

## Minutes

OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET held at  
The Town Hall, Hendon, NW4, on Tuesday, 14 December 2010.

### PRESENT:

- \*The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Anthony Finn BSc (Econ), FCA)
- \*The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Lisa Rutter)

### Councillors:

- |                        |                                     |  |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| *Maureen Braun         | *Anne Hutton                        | *Kate Salinger BEd (Hons)                              |
| *Alex Brodkin          | *Geoffrey Johnson                   | *Gill Sargeant   |
| *Anita Campbell        | *Julie Johnson                      | *Joan Scannell   |
| *Pauline Coakley Webb  | *Sury Khatri BSc (Hons),<br>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),<br>Cert Ed, DipM (CIM), AMBA |
| *Alison Cornelius      | *Graham Old                         | *Stephen Sowerby                                       |
| *Richard Cornelius     | *Charlie O-Macauley                 | *Andrew Strongolou                                     |
| *Tom Davey             | *Monroe Palmer OBE, BA,<br>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)<br>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 Melvin Cohen, Councillor Dean Cohen, Councillor Daniel Thomas, Councillor Andrew McNeil and Councillor Kath McGuirk.

**3. MINUTES (Agenda Item 1.3):**

**RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 November 2010 be approved, subject to the following amendment:**

**(i) That the minor corrections to Supplementary Questions 36 and 37 in the name of Councillor Geof Cooke be noted.**

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1.4):**

<b>Member:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Interest Declared:</b>
Councillor Barry Rawlings	Item 4.1 – Administration Policy Item:  Big Society Innovation Fund	Personal and prejudicial interest as Councillor Rawlings is employed by a local charity.  Councillor Rawlings left the Chamber and took no part in the discussion or voting on this item.
	Item 4.2 – Opposition Policy Item:  Children’s Centres	Personal and non prejudicial interest as Councillor Rawlings sits on an advisory board for a children’s centre. Councillor Rawlings remained in the Chamber and took part in the discussion and voting on this item.
Councillor Geof Cooke	Item 3.2 – Motion in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman  Lane Rental	Personal and non prejudicial interest as Councillor Cooke is an employee and small shareholder of National Grid, a utility that excavates roads. Councillor Cooke remained in the Chamber and took part in the discussion and voting on this item.
Councillor Claire Farrier	Item 3.4 – Motion in the name of Councillor Sachin Rajput  Endorsement for Adult and Children’s Services	Personal and non prejudicial interest as Councillor Farrier works for the Care Quality Commission. As the Motion was not debated, Councillor Farrier remained in the chamber during the vote, but did not participate in the voting.
Councillor Alison Moore	Item 4.2 – Opposition Policy Item:  Children’s Centres	Personal and non-prejudicial interest as Councillor Moore is currently the Chair of the Advisory Committee for the Newstead Children’s Centre in East Finchley; the body has no formal decision making powers. Councillor Moore remained in the Chamber and took part in the discussions and voting on this item.

Councillor Alan Schneiderman	Item 3.1 – Motion in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman  Outstanding Schools	Personal and non-prejudicial interest as Councillor Schneiderman's employment covers this area. Councillor Schneiderman remained in the Chamber and took part in the discussions and voting on this item.
Councillor Gil Sargeant	Item 4.1 – Administration Policy Item:  Big Society Innovation Fund	Personal and non-prejudicial interest as Councillor Sargeant works for Age UK. Councillor Sargeant remained in the Chamber and took part in the discussions and voting on this item.
Councillor Kate Salinger	Item 4.2 – Opposition Policy Item:  Children's Centres	Personal but non-prejudicial interest as Councillor Salinger is the Chairman of Coppetts Wood School and Children's Centre. Councillor Salinger remained in the Chamber and took part in the discussions and voting on this item.

**5. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 5):**

The Worshipful Mayor regretted to announce the death of former Mayor of Barnet, Mrs Pam Coleman on 3 December 2010. Mrs. Coleman was Mayor during the municipal year 1996-97 and Councillor for the former Arkley Ward from 1990 – 2002. At the invitation of the Worshipful Mayor, Councillor Alison Moore, Councillor Brian Coleman and Councillor Jack Cohen spoke in tribute of Mrs. Coleman.

The Worshipful Mayor further announced the death of former Mayoress of Barnet, Mrs. Joan Pares. Mrs. Pares was Mayoress to Councillor Andrew Pares, who was Mayor during the municipal year 1976-1977. Councillor Andrew Pares was also Leader of the Council from 1973-1976. Councillor Brian Coleman spoke in tribute of Mrs Pares.

A minute silence was held in remembrance of departed friends and colleagues.

The Worshipful Mayor announced that Councillor Monroe Palmer has been made a life peer. He will be introduced into the House of Lords on 19 January 2011. Councillor Palmer was re-elected to the Council for Childs Hill Ward in 1998, having previously represented the same Ward on the Council between 1986 and 1994. At the invitation of the Worshipful Mayor, Councillor Lynne Hillan, Councillor Jack Cohen and Councillor Alison Moore congratulated and commended Councillor Monroe Palmer on his appointment to the House of Lords. Councillor Palmer thanked the three Group Leaders for their kind words.

On behalf of the Council, the Worshipful Mayor, congratulated Councillor Dean Cohen on his recent engagement.

**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 3.2, 3.3 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 3.2, 3.3 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 BRIAN COLEMAN (Agenda Item 3.2)**

Motion 3.2 in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Kath McGuirk was moved by Councillor Geof Cooke. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor McGuirk was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the Motion was declared carried.

**RESOLVED - Council is dismayed that utility works frequently overrun, causing misery, congestion and pollution as traffic is diverted or funnelled around the area.**

**Further, Council regrets that at present there is little that the London Borough of Barnet can do to control these problems.**

**Council believes the solution lies in a “Lane Rental” system, promoted by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, whereby utility companies are charged on an incremental basis for digging up the roads. Council accordingly instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Mayor of London in support of his proposals. Council further believes that there would be no justification for utility bills to rise as a result of the Mayor of London’s proposals.**

**Council also requests that the Cabinet Member investigate the possibility of a complete ban on Temporary Traffic Lights at roadworks in order to encourage faster completion of works.**

**10. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR ANNE HUTTON AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW HARPER (Agenda Item 3.3)**

Motion 3.3 in the name of Councillor Anne Hutton was moved. Amendments in the name of Councillors Andrew Harper and Gill Sargeant were moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Harper was declared carried. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Sargeant was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive Motion as amended was declared carried.

