

**Council Questions to Cabinet Members
13 September 2011
Questions and Responses**

Question 1**Councillor Susette Palmer**

Will the Cabinet Member please tell us which Wards include a residential, non shopping street, CPZ and, in addition which Wards also include a shopping centre/high street CPZ.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The CPZs which are currently in operation (Chipping Barnet, Brent Cross Station, Cricklewood, Mill Hill, Brent Cross, East Finchley, Golders Green, West Hendon, Hendon, North Finchley, Church End, Temple Fortune, Colindale, Mill Hill East and Edgware) are associated either with a London Underground or National Rail Station, a busy retail area or an area where there are significant parking demands due to local amenities or attractions. All these CPZ include residential and shopping areas.

Question 2**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Could the Cabinet Member please update the Council regarding measures being taken to clarify the position on pavement parking throughout the Borough.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The position regarding footway parking has not changed in that where footway parking contravention takes place enforcement will be carried out, although in roads where no CEO visits have taken place within the 3 months prior to a request for enforcement being received, ward member views will be sought before enforcement action is carried out.

Footway parking is an offence under Highway legislation.

Question 3**Councillor Alison Moore**

The external auditors have reported errors in the draft Pension Fund Accounts for 2010/11, and noted that investment transaction data had not been processed within the SAP accounting software for a period of time – what is being done to ensure that such errors do not arise again, and that all transactions are correctly entered in SAP at all times regardless of staffing issues?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Since November 2010, all cash balances in the pension fund have been managed directly by the fund managers, when previously a very inefficient process involving daily cash transfers between the Council and the fund managers took place. Since that point, detailed recording of transactions on a line by line basis has not been recorded in SAP, these have been recorded at summary level based on the accounting information provided by fund managers. This recommendation is accepted and full reporting of transactions within SAP will be in place for the 2011/12 accounts.

Question 4**Councillor Susette Palmer**

Surely we should not have to wait until the end of July for our new diaries since the format is roughly the same every year. The Committees get out of date anyway so perhaps we should just put in the Mayors photo and print immediately after Mayor making. Why must it take so long?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

It would have been good to produce the diaries quicker but this year there were difficulties with the production despite constant chasing by officers and cabinet members. Much as the Mayor's picture is admired, the main purpose of the diary is to get our schedule of meetings into order. The diary is not easy to compile and this year took 4 weeks longer than it should have to print and bind. It will be earlier next year.

Question 5**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Can the Cabinet member update the Council on the number of roads which have been closed or

restricted recently in areas such as my own due to gas, electricity or other works involving excavation. Is the Council able to increase its control over the timing of these works and the streamlining thereof between utility companies to keep such closures and restrictions to a minimum? This is certainly the stated wish of the Mayor of London.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Far too many. In the past 12 month period there have been 58 road closures and 552 sites where some form of restriction was necessary in order to accommodate Utility Company works to be carried out safely. When compared to the total number of work sites during the same 12 month period this equates to 6.28% of all works carried out.

The Authority's Street Works team are entitled by legislation to request full details of Utility Company proposed works including methods of working, timing and traffic/pedestrian management arrangements. We can challenge works durations and propose changes to traffic management arrangements and often do so. We also impose penalty charges on the Utility Companies when their works overrun the agreed durations. This will be further stepped up in the near future by extending the conditions we attach to Street Works permits and utilising Fixed Penalty Notices to assist in encouraging better management and compliance by the Utility Companies.

Question 6

Councillor Julie Johnson

There appears to be an increase in fly tipping in West Hendon Ward. Can the Cabinet Member provide details of the amount of dumping in West Hendon and the cost of clearance. How do these figures compare with the overall cost of the now defunct free skip service which was well used by West Hendon residents.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The annual cost of the fly tip removal team is approx £90k.

The annual cost of the neighbourhood skip service was approx £238k.

Question 7

Councillor Brian Gordon

Could the Cabinet Member please give some brief details of the Council's "planning alerts" service.

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Planning Alerts are one of a series of web based initiatives which the Council has developed with "MySociety" with the intention of opening up local services and giving residents greater knowledge of proposals to change their environment.

We give residents two options to sign up and use the facility:- by ward, or by postcode. The latter option allows residents to choose if they want to know about development within 200yards or 180metres, about half a mile or 800metres, and about a mile or 1.6kilometres. The service is part of a commitment to exploring how we can make the information the council holds more easily available and more relevant to residents. I am pleased to report that to date 745 Barnet residents have signed up for planning alerts. A total of 39,503 alerts, covering 1,148 planning applications, have been sent out as of 6th September 2011.

Members will know that few issues excite local interest as much as planning so I am sure this innovative new service will be welcomed by residents.

Question 8

Councillor Ross Houston

Has the council written to all residents who were on the open housing register to inform them about the change in housing allocations policy? Where applicable have residents been advised that they have been removed from the housing register and have they been offered housing advice?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Letters have not been sent to all those households that were on the Housing Register. Instead, a number of actions were taken to ensure that the closure of the register and the introduction of the new allocations scheme were widely publicised, including:

- An article in the March 2011 edition of Barnet First

- Article in Barnet Homes' March 2011 edition of "At Home"
- Notices in the Local press as part of Choice Based Lettings adverts throughout February, March and April 2011
- Direct contact by the Housing Service with existing cases identified as likely to have high priority under the new scheme
- Barnet Homes wrote to all council tenants registered for a transfer
- Information placed on the Council's and Barnet Homes' web sites and the Home Connections web site

Housing advice is offered to all members of the public who contact the housing service, including those who may have been on the housing register before it was closed.

