string that we can.

Question 16**Councillor Andreas Tambourides**

Will the Leader join me in congratulating the former Leader of Barnet Council, Mike Freer, on his election to the DCLG Select Committee?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

Yes. A well-deserved appointment. Mike has done a huge amount to improve and innovate in Local Government as many people in Barnet and beyond will testify.

Supplementary Question 16**Councillor Andreas Tambourides**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Does the Leader agree with me that this reflects, in part, Mike Freer's success in formulating the innovative Future Shape strategy, something you, Leader, you were actively involved and have pledged to continue?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

I always will be very proud of the achievements of former Councillor Mike Freer. As he moves onto bigger and better things I think that we all know that his roots will still be in Barnet Council.

Question 17**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

How will the Administration continue "Supporting People" given the recent announcements on "Supporting People grant" – particular those elderly and vulnerable residents in sheltered housing?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

The Government's decision to remove the ring-fence from the Supporting People Programme Grant and to subsume it within the Area Based Grant makes no difference to the Council's relentless drive to use resources as efficiently as possible. Government-commissioned research shows that prevention services, such as those provided by this Authority, help to keep people independent and reduce the risk of dependency on more expensive health and social care provision. Local and national analyses of housing and support services for older people also show that there are inefficiencies that need to be resolved. In relation to the aforesaid, later this year Cabinet will be considering options for improvement within the budgetary resources available in Barnet.

Supplementary Question 17**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

The response is neither patronising nor an answer, so I will give it another go. Will the Cabinet Member confirm that this answer would be seen as a threat to the elderly and vulnerable residents in Barnet because it suggests further cuts are in line; and also he is not recognising that sheltered housing could be part of the preventative services. A decision has been made, got mucked up, has been made again without thinking through the options for these services as so often happens with this Council.

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

Mr Mayor, can I just start with the word patronising, I cannot see how my response in any way whatsoever can be considered patronising. Mr Mayor, I think that the response that I have provided adequately answers the question raised by the relevant Councillor. But, can I just say this in an effort to cover any anomalies that he may consider may be apparent although I disagree that any such exist: quite simply I reassert the very importance on this side of the Chamber and the Council as a whole to make sure that we look after the interests of all of our residents. And, it is very important while we consider elderly, vulnerable, middle-aged and younger adults that we consider all of them.

So when I look at the supporting people grant that he refers to, regardless as to what it is termed as, or how it may change, as far as I'm concerned the funds that I have, and we are in difficult times mainly due to his failed Government, that we must consider what we do with the money we have and I would like it directed at all people and not just targeted groups leaving out others like his Party may seek to do. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

Question 18

Councillor Reuben Thompstone

Given we are in the Age of Austerity, will the Cabinet Member for Resources outline steps being taken to keep Council spending and Council Tax down next year and beyond?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Real terms reductions over 4 years of between 25% and 33% have been announced for non-priority services. This represents an unprecedented challenge to all local authorities.

In response, the Council has recently enhanced the business planning and performance framework. All services have been asked to identify how they would manage with a reduction in net expenditure of 20% over three years.

The Government has also announced incentives for Councils which freeze council tax for 2011/12. The Council will consider its response to this when further details become available.

Supplementary Question 18

Councillor Reuben Thompstone

Thank you Mr Mayor and I would like to thank Councillor Thomas for the answer to the question. Is he pleased that Barnet is regarded as ahead of the curve in terms of the efficient use it made over the boom years and does he wish the Labour Government had done the same?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, I am very pleased. We do run a very efficient Council and the Audit Commission has said so. We have a good level of reserves unlike when we took over from the previous Administration when reserves were extremely low and I do wonder if we had severe weather just after we took over from the Labour-Liberal Democrat pact whether we could have actually afforded to have repaired the roads to the extent that we have this time round. So yes, I am very pleased.

Question 19

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

How much money has Barnet lost as a result of the Con-Dem government's emergency budget?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

My answer to question two gives an indication of how much the Council's funding will decrease.

Supplementary Question 19

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

I thank Councillor Thomas for his answer, but given that his Administration frivolous complaints about Labour's year-on-year increases in funding for this Council, will he now oppose these cuts?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

No.

Question 20

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Mapledown School came fourth in the "Best Small Place to work in the UK" competition run by the Great Place to Work Group. Would the Cabinet Member join me in congratulating them?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

I would. It is a great testament to all staff at the school.