**RESOLVED - Council believes that tough choices have to be made nationally as “there is no money” (Liam Byrne MP).**

**This includes, Council notes, the reduction in funding available to schemes such as the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).**

However, Council further notes that students currently in receipt of EMA will continue to receive the allowance, and understands that targeted support (through learner support funds) will be brought in to support the neediest through further education and training.

Council calls on Cabinet to ensure the transition under these changes is as smooth as possible, and that the targeted support is made available to those most in need of it.

**11. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR HELENA HART (Agenda Item 3.5)**

Motion 3.5 in the name of Councillor Helena Hart 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 Rawlings was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the Motion was declared carried.

**RESOLVED - Council welcomes the Coalition Government's new White Paper on Public Health, "Healthy Lives, Healthy People"**

Under proposals in the White Paper, which aims to transform public health and create a "wellness service". Council notes Local Authorities such as London Borough of Barnet will be given ring fenced funding to improve health and well-being in their local communities.

Council is pleased elected representatives will finally have a real say on how healthcare priorities are delivered in the local area, putting them in the driving seat in improving the health of local residents when Primary Care Trusts are abolished.

In particular, Council notes the plans are expected to encourage the "nudging" of individuals towards healthier lifestyles with a range of incentives, although the details will be fleshed out in Action Plans due to be published next year.

Council believes that no-one is better placed to know our local Barnet population and their collective health and wellbeing needs than their local elected representatives.

Whilst this Administration has no intention of either "nannying" or imposing solutions on local people, Council believes LBB is ideally positioned to help and inform them on how to improve their life chances using our existing networks.

Council requests Cabinet to take account of the new joined up approach to Public Health proposed in the White paper and to work across all departments but especially adults, children, housing and planning to ensure the very best results from this transfer of powers.

**12. MOTION 3.1 IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR ANDREW HARPER (Agenda Item 3.1)**

Motion 3.1 in the name of Councillor Andrew Harper was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Anne Hutton was moved. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Hutton was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the Motion was declared carried.

**RESOLVED - Council is proud that Barnet has the highest proportion of schools currently rated good or outstanding by OFSTED in London.**

Council further notes that Barnet is among the top 10 of Councils in the Country on this measure.

Council calls on Cabinet to ensure excellence in Barnet's education continues and is built upon, especially with the welcomed advent of Academies and Free Schools and other much needed education reforms being introduced by the Coalition Government

**13. MOTION 3.4 IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR SACHIN RAJPUT AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW HARPER (Agenda Item 3.4)**

Motion 3.4 in the name of Councillor Sachin Rajput was moved. Amendments in the name of Councillors Andrew Harper and Barry Rawlings were moved. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Harper was declared carried. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Rawlings was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive Motion as amended was declared carried.

**RESOLVED - Council is proud of its excellent Adults and Children's Services that provide support to some of the most vulnerable in the community and provide direction to the next generation of youngsters.**

Therefore Council is extremely pleased that Adult Social Care has been judged Excellent in a recent inspection by the Care Quality Commission, and Children's, in a surprise visit by OFSTED, was praised for its procedures in Safeguarding children.

Council welcomes this third party endorsement of solid sustainable improvement in these services, and warmly congratulates all staff involved in achieving this accolade.

Further, Council calls on Cabinet to work to ensure these services remain of high standard in the years to come.

Council further congratulates Children's Services on last week's announcement on their overall Excellent rating by OFSTED and pays tribute to the hard work and determination of all involved in achieving this.

**14. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING.**

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

**15. ADMINISTRATION POLICY ITEM – BIG SOCIETY INNOVATION FUND (Agenda Item 4.1)**

Councillor Robert Rams proposed the item and moved that it be adopted. An amendment in the name of Councillor Jim Tierney was moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Tierney was declared lost. Upon being put to the vote, the Policy Item was declared carried

**RESOLVED - Council agrees with David Cameron that the best initiatives that help individuals come from citizens themselves.**

The "One Barnet" programme also involves LBB and the wider Barnet Public Sector shaping services more closely around what our residents want and need.

**Council therefore believes that work being done by local people to improve the Borough should be supported wherever possible as part of the “Big Society” espoused by the Coalition Government.**

**Therefore Council calls on Cabinet to formulate plans through a Big Society Innovation Fund to support innovative work in the Barnet civil society that meets local priorities.**

**16. OPPOSITION POLICY ITEM AS AMENDED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW HARPER – CHILDREN’S CENTRES (Agenda Item 4.2)**

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

**RESOLVED - Council regrets the economic malaise which Council believes was caused by the previous Labour Government’s mismanagement, and understands tough choices have to be made.**

**Council notes the Sure Start funding is being reduced by 30% and rolled into the Early Intervention Grant, with the ring-fence removed.**

**Accordingly, Council calls on Cabinet to ensure that money for services currently provided through Children’s Centres is spent in the most efficient and effective way in order to support those most in need and in line with our Early Intervention agenda.**

**17. REPORT OF CABINET – SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY (Agenda Item 5.1.1)**

Councillor Robert Rams, moved adoption and reception of the report.

**RESOLVED - That, subject to the inclusion of the reference requested by the Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2020 be approved.**

**18. REPORT OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE – REVIEW OF THE LICENSING POLICY (Agenda Item 5.2.1)**

Councillor Andreas Tambourides, moved adoption and reception of the report.

**RESOLVED - That Council approve the Licensing Policy as submitted so it can be published on or before 7th January 2011 in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003.**

**19. CHIEF OFFICERS APPOINTMENT PANELS – DIRECTOR FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH AND DIRECTOR FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Items 5.3.1)**

Nominations to the panels were moved in the names of Councillor Joan Scannell, Councillor Barry Rawlings and Councillor Susette Palmer.