Question 9

Councillor Brian Gordon

Council the Cabinet Member inform the Council what lessons regarding law and order and policing within Barnet were learned from the disgraceful riots that took place around London during August?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Fortunately LB Barnet did not experience the level of disturbance seen in other parts of the Capital and across the country.

The response to the disturbances locally was excellent. Barnet Police were extremely proactive, deploying their resources rapidly so that timely interventions were made at key locations around the borough.

The Council supported the Police along with other partners as much as possible, for example co-ordinating responses with our CCTV Service.

The Metropolitan Police Service has commenced formal reviews into the disturbances, the results of which will hopefully provide useful lessons for the future.

Question 10

Councillor Gill Sargeant

What youth provision was there on Grahame Park this summer?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The activities offered to young people over the summer on Grahame Park Estate included football every Wednesday evening, targeted towards young people at risk of or involved in gangs, drugs, and anti-social behaviour; a Community Clear up on 28 July as part of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme; and Urban Gamez, a multi-sports event delivered in partnership with Barnet Homes attended by over 100 young people. A Motor Mechanics course was also held for four days in August in which young people maintained a fleet of dirt bikes before spending a day off-roading.

In partnership with SWITCH (Barnet's mobile skate park), a number of young people involved in gang activity on the Grahame Park estate were supported by a targeted youth worker during the summer and will be offered a preventative programme starting mid-September. Since the riots, regular outreach work has been taking place.

Question 11

Councillor Brian Salinger

Will the cabinet member for Children's services join me in congratulating the head teacher and staff at the Pupil Referral Unit (the Pavilion) on the outcome of their recent Ofsted inspection?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

The outcome of the Pavilion's recent Ofsted inspection has not yet been formally published by Ofsted and so I am not in a position to comment. Nevertheless, as I'm sure Members will agree, the Pavilion has for a number of years been working successfully with some of our most vulnerable children - those excluded from mainstream schools - and the Headteacher, Shelley Dannell and her staff are to be commended for their hard work and dedication.

Question 12**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

How much, if any, of Barnet's £3m reduction in Housing/Council Tax benefit grant from the Department of Work and Pensions has been recovered?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Each year the Council provides an estimate of the total benefits bill to DWP so that an estimate of grant payable to the Council can be made. This year, the implementation of our new system has made it more difficult to provide the necessary evidence to the DWP. We remain confident that this will be resolved, and that the correct level of grant will be paid to the Council by the DWP.

Question 13**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Will the Cabinet Member for Housing tell the Council:-

- a) How many units of nightly purchased accommodation were in use as at 1st August 2011.
- b) How many of those units had been occupied by the same individual or family for:
 1. less than one month
 2. more than 1 month but less than 3 months
 3. more than 3 months but less than 6 months
 4. more than 6 months but less than 9 months
 5. more than 9 months but less than 12 months
 6. more than 12 months.

In the case of those over 12 months will the cabinet member identify each case (suitably anonymised) indicating the date on which the arrangement started.

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

- a). There were 213 units of nightly purchased accommodation in occupation as at 31st July.
- b).
 1. 35 had been occupied for less than one month
 2. 59 occupied for more than one month but less than 3
 3. 50 occupied for more than 3 months but less than 6
 4. 17 occupied for more than 6 months but less than 9
 5. 17 occupied for more than 9 months but less than 12
 6. 35 occupied for more than 12 months

A list detailing dates of occupation for those in residence for more than 12 months is below

08/07/10
 03/06/10
 03/06/10
 27/05/10
 20/05/10
 19/04/10
 26/03/10
 11/02/10
 11/02/10
 11/02/10
 08/02/10
 03/02/10
 13/01/10
 06/01/10
 04/12/09
 04/11/09
 07/09/09
 26/08/09
 21/08/09
 31/07/09
 02/07/09
 09/04/09
 19/02/09

19/01/09
 07/10/08
 24/09/08
 15/08/08
 13/06/08
 12/05/08
 12/05/08
 03/04/08
 14/06/07
 26/04/07
 12/09/06
 26/07/06

Question 14

Councillor Andrew McNeil

Would the Cabinet Member attend a quick site visit with myself and parents at Martin Primary School in East Finchley who are worried about the many dangers posed by the positioning of recycling bins so near to the School – the pavement is made narrower with the positioning of the bins, and at school run times children and parents often have to step onto the road to navigate around the bins which is clearly very dangerous. While officers have tried to find an alternative location for the bins, so far the bins, and the danger, remain.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Following a conversation with Councillor McNeill I have instructed that the bins which are ugly and dirty as well as an obstruction are removed.

Question 15

Councillor Brian Salinger

Will the Cabinet Member for the Environment please advise the Council how many premises in each Ward have applied for and been granted temporary street trading licences (otherwise known as the pavement tax) since the introduction of the charge? Will the Cabinet Member advise the Council how much has been paid to the Council for these licences? Will the Cabinet Member tell the Council what enforcement action has been taken against traders who do not apply and the outcome of those actions?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Temporary licences are issued for a maximum period of six months at a time in accordance with the legislation (London Local Authorities Act 1990 as amended). Licences cover the periods April – September and October – March.

Some discrepancies with historic data were identified due to the transfer of data to a new IT system and an office move. Caution should therefore be taken with regard to the reliability of the data presented.