Question 21

Councillor Ross Houston

How much money will Barnet lose from the Con-Dem government's capping of Housing Benefit, and what impact will this policy have on ordinary local residents' ability to afford to live near their families?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Barnet Council will not lose any money by this change. There will be an impact on those people receiving very large amounts of housing benefit. We hope not to have more news stories causing resentment amongst hard working tax payers who feel the community is being ripped off.

Supplementary Question 21

Councillor Ross Houston

I thank the Cabinet Member for his reply. Around 428 families in Barnet are in receipt of housing benefit over the proposed cap out of 26,000 that is. This is a small proportion in percentage terms but it is still hundreds of families that are all on low incomes i.e. in receipt of income support or pension credits or job seekers allowance. These people cannot afford to pay rent in Barnet where will they go?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

They will be helped to find other accommodation both in the Borough and outside.

Question 22

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

The Administration made a commitment to publish all expenditure over £500 online – why hasn't this been implemented yet?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Council committed to publishing items of expenditure in excess of £500 with effect from 1 April 2010. This is being undertaken quarterly in arrears and therefore the first due date is 30 June. It will take a couple of weeks to summarise and validate the data into a format that can be posted on the website but it is expected that this will be achieved by mid-July which is earlier than many other Councils.

Supplementary Question 22

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

The motion committed to publishing items of expenditure online was actually passed in this Chamber in November last year, eight months ago. What's actually taken so long to get this online? We actually want to see the full data not the summarised version that he is working on.

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, the fact that Councillor Schneiderman wants the full data is welcomed and that is what is taking so long. I don't know if Councillor Schneiderman in his regular briefings with officers manages to look at how much of our money we spend by department, of all the accounting codes – it is very complex accounting this Council has and to get it in order to display to the public and in a format that the public understands takes a long time. We are still ahead of many councils with this policy and I look forward to the publishing next week.

Question 23

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Would the Leader comment on the Council's council tax collection rate this year?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

As the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance it falls upon me to answer questions related to Council Tax collection. The Council Tax collection rate as reported to the Government at 31.3.10 was 96.34%. This was the highest rate ever achieved in Barnet.

We anticipate that this excellent collection performance will be maintained.

Question 24

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

How much has the Future Shape Project cost council tax payers so far?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Current year costs will be considered for approval with the quarter one monitoring report to Cabinet Resources Committee in September. We currently anticipate that costs for the financial year 2010/11 will be within a revised and lower ceiling of £1.5m.

A key element of Future Shape is the delivery of significant savings which will contribute substantially to meeting the forecast revenue funding gap in future years.

Supplementary Question 24

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Can I ask the Cabinet Member when will Future Shape savings actually exceed the costs of this programme, if ever?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

In due course.

Question 25

Councillor Anne Hutton

How many Barnet schools are considering Academy status because the Council gives little or no support to them?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Nine of our secondary schools and 20 of our primary schools are rated outstanding, and are therefore eligible to become Academies from September 2010. A number of our outstanding secondary schools are considering Academy status, but there is no evidence to suggest that this is because they feel unsupported by the Council. In fact a large proportion of our schools choose to purchase additional support such as catering and IT support from the Council rather than private suppliers, which suggests we offer a high quality service.

Supplementary Question 25

Councillor Anne Hutton

Thank you Mr Mayor. I think some of the Heads do feel unsupported by the Council in fact. Would the Cabinet Member assure me that there won't be any increase in the charges for support services to schools under the easyCouncil?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

I can't possibly make any such commitment about charges in the future, as Councillor Hutton knows, we're having to review all the matters in light of the financial constraints that the authority finds itself under, and indeed the costs of many other services will feature as part of that review.

Question 26

Councillor Geof Cooke

When will safety measures at Henlys Corner be implemented?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

TfL plans to start construction of the Henlys Corner improvement scheme in early 2011.

Supplementary Question 26
Is the funding 100% committed?

Councillor Geof Cooke

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman
No.

Question 27

Councillor Jim Tierney

If the London Councils Grant Scheme ends, will the Administration ring fence their contribution for the local voluntary sector?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The current four-year commissioning of services by London Councils extends to 2012.

The Council is not at this stage making any commitment to ring fence current contributions for future years.