**RESOLVED –**

- 1. That the Council appoint the following Councillors to the Chief Officers Appointment Panel to carry out the appointment of the Director for Adult Social Care and Health.**

**Chairman: Councillor Lynne Hillan**

**Vice Chairman: Councillor Sachin Rajput**

**Councillors: Bridget Perry, Helena Hart, Barry Rawlings,**

Substitute Claire Farrier and Jack Cohen  
Councillors: Richard Cornelius, Alison Cornelius, Andrew McNeil  
Pauline Coakley Webb, Monroe Palmer and Susette  
Palmer

2. That the Council appoint the following Councillors to the Chief Officers Appointment Panel to carry out the appointment of the Director for Planning, Environment and Regeneration.
- Chairman: Councillor Lynne Hillan  
Vice Chairman: Councillor Wendy Prentice  
Councillors: Richard Cornelius, Brian Coleman, Kath McGuirk, Jim Tierney and Jack Cohen
- Substitute David Longstaff, Andrew Strongolou, Geoffrey  
Councillors: Johnson, Julie Johnson, Monroe Palmer and Susette  
Palmer

20. **CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (Report and Supplemental Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Item 5.3.2 and 5.3.6)**  
**RESOLVED – The following changes were approved**

**Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- Councillor Graham Old be appointed to replace Councillor John Hart as a member of the Committee.

**Corporate Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee.**

- Councillor Sury Khatri be appointed to replace Councillor Daniel Seal as a member of the Committee.

**Audit Committee**

- Councillor Brian Schama to appointed to replace Councillor Tom Davey as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

21. **CHANGES TO REPRESENTATION OF THE COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.3)**  
**RESOLVED – The following changes were approved, that;**
1. Councillor Daniel Seal be appointed to replace Councillor Andrew Harper as a Council representative on the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute.
  2. Councillor Kate Salinger be appointed to replace Councillor Wendy Prentice as a Council representative on the Adoption and Permanency Panel.
22. **JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Supplemental Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 5.3.4)**  
**RESOLVED - That the Terms of Reference of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the London Boroughs of Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington be agreed.**

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

There were none.

The meeting finished at 10:25pm



**Council Questions to Cabinet Members**  
**14 December 2010**  
**Questions and Responses**

**Question 1**

**Councillor Jack Cohen**

In relation to Vendor Payments & Commitments over £500 for July to September 2010 for Corporate Services please provide me with details of the six payments to Pinner Lock Centre all made on 6 September 2010 and totalling £7,000.

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

Pinner Lock Centre provides secure accommodation for the most vulnerable members of our society. The organisation converts rooms within the homes of the client thereby providing some immediate sanctuary for these individuals who are under the risk of physical abuse. This is more cost effective and practical solution than relocation. Given the nature of the service it would be inappropriate to provide details of the clients or the properties involved. However six properties were converted during the period concerned.

**Supplementary Question 1**

**Councillor Jack Cohen**

I thank Councillor Thomas in his absence for his reply. It is an interesting one that I will pursue another time. Councillor Hillan, on a more general note, the introduction of publicising expenditure over £500 is an important landmark. But, would you agree with me that we need to make it as transparent as possible to our residents? And, would you look at the Council's website, and in particular to the welcome to the Council governance and democracy homepage, and there you will find links to various information of Council publications and information and they listed day-to-day. Unfortunately, the link to vendor payments starts with the letter 'a', all expenditure of £500 is inserted between 'w' for ward information and 'y' youth parliament. Would you use your good officers to put this in its right place so it becomes accessible to the public?

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

Thank you very much for your feedback. As you know we are one of the first councils to have published this information. I agree with you, we must be transparent, our residents do need to know exactly what we are spending their money on and it is good to get that feedback and we can tweak things as we go along. We do realise that there are going to be some initial teething problems, so thank you for finding that.

**Question 2**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

When was the last time that part of the weekly advertisement in the Barnet Press for homes available to let under Choice Based Lettings included details of the number of points that successful applicants had had to secure a property of their choice?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

Officers believe December 2004.

**Supplementary Question 2**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Thank you, Mr Mayor. I take it from the reply that the Cabinet Member doesn't actually know the answer. I respectfully suggest that his answer is probably wrong. I say that, because the officers who set up Choice Based Lettings scheme, who knew what they were doing, were still working for the Council in 2004. I might accept sometime after 2006 the practice may regrettably have lapsed. Does the Cabinet Member accept that by publishing the results of the bidding process and letting applicants know how far short of the sort of number of points that are needed for any realistic chance of being successful, is a key element of Choice Based Lettings as it enabled realism to be given to the applicant and help to encourage those without a high priority to look to other sectors for a solution for their housing need? Does the Cabinet Member also accept by publishing the result individuals were able to satisfy themselves that the properties that they were interested in were allocated to people assessed as being in greater housing need than themselves?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

Well, I don't know if I can actually give a one word answer to that and I was hoping I could – but it might not be printable. The existing Choice Based Lettings system is widely discredited. It is in theory possible to extract the information online, it was difficult, it was confusing and the system is being changed.

**Question 3**

**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

What has the Cabinet Member done to lobby the Government against their proposals to reduce Care Matters funding to local councils?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Care Matters is not currently a ring-fenced grant and has been absorbed within the Area Based Grant. The funding is used within social care to support children in care and those at risk of coming into care. There are currently no proposals to reduce support delivered through the previous Care Matters agenda in the year 2011/12. The Children and Young Person's Act 2008 introduced a number of statutory functions associated with 'Care Matters'; none of these functions are threatened.

**Question 4**

**Councillor Jack Cohen**

In relation to Vendor Payments & Commitments over £500 for July to September 2010 for Finance Directorate please provide me with details of the multiple payments of £5,148 to Capita on 27 August 2010.

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

Veredus were appointed to assist with Assistant Director (AD) recruitment. They are part of the Capita Group. These are stage payments for recruiting into the following roles:

AD – Strategic Finance

AD – Financial Services and

AD – Commercial Assurance.

**Supplementary Question 4**

**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Thank you to Councillor Thomas. Councillor Hillan, in relation to the payments to Capita for the recruitment of staff – will the introduction of e-recruitment now mean that we will no longer have to pay for the use of consultants and that will lead to considerable savings?

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

Obviously, the introduction is going to help enormously, but I still think we will going to probably be using firms like Capita when we are looking at senior members of staff.