Temporary street trading licences granted per financial year since introduction are detailed below;

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of premises licenced	102	98	65	94
Licence fees received	£29,800 (part year only)	£57,400	£39,000	£28,200 (6 months only. October renewals pending)
Enforcement action	Education only	3 FPNs issued	39 FPNs issued	58 warnings 6 FPNs issued

Notes:

- 2008/09 was the year the regime was introduced. An educational approach was taken, informing traders of the policy and application process rather than adopting a formal enforcement approach.
- The introduction of the regime in 2008/09 was incremental across the borough commencing from May 2008. Only 1 temporary licence was issued per premise due to the timing of the implementation programme.
- In 2010/11 Licensing Enforcement Officers were deleted as part of 2010/11 budget efficiencies. The work has now been re-profiled to the Priority Intervention Team but regulatory work during 2010/11 was reduced.

The table below sets out the licences issued per ward for 2011/12 April to October:

2011/12	Tables and Chairs	Displays of Goods	Total
Finchley Church End	3	2	5
West Finchley	7	9	16
Woodhouse	4	2	6
East Barnet	1	0	1
High Barnet	0	0	0
Totteridge	2	0	2
Edgware	3	4	7
Burnt Oak	0	7	7
Hale	0	1	1
Colindale	0	0	0
West Hendon	1	0	1
Hendon	0	4	4
Mill Hill	3	1	4
Golders Green	1	0	1
Childs Hill	12	8	20
Oakleigh	4	0	4
Garden Suburb	3	4	7
East Finchley	1	4	5
Coppetts	0	1	1
Underhill	0	0	0
Brunswick Park	1	1	2
Total	46	48	94

Question 16

Councillor Alison Moore

How long has the ESIS server been unsupported and with a failing back-up, and by when will the historic children's data that is being held on this server be migrated to a more secure server?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The ESIS server had various data bases on it that were used for historical data access. All data is now held on a new server and appropriate backups are in place.

The data has been secure for some months as a temporary measure was put in place to ensure the data was safe.

Question 17

Councillor Wendy Prentice

Does the Leader welcome the grant of £417,000 to Chipping Barnet from the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund? Will he congratulate those involved in the bid and especially thank our London Assembly Member for his behind the scenes lobbying? Does the Leader look forward to future grants from this fund under Boris Johnson's continuing Mayoralty?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

All of the residents and business owners who contributed to and the officers who produced the bid are to be congratulated. The town centre has indeed cause to thank our Assembly member for his contributions to the successful formulation of this bid and lobbying that gained this money.

We are all disappointed that the other bid we put in for Edgware was not successful but look forward to working with other Town Centres to achieve further success.

Question 18

Councillor Zakia Zubairi

What level of resident complaints / concerns over parking on the Grahame Park estate led to Barnet Homes' CPZ survey, and how much did it cost Barnet Homes to conduct the Grahame Park CPZ survey?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

The survey was undertaken for a number of reasons:-

- (A) a notable increase in parking on the estate particularly near Grahame Park way as a result of the development of Beaufort park which charges for parking and use by staff/ visitors to the police station
- (B) an awareness that as the regeneration takes hold there is likely to be a greater increase in traffic on the estate with contractors and their staff
- (C) a knowledge the CFGP are looking to implement a CPZ on the new estate after the councils adoption of the new roads
- (D) a minor but unquantifiable increase in complaints from residents. The issue was raised by Grahame Park resident at Barnet Homes resident meeting on 31st August.

The survey distributed to all properties on the estate sought residents views on the idea of a CPZ. It also sought information regarding the number of vehicles per household and whether residents wished to rent a garage on the estate.

The survey closed on the 5th August but due to holidays forms have continued to be received. As at the 31st Aug over 250 surveys have been received but have yet to be analysed. The level of response and the results will inform whether the scheme is developed any further. The survey was produced and distributed by Barnet Homes staff from the local housing office at minimal cost.

Question 19

Councillor John Hart

Could the Cabinet Member please update me on progress towards self-management of allotments in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

8 sites have now agreed to go self management with a lease for a term of 38 years and we have developed an agreed and appropriate model. I shall be bringing these proposals to the Cabinet Resources Committee for ratification in September. The process (although far too long winded) has demonstrated good will and collaborative working to achieve this excellent example of the Big Society. The lease model will then be rolled out to all remaining sites from September to April 2012.

Question 20

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Regarding the closure of Hampstead Garden Suburb Library and the relocation of some of those Library services to the Hampstead Institute: Why did the Cabinet Member report to the last Cabinet meeting that the council had had "very positive conversations" with the Hampstead Institute, and that they were "very keen for it to happen" when the Institute have clearly decided that this was "not a satisfactory solution"?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The Council had indeed had very positive conversations with the Hampstead Institute. The circumstances for the Institute have now changed and I look forward to hearing their conclusions in due course. In the meantime, I am pleased that a number of Hampstead Garden Suburb residents have been working with officers to develop community proposals for library services in the area.

Question 21

Councillor Graham Old

Would the Cabinet Member report on the enforcement of parking restrictions around Schools in Barnet and will he outline plans for the Autumn term?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Whilst enforcement around schools has always been undertaken, I instructed that this was to be stepped up in May 2011 as part of this Administration's policy of encouraging children to walk to school and ensuring it is safe to do so.

In support of a publicity campaign to highlight this issue a press release was issued on 7 June in which I made it clear that dangerous or irresponsible parking around schools would not be tolerated and penalty notices would be issued without warning. This campaign is about to be repeated at the start of the new school year.

