

Minutes

OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET held at The Town Hall, Hendon, NW4, on Tuesday, 25 January 2011.

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 Brodkin	*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 Strongolou
*Tom Davey	Lord Monroe Palmer OBE, BA, FCA	*Andreas Tambourides
*Barry Evangeli	*Susette Palmer MA	*Joanna Tambourides
*Claire Farrier	*Bridget Perry	*Daniel Thomas BA (Hons)
*Brian Gordon LLB	*Wendy Prentice	Reuben 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 Councillor Maureen Braun, Councillor John Hart, Councillor Andrew McNeil, Councillor Lord Monroe Palmer, Councillor Colin Rogers, Councillor Kate Salinger, Councillor Daniel Seal and Councillor Reuben Thompstone.

3. MINUTES (Agenda Item 1.3):
RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14 December 2010 be approved.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1.4):
 Members declared the following interests:

Member:	Subject:	Interest Declared:
Councillor Dean Cohen Councillor Jack Cohen Councillor Tom Davey Councillor Anthony Finn Councillor Andrew Harper Councillor Anne Hutton Councillor Susette Palmer Councillor Darrel Yawitch Councillor Susette Palmer Councillor Agnes Slocombe	Item 3.2 – Motion in the name of Councillor Jack Cohen: Controlled Parking Zones Item 4.2 – Opposition Policy Item: Parking in Barnet	Personal but non prejudicial interests as the Councillors live within Controlled Parking Zones in the borough. The Councillors remained in the Chamber and took part in the discussion and voting on these items.
Councillor Kath McGuirk	Item 3.4 - Motion in the name of Councillor Ansuya Sodha – Arts Depot, Barnet Museum & Church Farm House Museum	Personal but non prejudicial interest as Councillor McGuirk is a member of the Arts depot Board. Councillor McGuirk remained in the Chamber and took part in the discussion and voting on this item.
Councillor David Longstaff	Item 3.4 - Motion in the name of Councillor Ansuya Sodha – Arts Depot, Barnet Museum & Church Farm House Museum	Personal but non prejudicial interest as Councillor Longstaff is a Trustee of the Arts Depot. Councillor Longstaff remained in the Chamber and took part in the discussion and voting on this item.
Councillor Rowan Turner	Item 5.3.4 – Vacancies on School Governing Bodies	Personal but non prejudicial interest as a member of Councillor Turner’s family is a nominee for one of the vacancies on School Governing Bodies. Councillor Turner remained in the Chamber and took part in the discussion and voting on this item.

5. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 5):
 There was none.

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, 3.1 and 3.5 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, 3.1 and 3.5 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 ANNE HUTTON AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR BRIAN SALINGER – EXAM RESULTS (Agenda Item 3.3)

Motion 3.3 in the name of Councillor Anne Hutton was moved. Amendments in the names of Councillors Brian Salinger and Ross Houston were moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Salinger was declared carried. 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 by Councillor Salinger was declared carried.

RESOLVED – Council is proud of its first class schools and colleges that give the children of the Borough the best possible start in life.

Council believes that an excellent education and training is vital in building the future of Britain's and Barnet's economy.

Therefore Council is proud to note the excellent results achieved in schools and colleges last year across the Borough.

Council believes these achievements are the result of hard work by students, staff, teachers, parents, and Governors supported by LBB which is committed to maintaining high standards and working to help make every school a good school for every child.

Council warmly congratulates all the students, staff, teachers, parents, Governors and officers responsible for these excellent results, and calls on Cabinet to ensure Barnet continues to support its institutions so that they enjoy excellence in education for years to come.

10. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR JACK COHEN - PUPIL PREMIUM - EXTRA FUNDING FOR PUPILS ON FREE SCHOOL MEALS (Agenda Item 3.1)

Motion 3.1 in the name of Councillor Jack Cohen was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Anne Hutton was moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Anne Hutton was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the Motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – This council notes the importance of education for protecting the opportunities of Barnet's young people in these tough times and therefore welcomes the fact that, despite the severity of measures being taken in many public services to bring the UK deficit down to a sustainable level, the coalition government has firstly increased the amount of money going to schools to take account of rising pupil numbers and has also added to this a pupil premium, attaching extra funding for pupils on Free School Meals, looked after children and the children of service-men and women.

This council notes the £3,763,000 benefit this pupil premium will bring to 8700 of Barnet's most deprived and vulnerable pupils, helping to ensure every pupil in Barnet has a fair start in life and also welcomes the commitment to increase the amount of money available for the premium fourfold by 2014/15, bringing the total premium to the £2.5bn called for by the Liberal Democrats in their manifesto.

This council notes that schools and parents should register all pupils eligible for Free School Meals by 20 January 2011, ensuring that Barnet receives the full benefit of this extra funding. Council therefore requests Cabinet to draw up plans to ensure that all eligible Children have been registered and if necessary seek an extension to the deadline.

11. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR SACHIN RAJPUT – RIGHT TO CONTROL (Agenda Item 3.5)

Motion 3.5 in the name of Councillor Sachin Rajput was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Barry Rawlings was moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Barry Rawlings was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the Motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – Council believes that disabled residents should have choice and control over the support they need, freeing them from state control and improving outcomes for them.

Further, Council notes that giving local people the ability to determine how best to help themselves, chimes perfectly with LBB's own "One Barnet" approach to services.

Therefore Council is proud that Barnet is one of seven trailblazers in the UK, working with JobCentrePlus to put Right to Control into practice and test it out.

Council calls on Cabinet to work to ensure the success of Right to Control and other initiatives (including those of One Barnet) that are shaping services around those who use them.

12. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR JACK COHEN – CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES (Agenda Item 3.2)

Motion 3.2 in the name of Councillor Jack Cohen was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Charlie O'Macauley was accepted by Councillor Jack Cohen and moved. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive Motion was declared lost.

13. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR ANSUYA SODHA AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR ROBERT RAMS – ARTS DEPOT, BARNET MUSEUM & CHURCH FARM HOUSE MUSEUM (Agenda Item 3.4)

Motion 3.4 in the name of Councillor Ansuya Sodha was moved. Amendments in the names of Councillors Robert Rams and Pauline Coakley Webb were moved. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Rams was declared carried. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb was declared lost.

At least ten Members rose in their places and demanded a formal division on the voting on the amendment in the name of Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb. Upon being taken, the results of the Division were declared as follows:

For	Against	Not Voting	Absent
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Brodkin	Coleman	Finn	Braun
Campbell	Dean Cohen	Susette Palmer	McNeil
Coakley Webb	Melvin Cohen	Jack Cohen	Rogers
Cooke	Alison Cornelius		Monroe Palmer
Farrier	Richard Cornelius		Thompstone
Houston	Davey		Seal
Hutton	Evangeli		Kate Salinger
Geoffrey Johnson	Gordon		
Julie Johnson	Greenspan		
McGuirk	Harper		
Moore	Helena Hart		
O-Macauley	John Hart		
Rawlings	Hillan		
Schneiderman	Khatri		
Slocombe	Longstaff		
Sodha	Marshall		
Tierney	Old		
Sargeant	Perry		
Zubairi	Prentice		
	Rajput		
	Rams		
	Rayner		
	Rutter		
	Brian Salinger		
	Scannell		
	Schama		
	Shooter		
	Sowerby		
	Strongolou		
	Andreas Tambourides		
	Joanna Tambourides		
	Thomas		
	Turner		
	Yawitch		

For	19
Against	34
Not Voting	3
Absent	7
TOTAL	63

Upon being put to the vote, the substantive Motion as amended by Councillor Rams was declared carried.

RESOLVED – Council regrets the financial crisis caused by the last Labour Government that means tough choices have to be made.

Council notes and welcomes LBB Conservative Administration’s commitment to freeze Council Tax.

Council calls on Cabinet to examine the results of the consultation on the Budget headlines (including on these items) and to act as it deems appropriate given these tight financial constraints.

14. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING.

In accordance with the Agenda, the Mayor adjourned the meeting. The meeting reconvened at 9.05pm.

15. ADMINISTRATION POLICY ITEM – PARKING STANDARDS (Agenda Item 4.1)

Councillor Richard Cornelius proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the Policy Item was declared carried. **RESOLVED – Council notes the announcement by the Secretary of State for Communities, Eric Pickles MP and Transport Secretary, Philip Hammond MP that the Government is no longer insisting on Maximum Parking Standards in new developments (within PPG13 in conjunction with PPS3).**

Council calls on the Cabinet to investigate whether the Parking Standards in the London Borough of Barnet’s current and future Planning Policies could be altered subject to consultation.

16. OPPOSITION POLICY ITEM – PARKING IN BARNET (Agenda Item 4.2)

Councillor Kath McGuirk proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. An amendment in the name of Councillor Alex Brodtkin was moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Brodtkin was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the Policy Item was declared lost.

17. REPORT OF CABINET – MONITORING 2010/11 – APPROVAL OF VIREMENTS (Agenda Item 5.1.1)

Councillor Daniel Thomas, moved adoption and reception of the report. **RESOLVED – That the proposed virements be approved.**

18. PROPOSED NEW MEETING DATES (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Items 5.3.1)

RESOLVED – Council approved the proposed new meeting dates contained in the table below.

Committee	Date of Meeting	Proposed new date of Meeting	Reason
Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee	8/02/11	21/02/11	A number of Members have a clash of meetings with the Planning Sub-Committees on the same evening.
Special Committee (Constitution Review)	13/01/11	9/02/11	The Chairman has a Mayoral engagement on the same evening.

19. JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.2)

RESOLVED – That the Chairman of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee be delegated authority to appoint any Member of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee to attend a meeting of the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny

Committee as a substitute Member, in the event that an appointed Member is unable to attend.

20. VACANCIES ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.3)

RESOLVED – The following appointments were approved:

Vacancy Reference	Organisation	Person Appointed
1003	Day's and Atkinson's Almshouse Charity	No appointment made
1062	Fostering Approvals Panel	Councillor Graham Old
1089	Jesus Hospital Charity in Chipping Barnet	Councillor Brian Salinger
1076	Nicholl & Daniel Homes Charity	No appointment made
1137	Valentine Poole Charity	Councillor Brian Salinger

21. VACANCIES ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.4)

RESOLVED – The following appointments were approved:

Vacancy Reference	School	Person Appointed
VP04.1	Blessed Dominic RC	No appointment made
P23.1	Brookland Junior and Infant	No appointment made
P28.d1	Claremont Primary	Councillor Reuben Thompstone
P32.3	Colindale JMI	Adam Langleben
S03.3	Copthall	Rohini Abeyasinghe
P41.2	Dollis Infant	Tom Lavelle
P43.2	Edgware Junior and Edgware Infant and Nursery	No appointment made
P43.3	Edgware Junior and Edgware Infant and Nursery	No appointment made
P43.4	Edgware Junior and Edgware Infant and Nursery	No appointment made
P40.3	Fairway Primary and Children's Centre	Carole Read
P04.2	Foulds	Michael Subramaniam
P24.2	Garden Suburb Infants and Junior	Councillor Daniel Seal
P15.1	Hollickwood Primary	No appointment made
SP01.1	Mapledown	No appointment made
P17.1	Northside	Councillor Ross Houston
SP04.3	Oak Lodge	David Leighton
P30.1	Parkfield JMI	Debbie Hanley
P30.2	Parkfield JMI	No appointment made
VS6.1	St James RC High	No appointment made

Vacancy Reference	School	Person Appointed
VS7.2	St Mary's CE High	Tricia French
VP23.1	St Paul's CE School Mill Hill	Councillor Joan Scannell
SO6.6	The Compton	Councillor Reuben Thompstone
P50.3	The Orion and Goldbeaters	No appointment made
P03.5	Whitings Hill Primary	Linda Turner

- 22. CHANGES TO OUTSIDE BODIES – BARNET LAW SERVICE (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.5)
RESOLVED – That Councillor Barry Evangeli replaces Councillor Eva Greenspan as the Council's representative on Barnet Law Service.**

23. CHANGE TO CHAIRMANSHIP OF HENDON RESIDENTS FORUM

The Conservative Group moved from the floor that they wished to replace Councillor John Hart with Councillor Darrel Yawitch as the Chairman of Hendon Residents Forum.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Darrel Yawitch replaces Councillor John Hart as the Chairman of Hendon Residents Forum.

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

Comment: Councillor Claire Farrier

Cabinet Resources Committee has deferred any increase in allotment rent to 2012 and deferred the decision on the amount increase until the next Cabinet meeting on 14 February. These small changes to proposals to review input from members of the Barnet Allotment and Horticultural Society who pointed that the proposal to increase rent this year was illegal. The Cabinet must now also consider the legality of the proposed three-fold increases in light of the Harwood V Reigate and Bunstead decision in 1981. The judgement in this case was that allotments are recreational facilities and charges should change in same way as other recreational facilities. Charges under all facilities under the heading of leisure for Barnet are increasing in line with inflation. In order to prevent the risk of legal challenge this must also apply to charges relating to allotments.

Response: Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I think the whole matter is academic because I suspect by this time next year all the allotments in the Borough will be managing their own affairs, setting their charges and implementing their own maintenance budgets. The allotment holders may then realise how actually how much it really costs the Council to run these allotments. Sadly, in the current mess the country is in we can not subsidise anyone's hobbies.

Comment: Councillor Geof Cooke

Mr Mayor, the gazebo in Sunny Hill Park, which is in your Ward, was built by the café owner without planning permission and without the Council's permission as freeholder of the land. I am making no question or comment regarding the retrospective planning application, my concern here is with the removal notice on behalf of the Council as freeholder. This is extremely unpopular with people in the area and in my

view it is perfectible acceptable and in fact a boon to the area. What I would like to know is whether the removal notice was given purely by an officer and whether this Administration allows officers to take that sort of decision or whether it was personally stipulated by Councillor Coleman as the Cabinet Member?