**Question 5**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Since the Director of Housing started the trial of the 'new allocation policy' (not yet approved by Cabinet) how many properties have been let outside of the choice based lettings system? How many prospective tenants have refused the properties that officers have selected for them?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

78 Properties have been let using the new system. There were 8 refusals, 3 because the applicants had found their own housing, 2 on medical grounds, 2 because of location and 1 because the applicants wanted a house rather than a flat.

**Supplementary Question 5**

**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Does the Cabinet Member accept by allowing people to choose where they live leads to greater respect to the community that they live in rather than the resentment at living somewhere where they have been told to live?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

Mr Mayor, yes if it is a realistic choice. I would always say that people are given a choice so long as there are significant properties to actually make the choice from.

**Question 6****Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

What has been done to ensure that all expenditure by the Council over £500 has been correctly accounted for online?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

The process to publish this information is being streamlined and additional checks will be introduced.

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

In relation to Vendor Payments & Commitments over £500 for July to September 2010 for Planning, Housing and Regeneration please provide me with details of

- a) the payment of £11,648 to Kings College London dated 1 July;
- b) counsel fees of £17,075 dated 12 August; and
- c) six payments to Eversheds LLP totalling over £150,000 on 12 August and 28 September.

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

£11,648 was paid to Kings College for work on air quality monitoring. £5,500 of this will be reimbursed by Defra.

£ 17,075 was paid to counsel in respect of an Employment dispute.

The Eversheds payments were in respect of the Brent Cross development and will be reimbursed by the developer.

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

In relation to the six payments to Eversheds, and I notice on further inspection of the records that there were more payments to Eversheds in July, Councillor Cornelius in your answer you say these "payments were made in respect of the Brent Cross development and will be reimbursed by the developer", can you now confirm that the developer has indeed reimbursed those costs?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

Yes, Mr Mayor, a large proportion of that has already been reimbursed and invoices have been raised for the rest.

**Question 8****Councillor Graham Old**

Please could the Cabinet Member outline the level of response to the Library Survey?

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

The library survey has had an excellent level of response. By 1 December, over 1,000 responses to the online version of the survey had been received; and many more hard copies of the survey had been issued to library users. The library service consultation has also completed over 30 consultation events, to help us assess local needs and understand how we can best meet the needs of residents in the future.

**Supplementary Question 8****Councillor Graham Old**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Rams for his answer and just ask if there is any updated information since the answer went to press.

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

Thank you Mr Mayor. The latest figures that we have are that we have had 1,600 responses to our consultation and by the end of consultation we would have held 50 events. This has been a thorough consultation and will help to improve our library service for the future in this difficult economic time.

**Question 9****Councillor Anne Hutton**

What is the anticipated effect of removing the EMA?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The Educational Maintenance Allowance, a payment made to 16-18 year olds to support their participation in education or training is ending for new applicants in England from January 2011. This payment has been means tested for students in post 16 full time education, but awarded without means testing for those in Foundation Learning (also known as E2E) with various training providers. EMA payments are also usually related to the attendance and punctuality of the learner.

Students who currently receive EMA will continue to receive it for the remainder of this academic year, but not for next.

Connexions Personal Advisers are available to provide advice and support to students who have the EMA withdrawn, or to new students who may need support to study.

New *Discretionary Support Funds* are intended to meet special needs and circumstances of learners aged 16 or over who can't reasonably be covered by other forms of help. Colleges will determine priority groups and maximum amounts they award. The funds are prioritised for those who face financial hardship. From 2013, all 17 year olds will be required to participate in education or training; from 2015 this will rise to 18 year olds.

**Supplementary Question 9****Councillor Anne Hutton**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would like to thank the Cabinet Member for his reply. The Institute of Fiscal Studies concludes that the Educational Maintenance Allowance provides significant benefits for increasing the numbers of disadvantaged young people who stay on in post-16 education; and that costs of the scheme are more than recouped. Every child not in education, employment or training costs the economy £50,000 so how will removing this allowance help Barnet's finances?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Mr Mayor, one study says one thing one study says another. I intend to deal with these matters in the speech that I hope to be called upon to make when I move the amendment to Councillor Hutton's motion later on this evening.

**Question 10****Councillor Jack Cohen**

In relation to Vendor Payments & Commitments over £500 for July to September 2010 for Commercial please provide me with details of the six payments made on 14 July to Tribal consulting totalling £85,000.

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

This cost relates to a piece of work that was commissioned within the One Barnet Programme and relates to a Vendor Review & Savings Opportunity Assessment. The work has identified a number of opportunities for the Council both in terms of getting better value from its purchasing power but also in terms of how it manages the procurement processes. Not all of the proposals were appropriate for the Council but the benefits that will accrue will significantly exceed the cost of the review.

**Supplementary Question 10****Councillor Jack Cohen**

Councillor Thomas in his response to my question on the six payments to Tribal consulting totalling £85,000, it is interesting why there were six payments not one payment, however, he says as a result of their work that the benefits that will accrue to the Council will significantly exceed the cost of their work. Councillor Hillan, can you give some examples of the benefits that will accrue as a result of this work by Tribal?

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

I think it is important to say that this Council started some time ago on Future Shape which is now obviously become One Barnet because we are aware and we had the foresight to see that we were going to have to make savings.

Had we not done all the work and not had all the consultants in, then we would not be in the situation where we are, where we are able to go out to consultation with a balanced budget.

The amount of savings, even the next year, far out weigh how much we have spent and in future years it will be an enormous amount, at least half of the savings we have had to make because of the terrible financial situation that we are in.

**Question 11**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

There has been considerable public discussion about pupils in High Schools being allowed to participate in protests against the Government's increase in tuition fees, and other public spending cuts. Do you agree with me that as far as Barnet is concerned, the sanctioning of such political activism in schools should be strongly discouraged?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Yes.

**Supplementary Question 11**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Councillor Harper I am very pleased that you agree with my criticism of pupils being involved in political protests during school hours. We have all seen violence and disorder that had occurred in various parts of the country over the last few weeks. It was absolutely disgraceful, and those involved should be ashamed of themselves. Could this Council please, perhaps, issue a directive to all High Schools within this Borough, especially those under State Aid, that we, the Council, urge that students be forbidden during curriculum hours from participating in external political demonstrations that are totally inconsistent to what they should be doing in school?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I, of course, absolutely condemn the behaviour in the recent public protests that Councillor Gordon has described. I am not at all sure that either I or the Director of Children's Services, who is sitting just over there, is actually empowered to do what Councillor Gordon has just asked. Nevertheless, we can of course do our best to guide schools, influence them and tell them what it is that we would expect of their behaviour.