In terms of enforcement at school gates, between 9 May and 22 July a total of 727 visits were made to 31 schools resulting in the issue of 187 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs). The schools with the highest number of PCNs were:

St Mary's NW4	19 PCNs
Rosh Pinah HA8	17 PCNs
Fairway NW7	16 PCNs
Bell Lane NW4	14 PCNs
Danegrove NW4	14 PCNs
Deansbrook NW7	10 PCNs
Wessex Gardens NW11	10 PCNs
Menorah Gardens HA8	10 PCNs

Securing compliance with parking controls will continue to be a priority throughout the coming school year and action will be taken to deal with inconsiderate drivers on the school run who cause danger and inconvenience for both residents and pupils at our schools. A rolling programme will be established of attendance outside schools (including private schools) by Civil Enforcement Officers and it is envisaged that this will operate on every school day with 50 schools being visited each week.

Question 22

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Since the start of the 2011/12 financial year, what level of savings have been achieved by the easyCouncil/One Barnet programme and what level of implementation costs have been incurred?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Planned One Barnet savings are £4.682m for 2011/12, £4.131m for 2012/13 and £3.326m for 2013/14 as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. These are ongoing, year on year, savings to the Council's base budget.

The total projected cost of the One Barnet programme for 2011/12 is £4.9m, this is a one off cost. As at the end of August, the spend to date for 2011/12 is £1.6m. The total budget for the programme remains at £9.2m.

The latest monitoring position shows that the Council is not overspending in 2011/12 and that savings have been implemented. The quarter 1 monitoring report (to CRC) will show that of the total £29.1m savings that needed to be delivered, £1.4m are considered "high risk", but they are not

One Barnet savings. In the context of the recent spending review and cuts to government grant, this is a very strong financial position to be in.

Question 23

Councillor Joan Scannell

Can the Cabinet Member please tell me how many Barnet schools have achieved Academy status, and are there more in the pipeline?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Ten Barnet schools have successfully converted to Academy status (nine secondary schools and one primary). This is in addition to our two pre-existing academies - The Wren Academy and The London Academy. A further three secondary schools have received academy orders and are in the process of converting. The council continues to be supportive of Barnet schools that wish to convert to academy status and welcomes their inclusion in our wider schools partnership, helping to ensure that every school is a good school for every child.

Question 24

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

What is being done to tackle the fear of crime in Burnt Oak ward?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Resident perception surveys performed in 2011 have highlighted that fear of crime within Burnt Oak ward is higher than any other ward in the borough (80% worried about being a victim of crime as opposed to an average of 65% across the borough and 33.6% of residents feel unsafe at night as opposed to an average of 17.8% across the borough).

Some recent incidents have undoubtedly added to community concern within the area and the Police have instigated a reassurance programme engaging with local residents and businesses, which the council's priority intervention team are supporting.

A multi agency action plan has been developed by the council's priority intervention team officers in conjunction with the Safer Neighbourhood Team, for the Burnt Oak Town Centre, which will focus upon issues related to street drinking and environmental improvements.

Question 25

Councillor Daniel Seal

Will the Cabinet member advise what progress is being made with the monitoring of contracts?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Excellent progress has been made as highlighted in a report to the Audit Committee this month.

Question 26

Councillor Geof Cooke

a, How many houses and flats are owned and managed by the Council (as opposed to Barnet Homes)?

b. Of those how many are currently unoccupied?

c. How long has each of those been unoccupied?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

a) There are a total of 97 units of accommodation that are owned and directly managed by the Council. The majority of units are self-contained and classified as temporary accommodation hostels.

b) & c) There are currently 17 void units. The three long-term voids are undergoing major works as a result of long-term inherent defects.

- 3 void from 29/08/11 (3 days)
- 4 void from 22/08/11 (10 days)
- 1 void from 15/08/11 (17 days)
- 5 void from 08/08/11 (24 days)
- 1 void from 25/07/11 (38 days)
- 1 void from 18/07/11 (45 days)

- 1 void from 27/12/10 (248 days)
- 1 void from 24/05/10 (465 days)
- 1 void from 29/03/10 (521 days)

Question 27

Councillor Alison Moore

According to an internal IS Action Plan, an external IS contractor has passed all risks back to the council for maintaining the council's IT infrastructure – what is being done to ensure that risk is properly transferred to private sector contractors who take over any council services?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

In the last budget you will see the council has made provision to invest £1m per year for 3 years to refresh the councils Infrastructure. As part of the NSCSO procurement dialogue with private sector partners we will explore all possible options for providing the Infrastructure solution.

Question 28

Councillor Alex Brodtkin

What direct role does Barnet Council have in the ongoing discussions about the future of Northgate Clinic and Northgate School?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

A consultation on the future of Northgate Clinic is being led by NCL London health services. This process continues and Barnet Council leads have encouraged input to the consultation locally. Service leads across Barnet, Haringey, and Enfield continue to discuss the process for developing a community-based mental health intervention model.

Northgate PRU has recently completed an Ofsted inspection and has been judged as outstanding. The decision on Northgate Clinic may impact on the usage of Northgate PRU and discussions are ongoing.

The consultation was presented to the Joint cross-borough Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Health in July where a request was made for additional consultation and information regarding the education of pupils receiving mental health interventions. This will be presented to the Committee on 19 September and to Barnet Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 September.

Question 29

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Has council secured an agreement with Arts Depot to move Friern Barnet library and North Finchley library to this location? If so what are the terms of the agreement?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Officers have been working with colleagues at the artsdepot for several months. Now that Cabinet has approved the library strategy, a project team has been put in place, jointly overseen and sponsored by a Council Assistant Director and the artsdepot Chief Executive. This stage of the project will provide a comprehensive proposal for an integrated facility, including architectural designs and management arrangements, to be considered by Cabinet Resources Committee and the artsdepot board.