Response: Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I understand the matter is coming to the Hendon Area Planning Sub-Committee on February 8th and I have no comments to make and I have had no involvement whatsoever in the issue and planning matters will take their usual course.

Comment: Councillor Brian Salinger

Thank you Mr Mayor. I suspect that there is more time left than I suspected. I put this down on the comment on the work of the Cabinet not to comment on things like parking income and changes on fees and charges. We spend a lot of time in the Council talking about where we are spending money but there are sources of income for this Council which need to be protected and we need to be sure that we are getting what we are entitled to. I'd like to know from the Cabinet Member, for instance, whether he studied the Bill Roots report into the HEFC loss that we had. Also, I would like to know whether anyone has taken the care to look at the grants that actually come the way of this Council. We talk about the grants that we get from Central Government but has anyone actually looked through the list of them. Let me just quote if I may, Mr Mayor, from the CLG website and a breakdown of local specific finance settlements for 2010/11. Specific grants within the AES, their breakdown – let me read you out some of them:

- Dedicated schools grant;
- Schools standards grant including personalisation;
- Ethnic minority achievement;
- Music grant;
- Parent to success;
- Extended schools sustainability;
- Extended schools subsidy;
- School development grant;
- School lunch grant;
- One to one tuition;
- Targeted support for primary and secondary strategy;
- London prohibition grant;
- Early years increasing flexibility for 3 and 4 years;
- Surestart early years and children;
- Youth opportunities fund;
- Short breaks gaining holidays for disabled children;
- Targeted mental health in schools grant;
- Think family grant.

There is a whole long list of these and they are broken down into individual amounts within them. I want to know whether anyone has actually checked whether we are getting our correct share of those grants.

Response: Councillor Daniel Thomas

Thank you Mr Mayor. I can reassure Councillor Salinger that on a monthly basis Senior Officers monitor the grants claims that this Council should be making so at least it is being looked at the highest level and my suspicion is that all these grants that Councillor Salinger has just read out would probably just be all rolled into one at

some point or scrapped. And indeed if there is some extra funding, the new homes bonus for instance as well, which Councillor Salinger didn't mention but I know that Councillor Cornelius is doing his best to make sure that we benefit from that also in future years. So, yes we are looking to optimise our income and revenue to this Council to balance the budget.

The meeting finished at 10:17pm

Council Questions to Cabinet Members
25 January 2011
Questions and Responses

Question 1**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing tell the Council how much the Borough is expecting to receive this year by way of its share of the surplus made by the London Housing Consortium?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Barnet Homes have not used the LHC for many years and the Council is not expecting to receive any cash this year. The surplus is only distributed to those councils who do give them business.

Supplementary Question 1**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Can I ask the Cabinet Member whether he is aware that Barnet is one of 12 full members of the LHC and that there are now 46 associate members? At a time when local government is looking to work together, this is a purchasing consortium and one that is exceedingly longstanding, has given benefit to this Borough in the past. Can he explain why it is that we don't use any of their services given that they offer a wide range of products and services available through 12 OJEU compliant pre-tendered framework and negotiated arrangements, which I can give a list of all them and they are not just limited to housing projects. We seem to have opted out of our participation in this organisation at a time when I think we ought to be taking advantage of it.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Mr Mayor, I must thank the Councillor for drawing this to my attention. This is indeed an organisation that rather has gone out of fashion with Barnet. Maybe we should look at it again – I accept we should look at it but it could well be that this is simply too remote from Barnet and not of great use to us. We haven't used it since the decent homes programme came in but I would look at it again.

Question 2**Councillor Jack Cohen**

In relation to Residents Parking Permits and visitors vouchers:

How many Residents parking permits (broken down by first second and third vehicles were issued in 2009/10 and during the current financial year to date (31 December 2010). How much income does this amount to for each of the two periods?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The information is not readily available in the format requested as the records for second and third permits are combined. Taking this into account the figures are as shown in the table below:

	2009/10	2010/11 (part)
First Permits	11,249	8,915
Second / Third Permits	2,455	1,971
Total permits	13,704	10,986
Total Income	£507,964	£469,674

Supplementary Question 2**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Yes Councillor Coleman, can you tell me why you are proposing to increase the cost of parking permits by well over 100%?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, the reasons are long and complicated as Councillor Cohen knows as he was at Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny last night they include the deficit on the parking account the need to maintain our roads and pavements in this Borough to an adequate standard.

Question 3**Councillor Alison Moore**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm what the annual cost of the lease for the artsdepot building is, and how much of it the Council is responsible for in the event that the artsdepot as an organisation closes?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The Council holds the lease of the artsdepot space at a peppercorn rent and recharges it to the Arts Depot Trust for the same. Therefore the Council suffer the loss of only the additional peppercorn rent if the Arts Depot Trust were to cease trading or vacate the building. The Council would then either receive an additional rental income from any new occupant or make a saving itself by relocating services from another site.

With regard to service charges paid by the Trust, these vary over time and the Council would remain liable in the same way as at present. Equally, they would be recharged to any new occupant in the same way as they are now to the Trust.

The Council might also receive directly the income from the Trust's current sub-tenants, depending on how the sub-occupancies were arranged.

The Council is of course working closely with the Trust to ensure its financial viability is maintained.

Question 4**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Will you join me in congratulating Council staff for the successful road gritting arrangements that went according to plan during the icy weather in December? Will you comment on the success of the "grit bin warden scheme"?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes I am delighted that the supreme efforts of Council staff at all levels combined with meticulous planning and dynamic Political Leadership meant the Borough kept running during the recent winter weather. The Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Longstaff (Chairman Chipping Barnet Area Environment Committee) and I visited the Mill Hill Depot on 19 January to thank the many Council staff for their hard work.

The "grit bin warden scheme" or "Community Keeper" scheme is a pilot scheme that Environment & operations are running this winter and follows on from one of the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group that looked into the winter service provided by the Council during the previous winter.

So far the far the pilot scheme includes two Community Keepers, both in the Golders Green area, and three schools. Two further Community Keepers are being sought from other parts of the Borough.

The primary responsibility of the Community Keeper is to distribute the salt equitably amongst his fellow residents thereby eliminating the misuse of the salt. The Council will support the Community Keepers in their tasks by providing salt, wheel barrows, snow shovels, and weather forecast information.

Supplementary Question 4**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Can the Councillor confirm that if there is going to be another very cold snap this winter, we are as well equipped now with being able to deal with that, as far as the roads are concerned, as we were in the previous cold snap in December?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I know that you visited the Depot at 6 o'clock one morning last week, and I know staff were very grateful to see you as indeed the Mayoress at the Depot at 6 o'clock in morning, and you would have seen the huge pile of grit that remains there at the Depot. I understand the strategic reserve under the control of the TfL and the Mayor has not been touched and I understand that Her Majesty's Government has yet another secret reserve stored away. So, I am quiet confident that there is sufficient grit in this Borough, available to this Borough, to keep the Borough moving no matter what the Lord Almighty throws at us.

Question 5

Councillor Jack Cohen

In relation to Residents Parking Permits and visitors vouchers:

How many books of ten visit vouchers were issued for the same two periods? And how much income does this amount to for each of the two periods and what is the current charge for a book of ten visitor vouchers?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The vouchers are available singly, or in any number, although many people find it convenient to buy them in blocks of ten. As they are currently £1 each a book of ten would cost £10.

	2009/10	2010/11 (part)
Vouchers Issued	191,073	157,384
Income	£191,073	£157,384

Supplementary Question 5

Councillor Jack Cohen

Councillor Coleman you say in your answer that a book of permits currently costs £10 for a book of 10. Why then does the schedule of charges presented to the Cabinet Resources Committee show the current charges as £12 per book? Either the figure of £12 is wrong or the Council is being losing revenue this year by under charging which one is it?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I never knowingly under charge Mr Mayor.

Question 6

Councillor Geof Cooke

Please list the items of playground equipment that have been removed from parks and playgrounds in the past year with, for each item, the location and a description of what, if anything, has replaced it including any change in the intended age group of the users.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Please see table below:

Location	Items Removed	Items Installed in replacement	Age Range
Friary Park	Kompan Junior Swings	None	Junior
	Kompan Junior Multi Unit	Wicksteed Grizzly Multi Unit	Same age range
Hollickwood Park	Toddler Multi Unit	Wicksteed Tom Thumb multi unit	Same age range
	3 Spring Mobiles	2 new spring mobiles including 1 spring see saw	Same age range
Old Court House	Round about	Wicksteed Reactions Eclipse multi unit	Same age range
Victoria Park	Kompan Junior multi unit	Wicksteed grizzly unit	Same age range
	Kompan climbing frame	Wicksteed roundabout	Same age range
	Kompan see saw	Wicksteed see saw	Same age range

Location	Items Removed	Items Installed in replacement	Age Range
Mill Hill Park	Kompan Toddler Multi Unit	Wicksteed Tom Thumb Multi Unit	Same age range
	Kompan Junior Multi Unit	Proludic Junior Multi Unit	Same age range
	Kompan Junior Swings	Wicksteed Junior Swings	Same age range
	Kompan Toddler Swings	Wicksteed Toddler Swings	Same age range
	Kompan Stand alone Slide	None	Toddler

Supplementary Question 6

Councillor Geof Cooke

The feedback that I have had from parents is that play equipment which is challenging and of high play value at Friary Park has been replaced by inferior equipment which detains the children for not so long and is of low play value. What feedback have you had?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

None at all, Mr Mayor.

Question 7

Councillor Brian Gordon

Will the Cabinet Member confirm that cashless parking is available throughout the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes, the Pay-by-Phone system which allows motorists to pay for parking without using coins is available at every location operated by the Council across the Borough.

Supplementary Question 7

Councillor Brian Gordon

I want to ask you about the interim period before we move to being cashless with our parking policy. Is it possible to try a bit harder to see that the machines that are broken are repaired? More and more of them seem to be broken and a lot of people don't understand the position that they can no longer park by those machines that are broken. Also, can the notice on the machines be a bit clearer. It is a little yellow notice that can easily be missed that tells that you can't park anymore by a broken machine, that you as they have to make a phone call or find somewhere else. Many people are being caught out quite innocently by this very small notice.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Sadly, Mr Mayor, the machines are being vandalised as fast as we repair them and in last few weeks we have even had reports of the labels stuck on the machines informing people how to use the cashless parking system being scrapped off. There are reports that you would have heard from last week on your visit to the Depot from the parking staff themselves. That is why I intend to move to an entirely cashless system, as the City of Westminster operates, very quickly indeed. There will be very prominent notices on the lampposts telling you how to use the system.

Question 8

Councillor Jack Cohen

At the December meeting of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting Members were informed that "Parking Enforcement" is in "melt down". Do you accept responsibility or do you blame your predecessor?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I blame circumstances.

Supplementary Question 8

Councillor Jack Cohen

Thank you Mr Mayor. Councillor Coleman is blaming circumstances for the meltdown in parking enforcement.

Given that he admitted last night, Councillor Coleman, that the special parking account could lose up to £2 million in the current financial year due to poor organisation, will the Cabinet Member now tell me what he means by circumstances – is it his complete failure to get to grips with his portfolio or whether does he means that he was never up to the job in the first place?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, Councillor Jack Cohen is not correct as the parking account is not going to lose £2 million, the surplus on the parking account will be £2 million less than was budgeted in the current year's Council budget. That deficit I am advised by the Section 151 Officer in no uncertain terms, has to be made up.

Question 9

Councillor Geof Cooke

What is the latest estimate for the Pension Fund loss arising from the bankrupt Connaught housing maintenance company bond being allowed to lapse?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

There is a risk that the cost to the pension fund will be £1.5m, but this figure is subject to negotiation with the administrator. The Council's actuary has confirmed that this would not impact on the employers contribution rate and therefore would not have an impact on local taxpayers. Staff benefits are also unaffected by this matter.

Supplementary Question 9

Councillor Geof Cooke

I understand that the issue under review here came too late for the triennial review and the consequences from that which took place recently. But, Councillor Thomas are you seriously contending that the £1.5 million black hole in the pension fund will have no impact in the long run on the money which council taxpayers will have to pay by way of employer contributions.

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, the people who know best in this matter, the actuaries, have confirmed otherwise and this issue is being investigated and I understand that a report will be tabled at March's Audit Committee.

Question 10

Councillor Brian Gordon

Will the Cabinet Member confirm that refuse arrangements worked successfully during the Christmas period?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes, I can confirm that the week before Christmas when the severe weather took hold we were able to continue the refuse collection service as per normal. During the Christmas period there were two double collections which took place on 3 and 4 January 2011, to replace refuse not collected on the 27 and 28 December (both Bank Holidays). I am very grateful to our hard working staff and I am happy to explain to neighbouring Labour controlled Boroughs how we completed the task so successfully in Barnet. I am also pleased that this Administration ignored the Labour Government siren calls to introduce fortnightly refuse collections.

Supplementary Question 10

Councillor Brian Gordon

Thank you for explaining how well the double collection worked after the Christmas period. But, I would like to know if it is absolutely essential that we give all the staff the week off, the whole of the Christmas 'week'. I understand the Christmas days and the actual bank holiday days are sacrosanct as far as these things are concerned and I'm prepared to accept that. But, the other days of the week are not a bank holiday and I just wonder where we got into this situation where there seem to be no refuse collections at all during that particular week.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I think Councillor Gordon misunderstands – if only we could afford to give all the staff the week off. There were no collections on the Monday and Tuesday after Christmas which were both bank holidays in lieu of Christmas Day and Boxing Day which fell at the weekend. The rest of that week collections took place as normal.