Question 28

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

What batteries are accepted in the door-step re-cycling box, and has there been a change in policy on what batteries will or won't be collected i.e. AA type batteries?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

In Barnet all household batteries left in the recycling boxes will be collected. All undamaged car batteries left beside the recycling boxes will also be collected. There has been no change in policy on the collection of batteries.

Supplementary Question 28

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

If we are paying contractors to collect these things they should be collected. So I am drawing your attention to this issue, it is not what a resident told me it is me personally having these batteries dumped back on me. This is not right, so I am surprised to see from the this answer to me that they are still being collected and I shall put them back again. If they are not collected I shall remind you.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I shall be around in the morning.

Question 29

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

The Administration gave a commitment to provide more allotment plots in Coppetts ward, but so far nothing has happened. When will these additional allotments actually be provided?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

In due course.

Supplementary Question 29

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Looking at the answer it seems to be a standard answer that we are going to get for a lot of questions these days – in due course. I am not quite sure, in due course, does it mean similar to when you are looking for something, when it is on the side, or in excess or wait a mo and it can actually happen next year. What I would like to know is – have actually any sites been looked at? And, if not why not? And can I have a bit more precise than in due course, and does that mean next week, next year, the next year or never?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, it is a great pleasure to welcome Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb back to the Chamber after a gap of 8 years and her tour of wards across the Borough. In due course, Mr Mayor, means in due course.

Question 30**Councillor Alison Moore**

Given the huge number of potholes and deteriorating patches of tarmac on roads that have been resurfaced in recent years, what redress will the Council be seeking from its contractors for poor quality road maintenance?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I blame the weather not the contractors.

Supplementary Question 30**Councillor Alison Moore**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Councillor Coleman, you may blame the weather conditions but I think you are missing the point. The Council's auditors say that there is an underlying downward trend in the condition of the Borough's roads – it is not due to the short space of severe weather. And your own scrutiny task and finish group said the conditions on Barnet's roads are worse than neighbouring Boroughs. So, when will the Cabinet Member get tough on contractors to make sure that Barnet's tax payer's money is not being poured down the drain or should it be into a pothole?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, can I take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the Council's own staff and indeed their contractors who are working flat out to repair the roads damaged by acts of God during the winter. I am mindful of the points made by Councillor Moore, I'm considering taking action against the person responsible for the potholes, I shall be suggesting to the Borough Solicitor we take proceedings against the Lord Almighty.

Question 31**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Will the Cabinet Member advise whether traffic congestion in Barnet is increasing, stabilising or reducing?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

All three in different parts of the Borough.

Supplementary Question 31**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Where can the public see a breakdown of which situation ascertained in each area of the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

In due course, Mr Mayor.

Question 32**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Boris Johnson has decided to increase public transport fares for the third year running. What impact will this have on residents in outer-London Boroughs like Barnet who commute to go to work?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The Mayor of London needs to fill the black hole of £1.9 billion in TfL's accounts left by the Administration of Ken Livingstone.

Supplementary Question 32**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Do you welcome the inevitable increase in road traffic that will happen if public transport fares continue to be raised above the rate of inflation to pay for the scrapping of the carbon dioxide charge, scrapping of the western extension of the congestion zone and the Mayor's hugely expensive vanity bus?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Well, Mr Mayor, Councillor Cooke was the Member of the Administration that left a huge black hole in this Council's accounts, so he should know that there is a £1.9 billion black hole in TfL accounts and that fare rises have sadly had to fill that black hole. But, there again Councillor Cooke is also a supporter of the party that has left this country in one enormous black hole.

Question 33**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Will the Cabinet Member join me in condemning the cuts to police numbers that have been announced in London, and will the Cabinet Member also say what they have done to lobby against any cuts to police numbers occurring in Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

To date we have not been advised of any specific proposals relating to police numbers in Barnet. At present our police officer number is 585, (though this fluctuates a little month by month), and it has remained at about this level for two years. The figure includes the officers on our Safer Neighbourhood Teams who are doing excellent work across all the wards in our Borough. All organisations are being asked by the government to look at budget reductions, the police included, and our lobbying efforts will be focused on any specific proposals affecting Barnet.

Supplementary Question 33**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I am presuming that the Cabinet Member is aware that the Metropolitan Police has put a block on PCSOs and Safer Neighbourhood Teams across London applying for jobs as full-time PCs. This means that a lot of hard working PCSOs who have contributed fantastically to the safety of the residents of this Borough and across the Capital will now longer have the opportunity to become full PCs. Will you join me in condemning this move?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

At the moment the Police are having a full review of all their services and their budgets. Until we hear actually what their budgets are going to be I can add nothing further to my answer.