Question 30

Councillor Andrew McNeil

What is the estimated annual value of the contribution made by carers in Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

Nationally, it is estimated that the average carer contributes the equivalent of £15,000 per year of social care services. In Barnet, with an estimated 28,000 carers, that means an annual contribution of over £420 million.

Source: Inter-agency Carers Strategy, Barnet, 2009-2012

NB This figure is calculated on certain historical assumptions about the relationship between the citizen and the state and expressed in terms of replacement factor of carers input if commissioned by the state without modification resulting from a range of other interventions which would require further research and actuarial type analysis.

Question 31

Councillor Geoff Johnson

At a recent Hendon Environment Sub Committee the Chairman requested a parking review on pavement parking because there was no uniformity or continuity in Barnet on this issue. Some areas were allowed to park, others, including narrow streets in Colindale, were prohibited and issued with PCN's. Can the Cabinet Member advise if any decision has been made on this matter?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

This issue was raised for discussion as a Members Item at the Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee and a more detailed response is being prepared for the September meeting of that Committee. The position is that footway parking in these roads is not allowed and this offence will continue to be enforced. The Council has not got the resources to carry out a parking review and the Hendon Area Environment Committee does not have the power to change Highways legislation.

Question 32

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Why are people being allowed to park their entire vehicle on the pavement outside the Magistrates Courts in Hendon whilst other residents are being issued with PCNs for only part-parking on the pavement in areas where it has been allowed for years due to the inability of cars to pass on narrow roads?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Officers from the Parking Service identified footway parking at this location as an issue and commenced the process of introducing enforcement, going so far as to issue Warning Notices. This action did not, however, receive the support of Ward Members and the activity was discontinued, if Councillor Sodha wishes to change her mind perhaps she would let Officers know.

Question 33

Councillor Barry Rawlings

What is the expected impact on Barnet's social care of the cuts planned in health?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

The NHS seeks to reduce costs through its QIPP plan. This will include reducing admissions and discharging earlier where clinically safe to do so. In turn this could increase the need for services such as enablement, telecare and homecare as people previously receiving activities of daily living support in hospital will instead receive them from social services in their own home. The impact of changes in health on social care has been recognised and the Council received £3.9m from the NHS in 2011/12 to enhance and develop social care services that also support health. A further tranche of funding will be received in 2012/13 and is expected to be £ 3.7m

A high level plan was agreed by CRC in February 2011 for this funding and a programme of work is underway in collaboration with health colleagues to implement this plan. The planned initiatives are intended to support both the Council's MTFs and the NHS QIPP and business cases are being developed as invest to save plans to ensure sustainability of any new interventions. This joint approach to use of these funds is a requirement of the allocation but also recognises that cuts in social care may also impact on health services. The Council is pursuing a system-wide approach to ensure robust management of financial and care risks locally through the Health and Well-Being Board.

Question 34

Councillor Julie Johnson

When is the river bank adjacent to the new marketing suite in Cool Oak Lane going to be replanted. The agreement with the developers I understand was to provide appropriate planting suitable for water birds. However this has not happened.

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

The planting concerned is required as part of the temporary 4 year consent given for the erection of a compound containing single storey buildings for use as a marketing suite and site office, associated with the early phases of the regeneration of the West Hendon Estate.

The Landscaping plan agreed with officers includes a strip of planting along the waters edge varying between 3 - 7m in width intended to improve the ecological value around the margins of the Welsh Harp, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with a particular focus on securing benefits for waterbirds as indicated.

Condition 15 attached to the application requires that all work comprised in the approved landscaping scheme is carried out before the end of the first planting and seeding season following the commencement of the use. The first planting season will end in March 2012.

Planting along the water's edge includes Yellow Iris, Water Plantain, Flowering Rush, Lesser Pond-sedge and a variety of other appropriate native plants to the satisfaction of Natural England. Officers are monitoring matters closely and liaising with the developer partner to ensure that the area is appropriately planted in season and achieves the desired ecological improvements, eventually forming an important part of the natural buffer to the SSSI following the removal of the temporary compound.

Question 35**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

What progress has been made in implementing the £110,000 cut to risk management set out in this year's budget, described as 'restructuring and consideration of alternative delivery options'?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

A risk officer post has been held vacant as capacity has been built up with risk champions across the Council. The risk management system JCAD has been embedded further within the Council and senior management has had targeted support given to build up capability at a senior level. Further improvements have been made to the reporting of risks to ensure greater scrutiny and challenge of risks. Risk management support has been built into the re-tendered contract with PwC, this has also meant that the pressure of the risk manager post has not been required. Within Finance there is floating CIPFA student resource who have been assisting in risk management activity. The Council has also used e-learning packages for risk management training. A restructure is currently taking place to realign further risk management capability within IA and Risk Management. The IA and RM budget is being managed within the Finance budget and collectively the budget is being achieved.

Question 36**Councillor Alison Moore**

Would the Cabinet Member provide an update on how the Customer Services Transformation project is progressing?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

There are several elements to the Customer Services Transformation Programme. The first phase of customer service consolidation was completed in April this year. Recently completed elements of the programme are:

- Consolidation of the Assisted Travel service into Customer Services
- Completion of review and mapping of customer processes in all DRS, Environment, Housing, Registrars and Corporate Governance services, in advance of consolidation into Customer Services.
- Launch of the Govmetric customer satisfaction measurement tool to provide rich insight data for all Council services

By the end of September, projects to transform contact centre operations, parking customer services and the assisted travel service will be underway.