Question 11

Councillor Jack Cohen

When did e-recruitment commence? How many posts have been advertised? And how many filled using e-recruitment since the commencement?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

The e-recruitment project experienced various unexpected delays through the procurement process and therefore has not yet been implemented. The project is now in the implementation phase and the system development with our software supplier commenced in early January. The roll out of the newly branded "One Barnet" jobs and careers website and the recruitment administration system will take 10-12 weeks, with a launch date of Monday 28 March 2011.

Supplementary Question 11

Councillor Jack Cohen

Councillor Hillan, thank you for explaining that the implementation of e-recruitment had been delayed and the launched date has now been scheduled for 28 March 2011. At the Cabinet meeting on 29 October 2010 a report on the estimated financial benefits of Phase 1 of the One Barnet Project showed a saving of £106,000 due to the implementation of e-recruitment in the financial year 2010-11. Would you agree with me that this figure must be wrong and throws into doubt all the projected savings of the One Barnet Project?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

I am sure that the figures would have been changed and obviously we will be ending this financial year with the figures as amended accordingly. It is nice to know Councillor Cohen you are such a fan of One Barnet though.

Question 12

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Would the Cabinet Member advise how the Council can conduct a new relationship with citizens if democracy pages on the Council website still list former Councillors as current Councillors?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Following the elections in May 2010, the website was updated to include information on the current Members and to delete that pertaining to retiring Members. However, whilst there was and is an up-to-date list of all Councillors on the website, it appears that some of the associated links did still have reference to former Councillors and these have now been removed from the system. Democratic Services have also recently conducted further work relating to information on the website to ensure that the information on links relating to Members is fully up-to-date. Where anomalies were evident, namely due to duplication of information and outdated information that had not been deleted (as new information was put on the website) these have been remedied as far as possible.

Question 13

Councillor Tom Davey

Please could the Cabinet Member outline how LBB is performing in handling residents' phone calls?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

This has been an area of service where the Council has struggled in the past. However, performance has been improving month on month for the last year and in the quarter to January 2011 we have exceeded our target for answering calls within 20 seconds. This is the first time that I can remember this target being exceeded and, moreover, we have achieved this during a period of very poor weather which, historically, has presented huge demands on our call centres. At the same time, residents' satisfaction with the quality of service they receive from the Council's customer services staff remains high. But I do not want us to rest on our laurels and we are increasing our target for the fourth quarter of the year.

Question 14

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

What extra services will be provided to residents by the parking department to merit a 150% increase in the charge for residents' parking permit (from £40 to £100)?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The increased revenue will ensure that the parking fund surplus can be used to improve our roads and pavements to the benefit of all Borough residents.

Supplementary Question 14

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

In other words residents living in the CPZs will be paying to resurface roads in other areas of the Borough where there are no CPZs. Is that so, Councillor Coleman?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Including, Mr Mayor, in Councillor Sodha's own Ward for which no doubt she will be claiming the credit.

Question 15

Councillor Andrew Strongoulou

Could the Cabinet Member please outline what Barnet is currently doing to give local disabled people more control over their lives?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

The Council has been implementing a programme of activity to give disabled people more control over their lives, namely the 'Delivering Choice and Independence' programme since 2007.

One objective of this programme is to create a 'consumer led Adult Social Services Directorate'. This has led to a comprehensive revision of our case management practices designed to ensure that recipients of social care maximise their control over their lives. Two key elements of this have been:

- The introduction of 'homecare enablement'. This is the provision of time-limited packages of intensive support designed to help people learn and re-learn the skills necessary for them to live independently at home. 50% of recipients of homecare enablement are not in receipt of social care 90 days after its completion.¹ By contrast, before homecare enablement was introduced, 75% of people were still receiving traditional homecare or a direct payment seven weeks after being referred to us.²
- The introduction of 'personal budgets'. When someone receives a personal budget, they know how much money they have to spend on their social care and can thus take control over the design and management of their package of support. By the end of 2010/11, the Council's target is that 30% of the people Adult Social Services supports to live in the community will have taken this control of their social care funding through a personal budget or a direct payment.

The other objective of the Delivering Choice and Independence programme is to create a 'consumer led local social care market'. Examples of recent and current initiatives to incentivise social care providers to be more responsive to the demands of disabled people include:

- The 'Innovation Fund': a 'pot' of £200,000 of small grants allocated to organisations which are developing new service models which give disabled people control over their lives.
- 'Social Care Connect': a online directory of social care services on which people can rate the quality of the support they receive and discuss aspects of their care with peers in discussion groups.
- 'Transforming Community Equipment Services': moving to a 'prescription' system for simple occupational therapy equipment. This allows people to cash in prescriptions for equipment at local shops (such as pharmacies) – choosing to 'top up' their prescription with their own money if they decide to choose a piece of equipment which is more expensive than that normally provided by the State.

In January 2010, the London Borough of Barnet, Barnet Centre for Independent Living and local offices of the Jobcentre Plus successfully bid to be one of seven 'trailblazer' sites for the 'Right to Control'. This is a new legal right to give disabled people coordinated control over money and support they receive from the following funding streams:

- Social care;
- Community equipment;
- Disabled Facilities Grant;
- Independent Living Fund;
- Some Supporting People services;
- Work Choice; and
- Access to Work.

Disabled people gained the Right to Control on 13 December 2010. This places the Council at the forefront, nationally, of providing disabled people with control over numerous areas of their lives, including the support they receive for social care, housing and employment.

Question 16

Councillor Barry Rawlings

¹ Figure as at 5 September, 2010.

² 2008 data.

Would the Cabinet Member advise the status of any bed-blocking in Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

It is assumed that this is referring to delayed discharges from hospital due to Social Services. Barnet Social Services has got an excellent record in relation to preventing delays at the two acute hospitals (Barnet & Chase Farm and Royal Free Hospital) over a number of years. Delays do occasionally happen but are often due to external and exceptional circumstances including but not limited to client and relative choice and complex placements. There has been no change over the winter months to our excellent performance of ensuring no delays.

Over the last couple of years additional pressures relating to the increase in seasonal demand due to winter have been increasing nationally and there has been huge demand and pressure on the system over the past few weeks during the Christmas and snow period.

Barnet has in place systems and procedures to deal with this; indeed Barnet was green rated by the North Central London sector for its Capacity Plan (the Barnet Capacity Plan brings together our local organisational plans for dealing with a period of increased demand for unplanned health and social care) and general preparedness for winter. Barnet has a system of regular conference calls between relevant health and social care staff, so that any blockages in the system can be dealt with by the relevant managers or escalated as necessary. Barnet also participates in the North Central London daily conference calls.

Question 17

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

Eric Pickles and the Government say that frontline services should not face cuts as a result of the local government settlement – would the Leader advise why Barnet is proposing cuts to frontline services?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

The Council is making the majority of savings by improving efficiency and re-designing services, rather than making cuts, which is the challenge that Mr Pickles is setting local government. However, in the context of a budget gap of more than £40m, it is very difficult not to touch frontline services when delivering a balanced budget but our proposals are aimed to minimise the impact on service delivery.

Question 18

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

Would the Leader advise how many frontline staff have been made redundant for each year since 2002, and how many she expects will finally be made redundant as a result of the forthcoming budget?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

31 March 2011	31 March 2011	2010-09	2009-08	2008-07	2007-06	2006-05
Per the Budget Proposals – Projected Employee redundancies	Estimated front line redundancies	Frontline redundancies	Frontline redundancies	Frontline redundancies	Frontline redundancies	Frontline redundancies
345	221 ^{3*}	34	19	19	7	17

Question 19

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

³ 196 of these are estimated to fall in Children’s Service, but it is expected that this figure will reduce as budget proposals are finalised. We defined front line as being posts which are not back office, support or management according to HR data. Examples of front line posts counted in these figures are: grounds staff; street enforcement officers; customer services agents; highways maintenance; park keepers; revs and bens assistants; librarians.

Would the Leader advise if the Council has informed Eric Pickles yet about the number of redundancies Barnet expects to make as a result of the forthcoming budget?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

Advance notification of potential redundancies is required from employers proposing to make 20 more employees redundant within a period of 90 days. The Redundancy Payments Service (RPS), which is part of the Insolvency Service, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, collects the information and distributes it to the appropriate Government Departments and Agencies. The HR1 form which initiates this was faxed to the Insolvency Service by the Head of Business Partnering & Change on 2 December and a transmission receipt received, a further e-mail confirmation was received from the Insolvency Service on 3 December 2010.

Question 20

Councillor Andrew McNeil

Would the Cabinet Member advise how the Barnet Museum will be able to remain open without the Council's financial support?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

These are extremely difficult times for councils and in such times we have to consider challenging proposals. Barnet Museum is expected to cost the Council £23,110 this year. It is open for 10 hours a week and has 3,087 visitors a year with a direct cost to the Council of £7.49 per visit. Given these facts, I think it is hard to justify continuing the level of funding we give to Barnet Museum when our priority has to be to protect services for the most vulnerable people in the Borough. That said, I am keen to hear any alternatives that help mitigate the impact of these proposals on Barnet Museum, and await the results of the consultation to assess whether viable alternative options have been suggested.

Question 21

Councillor Andrew McNeil

Would the Cabinet Member advise what provision is being made by the Council to ensure that the 17th Century Church Farm House retains its listed status?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

This listing is in the hands of the Secretary of State. Any change is not in the gift of the Council.

Question 22

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Would the Cabinet Member outline the details of all repairs undertaken on the district heating system in Grahame Park during December?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

At the beginning of December 2010 because of a water leak of some 24,000 gallons on the District Heating System, all heating and hot water was lost to the domestic properties on the Graham Park Estate and St James School and Barnet College.

Barnet Homes Emergency planning was implemented and the Council arranged a meeting on 2 December at St James School. This was attended by all the affected organisations, and Council officers to discuss the work needed to restore services and the risks to residents and other people.

The cause was identified by a team of Engineers from Barnet Homes as a leak on the non-domestic pipe work. This testing required isolating each part of the system in turn and also some excavation work. The defective pipes were isolated and the heating was restored very quickly to the domestic properties. Whilst repairs were undertaken, operations staff from Barnet Homes arranged for all residents to have temporary heating. Homes were visited to ensure that vulnerable customers were given appropriate support.

Barnet Homes Engineers continued in extreme weather conditions to test the piping runs in relation to the college and the school to identify the precise location of the leak and fix it. Staff worked actively with the school and college to install temporary heating and enable as many pre-planned activities and lessons to continue.

Along with the emergency work, Barnet Homes procured the services of a specialist consultant to plan for the provision of a temporary boiler house for the School and College. Fortunately, this was not needed as the leak was successfully identified as being under the Grahame Park Youth Wing and was isolated and repaired to enable full restoration of heating to the School and College before the end of term.

Barnet Homes are continuing to work with the consultant team in order to develop a specific, priced contingency plan should this type of event recur in the future.

The leak was repaired fully to the Youth Wing on 17 December.

Supplementary Question 22

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Thank you for your answer Councillor Cornelius, but I really wanted an understanding of some of the issues regarding the individual blocks of homes that loss heating. And, also because just it mentions that there were a range of homes – over the Christmas period most of Grahame Park Estate had problems with their heating throughout and I know that Barnet Homes worked incredibly hard to do this and I wanted that everybody be made aware just how many people had suffered and how many blocks were effected. And, I hope this question will lead to consideration to increased funding given that the delay in the regeneration of the Estate could well cause serious problems to heating for years to come.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Mr Mayor, I regret the spelling error and that was obviously very careless of me and I am very sorry for that. The question on the heating, as Councillor Sargeant knows, to lose 35,000 gallons of hot water from a heating system is a serious problem. Not to know where the leak is and to have excavators in action to find it is a necessity in a complicated process. The heating system is very old and why we are regenerating the Estate.

Question 23

Councillor Alex Brodtkin

Will the proposed changes to the Space Day Centre in Edgware mean that it is not guaranteed to be open five days per week? In addition, have service users been consulted about the possibility of the Space not being open for five days per week?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

It is important to distinguish between The Space as a service and The Space as a building. When we asked service users what they liked about coming to The Space, they replied that they enjoyed seeing friends, staff, taking part in activities and going out for the day. All of these things will be important features of the new service. Service users rarely mentioned the building itself. In fact, the building is often quite empty during the day even now, with lots of service users going out to activities.

The new service, incorporating both The Space and Community Support Team, is certainly intended to operate five days a week and possibly even more, with some people choosing support at weekends. The schedules, times, and locations of activities for individual service users will be informed by their plans. We expect that some individuals will prefer a more flexible timetable than a five days per week, 9am – 5pm programme.

Whilst we do expect to use The Space building less over time, we recognise that there will still be some demand for the current building – particularly in the early stages of identifying the most suitable buildings for specific activities.

At the consultation with service users we did not specifically mention, as this would have been misleading, the possibility of The Space not being open for five days a week – the new service will operate five days a week.

However, we did consult about:

- How service users would feel spending time in community buildings other than the current day centre.
*Some people said they would be sad if the day centre did not operate as a permanent base. **People raised concerns about safety and keeping warm during the winter weather if they were out and about.***
- How service users would feel having a more flexible day timetable, where for example their day starts later and finishes after an activity in the evening.
People said they would like to take part in evening activities, but some people said they did not want to be at home during the day.
- How service users would feel having a more flexible weekly timetable, where for example they do not access the service for one day during the week and are supported to get to an activity they want to participate in at the weekend.
People said different things about whether they wanted to do things every day or just on some days during the week.

We will be incorporating the views of service users (and of parents and carers) into the planning process.