**Question 12**

**Councillor Jim Tierney**

Will the Council ring-fence any money repatriated from the London Councils' Grants Scheme for the voluntary sector in Barnet, and how will that money be distributed to voluntary sector organisations?

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

We will decide in due course how any savings that derive from changes to the London Boroughs Grants Scheme are used. Any funds that are earmarked for the voluntary and community sector are likely to focus on helping deliver front-line services in support of corporate priorities and commissioning strategies.

**Supplementary Question 12**

**Councillor Jim Tierney**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you for your response Councillor Rams, but you refer to these repatriated money as savings. The facts are that are for helping Barnet to fund the local voluntary sector directly rather through the London-wide fund so it is sent back to us as voluntary sector money. So, why can't you say from the outset, Councillor Rams, that you will ring-fence those funds for our local voluntary sector in Barnet?

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

Mr Mayor, thank you. Can I start by thanking the Labour Party for leading and helping us to ensure that this money is coming back, it was the Grants Committee a couple of weeks ago, and the Leaders' Committee today, that the Labour Party and the Conservatives worked together to ensure that we get this money back. Sadly, the Lib Dems did not support this. We are not quite there yet, still 2/3 of London councils have to agree that the money has to come back.

When that does happen, we will look to ensure that we get some of that money back and it goes to the voluntary sector, but I won't commit how much yet till it is all confirmed that it is coming back.

**Question 13**

**Councillor Jack Cohen**

In relation to Vendor Payments & Commitments over £500 for July to September 2010:

What was

- a) the total amount of payments to consultants across all departments?
- b) the total amount of payments for agency staff across all departments?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

The total amounts of payments to consultants over £500 were £8,334,478, of which £7,084,794 was Capital and £1,249,684 Revenue.

The total amounts of payments for agency staff over £500 were £2,220,111 of which £169,921 was Capital and £2,050,190 Revenue.

**Supplementary Question 13**

**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Would Councillor Hillan agree with me that payment of almost £8.5m to consultants in just one quarter is astonishing? How can she justify this?

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

An awful lot of the money that is spent is professionals who are working on capital schemes and delivering projects for us. A lot of this money is going to be paid by the developers, but of course we do have to pay that sort of money out. We don't employ architects full-time on the Council anymore for instance, but you would obviously need an architect to put the plans together for any big scheme.

**Question 14**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Having recently participated in a visit to some of our housing estates as part of a Task and Finish Group inspection, it is apparent that many residents – and indeed Housing Managers – are feeling highly demoralised by the uncertainty about the future timescale of regeneration. Whereas much of this is outside the control of our Council, can we do as much as possible to reassure residents and provide them with as much open information as we have regarding future regeneration plans?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

In short, yes. The regeneration process is slow but is proceeding. If any Housing Manager is "highly demoralised" they need to speak to their line manager or me. The world is an uncertain place and the pace of building depends on the availability of money. It is important that all concerned are told the complete truth and that unrealistic hopes are not raised. There are already good newsletters that go out on the regeneration estates. I will make sure that Councillor Gordon receives copies.

**Supplementary Question 14**

**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Councillor Cornelius, I am sure that you are just as concerned as I am about the slow movement of regeneration, in fact probably more so, as you're on the frontline with this. Do you not agree that one of the important factors here, is that essential repairs and decorations to properties should not be allowed to fester too long on those Council estates where, due to the regeneration delays, clearly people are going to be living in their properties for somewhat longer than originally anticipated?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

Yes.

**Question 15**

**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Does the Cabinet Member support the reduction in support for school sports?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The Government had to make very difficult decisions with regard to public spending and a number of specific grants had to end – support for School Sports Partnerships is likely to be affected. The Government is currently in discussion with headteachers and others to develop alternative plans to maintain sport in schools and to develop competitive sport while de-ringfencing funding. School budgets were given a high priority in the Government's spending review to reflect the commitment to improving standards in education. At the same time government policy is giving schools greater freedom to decide how to spend their money to best meet the needs of their local community. I fully recognise the value of high quality school sport being available to all children and am confident that our excellent schools in Barnet will continue to include this in their overall provision.

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

In regard to this answer, with this sort of nothing to do with me attitude, could I ask the Lead Member what is he going to do to ensure that schools at least continue to provide an adequate level of sport, particularly any free school or Academy that don't have to, because this links to both the public health and sport portfolio?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

I have no doubt whatsoever that all the Barnet family of schools will continue to place a very strong emphasis on sport – they have done in the past and there is no reason to believe they won't do so in the future.

**Question 16****Councillor Jack Cohen**

Please provide an update on the action the Council is taking to address the shortage of primary school places in the west and south of the Borough. Will you confirm that Wessex Gardens school is admitting to what amounts to an additional class of children to meet the demand and can you confirm whether section 106 monies are being utilised to fund this and if so how much?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

In preparation for September 2010 we worked with schools to create 210 temporary Reception places in seven schools, four of the classes (120 places) are in the west and south of the Borough at Dollis Infants, Woodcroft, Barnfield and Broadfields, while the others are at Monkfrith, Tudor and Holly Park. In response to emerging pressure on Year 1 places, due to children moving into the Borough this autumn, Wessex Gardens recently agreed to take an additional Year 1 class of 30 pupils, while Dollis Infants also accommodated some additional Year 1 pupils. The capital costs of the additional classroom at Wessex Gardens are funded from capital grants and there is no Section 106 funding associated with this scheme.

**Supplementary Question 16****Councillor Jack Cohen**

Would Councillor Harper join with me in congratulating the Head and all those who work at Wessex Gardens School for the way that they cooperated in dealing with the shortfall in school places? Can Councillor Harper tell me what plans does he have to do with any similar shortfall in school places in September 2011?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Well, I certainly will join Councillor Cohen in the first part of his question. In fact, I, myself visited Wessex Gardens School to convey my personal appreciation and that of the Administration to the Headteacher and staff only on Wednesday 5 December. I have to say that there was a little bit of mischief there which Councillor Cohen and his Ward colleagues were involved in – the School were very dismayed by the suggestion that they weren't willing and weren't prepared to take the extra children and they were particularly upset they told me by the tenor of remarks in an article in Hampstead and Highgate Express on this subject. However, that being said, of course the Council is continuing to put in place contingency plans for the expected increasing requirements of primary schools places – that is part of our plans for the next couple of years and if Councillor Cohen is prepared to check the records he would see that I took a paper on this subject to Cabinet back in September this year.