By mid-October, customer processes in all remaining Council services, including Adults' and Children's Services, will have been mapped and transformation plans put in place.

I expect all services to have been mapped, reviewed and appropriate action to have been taken by the time we reach the conclusion of procurement of a new customer service partner.

Question 37

Councillor Julie Johnson

The former garden nursery in Cool Oak Lane is being used by the owner to manufacture low grade compost / aggregate. I understand an enforcement notice has been issued by Barnet Council because this practice is in breach of planning laws on this site. As a result there are now several large slag heaps on this land. I am informed it will take a minimum of three months before this situation is resolved, longer if an appeal is lodged. Should a risk assessment be undertaken to ensure these large heaps are safe from collapse which could cause damage to the nearby SSSI?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

An enforcement notice has been served against the use of the former nursery garden site for "the mixing/processing of soil including the industrial grading of reclaimed building material and soil with storage and deliveries of the same".

The notice requires the unauthorised use to cease and the land to be restored back to its state prior to the breach of planning control. Officers have recently been advised that an appeal against this notice has been made to the Planning Inspectorate and a decision on this appeal will take at least four months.

Officers have visited the site and seen the large heaps of earth and do not currently consider these to be at risk of collapse.

In the event the heaps of earth represent a dangerous occurrence, the Council does not have powers to deal with this type of situation; the authority resting with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) who have been notified of the situation.

If persons do believe that the heaps of earth may pose a danger, then they should contact the HSE direct. The following link gives details on how to report dangerous occurrences:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/index.htm>

Question 38

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

How many evictions from private sector rented properties in which tenants were council nominees have there been in the last twelve months, and what resource impact is this having (if any) on the council in terms of homelessness acceptances and the cost of temporary accommodation?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

We are not required to report on the number of evictions from private sector properties where tenants were council nominees and no decision has been taken locally to identify these cases. We are required only to report on the total number of evictions from private sector properties for our P1e returns to Government. In the last 4 quarter periods (01/07/10 – 30/06/11) there have been 95 homeless acceptances (38%) as a result of evictions from private sector properties. In the same period, there were 248 homeless acceptances in total.

Overall, there has been a slight increase from the same period in the preceding year (01/07/09 – 30/06/10); there were 68 homeless acceptances (29%) as a result of evictions from private sector properties from a total of 234.

Despite an increase in demand, the cost of temporary accommodation has reduced in the same period. The council re-structured its private sector leasing scheme and reduced the costs of nightly

purchased accommodation. Both forms of privately sourced temporary accommodation now fully cover costs and make minor surpluses for the council.

Question 39

Councillor Alison Moore

Would the Cabinet Member advise the number of enquiries the council has received from residents regarding benefits advice for the last three years; and the number of housing benefit claimants there were for the last three years?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Benefits receive in excess of 450,000 contacts from the public each year broken down roughly as follows: 280,000 (written correspondence or email), 140,000 phone calls and 30,000 face to face.

The number of claimants continues to increase, the July snap shots of cases in payment since the credit crunch are as follows:

July 2011: 33,742

July 2010: 32,332

July 2009: 30,413

July 2008: 27,547

Question 40

Councillor Julie Johnson

Can the Cabinet Member for Regeneration elaborate on what housing arrangements will be offered to adult children on West Hendon Estate when their parents are rehoused under the current regeneration of this estate?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Adult children can apply for their own property but there is no guarantee that they will be accommodated. Social Housing is allocated to those who will most benefit from it and need it. It is unacceptable for people to be trapped in generational and indeed institutional poverty. The aspiration must be that Adult children will get a job and house themselves rather than be dependant on the state.

Question 41

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Given the recent unrest, does the Cabinet Member think that this is the time to be cutting police numbers?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Regardless of the recent mob violence, arson and looting, I would like to state, unequivocally, that Police numbers are rising.

The MPA figures show that, when Boris Johnson entered office in May 2008, police officer numbers stood at 31,398 for the 2007-08 financial year.

The approximate number of officers expected for the 2011-12 financial year will rise to 32,380.

Compared to his inheritance of 31,398, this would mean police officer numbers will have increased by 1,112 during Boris Johnson's term of office.

Question 42

Councillor Geof Cooke

Is aborting well-advanced viable projects and writing off the money already spent on them part of the Council's financial strategy?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

No, this isn't the council's strategy.

Question 43

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Would the Cabinet Member confirm if the council has received any expressions of interest to transfer Friern Barnet Library to a community group under the Community Asset Transfer legislation, and if so how this expression of interest will be dealt with by the council?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The council has received a preliminary draft of a proposal for a 'Community Hub' in Friern Barnet. This has been shared with officers from finance, legal, property and planning services for initial consideration.

Question 44

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

Now that the council is aware that there is a brothel in Watling Avenue in Burnt Oak, what steps are being taken to deal with this and in future discourage this sort of business setting up in the area?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The brothel identified in Watling Avenue has been closed. The serious crime division are still investigating the incident at the brothel and arrests have been made and one person charged with murder.

The issue of tackling brothels has now become a standing agenda item at the fortnightly Police borough tasking meetings. Currently Safer Neighbourhood Teams are identifying all suspected brothels within their areas informed by relevant intelligence from other agencies, partners, businesses and residents.

Once intelligence has been gathered an action plan to tackle the problem will be implemented. Such action will take a multi agency approach and adopt the use of a range of relevant powers including the use of brothel closure orders.