Supplementary Question 23

Councillor Alex Brodtkin

In Councillor Rajput's lengthy response he says that "we do expect to use The Space building less over time". In the interests of much needed clarity over this very sensitive issue could he categorically state how many days a week this day centre will be open and for those days that it is not open could he explain which alternative venues will perform the services that it currently provides?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

Mr Mayor, I think my response quite simply needs to be that the paper that you have before you provides the response that you need. We have consulted with people, we have distinguished between the services provided and the building; and of course there is scope for more uses than 5 days a week in the manner that my response provides.

Question 24**Councillor Alex Brodkin**

Given the Council's decision to withdraw funding to Church Farm House Museum and Barnet Museum, what measures will the Council take to ensure that the artefacts and materials presently housed in these museums remain available to Barnet residents?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The Council is looking at options to maintain the availability of artefacts and materials within the Borough. I would be interested to hear any proposals that help us achieve this.

Supplementary Question 24**Councillor Alex Brodkin**

I am very grateful to Councillor Rams invited me to make suggestions on the availability of material and artefacts, but I would had hoped that he had considered this before pulling the plug on the entire funding. But, if he wants suggestions, what can he do to enlighten me by telling me about the viability of storing artefacts and materials in libraries and Friary House that I believe being mooted. Hardly, ideal proposals but I would be interested to hear his thoughts.

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Mr Mayor, firstly I hope that the museums will stay where they are. I believe they will come forward with business plans to enable them to take a proper lease to the properties and therefore I hope that they will be staying in their exact properties. If that is not the case, we have already made a number of suggestions including libraries as he said, Priory House and other places for the collections to be held. Sadly, Barnet Museum, especially, doesn't seem to want to move out of High Barnet although it is a museum of Barnet and is not reciprocal to our suggestions and offers for providing new places for it. But, libraries are one option that we are looking at as you said as well as Priory House. There are a number of options on the table but I do hope that they would be staying exactly where they are.

Question 25**Councillor Alex Brodkin**

What is the current charge for a Barnet resident if they want to replace a wheeled bin which is stolen or has disappeared by means other than through the fault of the refuse crews?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

£57.00.

Supplementary Question 26**Councillor Alex Brodkin**

Full marks to Councillor Coleman for brevity but I imagine that the resident who is charged £57 for replacement of a bin that they might be a victim of crime to have loss by might ask the question – why they are paying £57 in this Borough and most other Boroughs in London don't pay anyway near as much as this? Why there is no second hand bin available at a cheaper price? Why there is no discount when you report it within 24 hours? Perhaps, residents would also like to know why there is no distinction between being a victim of crime and having a bin lost and losing it willy nilly?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, a resident may well ask that but I'm not so sure that a resident would want a second hand bin but there we go. I think that Councillor Brodkin makes a very sensible point there perhaps he might suggest that this is a matter for scrutiny and we can have a scrutiny into bin replacement programme. But, all I know it is very difficult, Mr Mayor, to tell the difference between a resident who has suffered a theft of a wheelie bin and a resident who has been perhaps a little bit careless with their wheelie bin.

Question 26**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

What capitalisation requests have been made to the Department for Communities and Local Government over the last year and for the forthcoming budget and what is the outcome of those requests?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Council made a request to capitalise costs associated with redundancy and also to capitalise losses arising from the potential impairment of Icelandic bank deposits. The Council received a £2.3m approval for capitalisation of costs of redundancy, but was refused a directive to capitalise losses from the potential impairment of bank deposits.

Supplementary Question 26

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Thank you Mr Mayor. Does the Government's latest refusal to capitalise Barnet's Icelandic bank losses not mean that residents are paying for this Administration's decision to chase high interest rates and by setting aside an earmarked risk reserve in the budget, millions of pounds worth of planned cuts in frontline services are actually being made to pay for those Icelandic bank losses.

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, no it doesn't.

Question 27

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Why did the Cabinet endorse cutting the Council's internal audit service when officers believed that the proposed cut would reduce the service by an unacceptable level?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Council faces tough choices on spending cuts, and no area of the Council should be exempt from reviewing their costs and coming up with more efficient ways of delivering services. Officers have been working up alternative proposals that would not reduce the level of service to the level initially indicated.

Supplementary Question 27

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Thank you Mr Mayor. When I raised the internal audit cuts back in October I was told that it would not affect the internal audit service which is now acknowledged not to be the case. So it is good to see that this ill-thought cut out is now been reconsidered, but why has he and the rest of the Cabinet approved it as an option given the warning that officers had given.

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, the Cabinet were right to be ambitious with savings across all the services in the Borough and it now transpires that the One Barnet approach of sharing back office services may actually save costs. We are now talking with Enfield, and sharing the service with them should be able to realise all the savings in the proposals. So, I'm glad that we have been ambitious and quite clearly the Labour Group would not have been as ambitious.

Question 28

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Is the closure of Barnet museum, which is staffed by volunteers, an example of the Big Society in action?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Barnet Museum operates with a significant Council subsidy to maintain the building and support running costs. The proposal to withdraw funding from Barnet Museum also invited comments and contributions to suggest alternative ideas to manage both Museum buildings, the collections and artefacts. I am keen to hear any cost-effective proposals that support volunteers in making the history of the Borough widely available to the public.

Supplementary Question 28

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Thank you Mr Mayor. As we know Barnet Museum is run by volunteers who are giving up their time without pay to run that museum. So, how come the much trumpeted Big Society actually work if the Council refuses to pay the running costs or is he going to ask the volunteers to pay the electricity bill as well?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Mr Mayor, Barnet Museum have put forward a business case which in fact they will be paying the electricity bill.

Question 29

Councillor Geoff Johnson

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that all school crossing patrols will be maintained, and none will be cut?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

No.

Supplementary Question 29

Councillor Geoff Johnson

Mr Mayor, thank you very much. I would like to submit a petition after my supplementary. In the answer to my question I take that to mean that your going to cut school crossing patrols. Please can you confirm which schools are going to have their school crossing patrol cut?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, Councillor Johnson is entirely correct. There are 10 schools though historic accident, that nobody can remember, are still funded centrally by the Council. Of those 10, 4 members of staff wish to retire and it is open to the schools to make their own crossing patrol arrangements just as it is open to them to make their own staffing arrangements in all other areas. This is an anomaly which has slipped through for many years – quite why we are funding 10 crossing patrols when the other 110 schools in the Borough are not having centrally funded crossing patrols nobody can remember.

Question 30

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

What are the potential future uses for Church Farm House museum?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The building has many potential uses and I would expect it to attract interest from local organisations as well as commercial organisations.

Supplementary Question 30

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Thank you Mr Mayor. Given that Church Farm House museum is a Grade Two Star Listed Building surely alternative uses are in fact actually limited. And, should we not actually be saving our heritage, listen to the thousands of residents who have signed a petition and want it to remain a museum as it has been for more than 50 years through economic times both good and bad. Do you now commit keeping the museum open on that site?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Mr Mayor, if the thousands of residents that signed the petition actually went to the museum maybe it would be more supportive.

Question 31

Councillor Alison Moore

Why wasn't the LINK contract let to Community Barnet in the first place, and could the Cabinet Member give details of how the Government grant to fund the establishment of the LINK was spent?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

BVSC (now known as Community Barnet) was one of the three organisations submitting tenders for the original contract – the others being Community Investors Development Agency (CIDA) and Parkwood Healthcare Ltd. The Tenders were reported to Cabinet Resources Committee on 22 July 2008 with 70% of the evaluation based on quality and 30% on price.

The CIDA bid was significantly ahead of the others' both in terms of price and quality. The latter evaluation included clarification and amplification through interviews and gave CIDA 251 points (out of a maximum of 280 points): Therefore, in accordance with established Council policy, as CIDA had scored highest both on quality and price, they were awarded the Contract.

A sum of £542,000 was added to Barnet's Area Based Grant over the period 2008/9 to 2010/11, which was equivalent to the Department of Health's expenditure on the PPI fora which preceded LINKS. However the point of Area Based Grant is that it is not ring fenced, giving the Council greater flexibility over how it used to support the Council's overall priorities.

The contract with CIDA was to the value of £413,000 over three years. The only expenditure outside this was staff costs of contract monitoring (which are not separately recorded) and legal matters relating to the contractual dispute with CIDA.

There was an additional one off grant of £10,000 in 2007/2008 from the Department of Health to help Local Authorities prepare for LINKS. This supported staff time in undertaking the additional responsibilities of getting LINKS started, particularly prior to the appointment of a host – and the costs of staging an awareness raising Conference in July 2008.

Supplementary Question 31

Councillor Alison Moore

Thank you Mr Mayor. Councillor Hart, given the turmoil over the next few years that will be created across the health sector by Andrew Lansbury's NHS proposal and the public concerns that is already causing, can I have your assurance that you are doing everything that you can to support the work of the LINK?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Thank you Mr Mayor. First of all, as Councillor Moore would expect, there would not be turmoil - there would be a vast improvement in the Health Service for patients in Barnet - and elsewhere in this Country - as a result of these reforms. I think the Labour Group would be far better to work with us in ensuring that these reforms do work for the benefit of patients rather than just making cheap political points and hoping to cause concern. As far as the LINK is concerned, as Councillor Moore will know, LINKS will be changing into Health Watch and we will - as per the legislation - be supporting them.

Question 32

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

With litigation still ongoing in the process to try and recover the £27.4 million from Icelandic banks, reported in Cabinet papers 2010 to be the 'single most important financial risk facing the Council', would the Cabinet Member please confirm what the litigation costs are to date and how is the litigation being funded?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Costs to date associated with this litigation are £91k since January 2009. Costs are included in the claim and will be repaid if it is successful.

Supplementary Question 32

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would really like a bit more information. The figure being mentioned is that this Council has had to pay £91,000 in litigation to try and recoup the money from Iceland – the £27.4 million that we're still missing.

What I am not sure about, and maybe I can be enlightened, is this £91,000 money that we have paid out or are we are on a no win no fee agreement and as we have no idea how long this

litigation will proceed could I have some idea if there was budget for this litigation? if there is a figure for that over the next 12 months? and if so what is that figure?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, I am always happy to enlighten Labour Councillors and a risk reserve has been set aside for all costs.

Question 33

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

With potholes once again in evidence, when will they be repaired and how will they be prioritised?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

It is expected that pothole reports are attended and made safe within 48 hours, however, these may be programmed (in exceptional circumstances) for immediate or 24 hour response if the report identifies a serious problem or if this is deemed more appropriate. The Councillor will have noticed that thanks to the Pot Hole elimination programme our roads are in a far better condition than many neighbouring Boroughs.

Supplementary Question 33

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

With regard to potholes, the quote by Councillor Coleman that we are in a good position might have been the case prior to the snow and ice of last December. But, right now, I don't actually see any sign of the current state of potholes being filled and I would advise him and any other Councillors that would like to drive northbound over the bridge over Colney Hatch Lane which is a pile of widening holes, and a danger to vehicles not being able to avoid them, or creating a danger to other lanes of traffic when trying to avoid them. Can I have clarification, is Council being proactive in identifying these new areas or is Council waiting for every pothole to be reported or is the truth that the cupboard is bare and work is being held back until the next financial year?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Well, Mr Mayor, I was rather hoping that the supplementary of Councillor Coakley Webb might be making suggestions about how we are going to pay for these pothole repairs but oh no the Labour Group want their cake and to eat it. On the one hand they demand the roads are repaired but on the other hand they demand we don't increase parking fees to pay for it. So, I am waiting for a Labour Member, Mr Mayor, to suggest how we are going to pay for these much needed repairs for our roads.

Question 34

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Is the Administration's proposal to cut the grant to the 'ARTS DEPOT' confirmation of their philistine approach to arts in the Borough or will the Administration listen to the concerns of residents and reconsider funding for the next financial year?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

We will listen to the concern of residents who are worried that her Government left this country with no money and who want children and adult services protected.

Supplementary Question 34

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Again, the question was not answered. Part of the question asks will he reconsider funding for the arts depot, but it wasn't actually answered. Could I have a really simple answer yes or no – to the question you are being paid to answer – will you or will you not reconsider funding to the arts depot?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Mr Mayor, our proposal is currently only to cut only 11% of the total funding for the arts depot.

This is a small amount in the grand scheme of things. We are committed, Mr Mayor, to continued funding the excellent work that it does with people with special needs and the like. I look forward to bringing full proposals to help the arts depot survive, I believe that if you look back through history the problems that we are in now were caused by the Labour Party not listening to the concerns. Mr Mayor, I have read the papers in great detail when the arts depot was proposed time after time Labour Councillors were advised that the theatre was not being built big enough to make it survive economically. Did they listen to us? No that is why they are in the position they are in at the moment. I hope that the arts depot survive and I'm sure it will and look forward to coming forward with innovative ideas to ensure that it does.

Question 35

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

If prevention is better than cure why is the Administration obliterating youth services in the full knowledge that this will create huge future costs to the community by not offering support to some of our most needy and vulnerable youngsters?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Given the necessity to reduce revenue spending following the Government's spending review, savings are proposed within the youth support area. The proposed restructuring of youth support services (which would bring together six existing services) aims to ensure that resources are focused on prioritising preventative and support work with the most vulnerable young people, as well as meeting statutory requirements. Within the proposal is the creation of a new targeted youth worker who will be able to intervene at an early stage of a young person being identified as 'at risk'. Preventative work is, essentially, the core driver behind the proposed structure.

Supplementary Question 35

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Thank you, quite simply, all I would like is clarification with regards to youth work. Does the reply actually suggest that this Council will now only be involved in youth work that is covered by a statutory requirement, and that anything else will simply not be funded?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Thank you Mr Mayor. I think that Councillor Coakley Webb seems to have become the Labour Group spokesman on just about everything. I'm delighted now to have my opportunity to join the throng. If Councillor Coakley Webb looked carefully at the youth offer proposals being made by the Childrens Service she would see that of course we are no longer able to fund a universal service but we are creating possibilities for targeted funding for, indeed, those who are most needy, most vulnerable among our children and young people, as my written answer suggests, and those principles are what underlie this Administration's budget proposals throughout.