**Question 17****Councillor Brian Gordon**

It seems that the Borough is likely to get very little back, in return for the contribution it is making to public spending on the forthcoming Olympic Games? Can the Council use its influence to procure that Barnet will be more involved in the event and thereby derive some eventual benefits from it?

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

I have already made public my disappointment that no Olympic event will take place in the Borough, however, through the Olympic Steering Group, the Council has been working with other organisation, towards ensuring that the Borough is best placed to make use of the opportunities that the Games will bring, whilst seeking to work together to mitigate some of the inevitable costs and impacts of the Games.

Barnet's residents, in particular young people, will see benefits from the Games taking place. It is hoped that the Council will be able to access 2012 related funding that could be used to upgrade or refurbish sporting facilities or to support initiatives to increase participation and inclusion in physical activity. Whilst a number of the Borough's schools received funding last year for cultural projects related to 2012 Olympiad. The Torch Relay will give us the chance to showcase our borough to a global audience, and as part of Host Borough logo agreement with LOCOG there may be opportunities for the Council to give away a number of tickets for the Games as prizes in schools and sports clubs so that some of Barnet's younger residents have the opportunity to attend the Games free of charge. The Council may also take some reassurance from the positive comments made by LOCOG about the potential of a refurbished Copthall Stadium hosting a major team.

**Supplementary Question 17****Councillor Brian Gordon**

Councillor Rams, I am very pleased see the various sporting initiatives and ideas that may well develop during the Olympic period or as a consequence to that. But, I want to ask is it absolutely set in stone that there is going to be no Olympic activity whatsoever within this Borough? We still have 1½ years to go and I would like to know whether there is any possibility that the Council using its influence to see whether there can be some changes in that direction. And also I am interested to see that you refer to Copthall Stadium in your answer and various ideas are for that and wonder whether that can be elaborated upon, perhaps, but not now, but more information could be given about how Copthall could be involved in the Olympic event.

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

Thank you, I am happy to provide you with more information about Copthall. I do think it is a disgrace that our taxpayers are forced to pay all this extra money for the Olympics but we get nothing in our Borough. Sadly, I feel it is too late for us to lobby for anything to be put in our Borough, we saw the kaffuffle that happened recently over the marathon route and don't think we will see any change. But, it would be nice if we did have the 200 yards of cycle track that we did have put back in place.

**Question 18****Councillor Anne Hutton**

How are the responses to the libraries consultation being collated and when will Councillors be given the detailed results?

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

The strategic library review has featured a broad and comprehensive consultation programme, including over 30 different consultation activities. The online consultation is due to close on 17 December, and all other consultation events will be completed by the end of December. Results from various consultation activities will be collated into one main report in early January. This will summarise and bring together results from the various consultation initiatives – from the online surveys, user and non-user focus groups, and summaries of different community group focus groups. This evidence will be used to inform and shape the Library strategy, and the consultation report will be made available to Councillors.



**Supplementary Question 18****Councillor Anne Hutton**

Thank you Mr Mayor. There was a bit of confusion around when the end date for the consultation for the libraries was going to be – I understand it is now 17<sup>th</sup> next Friday – that is correct? Just wanted to ask, if the majority of people responding to the consultation either by petition or online, if they don't want to close any libraries will you agree not to close any?

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

There isn't, so far, been submitted any petition to the consultation and there have been over 1600 responses. The majority of which have been very favourable and looking at ways that we can provide the service better for less money. I think the library review will come forward with some innovative ideas that will only benefit our residents.

**Question 19****Councillor Bridget Perry**

Please could the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion please inform us what action the Council is taking to tackle domestic violence given we had the International Elimination of Violence against Women Day on 25 November?

**Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides**

Barnet Council has been working hard with all its partners to promote greater awareness of domestic violence in our society at the present time. Current action taking place includes

- a poster campaign throughout December to raise awareness of domestic violence in the Borough;
- co-ordination with Brent and Harrow to see how inter-Borough working can improve the lives of domestic violence survivors;
- piloting a Safer Families project across several Children's Centres as part of an early intervention and prevention approach;
- developing the Barnet Specialist Domestic Violence Court; and
- developing a rape crisis counselling centre together with Haringey, Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, and Islington.

A successful domestic violence event was hosted by the Sangam Centre on 25 November. Following on from this, there will be a further three presentations at the Domestic Violence Forum on 7 December. Local agencies are regularly invited to share good practice at the Domestic Violence Forum, and there is a clear multi-agency governance structure to tackle domestic violence in the Borough.

The Council and its partners have set out their strategic priorities in the Multi-Agency Barnet Domestic Violence Strategy 2010/11-2010/13. Priorities include:

- raising awareness and taking an early intervention approach;
- ensuring safe and effective provision for domestic violence survivors;
- safeguarding children and young people affected by domestic violence;
- delivering an effective criminal justice system;
- and co-ordinated action across all agencies.

Domestic violence provision across the Borough is currently under review with a view to making improvements to services as part of the commissioning process for 2011/12.

We and all our partners are working to make everyone aware of this usually hidden crime and ensure that it is dealt with properly and sensitively by everyone involved.

**Supplementary Question 19****Councillor Bridget Perry**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I thank Joanna Tambourides for her very comprehensive reply to my question. Can the Cabinet Member advise when the Rape Crisis Counselling Centre will be up and running for Barnet residents to use?

**Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I was able to attend the launch of the North London Rape Crisis Counselling Centre at City Hall last week. The Islington Hub has been opened, recruiting Counsellors, and I am pleased to say that it will be fully operational in January and also the outreach satellite service for Barnet residents. I do hope that all members will tell everybody when the opportunity arises that we do now have a rape counselling service in Barnet.

**Question 20**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

Why are Area Environment Sub-Committees being cancelled, and will the Cabinet Member give me an assurance that they will not be scrapped?