Tackling prostitution is a complex issue and is seen as a high crime generator having links to organised crime, immigration, serious violence and trafficking.

A holistic approach is required to change the behaviour of those that pay for sex as well as provide support to those who provide sex services to change their lifestyles, as they can be extremely vulnerable, for example with drug and alcohol dependency issues.

Question 45

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Would the Cabinet Member comment on the cost of parking in Beaufort Park?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

The parking charges were agreed as part of the Beaufort Park outline planning consent granted in April 2005 to deliver and manage appropriate and sustainable parking levels in this regeneration area. The charges are based on the Council's parking Permit Charge which is reviewed annually and included in the lease arrangements associated with the affordable accommodation provided.

Question 46

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Given that the consultation for the Edgware and North Finchley Town Centre Strategies was undertaken in February and March 2010, why have the Strategies still not been published?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The consultation in Feb/Mar 2010 which Cllr Schniederman is referring to was the consultation undertaken on the draft Finchley Church End town centre strategy. There has not been any public consultation to date on the Edgware Town Centre strategy.

The North Finchley Town Centre is considered to be doing better than some other Town Centres in the borough and work has been directed at other Town Centres. A bid for funding from the Mayor's outer London Fund is being prepared to enhance the public realm in the Town Centre. It is anticipated that draft strategies for Finchley Church End and Edgware will be taken forward for public consultation later this year.

Question 47

Councillor Alex Brodtkin

Schools in Burnt Oak such as Barnfield, Goldbeaters, and The Annunciation are not alone in experiencing the problem each school day morning of children having to walk on the road because

of the number of parents' cars which have been parked on the nearby pavements. What practical steps is the Council taking to assist these schools in dealing with this issue?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Head Teachers and Governing Bodies are well aware of the need to plan for access to their schools and to manage the impact of pupils and carers on the local community, particularly that caused by those who are dropped off in cars. The Council has previously mounted a publicity campaign throughout the borough, aimed at this set of drivers, drawing attention to the negative impact of the actions of an inconsiderate minority. It also has a rolling programme of enforcing the restrictions around schools with Civil Enforcement Officers attending locations across the borough on every school day, visiting a total of 50 schools every week to secure compliance with the regulations.

Question 48

Councillor Geof Cooke

Barnet is widely perceived as the least cycle-friendly of all the London boroughs. Is the Council doing anything to support the Mayor of London's policies on cycling?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The Borough is friendly to all road users and supports all the Mayor's policies.

Question 49

Councillor Zakia Zubairi

How much income per annum do Barnet Homes estimate they would generate if a CPZ was rolled out with permits costing £100, £80, £50, or £30?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

If it is decided to proceed any cost charged would cover the cost of implementing the scheme only. This has not been calculated at this point.

Question 50

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Is the cabinet member willing to close Friern Barnet and North Finchley libraries without the guarantee of a seamless move to relocated premises?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

I do not expect to simply close two buildings and open another. Instead, I believe we will relocate those elements of the service that are easiest to move into the artsdepot first – for example, rhymetime and bookstart – and move other elements of the service at a later stage. Therefore, this is likely to be a gradual merger of Friern Barnet and North Finchley library services.

Question 51

Councillor Geoff Johnson

Can the Cabinet Member for Regeneration please tell Colindale Ward Councillors where temporary tenants on Grahame Park Estate are being rehoused, as the regeneration programme proceeds?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Tenants in temporary accommodation on the Estate will be offered alternative accommodation at the time they need to move. The location of the properties will depend upon what is available then and the priority the household has under the Council's allocation scheme.

Question 52

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Could the Cabinet Member update us on the implementation of the Fairer Contributions Policy, including what issues there have been with assessments, what issues there have been following-up those clients who have not returned assessment forms and what problems there have been with billing?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

The Fairer Contributions Policy was implemented from 6 June 2011. Currently there are 2721 people who receive services for which they require an assessment under the new policy.

To date, 2026 people have sent in their Financial Assessment form. Of these, 1910 people have been financially assessed and 116 people are currently being assessed. Approximately 120 people

have requested a review or appealed against the financial assessment. In these cases the client or carer is contacted and as necessary further information is sought to enable the assessment to be reviewed and revised if appropriate.

A process is in place to follow up people who have not returned their completed financial assessment form or additional information that has been requested. This process takes into account that some people may not have the capacity to complete the form by themselves, so the Financial Assessment Team have been working closely with Social Care Teams to identify those vulnerable clients who need assistance to complete forms. The Financial Assessment Team have also called everyone who has not returned a form in many cases three times.

Currently there are 695 people who have not returned a Financial Assessment form and all of these people have been sent a further financial assessment form with a written offer for a visit to assist with completion.

The first invoices were sent out to clients from week commencing 18 July 2011 for the period 6 June 2011 to 3 July 2011. There were initial issues in 44 cases with regards to people receiving £25 per week transitional protection for people going into day care. This has been rectified. Invoices have been suspended in those cases where the contribution has been queried.

There are two dedicated help lines to advise and assist people who have queries about the financial assessment or care needs.

Question 53

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Given that there has been ongoing slippage in the anticipated savings for the One Barnet programme so far, how does the Cabinet Member know for definite that savings that will not now be made in 2012/13 will be made up in 2013/14?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

As set out in a previous answer, the One Barnet programme savings are on track to be delivered in 2011/12.

A series of business cases have been approved by CRC over recent months. For the LATC, NSCSO, Parking and DRS projects, the business cases suggested that savings for 2012/13 would be not be delivered as quickly as originally set out in the One Barnet Framework.