Question 36

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Is the Cabinet Member happy to be ringing the death knell on both Barnet Museums by withdrawing Council support for the volunteers who have a passion and the dedication for preserving the history of the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

I am not happy to make any budget decisions that impact on any voluntary activity in Barnet. Church Farmhouse Museum is directly funded and operated by Council, and Barnet Museum is run by volunteers with a subsidy from the Council to cover building and operating costs. The fact is that the council's priority must be to protect vulnerable people in such a tough financial environment while Barnet Museum is open for only 10 hours a week at a cost to the Council of £7.49 per visit. Church Farmhouse Museum receives just 8,000 visitors a year at a cost of £15 per visit. The consultation set out to invite alternative proposals for management and use of the buildings, and options for the future display and promotion of collections. I welcome any cost-effective proposals that could tap into the dedication of volunteers to preserve the history of the Borough, make it widely available to the public, and provide value for money for Barnet residents.

Supplementary Question 36**Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb**

In relation to, Barnet Museum the museum has asked for an asset transfer in order for them to undertake completely the running and continuation of this really valuable asset to our history. Will the Cabinet Member confirm, if he actually going to comply and go along with this application for asset transfer or is the reality that Council would prefer to get the building, sell it and take the money?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Mr Mayor, the museum has come forward with a business plan which we need to look at in great detail to see if it viable. The idea is to let them have it on a commercial lease so that they are able to cover the costs for the maintenance as well as the costs of the lease. I hope that they are able to do that and I look forward to seeing the museum continue.

Question 37**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Is any Cabinet Member in overall charge of the Council's response to the Information Commissioner's Office audit that exposed many serious failings in the Council's arrangements for protection of confidential data?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

The Cabinet Member for Governance and Civic Affairs has overall responsibility for the Council's response to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) audit on Data Protection.

It is important for the Council to regularly assess how effective its DP policies and practices are, and to what extent it is meeting the statutory requirements of the Data Protection Act (DPA). To assist in this process (and in light of new powers the ICO now has to fine public authorities for non compliance), the ICO were asked to carry out an independent Data Protection Audit. This was a voluntary audit (for which there was no charge), but one that we were keen to undertake in order to have an independent and expert opinion on where we needed to focus our efforts in order to ensure we were fully compliant.

The Data Protection Action Plan that details the Council's progress against the recommendations made by the Information Commissioner's Office was agreed by the Audit Committee at the 7 December meeting, and this work is being led by the Director of Corporate Governance.

The audit highlighted a number of areas where it felt the Council needed to do more work. A key area of work focussed on training and awareness and ensuring that all staff understood their DPA responsibilities. In response to this a communications and awareness raising campaign was launched in October, part of which was a number of briefing sessions (31 in total) – aimed at all staff across the Council. Nearly 2000 staff attended these sessions, and additional briefings planned for February should raise that number further.

We are expecting a follow up audit to take place in March of this year and, whilst there is still work to do in addressing all of the recommendations, we are confident that the Council will be able to demonstrate significant progress in the key areas highlighted by the auditors.

Supplementary Question 37**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Councillor Melvin Cohen, thank you for owning up to being responsible for the Council's response to the audit into the Council's failings on safeguarding confidential data because I was a bit concerned because back in July when the report was submitted to the Cabinet Resources Committee it was submitted by 2 other members of the Cabinet and you were not mentioned. This is an important matter with 26 no less recommendations to respond to following the loss of a great amount of school pupil data earlier last year. It is an audit report that did not get reported to the Audit Committee until December, so the report came out in June went to Cabinet Resources in July – Audit Committee didn't get it until December. Is this fragmented and frankly ineffectual response to an extremely important matter good enough?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Mr Mayor, I am sick and tired of the continuous whinging and whining from this particular Member. Does he not have the good grace to concede the huge advances that this Administration has made in sorting this problem since first notified.

Question 38

Councillor Anne Hutton

Different models for delivering children's centres in Barnet have now emerged as part of the Council review – which model does the Cabinet Member personally wish to see implemented?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Consultation on children's centres and related services is currently taking place and does not close until 7 February. Cabinet will be fully considering the result of consultation at the Cabinet meeting on 14 February to help us take a decision on the proposal and the most appropriate model for children's centres. Like Cabinet colleagues I will take a view when I have considered all the evidence. I think it unwise to take a view before the results of consultation are known.

Question 39

Councillor Anne Hutton

Is the Cabinet Member pleased that the Government has done a u-turn on the cuts to funding of school sports partnerships?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Barnet benefits from a range of sports opportunities provided in our schools and through other organisations. The announcement of funding to support the ongoing development of physical education and sport in schools is most welcome, especially at a time of constrained resources.

Question 40

Councillor Alison Moore

Has the Leader liaised with the local business community on ameliorating the effects of the Government's new 20% VAT on the local economy?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

No.

Supplementary Question 40

Councillor Alison Moore

Thank you Mr Mayor. In the light of today's report, Councillor Hillan, that the economic growth of the country has stalled and that there has been no growth in the past quarter, will the Leader now reconsider and have that discussion with local businesses to ensure the health of our local economic environment?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

I am actually amazed how you can speak like that about this national crisis which was clearly caused by your Government and we are here yet again sorting out the mess. The 20% VAT was going to happen either way and I am sure that businesses were very well aware of it. The way that we can help our businesses in this Borough is by keeping down our council tax down to 0% increase which allows the economy to flourish.

Question 41

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

What are residents' choices for paying for parking when parking machines are out of service? Are they required to make calls to the Parking department to pay by bank card? What if they do not have mobile phones or even bank cards?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Cashless parking is the future (and indeed the present) as Westminster City Council have proved beyond doubt. I do not know anyone who is a car driver and does not have access to a mobile phone. If Councillor O-Macauley does I suggest he refers them to the many excellent mobile phone deals available on the High Street.

Supplementary Question 41**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

Thank you very much Mr Mayor. It is the same responsibility is the Cabinet Member is he part of the Big Society yes or no? The Cabinet Member's response is very inadequate I want to ask if the Cabinet Member ever check how many people using pay as you go phones are having to phone Barnet parking services to reason to all the protocols before accessing the service needed. Can the Cabinet Member have a wider consultation on this matter and answer my question properly?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I'm afraid I do not accept that, in this day and age, anyone who is a car driver doesn't have access to a mobile phone. I'm sorry the City of Westminster is completely cashless, cashless is the future coins are the past. Mr Mayor, as you will know banks are withdrawing all cheque cards and replacing them with debit cards so I cannot believe that if you are an active car driver you don't have access to a credit card or debit card and a mobile phone.

Question 42**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

Why was refuse not collected recently over the Christmas period even though the streets where not hazardous for driving?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The Councillor is incorrect, refuse collections took place as per normal in the severe weather leading up to Christmas.

Supplementary Question 42**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

Thank you very much Mr Mayor. I have a question for the Cabinet Member is he part of the Big Society yes or no? Well, it is very obvious that I have heard a similar question on this side this evening about refuse. Well, the refuse was collected in the Cabinet Member's area but was certainly not collected in many areas in Barnet including for over 2 weeks where I was approached by many residents. Can the Cabinet Member double check with the refuse service and write back to me as to what went on?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I am not sure what Councillor O-Macauley is asking me in that question. The refuse service works extremely well with our staff working until 8 or 9 o'clock at night to clear the rounds during the bad weather. We were proactive in sending the gritters up the road in front of the dustcarts. The only 2 days missed were the 2 bank holidays as planned on the Monday and Tuesday after Christmas. I, My Mayor, and I know you are because you up at the Depot and told them so, are very proud of work that the staff of this Borough did. Many residents have come up to me, and know to you Mr Mayor, to thank the refuse staff for maintaining a near normal service during the bad weather over the Christmas and New Year period. And frankly I am sick and tired about the moaning and whinging and carping of opposition Members who want to pick holes and denigrate the efforts of our first class staff.

Council Questions to Cabinet Members
25 January 2011
Questions and Responses

Question 1**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing tell the Council how much the Borough is expecting to receive this year by way of its share of the surplus made by the London Housing Consortium?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Barnet Homes have not used the LHC for many years and the Council is not expecting to receive any cash this year. The surplus is only distributed to those councils who do give them business.

Supplementary Question 1**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Can I ask the Cabinet Member whether he is aware that Barnet is one of 12 full members of the LHC and that there are now 46 associate members? At a time when local government is looking to work together, this is a purchasing consortium and one that is exceedingly longstanding, has given benefit to this Borough in the past. Can he explain why it is that we don't use any of their services given that they offer a wide range of products and services available through 12 OJEU compliant pre-tendered framework and negotiated arrangements, which I can give a list of all them and they are not just limited to housing projects. We seem to have opted out of our participation in this organisation at a time when I think we ought to be taking advantage of it.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Mr Mayor, I must thank the Councillor for drawing this to my attention. This is indeed an organisation that rather has gone out of fashion with Barnet. Maybe we should look at it again – I accept we should look at it but it could well be that this is simply too remote from Barnet and not of great use to us. We haven't used it since the decent homes programme came in but I would look at it again.

Question 2**Councillor Jack Cohen**

In relation to Residents Parking Permits and visitors vouchers:

How many Residents parking permits (broken down by first second and third vehicles were issued in 2009/10 and during the current financial year to date (31 December 2010). How much income does this amount to for each of the two periods?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The information is not readily available in the format requested as the records for second and third permits are combined. Taking this into account the figures are as shown in the table below:

	2009/10	2010/11 (part)
First Permits	11,249	8,915
Second / Third Permits	2,455	1,971
Total permits	13,704	10,986
Total Income	£507,964	£469,674

Supplementary Question 2**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Yes Councillor Coleman, can you tell me why you are proposing to increase the cost of parking permits by well over 100%?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, the reasons are long and complicated as Councillor Cohen knows as he was at Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny last night they include the deficit on the parking account the need to maintain our roads and pavements in this Borough to an adequate standard.

Question 3**Councillor Alison Moore**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm what the annual cost of the lease for the artsdepot building is, and how much of it the Council is responsible for in the event that the artsdepot as an organisation closes?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The Council holds the lease of the artsdepot space at a peppercorn rent and recharges it to the Arts Depot Trust for the same. Therefore the Council suffer the loss of only the additional peppercorn rent if the Arts Depot Trust were to cease trading or vacate the building. The Council would then either receive an additional rental income from any new occupant or make a saving itself by relocating services from another site.

With regard to service charges paid by the Trust, these vary over time and the Council would remain liable in the same way as at present. Equally, they would be recharged to any new occupant in the same way as they are now to the Trust.

The Council might also receive directly the income from the Trust's current sub-tenants, depending on how the sub-occupancies were arranged.

The Council is of course working closely with the Trust to ensure its financial viability is maintained.

Question 4**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Will you join me in congratulating Council staff for the successful road gritting arrangements that went according to plan during the icy weather in December? Will you comment on the success of the "grit bin warden scheme"?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes I am delighted that the supreme efforts of Council staff at all levels combined with meticulous planning and dynamic Political Leadership meant the Borough kept running during the recent winter weather. The Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Longstaff (Chairman Chipping Barnet Area Environment Committee) and I visited the Mill Hill Depot on 19 January to thank the many Council staff for their hard work.

The "grit bin warden scheme" or "Community Keeper" scheme is a pilot scheme that Environment & operations are running this winter and follows on from one of the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group that looked into the winter service provided by the Council during the previous winter.

So far the far the pilot scheme includes two Community Keepers, both in the Golders Green area, and three schools. Two further Community Keepers are being sought from other parts of the Borough.

The primary responsibility of the Community Keeper is to distribute the salt equitably amongst his fellow residents thereby eliminating the misuse of the salt. The Council will support the Community Keepers in their tasks by providing salt, wheel barrows, snow shovels, and weather forecast information.

Supplementary Question 4**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Can the Councillor confirm that if there is going to be another very cold snap this winter, we are as well equipped now with being able to deal with that, as far as the roads are concerned, as we were in the previous cold snap in December?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I know that you visited the Depot at 6 o'clock one morning last week, and I know staff were very grateful to see you as indeed the Mayoress at the Depot at 6 o'clock in morning, and you would have seen the huge pile of grit that remains there at the Depot. I understand the strategic reserve under the control of the TfL and the Mayor has not been touched and I understand that Her Majesty's Government has yet another secret reserve stored away. So, I am quiet confident that there is sufficient grit in this Borough, available to this Borough, to keep the Borough moving no matter what the Lord Almighty throws at us.

Question 5

Councillor Jack Cohen

In relation to Residents Parking Permits and visitors vouchers:

How many books of ten visit vouchers were issued for the same two periods? And how much income does this amount to for each of the two periods and what is the current charge for a book of ten visitor vouchers?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The vouchers are available singly, or in any number, although many people find it convenient to buy them in blocks of ten. As they are currently £1 each a book of ten would cost £10.

	2009/10	2010/11 (part)
Vouchers Issued	191,073	157,384
Income	£191,073	£157,384

Supplementary Question 5

Councillor Jack Cohen

Councillor Coleman you say in your answer that a book of permits currently costs £10 for a book of 10. Why then does the schedule of charges presented to the Cabinet Resources Committee show the current charges as £12 per book? Either the figure of £12 is wrong or the Council is being losing revenue this year by under charging which one is it?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I never knowingly under charge Mr Mayor.