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

Over the last two cycles of Council meetings, 5 out of 6 Area Environment Sub-Committee meetings have taken place. On 13 October 2010, the Special Committee (Constitutional Review) agreed that the arrangements for both Residents Forums and Area Environment Sub-Committees should be reviewed and the Special Committee (Constitutional Review) will be considering the review of those arrangements at meetings in the New Year.

**Supplementary Question 20**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

I repeat my question – can she assure us that they won't be scrapped?

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

We are looking at ways at not scrapping them because it is very important that we go along with the Government's proposals for localism and I think it is an area where we could involve the local residents in a much better way. Of course, I would welcome any feedback from the Labour Group or Liberal Democrat Group before the constitutional review.

**Question 21**

**Councillor Stephen Sowerby**

Will the Cabinet Member join me in congratulating Ravenscroft School in their bid to become an Academy?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

I am very pleased that The Ravenscroft School has now been approved by the Department for Education to convert to Academy status. The Council will support the Governors and school leadership to make this a successful transition.

**Supplementary Question 21**

**Councillor Stephen Sowerby**

Mr Mayor, I thank the Cabinet Member for his answer. Does he look forward to other academies being formed in the Borough?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Mr Mayor, yes I do and I can say, despite the political flak from Members opposite, some of which we saw in Councillor Rawlings' supplementary question a few moments ago, that this Conservative Administration fully supports those schools that may wish to move to academy status and I am happy to report that only yesterday Councillor Thomas and I signed a delegated powers report with respect to The Compton School, hopefully being the next school to transfer to academy status from the beginning of next year.

**Question 22**

**Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb**

Can the Cabinet Member assure me and all the families of deaf children that the budget for specialist support services for deaf children for next year will not be affected by budget cuts?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The budget proposal aims to reduce management costs and will not affect services for deaf children.

**Question 23****Councillor Mark Shooter**

Does the Leader of the Council agree with our Prime Minister, who was quoted as saying – "When it comes to looking at and trimming your budgets, don't do the easy thing, which is to cut money to the voluntary bodies and organisations working in our communities. Look at your core costs?" (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100915/debtext/100915-0001.htm> – column 877)

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

We are sympathetic with the Prime Minister's remarks regarding voluntary organisations and cutting core costs but we are in a different place regarding our costs and funding per head of population than a lot of other councils. A Council as efficient as Barnet, with one of lowest back office costs in London, has limited places to look for savings but we will still squeeze as much value as possible from what we spend on core costs. We will also need all bodies we pay for services, charitable and non-charitable, to look for efficiencies.

Delivering public services in the future will require us to work closer with our residents and community bodies. To achieve this, we recognise that capacity and skills will need to be developed amongst some individuals and groups. We're therefore proposing to create a new time-limited Big Society Innovation Fund and would welcome ideas on how such resource might be best targeted.

**Question 24****Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

How will removing security of tenure from Council tenants help reward those who work in the Borough?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

Social Housing exists to help people in need whilst they need help. The direction of Government policy is to ensure that those who become new tenants and then no longer need help, should move on and free up accommodation for those who do need help. This will mean that more can be helped. There has not been any suggestion that security of tenure should be removed from existing tenants.

**Supplementary Question 24****Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

The point of my question was that to remove security of tenure provides a disincentive to people to improve their circumstances by getting a higher paid job as many will fear losing their homes. How will this help more people get the housing they need? I just don't understand what you are trying to say.

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

What the Government is trying to do is to guide us towards delivering help to people who actually need it when they need it and if they cease to need that help then it is wrong for other people to continue to subsidise them.

**Question 25****Councillor Mark Shooter**

The Council used to be very strict in not allowing potential or projected savings to be included in budgets but only certain or identifiable ones. What test is used now?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) to report to the Council at budget-setting on the robustness of the estimates. There has been no recent change to these requirements. In making this judgement, the CFO will have regard to the nature of the budget process and in particular to the degree of professional rigour and challenge in the process. I am confident that the CFO will issue a positive report when Council comes to finalise the budget.

**Question 26****Councillor Ross Houston**

Given that capacity in the private rented sector is now shrinking as a result of the Government's housing benefit cuts, how and where will the Council house the 15,000 families that they are about to remove from the housing register?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

Capacity in the Private Rented Sector fluctuates and it is too early to see what the changes in housing benefit and mortgage availability will do to that supply. The majority of those on the list probably never would have been housed by the Council. The whole problem with the list has been that it reflects demand rather than need and as such going on the register can arouse a false hope of eventual Council housing. The aim of the new allocations policy is to get a system that is both simpler and fairer.

**Supplementary Question 26****Councillor Ross Houston**

I thank the Cabinet Member for his reply. A report from council officers budget and performance categorically says that capacity is tightening in the private rent sector because of housing benefit cut. If this continues or worsens, will you finally commit to providing more affordable housing for rent and shared ownership?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

Mr Mayor, that is not a commitment that I can make.

**Question 27****Councillor John Marshall**

Will the Cabinet Member join me in congratulating Oak Lodge School in achieving an Outstanding rating from Ofsted?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

I am delighted to congratulate Oak Lodge School on the 'Outstanding' rating they received from Ofsted this term. This external validation of the high quality provision at the school is a tribute to the staff, governors and whole school community. As Councillors will know the figures for Barnet schools judged as 'Good' and 'Outstanding' are well above national averages and it is a great achievement that all four Special Schools in the Borough are now in the 'Outstanding' category.

**Question 28****Councillor Alison Moore**

Why are the Council predicting they will save exactly the same amount of money each year under some strands of the easyCouncil programme – is this double accounting?

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

The projects in the One-Barnet programme are seeking to deliver on-going savings to the base budget cost of our services. So over a given period of time, the total saving for a project would be the total of the savings in each year. This is not 'double accounting' – a point that was agreed at the Audit Committee last week.

**Supplementary Question 28****Councillor Alison Moore**

I think the best thing to say about this is that portraying your savings estimates in the best possible light. Now, that you have confirmed that the year-on-year savings are not additional savings each year, can you confirm whether these savings are identified and deliverable or are they just targets?

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

I can confirm that they are identified and will be made.