Question 54

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Would the Cabinet Member advise what increase there has been in waiting lists and waiting times at Barnet Hospital and the Royal Free Hospital?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Hospital Waiting Lists are measured through the 18 week Referral to Treatment (RTT) measure. This measures the time to the first out patient appointment and the time to admission (if appropriate).

According to the latest NCL Performance Report, the Royal Free Hospital and Barnet & Chase Farm Hospitals are RAG (Red, Amber and Green - Traffic Light Warning System) rated as Green for both measures.

Question 55

Councillor Alex Brodtkin

Have the staff of both Northgate Clinic and Northgate School had an opportunity to put across their thoughts about any service providers who have registered a firm expression of interest to operate on either of these two sites in the future?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Staff at both the Clinic and School have had an opportunity to input into the overall consultation.

The site is currently occupied by BEH Mental Health Trust. The future use of the existing estate will be managed as part of the commissioning and procurement process which will take place via an open and transparent process.

Question 56

Councillor Andrew McNeil

Would the Cabinet Member join me in thanking the East Finchley Advice Service (which is due to close in September due to its grant being withdrawn by the council) for their many years of service to Barnet residents in need of advice? Would the Cabinet Member confirm that the cut in funds to community advice services will definitely not lead to a cut in the number of people who will be able to access advice in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

I do join Cllr McNeil in thanking the work of the East Finchley Advice Service. Whilst the grant was withdrawn it is a shame they did not apply to the Big Society Innovation Bank, failed to complete a successful application for a LBB small grant to start a new debt advice service, despite officers working with them and did not bid for the new Community Advice Contract singly or jointly despite being involved for 2 years with the soft market test and development of the specifications.

I can not give Cllr McNeil the guarantee he seeks and the actual number of people using the service will in reality depend on the tender accepted. We do expect there to be a year by year improvement in clients assisted per pound spent over the life of any new contract awarded.

Question 57

Councillor Alex Brodtkin

Could the relevant Cabinet Member confirm whether it was agreed at the last Hendon Residents Forum to put up 'no cycling prevention notices' on the lampposts situated on the pavements of Watling Avenue in response to the problem of cyclists riding their bicycles on the pavements of Watling Avenue, and, if so, whether this has been implemented by the Council?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

No such decision was made at the Forum. The erection of 'no cycling' signs would result in minimal compliance from those who would be inclined to cycle on the footway anyway, contribute to street clutter which we are generally trying to reduce, and involve maintenance responsibilities. It would also suggest that where such signs do not exist cycling on the footway is acceptable, The local SNT have been alerted to this concern and requested to proactively enforce when witnessing such cycling that hopefully will lead to a reduction in this occurring.

Question 58

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

What progress has been made to ensure that Barnet Museum can survive in its current location?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Barnet Museum expressed an interest in continuing to provide a museum at the 33 Wood Street premises, submitting a draft proposal in June 2011. A meeting was held on 1 August between Property Services, Libraries Service and representatives from Barnet Museum to review this proposal. Actions from this meeting will provide information to Barnet Museum that will help them to revise and better present their proposal for evaluation by officers and eventual presentation to Members. The timescale has yet to be set for Members to consider Barnet Museum's proposal. In the interim period, Barnet Council continues to provide the accommodation, building maintenance and utilities to support the continuing service during preparation of the proposal.

Question 59

Councillor Geoff Johnson

I have asked for the overgrown foliage including nettles at the junction of Colindeep Lane and Sheaveshill Avenue to be cut back as it has spread across the public footpath. Can I ask why there has been a delay by Barnet Council in undertaking this request?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The land on which this foliage emanates is not owned by the Council and therefore it has been necessary to identify the land owner and hence the party responsible for cutting back the foliage.

However I have asked officers to follow the law as it applies to any overgrowing foliage, i.e. cut it down and return it to the landowners.

Question 60

Councillor Geoff Johnson

There are two small car parks on Bell Lane which are managed by Met Parking Services. Met Parking Services claim they are managing them on behalf of the London Borough of Barnet, but the council do not seem to know anything about them. Would the Cabinet Member confirm if these are indeed LB Barnet car parks, and if so, what consultation of local residents took place prior to parking charges being introduced there?

Answer by Councillor Dan Thomas

The Council owns the freehold interest in the land shown on the 2007 Land Registry title plan, and the title has not been sold or transferred to any third party.

As these pieces of land do not fall within an adopted highway the Council is not obliged to any legislative frame work pertaining to these areas. However, the shop frontage tenants on Bell Lane were consulted and this agreement looks to alleviate the difficulties in parking in front of the Bell Lane shops and the consequent attempt to increase the custom on the parade which has been adversely affected by parking in the slip road and car park. To this end the Council granted a parking arrangement with MET Parking Services Ltd on a fixed term basis.

The agreement does not allow for the introduction of pay-and-display parking to members of the public. Furthermore, I can confirm, at present, that there is no intention to introduce any charges in the future to park for a short-term period.

Question 61

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

What powers does the Council have (in Trading Standards for example) to monitor the short-term employment practices of local shops and traders to ensure that people are not being exploited?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The regulation of employment practice is via a number of government departments and agencies such as the Employment Standards Agency and HM Revenue and Customs.

Trading Standards and other regulatory council services do not have any specific powers to deal with such issues. However, if concerns are noted whilst officers are inspecting business premises as part of their normal duties they will refer these to the relevant agency.

The Environmental Health – Health and Safety Team – do have some powers with regard to inspecting business premises but these are with regard to health and safety at work regulations.