Question 6

Councillor Geof Cooke

Please list the items of playground equipment that have been removed from parks and playgrounds in the past year with, for each item, the location and a description of what, if anything, has replaced it including any change in the intended age group of the users.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Please see table below:

Location	Items Removed	Items Installed in replacement	Age Range
Friary Park	Kompan Junior Swings	None	Junior
	Kompan Junior Multi Unit	Wicksteed Grizly Multi Unit	Same age range
Hollickwood Park	Toddler Multi Unit	Wicksteed Tom Thumb multi unit	Same age range
	3 Spring Mobiles	2 new spring mobiles including 1 spring see saw	Same age range
Old Court House	Round about	Wicksteed Reactions Eclipse multi unit	Same age range
Victoria Park	Kompan Junior multi unit	Wicksteed grizly unit	Same age range
	Kompan climbing frame	Wicksteed roundabout	Same age range
	Kompan see saw	Wicksteed see saw	Same age range

Location	Items Removed	Items Installed in replacement	Age Range
Mill Hill Park	Kompan Toddler Multi Unit	Wicksteed Tom Thumb Multi Unit	Same age range
	Kompan Junior Multi Unit	Proludic Junior Multi Unit	Same age range
	Kompan Junior Swings	Wicksteed Junior Swings	Same age range
	Kompan Toddler Swings	Wicksteed Toddler Swings	Same age range
	Kompan Stand alone Slide	None	Toddler

Supplementary Question 6

Councillor Geof Cooke

The feedback that I have had from parents is that play equipment which is challenging and of high play value at Friary Park has been replaced by inferior equipment which detains the children for not so long and is of low play value. What feedback have you had?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

None at all, Mr Mayor.

Question 7

Councillor Brian Gordon

Will the Cabinet Member confirm that cashless parking is available throughout the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes, the Pay-by-Phone system which allows motorists to pay for parking without using coins is available at every location operated by the Council across the Borough.

Supplementary Question 7

Councillor Brian Gordon

I want to ask you about the interim period before we move to being cashless with our parking policy. Is it possible to try a bit harder to see that the machines that are broken are repaired? More and more of them seem to be broken and a lot of people don't understand the position that they can no longer park by those machines that are broken. Also, can the notice on the machines be a bit clearer. It is a little yellow notice that can easily be missed that tells that you can't park anymore by a broken machine, that you as they have to make a phone call or find somewhere else. Many people are being caught out quite innocently by this very small notice.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Sadly, Mr Mayor, the machines are being vandalised as fast as we repair them and in last few weeks we have even had reports of the labels stuck on the machines informing people how to use the cashless parking system being scrapped off. There are reports that you would have heard from last week on your visit to the Depot from the parking staff themselves. That is why I intend to move to an entirely cashless system, as the City of Westminster operates, very quickly indeed. There will be very prominent notices on the lampposts telling you how to use the system.

Question 8

Councillor Jack Cohen

At the December meeting of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting Members were informed that "Parking Enforcement" is in "melt down". Do you accept responsibility or do you blame your predecessor?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I blame circumstances.

Supplementary Question 8

Councillor Jack Cohen

Thank you Mr Mayor. Councillor Coleman is blaming circumstances for the meltdown in parking enforcement.

Given that he admitted last night, Councillor Coleman, that the special parking account could lose up to £2 million in the current financial year due to poor organisation, will the Cabinet Member now tell me what he means by circumstances – is it his complete failure to get to grips with his portfolio or whether does he means that he was never up to the job in the first place?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, Councillor Jack Cohen is not correct as the parking account is not going to lose £2 million, the surplus on the parking account will be £2 million less than was budgeted in the current year's Council budget. That deficit I am advised by the Section 151 Officer in no uncertain terms, has to be made up.

Question 9

Councillor Geof Cooke

What is the latest estimate for the Pension Fund loss arising from the bankrupt Connaught housing maintenance company bond being allowed to lapse?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

There is a risk that the cost to the pension fund will be £1.5m, but this figure is subject to negotiation with the administrator. The Council's actuary has confirmed that this would not impact on the employers contribution rate and therefore would not have an impact on local taxpayers. Staff benefits are also unaffected by this matter.

Supplementary Question 9

Councillor Geof Cooke

I understand that the issue under review here came too late for the triennial review and the consequences from that which took place recently. But, Councillor Thomas are you seriously contending that the £1.5 million black hole in the pension fund will have no impact in the long run on the money which council taxpayers will have to pay by way of employer contributions.

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, the people who know best in this matter, the actuaries, have confirmed otherwise and this issue is being investigated and I understand that a report will be tabled at March's Audit Committee.

Question 10

Councillor Brian Gordon

Will the Cabinet Member confirm that refuse arrangements worked successfully during the Christmas period?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes, I can confirm that the week before Christmas when the severe weather took hold we were able to continue the refuse collection service as per normal. During the Christmas period there were two double collections which took place on 3 and 4 January 2011, to replace refuse not collected on the 27 and 28 December (both Bank Holidays). I am very grateful to our hard working staff and I am happy to explain to neighbouring Labour controlled Boroughs how we completed the task so successfully in Barnet. I am also pleased that this Administration ignored the Labour Government siren calls to introduce fortnightly refuse collections.

Supplementary Question 10

Councillor Brian Gordon

Thank you for explaining how well the double collection worked after the Christmas period. But, I would like to know if it is absolutely essential that we give all the staff the week off, the whole of the Christmas 'week'. I understand the Christmas days and the actual bank holiday days are sacrosanct as far as these things are concerned and I'm prepared to accept that. But, the other days of the week are not a bank holiday and I just wonder where we got into this situation where there seem to be no refuse collections at all during that particular week.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I think Councillor Gordon misunderstands – if only we could afford to give all the staff the week off. There were no collections on the Monday and Tuesday after Christmas which were both bank holidays in lieu of Christmas Day and Boxing Day which fell at the weekend. The rest of that week collections took place as normal.

Question 11

Councillor Jack Cohen

When did e-recruitment commence? How many posts have been advertised? And how many filled using e-recruitment since the commencement?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

The e-recruitment project experienced various unexpected delays through the procurement process and therefore has not yet been implemented. The project is now in the implementation phase and the system development with our software supplier commenced in early January. The roll out of the newly branded "One Barnet" jobs and careers website and the recruitment administration system will take 10-12 weeks, with a launch date of Monday 28 March 2011.

Supplementary Question 11

Councillor Jack Cohen

Councillor Hillan, thank you for explaining that the implementation of e-recruitment had been delayed and the launched date has now been scheduled for 28 March 2011. At the Cabinet meeting on 29 October 2010 a report on the estimated financial benefits of Phase 1 of the One Barnet Project showed a saving of £106,000 due to the implementation of e-recruitment in the financial year 2010-11. Would you agree with me that this figure must be wrong and throws into doubt all the projected savings of the One Barnet Project?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

I am sure that the figures would have been changed and obviously we will be ending this financial year with the figures as amended accordingly. It is nice to know Councillor Cohen you are such a fan of One Barnet though.

Question 12

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Would the Cabinet Member advise how the Council can conduct a new relationship with citizens if democracy pages on the Council website still list former Councillors as current Councillors?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Following the elections in May 2010, the website was updated to include information on the current Members and to delete that pertaining to retiring Members. However, whilst there was and is an up-to-date list of all Councillors on the website, it appears that some of the associated links did still have reference to former Councillors and these have now been removed from the system. Democratic Services have also recently conducted further work relating to information on the website to ensure that the information on links relating to Members is fully up-to-date. Where anomalies were evident, namely due to duplication of information and outdated information that had not been deleted (as new information was put on the website) these have been remedied as far as possible.

Question 13

Councillor Tom Davey

Please could the Cabinet Member outline how LBB is performing in handling residents' phone calls?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

This has been an area of service where the Council has struggled in the past. However, performance has been improving month on month for the last year and in the quarter to January 2011 we have exceeded our target for answering calls within 20 seconds. This is the first time that I can remember this target being exceeded and, moreover, we have achieved this during a period of very poor weather which, historically, has presented huge demands on our call centres. At the same time, residents' satisfaction with the quality of service they receive from the Council's customer services staff remains high. But I do not want us to rest on our laurels and we are increasing our target for the fourth quarter of the year.

Question 14

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

What extra services will be provided to residents by the parking department to merit a 150% increase in the charge for residents' parking permit (from £40 to £100)?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The increased revenue will ensure that the parking fund surplus can be used to improve our roads and pavements to the benefit of all Borough residents.

Supplementary Question 14

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

In other words residents living in the CPZs will be paying to resurface roads in other areas of the Borough where there are no CPZs. Is that so, Councillor Coleman?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Including, Mr Mayor, in Councillor Sodha's own Ward for which no doubt she will be claiming the credit.

Question 15

Councillor Andrew Strongoulou

Could the Cabinet Member please outline what Barnet is currently doing to give local disabled people more control over their lives?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

The Council has been implementing a programme of activity to give disabled people more control over their lives, namely the 'Delivering Choice and Independence' programme since 2007.

One objective of this programme is to create a 'consumer led Adult Social Services Directorate'. This has led to a comprehensive revision of our case management practices designed to ensure that recipients of social care maximise their control over their lives. Two key elements of this have been:

- The introduction of 'homecare enablement'. This is the provision of time-limited packages of intensive support designed to help people learn and re-learn the skills necessary for them to live independently at home. 50% of recipients of homecare enablement are not in receipt of social care 90 days after its completion.¹ By contrast, before homecare enablement was introduced, 75% of people were still receiving traditional homecare or a direct payment seven weeks after being referred to us.²
- The introduction of 'personal budgets'. When someone receives a personal budget, they know how much money they have to spend on their social care and can thus take control over the design and management of their package of support. By the end of 2010/11, the Council's target is that 30% of the people Adult Social Services supports to live in the community will have taken this control of their social care funding through a personal budget or a direct payment.

The other objective of the Delivering Choice and Independence programme is to create a 'consumer led local social care market'. Examples of recent and current initiatives to incentivise social care providers to be more responsive to the demands of disabled people include:

- The 'Innovation Fund': a 'pot' of £200,000 of small grants allocated to organisations which are developing new service models which give disabled people control over their lives.
- 'Social Care Connect': a online directory of social care services on which people can rate the quality of the support they receive and discuss aspects of their care with peers in discussion groups.
- 'Transforming Community Equipment Services': moving to a 'prescription' system for simple occupational therapy equipment. This allows people to cash in prescriptions for equipment at local shops (such as pharmacies) – choosing to 'top up' their prescription with their own money if they decide to choose a piece of equipment which is more expensive than that normally provided by the State.

In January 2010, the London Borough of Barnet, Barnet Centre for Independent Living and local offices of the Jobcentre Plus successfully bid to be one of seven 'trailblazer' sites for the 'Right to Control'. This is a new legal right to give disabled people coordinated control over money and support they receive from the following funding streams:

- Social care;
- Community equipment;
- Disabled Facilities Grant;
- Independent Living Fund;
- Some Supporting People services;
- Work Choice; and
- Access to Work.

Disabled people gained the Right to Control on 13 December 2010. This places the Council at the forefront, nationally, of providing disabled people with control over numerous areas of their lives, including the support they receive for social care, housing and employment.

Question 16

Councillor Barry Rawlings

¹ Figure as at 5 September, 2010.

² 2008 data.

Would the Cabinet Member advise the status of any bed-blocking in Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

It is assumed that this is referring to delayed discharges from hospital due to Social Services. Barnet Social Services has got an excellent record in relation to preventing delays at the two acute hospitals (Barnet & Chase Farm and Royal Free Hospital) over a number of years. Delays do occasionally happen but are often due to external and exceptional circumstances including but not limited to client and relative choice and complex placements. There has been no change over the winter months to our excellent performance of ensuring no delays.

Over the last couple of years additional pressures relating to the increase in seasonal demand due to winter have been increasing nationally and there has been huge demand and pressure on the system over the past few weeks during the Christmas and snow period.

Barnet has in place systems and procedures to deal with this; indeed Barnet was green rated by the North Central London sector for its Capacity Plan (the Barnet Capacity Plan brings together our local organisational plans for dealing with a period of increased demand for unplanned health and social care) and general preparedness for winter. Barnet has a system of regular conference calls between relevant health and social care staff, so that any blockages in the system can be dealt with by the relevant managers or escalated as necessary. Barnet also participates in the North Central London daily conference calls.

Question 17

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

Eric Pickles and the Government say that frontline services should not face cuts as a result of the local government settlement – would the Leader advise why Barnet is proposing cuts to frontline services?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

The Council is making the majority of savings by improving efficiency and re-designing services, rather than making cuts, which is the challenge that Mr Pickles is setting local government. However, in the context of a budget gap of more than £40m, it is very difficult not to touch frontline services when delivering a balanced budget but our proposals are aimed to minimise the impact on service delivery.

Question 18

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

Would the Leader advise how many frontline staff have been made redundant for each year since 2002, and how many she expects will finally be made redundant as a result of the forthcoming budget?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

31 March 2011	31 March 2011	2010-09	2009-08	2008-07	2007-06	2006-05
Per the Budget Proposals – Projected Employee redundancies	Estimated front line redundancies	Frontline redundancies	Frontline redundancies	Frontline redundancies	Frontline redundancies	Frontline redundancies
345	221 ^{3*}	34	19	19	7	17

Question 19

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

³ 196 of these are estimated to fall in Children’s Service, but it is expected that this figure will reduce as budget proposals are finalised. We defined front line as being posts which are not back office, support or management according to HR data. Examples of front line posts counted in these figures are: grounds staff; street enforcement officers; customer services agents; highways maintenance; park keepers; revs and bens assistants; librarians.