**Question 29****Councillor Julie Johnson**

Recently, some parents were consulted on services at Children's Centres. Who commissioned this consultation, who administered this consultation, how many parents took part in the consultation and what were the results of this consultation?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The pre-consultation questionnaire was issued during a one week window between the 8-12 November, by the Council. Children's Centres staff were asked to meet with parents to discuss the questionnaires and complete them either on a one on one basis or in a group forum, questionnaires were not to be issued directly to parents. This information was subsequently assessed and has fed into the initial shaping of Children's Centres business case which will be formally consulted on. Approximately 1000 parents participated during this one week, the analysis will be reported in the business case.

**Question 30****Councillor Julie Johnson**

Recently, the Cabinet Member wrote to parents and carers about Children's Centres. How many parents and carers did this letter go to, and have all parents now been informed that there is a review of Children's Centres in the Borough?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The letter went to 1,359 parents and carers. Further letters have been made available in Children's Centres for parents to take away, and information is also displayed on noticeboards in all centres.

**Question 31****Councillor Anne Hutton**

Would the Cabinet Member advise what the exact attendance figures are for each Children's Centre in Barnet, and what the exact registration figures are for each Children's Centre in Barnet?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

	Children registered	Number of different children who have visited the centre
Barnfield	612	1,200
Bell Lane	552	760
Canada Villa	197	127
Child's Hill	298	430
Chipping Barnet	278	210
Church End	290	179
Coppetts Wood	536	1,000
Edgware	195	100
Fairway	413	609
Hampden way	287	770
Kennedy Leigh	398	769
Mill Hill	257	56
Newstead	416	663
North Finchley	190	174
Parkfield	316	610
St Margarets	314	466
Stonegrove	449	600
Sweets Way	224	223
The Hyde	428	706
Underhill	337	731
Wingfield	606	660
Children who are registered but live in an area of Barnet not yet assigned a centre. This will be addressed through the review.	1286	N/A
Children who do not live in Barnet	837	711
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10861</b>	<b>9,421</b>

**Question 32****Councillor Julie Johnson**

Will the Cabinet Member assure me that a marketing suite will not be located on the site of the sailing base during the regeneration of the West Hendon estate?

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

The marketing suite may well be located on this site.

**Supplementary Question 32****Councillor Julie Johnson**

This site is a haven for water birds that are protected from human activity. They have been accustomed to the present peaceful environment. Would the Cabinet Member consider the alternative site where the sheltered accommodation was before it was demolished? It has excellent access and is large enough to accommodate the marketing suite plus other offices and parking. This proposal has cross-party support among the Councillors on the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee.

**Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius**

Mr Mayor, there are cost implications as well as practical implications and the site proposed is clearly the best one.

**Question 33****Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

Would the Cabinet Member detail how the local economy has benefited from migration?

**Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas**

The impact of migration on the local economy is difficult to quantify. For a start, it is important to note that many Barnet residents commute out of Barnet to work, so information about the impact of exclusively Barnet-based migrants on the local economy is very hard to calculate (likewise, data about migrants working in the Barnet economy but living elsewhere).

However, I pay tribute to the contribution that all of Barnet's diverse community makes to the economy, be it nationally, in London, and locally here in and Barnet.

**Question 34****Councillor Anne Hutton**

Will the Cabinet Member confirm that he will not close any Children's Centres?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

Barnet Council has full funding for all our 21 children's centres until the end of the current financial year (March 2011). These children's centres are paid for entirely out of central government's "Sure Start" grants and we will not know the level of funding we will receive for the next financial year until around mid-December. We will obviously develop plans for next year in the light of the money available for the Council to spend. We will then discuss these plans with parents, staff and partner agencies across the Borough. Changes, if any, to what we provide in Barnet will be targeted to ensure that services and support are there for those parents and children most in need of the Council's help.

**Question 35****Councillor Anne Hutton**

Are libraries with the lowest usage / number of visits under threat of closure?

**Answer by Councillor Robert Rams**

The strategic library review has two key aims: Firstly, to make sure that library services meet the needs of our residents in the future; and secondly, in a difficult financial environment, we must consider ways to make our services more effective and efficient.

Visits to our libraries do vary considerably, from 796,000 per year at our busiest library to 16,000 per year in our least visited library. However, no proposals have been made for any specific library sites, and the starting point of the strategic review is to assess needs across the Borough, identify areas of strength, weakness, and options to improve library services in the future.

Consultation with users, non-users, and those who are disconnected from use of libraries is ongoing.

**Question 36**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

What is the Secretary of State's response to the Leader's letter about Government funding for housing (housing benefit and homelessness), and primary school places?

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

Bob Neill MP has visited Barnet and we have discussed the implications with him and raised our concerns.

**Supplementary Question 36**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

Would the Leader tell us what his response was?

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

Well his response was to send Bob Neill down and he visited Barnet and we discussed all the items in my letter and as a result of that he is taking them away and the Government is certainly looking at some of the suggestions that we made.

**Question 37**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

How many youth centres will close in Barnet as a result of the Administration's budget?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

The children's service is currently looking at several options regarding the reduction in budget which will include evaluation of young people's needs. Following consideration of these options, there will be a consultation process with all stakeholders and key partners before we know the full impact on the service delivery, including any potential impact on youth centres.

**Supplementary Question 37**

**Councillor Alison Moore**

Is closing youth centres one of those options?

**Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper**

I shall be looking at youth service provision in all respects including through youth centres. There will be a statutory consultation which will be starting up shortly. There will be proposals going out and I suggest, Councillor Moore and others who are interested, look at that consultation.

**Question 38**

**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

How much money has been spent on mending potholes and in light of the current weather and the continuing poor state of Barnet's roads what money has the Cabinet Member built in to his budget to deal with damage to roads that may be caused by cold weather this winter?

**Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman**

The spend on pothole related works during this financial year (to date) has been £3,112,604. I am sure the Councillor will want to congratulate the Administration and the Officers on the successful completion of this project.

The breakdown of this expenditure is as follows:

Pot Hole Elimination programme (PEP) Phase 1 – Main road network – £660,000

Pot Hole Elimination programme (PEP) Phase 2 – All other Borough roads – £2,145,000

Reactive Pot Hole repairs prior to PEP commencement – £307,604

The remaining Responsive Maintenance budget for this financial year stands at £309,679. This budget is available to respond to all safety defects on the highway and as such is not just for pot holes.

The annual responsive maintenance budget for 2011/12 financial year is expected to be £1.9m.