Question 34**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Will the Cabinet Member advise how much secure cycle parking has been provided by the Council in the last eight years, and where?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

In the last two years, (the period for which figures are available) 41 new cycle stands have been provided on street at Hadley Highstone; Finchley Road, Temple Fortune; East Finchley (Church Lane, East End Road and High Road near tube station); Station Road, Edgware; High Road, Whetstone; Woodhouse Road, Friern Barnet; North Finchley (near Sainsbury's); Chipping Barnet (near The Spires).

Supplementary Question 34**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Would it be fair to say that the Administration shares the enthusiasm of the Mayor for London to promote cycling?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, there is no end to my enthusiasm for the policies of the Mayor for London.

Question 35**Councillor Colin Rogers**

Would the Cabinet Member please explain why Stanley Road Playing Fields has been fenced off?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Stanley Road playing fields was subject to a lease which recently expired. Property Services repossessed the site at that expiry and took action to secure the site to avoid squatters and further rubbish dumping.

Although the site was leased out, the previous occupier failed to properly secure the gates, wrongly giving the impression that public access was permitted. It was not. The site will remain secured while consideration is given to the future of the site.

Property Services will undertake intermittent checks of the site until the future of the site is agreed.

Question 36**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Would the Cabinet Member say what she thinks of the value of dentistry services at Edgware Hospital?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Whilst I have not had any complaints about the quality of service at the Dental Access Centre (DAC) at Edgware Hospital, I understand that activity levels at the DAC have been relatively low. This is despite NHS Barnet's efforts to increase uptake of NHS Dental services, including a mail drop to every house in Barnet with information on how to access an NHS dentist. Perhaps greater uptake of NHS dental services across the Borough is something which should best be pursued through the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Question 37**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Why did the number of road casualties in Barnet increase in 2009 in all categories except fatalities when most of London showed an improvement?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Barnet's rise in overall casualties in London between 2008 and 2009 was a common issue with other authorities in North London. The highest casualty increases all occur in north London (Haringey 25%, Enfield 20%, Islington 19%, Barnet 15%) with relatively high increases in other north and north west London boroughs (Harrow, Brent and Ealing all 8%, Hammersmith and Fulham 7% and Camden 6%). Relatively low numbers of casualties in some of the groups reported recently by TfL mean that year-on-year fluctuations are to be expected. Comparison over a longer period suggests that the increases for most groups in 2009 are consistent with the level of random variation that can be expected.

Encouragingly fatalities fell (from 18 to 8) and seriously injured casualties had a lower percentage increase than overall casualties. (The combined measure of casualties killed and seriously injured rose by one from 136 in 2008 to 137 in 2009).

Child (under 16) casualties also fell, with a 50% reduction in the numbers of children killed or seriously injured (from 12 in 2008 to 6 in 2009).

Supplementary Question 37**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Is it not the case that 15% increase to 1,403 casualties is statistically significant and crying out for investigation and response from TfL, Barnet and the other Boroughs in north and north-west London?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes, Mr Mayor.

Question 38**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Was the Cabinet Member aware that schools are being charged for PC encryption? Can he tell Members how much money schools have been charged in total for this, and is it fair that schools who have been responsible and not lost any data should have to pay this extra charge?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

All schools have a responsibility to keep pupil data secure. We recently sent a document to schools outlining best practices and how pupil data can be kept safe. Encrypting documents is one way of keeping data safe and Barnet Council is currently in discussion with suppliers to purchase encryption software in bulk at a lower price than individual schools would be able to. Our ICT schools support is a traded service, which many of our schools buy into. It is not the Council's responsibility to provide this support. When we have finalised arrangements with a supplier, any schools interested in buying encryption software from the Council would be able to do so. No schools currently purchase encryption software via the Council.

Question 39**Councillor Alison Moore**

Will the Leader advise how much money will be provided by the Con-Dem government to pay for the Census?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

We have not been advised of any additional support from government.

Supplementary Question 39**Councillor Alison Moore**

Could I ask the Cabinet Member would the census be going ahead, and if not how much worse would that make the allocation and delivery of resources and services in Barnet, mindful of the outcomes of the previous census?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, as far as I am aware the census is still going ahead and we are working with the Office of National Statistics, who actually co-ordinate the census, in order for them to get as accurate results as possible because the result of the census will impact on the funding for Barnet.