Would the Leader advise if the Council has informed Eric Pickles yet about the number of redundancies Barnet expects to make as a result of the forthcoming budget?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

Advance notification of potential redundancies is required from employers proposing to make 20 more employees redundant within a period of 90 days. The Redundancy Payments Service (RPS), which is part of the Insolvency Service, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, collects the information and distributes it to the appropriate Government Departments and Agencies. The HR1 form which initiates this was faxed to the Insolvency Service by the Head of Business Partnering & Change on 2 December and a transmission receipt received, a further e-mail confirmation was received from the Insolvency Service on 3 December 2010.

Question 20

Councillor Andrew McNeil

Would the Cabinet Member advise how the Barnet Museum will be able to remain open without the Council's financial support?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

These are extremely difficult times for councils and in such times we have to consider challenging proposals. Barnet Museum is expected to cost the Council £23,110 this year. It is open for 10 hours a week and has 3,087 visitors a year with a direct cost to the Council of £7.49 per visit. Given these facts, I think it is hard to justify continuing the level of funding we give to Barnet Museum when our priority has to be to protect services for the most vulnerable people in the Borough. That said, I am keen to hear any alternatives that help mitigate the impact of these proposals on Barnet Museum, and await the results of the consultation to assess whether viable alternative options have been suggested.

Question 21

Councillor Andrew McNeil

Would the Cabinet Member advise what provision is being made by the Council to ensure that the 17th Century Church Farm House retains its listed status?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

This listing is in the hands of the Secretary of State. Any change is not in the gift of the Council.

Question 22

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Would the Cabinet Member outline the details of all repairs undertaken on the district heating system in Grahame Park during December?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

At the beginning of December 2010 because of a water leak of some 24,000 gallons on the District Heating System, all heating and hot water was lost to the domestic properties on the Graham Park Estate and St James School and Barnet College.

Barnet Homes Emergency planning was implemented and the Council arranged a meeting on 2 December at St James School. This was attended by all the affected organisations, and Council officers to discuss the work needed to restore services and the risks to residents and other people.

The cause was identified by a team of Engineers from Barnet Homes as a leak on the non-domestic pipe work. This testing required isolating each part of the system in turn and also some excavation work. The defective pipes were isolated and the heating was restored very quickly to the domestic properties. Whilst repairs were undertaken, operations staff from Barnet Homes arranged for all residents to have temporary heating. Homes were visited to ensure that vulnerable customers were given appropriate support.

Barnet Homes Engineers continued in extreme weather conditions to test the piping runs in relation to the college and the school to identify the precise location of the leak and fix it. Staff worked actively with the school and college to install temporary heating and enable as many pre-planned activities and lessons to continue.

Along with the emergency work, Barnet Homes procured the services of a specialist consultant to plan for the provision of a temporary boiler house for the School and College. Fortunately, this was not needed as the leak was successfully identified as being under the Grahame Park Youth Wing and was isolated and repaired to enable full restoration of heating to the School and College before the end of term.

Barnet Homes are continuing to work with the consultant team in order to develop a specific, priced contingency plan should this type of event recur in the future.

The leak was repaired fully to the Youth Wing on 17 December.

Supplementary Question 22

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Thank you for your answer Councillor Cornelius, but I really wanted an understanding of some of the issues regarding the individual blocks of homes that loss heating. And, also because just it mentions that there were a range of homes – over the Christmas period most of Grahame Park Estate had problems with their heating throughout and I know that Barnet Homes worked incredibly hard to do this and I wanted that everybody be made aware just how many people had suffered and how many blocks were effected. And, I hope this question will lead to consideration to increased funding given that the delay in the regeneration of the Estate could well cause serious problems to heating for years to come.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Mr Mayor, I regret the spelling error and that was obviously very careless of me and I am very sorry for that. The question on the heating, as Councillor Sargeant knows, to lose 35,000 gallons of hot water from a heating system is a serious problem. Not to know where the leak is and to have excavators in action to find it is a necessity in a complicated process. The heating system is very old and why we are regenerating the Estate.

Question 23

Councillor Alex Brodwin

Will the proposed changes to the Space Day Centre in Edgware mean that it is not guaranteed to be open five days per week? In addition, have service users been consulted about the possibility of the Space not being open for five days per week?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

It is important to distinguish between The Space as a service and The Space as a building. When we asked service users what they liked about coming to The Space, they replied that they enjoyed seeing friends, staff, taking part in activities and going out for the day. All of these things will be important features of the new service. Service users rarely mentioned the building itself. In fact, the building is often quite empty during the day even now, with lots of service users going out to activities.

The new service, incorporating both The Space and Community Support Team, is certainly intended to operate five days a week and possibly even more, with some people choosing support at weekends. The schedules, times, and locations of activities for individual service users will be informed by their plans. We expect that some individuals will prefer a more flexible timetable than a five days per week, 9am – 5pm programme.

Whilst we do expect to use The Space building less over time, we recognise that there will still be some demand for the current building – particularly in the early stages of identifying the most suitable buildings for specific activities.

At the consultation with service users we did not specifically mention, as this would have been misleading, the possibility of The Space not being open for five days a week – the new service will operate five days a week.

However, we did consult about:

- How service users would feel spending time in community buildings other than the current day centre.
*Some people said they would be sad if the day centre did not operate as a permanent base. **People raised concerns about safety and keeping warm during the winter weather if they were out and about.***
- How service users would feel having a more flexible day timetable, where for example their day starts later and finishes after an activity in the evening.
People said they would like to take part in evening activities, but some people said they did not want to be at home during the day.
- How service users would feel having a more flexible weekly timetable, where for example they do not access the service for one day during the week and are supported to get to an activity they want to participate in at the weekend.
People said different things about whether they wanted to do things every day or just on some days during the week.

We will be incorporating the views of service users (and of parents and carers) into the planning process.

Supplementary Question 23

Councillor Alex Brodtkin

In Councillor Rajput's lengthy response he says that "we do expect to use The Space building less over time". In the interests of much needed clarity over this very sensitive issue could he categorically state how many days a week this day centre will be open and for those days that it is not open could he explain which alternative venues will perform the services that it currently provides?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

Mr Mayor, I think my response quite simply needs to be that the paper that you have before you provides the response that you need. We have consulted with people, we have distinguished between the services provided and the building; and of course there is scope for more uses than 5 days a week in the manner that my response provides.

Question 24**Councillor Alex Brodkin**

Given the Council's decision to withdraw funding to Church Farm House Museum and Barnet Museum, what measures will the Council take to ensure that the artefacts and materials presently housed in these museums remain available to Barnet residents?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The Council is looking at options to maintain the availability of artefacts and materials within the Borough. I would be interested to hear any proposals that help us achieve this.

Supplementary Question 24**Councillor Alex Brodkin**

I am very grateful to Councillor Rams invited me to make suggestions on the availability of material and artefacts, but I would had hoped that he had considered this before pulling the plug on the entire funding. But, if he wants suggestions, what can he do to enlighten me by telling me about the viability of storing artefacts and materials in libraries and Friary House that I believe being mooted. Hardly, ideal proposals but I would be interested to hear his thoughts.

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Mr Mayor, firstly I hope that the museums will stay where they are. I believe they will come forward with business plans to enable them to take a proper lease to the properties and therefore I hope that they will be staying in their exact properties. If that is not the case, we have already made a number of suggestions including libraries as he said, Priory House and other places for the collections to be held. Sadly, Barnet Museum, especially, doesn't seem to want to move out of High Barnet although it is a museum of Barnet and is not reciprocal to our suggestions and offers for providing new places for it. But, libraries are one option that we are looking at as you said as well as Priory House. There are a number of options on the table but I do hope that they would be staying exactly where they are.

Question 25**Councillor Alex Brodkin**

What is the current charge for a Barnet resident if they want to replace a wheeled bin which is stolen or has disappeared by means other than through the fault of the refuse crews?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

£57.00.

Supplementary Question 26**Councillor Alex Brodkin**

Full marks to Councillor Coleman for brevity but I imagine that the resident who is charged £57 for replacement of a bin that they might be a victim of crime to have loss by might ask the question – why they are paying £57 in this Borough and most other Boroughs in London don't pay anyway near as much as this? Why there is no second hand bin available at a cheaper price? Why there is no discount when you report it within 24 hours? Perhaps, residents would also like to know why there is no distinction between being a victim of crime and having a bin lost and losing it willy nilly?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, a resident may well ask that but I'm not so sure that a resident would want a second hand bin but there we go. I think that Councillor Brodkin makes a very sensible point there perhaps he might suggest that this is a matter for scrutiny and we can have a scrutiny into bin replacement programme. But, all I know it is very difficult, Mr Mayor, to tell the difference between a resident who has suffered a theft of a wheelie bin and a resident who has been perhaps a little bit careless with their wheelie bin.

Question 26**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

What capitalisation requests have been made to the Department for Communities and Local Government over the last year and for the forthcoming budget and what is the outcome of those requests?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Council made a request to capitalise costs associated with redundancy and also to capitalise losses arising from the potential impairment of Icelandic bank deposits. The Council received a £2.3m approval for capitalisation of costs of redundancy, but was refused a directive to capitalise losses from the potential impairment of bank deposits.

Supplementary Question 26

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Thank you Mr Mayor. Does the Government's latest refusal to capitalise Barnet's Icelandic bank losses not mean that residents are paying for this Administration's decision to chase high interest rates and by setting aside an earmarked risk reserve in the budget, millions of pounds worth of planned cuts in frontline services are actually being made to pay for those Icelandic bank losses.

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, no it doesn't.

Question 27

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Why did the Cabinet endorse cutting the Council's internal audit service when officers believed that the proposed cut would reduce the service by an unacceptable level?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Council faces tough choices on spending cuts, and no area of the Council should be exempt from reviewing their costs and coming up with more efficient ways of delivering services. Officers have been working up alternative proposals that would not reduce the level of service to the level initially indicated.

Supplementary Question 27

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Thank you Mr Mayor. When I raised the internal audit cuts back in October I was told that it would not affect the internal audit service which is now acknowledged not to be the case. So it is good to see that this ill-thought cut out is now been reconsidered, but why has he and the rest of the Cabinet approved it as an option given the warning that officers had given.

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, the Cabinet were right to be ambitious with savings across all the services in the Borough and it now transpires that the One Barnet approach of sharing back office services may actually save costs. We are now talking with Enfield, and sharing the service with them should be able to realise all the savings in the proposals. So, I'm glad that we have been ambitious and quite clearly the Labour Group would not have been as ambitious.

Question 28

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Is the closure of Barnet museum, which is staffed by volunteers, an example of the Big Society in action?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Barnet Museum operates with a significant Council subsidy to maintain the building and support running costs. The proposal to withdraw funding from Barnet Museum also invited comments and contributions to suggest alternative ideas to manage both Museum buildings, the collections and artefacts. I am keen to hear any cost-effective proposals that support volunteers in making the history of the Borough widely available to the public.

Supplementary Question 28

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Thank you Mr Mayor. As we know Barnet Museum is run by volunteers who are giving up their time without pay to run that museum. So, how come the much trumpeted Big Society actually work if the Council refuses to pay the running costs or is he going to ask the volunteers to pay the electricity bill as well?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Mr Mayor, Barnet Museum have put forward a business case which in fact they will be paying the electricity bill.

Question 29

Councillor Geoff Johnson

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that all school crossing patrols will be maintained, and none will be cut?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

No.

Supplementary Question 29

Councillor Geoff Johnson

Mr Mayor, thank you very much. I would like to submit a petition after my supplementary. In the answer to my question I take that to mean that your going to cut school crossing patrols. Please can you confirm which schools are going to have their school crossing patrol cut?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, Councillor Johnson is entirely correct. There are 10 schools though historic accident, that nobody can remember, are still funded centrally by the Council. Of those 10, 4 members of staff wish to retire and it is open to the schools to make their own crossing patrol arrangements just as it is open to them to make their own staffing arrangements in all other areas. This is an anomaly which has slipped through for many years – quite why we are funding 10 crossing patrols when the other 110 schools in the Borough are not having centrally funded crossing patrols nobody can remember.

Question 30

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

What are the potential future uses for Church Farm House museum?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The building has many potential uses and I would expect it to attract interest from local organisations as well as commercial organisations.

Supplementary Question 30

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Thank you Mr Mayor. Given that Church Farm House museum is a Grade Two Star Listed Building surely alternative uses are in fact actually limited. And, should we not actually be saving our heritage, listen to the thousands of residents who have signed a petition and want it to remain a museum as it has been for more than 50 years through economic times both good and bad. Do you now commit keeping the museum open on that site?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Mr Mayor, if the thousands of residents that signed the petition actually went to the museum maybe it would be more supportive.

Question 31

Councillor Alison Moore

Why wasn't the LINK contract let to Community Barnet in the first place, and could the Cabinet Member give details of how the Government grant to fund the establishment of the LINK was spent?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

BVSC (now known as Community Barnet) was one of the three organisations submitting tenders for the original contract – the others being Community Investors Development Agency (CIDA) and Parkwood Healthcare Ltd. The Tenders were reported to Cabinet Resources Committee on 22 July 2008 with 70% of the evaluation based on quality and 30% on price.

The CIDA bid was significantly ahead of the others' both in terms of price and quality. The latter evaluation included clarification and amplification through interviews and gave CIDA 251 points (out of a maximum of 280 points): Therefore, in accordance with established Council policy, as CIDA had scored highest both on quality and price, they were awarded the Contract.

A sum of £542,000 was added to Barnet's Area Based Grant over the period 2008/9 to 2010/11, which was equivalent to the Department of Health's expenditure on the PPI fora which preceded LINKS. However the point of Area Based Grant is that it is not ring fenced, giving the Council greater flexibility over how it used to support the Council's overall priorities.

The contract with CIDA was to the value of £413,000 over three years. The only expenditure outside this was staff costs of contract monitoring (which are not separately recorded) and legal matters relating to the contractual dispute with CIDA.

There was an additional one off grant of £10,000 in 2007/2008 from the Department of Health to help Local Authorities prepare for LINKS. This supported staff time in undertaking the additional responsibilities of getting LINKS started, particularly prior to the appointment of a host – and the costs of staging an awareness raising Conference in July 2008.

Supplementary Question 31

Councillor Alison Moore

Thank you Mr Mayor. Councillor Hart, given the turmoil over the next few years that will be created across the health sector by Andrew Lansbury's NHS proposal and the public concerns that is already causing, can I have your assurance that you are doing everything that you can to support the work of the LINK?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Thank you Mr Mayor. First of all, as Councillor Moore would expect, there would not be turmoil - there would be a vast improvement in the Health Service for patients in Barnet - and elsewhere in this Country - as a result of these reforms. I think the Labour Group would be far better to work with us in ensuring that these reforms do work for the benefit of patients rather than just making cheap political points and hoping to cause concern. As far as the LINK is concerned, as Councillor Moore will know, LINKS will be changing into Health Watch and we will - as per the legislation - be supporting them.

Question 32

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

With litigation still ongoing in the process to try and recover the £27.4 million from Icelandic banks, reported in Cabinet papers 2010 to be the 'single most important financial risk facing the Council', would the Cabinet Member please confirm what the litigation costs are to date and how is the litigation being funded?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Costs to date associated with this litigation are £91k since January 2009. Costs are included in the claim and will be repaid if it is successful.

Supplementary Question 32

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would really like a bit more information. The figure being mentioned is that this Council has had to pay £91,000 in litigation to try and recoup the money from Iceland – the £27.4 million that we're still missing.

What I am not sure about, and maybe I can be enlightened, is this £91,000 money that we have paid out or are we are on a no win no fee agreement and as we have no idea how long this

litigation will proceed could I have some idea if there was budget for this litigation? if there is a figure for that over the next 12 months? and if so what is that figure?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Mr Mayor, I am always happy to enlighten Labour Councillors and a risk reserve has been set aside for all costs.

Question 33

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

With potholes once again in evidence, when will they be repaired and how will they be prioritised?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

It is expected that pothole reports are attended and made safe within 48 hours, however, these may be programmed (in exceptional circumstances) for immediate or 24 hour response if the report identifies a serious problem or if this is deemed more appropriate. The Councillor will have noticed that thanks to the Pot Hole elimination programme our roads are in a far better condition than many neighbouring Boroughs.

Supplementary Question 33

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

With regard to potholes, the quote by Councillor Coleman that we are in a good position might have been the case prior to the snow and ice of last December. But, right now, I don't actually see any sign of the current state of potholes being filled and I would advise him and any other Councillors that would like to drive northbound over the bridge over Colney Hatch Lane which is a pile of widening holes, and a danger to vehicles not being able to avoid them, or creating a danger to other lanes of traffic when trying to avoid them. Can I have clarification, is Council being proactive in identifying these new areas or is Council waiting for every pothole to be reported or is the truth that the cupboard is bare and work is being held back until the next financial year?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Well, Mr Mayor, I was rather hoping that the supplementary of Councillor Coakley Webb might be making suggestions about how we are going to pay for these pothole repairs but oh no the Labour Group want their cake and to eat it. On the one hand they demand the roads are repaired but on the other hand they demand we don't increase parking fees to pay for it. So, I am waiting for a Labour Member, Mr Mayor, to suggest how we are going to pay for these much needed repairs for our roads.

Question 34

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Is the Administration's proposal to cut the grant to the 'ARTS DEPOT' confirmation of their philistine approach to arts in the Borough or will the Administration listen to the concerns of residents and reconsider funding for the next financial year?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

We will listen to the concern of residents who are worried that her Government left this country with no money and who want children and adult services protected.

Supplementary Question 34

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Again, the question was not answered. Part of the question asks will he reconsider funding for the arts depot, but it wasn't actually answered. Could I have a really simple answer yes or no – to the question you are being paid to answer – will you or will you not reconsider funding to the arts depot?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Mr Mayor, our proposal is currently only to cut only 11% of the total funding for the arts depot.

This is a small amount in the grand scheme of things. We are committed, Mr Mayor, to continued funding the excellent work that it does with people with special needs and the like. I look forward to bringing full proposals to help the arts depot survive, I believe that if you look back through history the problems that we are in now were caused by the Labour Party not listening to the concerns. Mr Mayor, I have read the papers in great detail when the arts depot was proposed time after time Labour Councillors were advised that the theatre was not being built big enough to make it survive economically. Did they listen to us? No that is why they are in the position they are in at the moment. I hope that the arts depot survive and I'm sure it will and look forward to coming forward with innovative ideas to ensure that it does.

Question 35

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

If prevention is better than cure why is the Administration obliterating youth services in the full knowledge that this will create huge future costs to the community by not offering support to some of our most needy and vulnerable youngsters?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Given the necessity to reduce revenue spending following the Government's spending review, savings are proposed within the youth support area. The proposed restructuring of youth support services (which would bring together six existing services) aims to ensure that resources are focused on prioritising preventative and support work with the most vulnerable young people, as well as meeting statutory requirements. Within the proposal is the creation of a new targeted youth worker who will be able to intervene at an early stage of a young person being identified as 'at risk'. Preventative work is, essentially, the core driver behind the proposed structure.

Supplementary Question 35

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Thank you, quite simply, all I would like is clarification with regards to youth work. Does the reply actually suggest that this Council will now only be involved in youth work that is covered by a statutory requirement, and that anything else will simply not be funded?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Thank you Mr Mayor. I think that Councillor Coakley Webb seems to have become the Labour Group spokesman on just about everything. I'm delighted now to have my opportunity to join the throng. If Councillor Coakley Webb looked carefully at the youth offer proposals being made by the Childrens Service she would see that of course we are no longer able to fund a universal service but we are creating possibilities for targeted funding for, indeed, those who are most needy, most vulnerable among our children and young people, as my written answer suggests, and those principles are what underlie this Administration's budget proposals throughout.

Question 36

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Is the Cabinet Member happy to be ringing the death knell on both Barnet Museums by withdrawing Council support for the volunteers who have a passion and the dedication for preserving the history of the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

I am not happy to make any budget decisions that impact on any voluntary activity in Barnet. Church Farmhouse Museum is directly funded and operated by Council, and Barnet Museum is run by volunteers with a subsidy from the Council to cover building and operating costs. The fact is that the council's priority must be to protect vulnerable people in such a tough financial environment while Barnet Museum is open for only 10 hours a week at a cost to the Council of £7.49 per visit. Church Farmhouse Museum receives just 8,000 visitors a year at a cost of £15 per visit. The consultation set out to invite alternative proposals for management and use of the buildings, and options for the future display and promotion of collections. I welcome any cost-effective proposals that could tap into the dedication of volunteers to preserve the history of the Borough, make it widely available to the public, and provide value for money for Barnet residents.

Supplementary Question 36**Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb**

In relation to, Barnet Museum the museum has asked for an asset transfer in order for them to undertake completely the running and continuation of this really valuable asset to our history. Will the Cabinet Member confirm, if he actually going to comply and go along with this application for asset transfer or is the reality that Council would prefer to get the building, sell it and take the money?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Mr Mayor, the museum has come forward with a business plan which we need to look at in great detail to see if it viable. The idea is to let them have it on a commercial lease so that they are able to cover the costs for the maintenance as well as the costs of the lease. I hope that they are able to do that and I look forward to seeing the museum continue.

Question 37**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Is any Cabinet Member in overall charge of the Council's response to the Information Commissioner's Office audit that exposed many serious failings in the Council's arrangements for protection of confidential data?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

The Cabinet Member for Governance and Civic Affairs has overall responsibility for the Council's response to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) audit on Data Protection.

It is important for the Council to regularly assess how effective its DP policies and practices are, and to what extent it is meeting the statutory requirements of the Data Protection Act (DPA). To assist in this process (and in light of new powers the ICO now has to fine public authorities for non compliance), the ICO were asked to carry out an independent Data Protection Audit. This was a voluntary audit (for which there was no charge), but one that we were keen to undertake in order to have an independent and expert opinion on where we needed to focus our efforts in order to ensure we were fully compliant.

The Data Protection Action Plan that details the Council's progress against the recommendations made by the Information Commissioner's Office was agreed by the Audit Committee at the 7 December meeting, and this work is being led by the Director of Corporate Governance.

The audit highlighted a number of areas where it felt the Council needed to do more work. A key area of work focussed on training and awareness and ensuring that all staff understood their DPA responsibilities. In response to this a communications and awareness raising campaign was launched in October, part of which was a number of briefing sessions (31 in total) – aimed at all staff across the Council. Nearly 2000 staff attended these sessions, and additional briefings planned for February should raise that number further.

We are expecting a follow up audit to take place in March of this year and, whilst there is still work to do in addressing all of the recommendations, we are confident that the Council will be able to demonstrate significant progress in the key areas highlighted by the auditors.

Supplementary Question 37**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Councillor Melvin Cohen, thank you for owning up to being responsible for the Council's response to the audit into the Council's failings on safeguarding confidential data because I was a bit concerned because back in July when the report was submitted to the Cabinet Resources Committee it was submitted by 2 other members of the Cabinet and you were not mentioned. This is an important matter with 26 no less recommendations to respond to following the loss of a great amount of school pupil data earlier last year. It is an audit report that did not get reported to the Audit Committee until December, so the report came out in June went to Cabinet Resources in July – Audit Committee didn't get it until December. Is this fragmented and frankly ineffectual response to an extremely important matter good enough?

Answer by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Mr Mayor, I am sick and tired of the continuous whinging and whining from this particular Member. Does he not have the good grace to concede the huge advances that this Administration has made in sorting this problem since first notified.

Question 38

Councillor Anne Hutton

Different models for delivering children's centres in Barnet have now emerged as part of the Council review – which model does the Cabinet Member personally wish to see implemented?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Consultation on children's centres and related services is currently taking place and does not close until 7 February. Cabinet will be fully considering the result of consultation at the Cabinet meeting on 14 February to help us take a decision on the proposal and the most appropriate model for children's centres. Like Cabinet colleagues I will take a view when I have considered all the evidence. I think it unwise to take a view before the results of consultation are known.

Question 39

Councillor Anne Hutton

Is the Cabinet Member pleased that the Government has done a u-turn on the cuts to funding of school sports partnerships?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Barnet benefits from a range of sports opportunities provided in our schools and through other organisations. The announcement of funding to support the ongoing development of physical education and sport in schools is most welcome, especially at a time of constrained resources.

Question 40

Councillor Alison Moore

Has the Leader liaised with the local business community on ameliorating the effects of the Government's new 20% VAT on the local economy?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

No.

Supplementary Question 40

Councillor Alison Moore

Thank you Mr Mayor. In the light of today's report, Councillor Hillan, that the economic growth of the country has stalled and that there has been no growth in the past quarter, will the Leader now reconsider and have that discussion with local businesses to ensure the health of our local economic environment?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council

I am actually amazed how you can speak like that about this national crisis which was clearly caused by your Government and we are here yet again sorting out the mess. The 20% VAT was going to happen either way and I am sure that businesses were very well aware of it. The way that we can help our businesses in this Borough is by keeping down our council tax down to 0% increase which allows the economy to flourish.

Question 41

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

What are residents' choices for paying for parking when parking machines are out of service? Are they required to make calls to the Parking department to pay by bank card? What if they do not have mobile phones or even bank cards?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Cashless parking is the future (and indeed the present) as Westminster City Council have proved beyond doubt. I do not know anyone who is a car driver and does not have access to a mobile phone. If Councillor O-Macauley does I suggest he refers them to the many excellent mobile phone deals available on the High Street.

Supplementary Question 41**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

Thank you very much Mr Mayor. It is the same responsibility is the Cabinet Member is he part of the Big Society yes or no? The Cabinet Member's response is very inadequate I want to ask if the Cabinet Member ever check how many people using pay as you go phones are having to phone Barnet parking services to reason to all the protocols before accessing the service needed. Can the Cabinet Member have a wider consultation on this matter and answer my question properly?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I'm afraid I do not accept that, in this day and age, anyone who is a car driver doesn't have access to a mobile phone. I'm sorry the City of Westminster is completely cashless, cashless is the future coins are the past. Mr Mayor, as you will know banks are withdrawing all cheque cards and replacing them with debit cards so I cannot believe that if you are an active car driver you don't have access to a credit card or debit card and a mobile phone.

Question 42**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

Why was refuse not collected recently over the Christmas period even though the streets where not hazardous for driving?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The Councillor is incorrect, refuse collections took place as per normal in the severe weather leading up to Christmas.

Supplementary Question 42**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

Thank you very much Mr Mayor. I have a question for the Cabinet Member is he part of the Big Society yes or no? Well, it is very obvious that I have heard a similar question on this side this evening about refuse. Well, the refuse was collected in the Cabinet Member's area but was certainly not collected in many areas in Barnet including for over 2 weeks where I was approached by many residents. Can the Cabinet Member double check with the refuse service and write back to me as to what went on?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I am not sure what Councillor O-Macauley is asking me in that question. The refuse service works extremely well with our staff working until 8 or 9 o'clock at night to clear the rounds during the bad weather. We were proactive in sending the gritters up the road in front of the dustcarts. The only 2 days missed were the 2 bank holidays as planned on the Monday and Tuesday after Christmas. I, My Mayor, and I know you are because you up at the Depot and told them so, are very proud of work that the staff of this Borough did. Many residents have come up to me, and know to you Mr Mayor, to thank the refuse staff for maintaining a near normal service during the bad weather over the Christmas and New Year period. And frankly I am sick and tired about the moaning and whinging and carping of opposition Members who want to pick holes and denigrate the efforts of our first class staff.