Question 40**Councillor Anne Hutton**

Will Barnet get the £80 million allocated from Building Schools for the Future programme, and if not what will happen to those school building programmes that were going to benefit from that money?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Barnet had made a bid for funds under the BSF programme after we were invited by the previous government to make a submission; the money had not actually been allocated. As Councillor Hutton will know, the Secretary of State for Education has announced that the six projects that we proposed as part of BSF will not proceed. We are currently reviewing capital investment for our schools in light of that announcement.

Question 41**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Will the Cabinet Member tell me what discussions have taken place with TfL regarding delivery of the Mayor of London's election pledge to "Put the commuter first by improving public transport in outer-London through orbital bus routes"?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Very little other than in relation to regeneration proposals.

Supplementary Question 41**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Will you be encouraging the London Mayor to put the outer-London commuter first and to deliver on his promise?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, as Councillor Cooke will know there is yet another black hole and that is called the bus subsidy that is currently running at £600 million when in the year 2000 it was zero. So, I cannot force any calls for increase bus services until the £600 million black hole on the bus account is duly filled.

Question 42**Councillor Geof Cooke**

What progress has been made, since I last asked, on consultation and planning for suitable permanent improvements in the Borough to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in February 2012?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

We will be consulting the Representative Deputy Lieutenant for the London Borough of Barnet, Mr Martin Russell, on the most appropriate way to mark the Queen's Diamond jubilee. A small working group of officers has been established within the Chief Executive's Service to explore how the Council might mark the Jubilee locally and how we might join in any capital wide celebrations.

No one is more enthusiastic about marking Her Majesty's reign than I am but the Jubilee will of course take in a time of austerity and this has to be borne in mind as we talk about permanent improvements.

I will report back.

Supplementary Question 42**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Do you consider that permanent improvements to the Borough would be an appropriate way to mark the Jubilee?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

I refer the Member to my answer.

Question 43**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Does the Administration "buy in" to the internal audit process?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Yes, the Administration fully supports the internal audit process as a key element of effective corporate governance.

Supplementary Question 43**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Why then had Cabinet Members not required senior officers to co-operate with the internal audit process and thus avoid the need for the external auditors to comment on the lack of buy in?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, I am not aware of Cabinet Members being involved in the audit process that to the extent that they had encouraged services not to buy in to audit. I can state quite clearly now that we are bought into the audit process, we have restructured the audit function, we brought it under the finance directorate, and we co-operate with the Committee and the auditors. And it is for the Audit Committee to oversee all this and to raise any concerns either with the Chief Executive or the Director of Finance.

Question 44**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

Is there a mentoring scheme for young people in the Borough that residents can get involved in?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

There are several mentoring schemes in the Borough, some of which residents can get involved with. For example:

- The Middlesex University Inclusion Development Ambassador Scheme which aims to widen access to Middlesex University to care leavers is due to start. The scheme is run in partnership with London Borough of Barnet and mentors are currently being trained. It is a programme for university students.
- We are currently investigating the possibility of setting up a voluntary Independent Visitor scheme (similar to a mentoring scheme) in Barnet for children in care.
- A First Time Entrants Mentoring Scheme (Council-led in partnership with police) is being developed, and 6 volunteers from the local community are currently being trained.
- Various mentoring opportunities can be accessed via the voluntary sector. Many faith groups have projects, for example there is one providing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for mothers and homework support for local children. Other opportunities include mentoring young men who have been involved in drug misuse.

Supplementary Question 44**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

What I really want to know, I know that the staff and different people are mentors in our schools, so are there any Councillors to your knowledge that are mentors?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

I believe some Members are, in their individual capacities, yes.

Question 45**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Older Children from Mapledown School attend course at a college outside the Borough. Given the huge cost of sending children with special educational needs outside the Borough what can be done to provide education for these young people at Barnet College?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Barnet Council is responsible for commissioning provision for such children from September 2011 and is very keen to improve the local offer to students with severe learning difficulties. The most popular college is currently Oaklands in Hertfordshire, which received significant additional resources from the Learning and Skills Council in 2005 in order to develop a new provision for students with severe learning difficulties.

Working with other north London boroughs, Barnet has researched demand and will use this information to seek to commission further provision locally.