

<p><u>MEETING</u></p> <p>COUNCIL</p>
<p><u>DATE AND TIME</u></p> <p>TUESDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2012</p> <p>AT 7.00 PM</p>
<p><u>VENUE</u></p> <p>HENDON TOWN HALL, THE BURROUGHS, NW4 4BG</p>

Dear Councillors,

Please find enclosed additional papers relating to the following items for the above mentioned meeting.

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
2.1	Questions to the Leader and Cabinet	1 - 16

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**Council Questions to Cabinet Members
Tuesday 11 September 2012
Questions and Responses**

AGENDA ITEM 2.1

Question 1

Councillor Brian Coleman

Following the publication of the preliminary results of the 2011 Census what early conclusions does the Leader draw ?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The increases in the population show that Barnet is a place where people wish to live and raise children. This is as a result of our excellent schools, efficient Council services and attractive environment. We also have a successfully integrated population who in the main get on with their lives with a minimum of interference from the state. This population increase is a statistical endorsement of the successful strategy that we have pursued throughout this Conservative administration.

Question 2

Councillor Alison Moore

Can the Leader of the Council reassure the people of Barnet that in line with his claimed support for the economic welfare of the Borough, he will not agree to the transfer of jobs and services out of the Borough under the NSCSO contract, and would the Leader please clarify what he is doing to ensure jobs and services stay in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Council's priority is to ensure the long-term quality and financial stability of its services for the residents of Barnet, and it is a fact that improvements in quality and cost can be achieved through re-locating services that do not require face to face contact within Barnet. Therefore the council has not sought to restrict NSCSO bidders on location where this principle applies. We cannot promise that this contract will not lead to job losses, any more that we could promise this if we retained the services in-house. However we can promise that outsourcing the NSCSO services will achieve far greater performance and financial benefits than the council could achieve if it retained the services in-house.

The Council has, through dialogue, challenged all proposals made by bidders in terms of operational deliverability, and ensured that commitments around quality and performance are enshrined in the contract. 60% of the evaluation model relates to the bidders' responses to our strategic and service requirements, whilst 40% relates to the financial savings available, and the level of commercial flexibility and risk transfer the bidders are committing to.

The Council has also asked bidders to make commitments that involve contributing to its economic growth agenda, and support it in implementing the London Councils Procurement pledge.

The NSCSO contract will deliver a minimum of £40m savings over the 10 year period, representing an 11% saving on core running costs each and every year of the contract. This huge saving will enable the council to meet the rising demands on our priority frontline services and maintain council tax at a level that the residents of Barnet can afford. This is a huge and significant contribution to the economic welfare of the borough.

Question 3

Councillor Brian Coleman

Does the Leader look forward to the expansion of Brent Cross Shopping Centre and does he consider that 3 years on from the granting of planning permission this should now be de-coupled from the moribund wider Cricklewood development ?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I do indeed look forward, impatiently, to the expansion and improvement of the shopping centre that is necessary to ensure its future against competition from elsewhere. The scheme was conceived in a different time politically and may well need amendment or a multi track approach. Change maybe necessary and it was always considered that such change might be necessary. However development is needed on the other side of the North Circular and the existing planning consent has a number of deadlines within it and these are still being met. The council is in regular contact with developers.

Question 4**Councillor Julie Johnson**

The Housing Minister has said '*We're not short of schemes to get housing built, we just need to get out there, roll our sleeves up and get developments going,*' – Given there was only one affordable home for rent started on site in the last financial year in Barnet what exactly is the Cabinet Member doing to address the lack of activity on affordable homes in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

The previous Labour Government's debt time-bomb has led to a challenging economic environment. In this context there has been a slowdown in the delivery of all new homes, which will naturally filter through to the delivery of affordable homes which are set as part of the planning process.

What we did see in 2011/12 is 456 affordable homes that were already on site (started in 2010/11) and in 2011/12 629 affordable housing completions which were available for those in housing need. 482 of these completions were rented homes.

We will continue to work with developers and registered providers as well as exploring HRA headroom opportunities to assist further construction of new homes.

Question 5**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Can you please comment on the recent exam results achieved in Barnet's schools?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

I'm pleased to give some details of what's been achieved. Provisional results indicate that the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades including English and maths in Barnet will be broadly in line with performance in 2011 (68.8%). We are predicting 68% of pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C GCSE grades including English and mathematics. This compares with a national figure in 2011 of 58%.

The percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades is also predicted to be broadly in line with performance in 2011 at 86%*. This compares with a national figure in 2011 of 80%.

Provisional A level results show that the borough's schools performance continues to remain well above the national average. 16% of entries were awarded an A* grade with a further 28% awarded an A grade. This compares with 8% and 19% nationally.

I pay tribute to our schools and all who belong to them. Working together, we're helping to ensure that every Barnet school is a good school for every child.

*Figure for 2011 and projected figure for 2012.

Question 6**Councillor Alison Moore**

The Council has dismissed criticism of its procurement practices as 'a number of tired criticisms that have been dealt with'. Can the Deputy Leader therefore explain how a contract with Agylisis valued at £2m over 3 years when it was let in July 2010 has already resulted in payments of £3.24m?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The contract with Agylisis has been compliantly procured against EU regulations and in line with the Council's Constitution. The DPR approving the contract and the contract itself did not stipulate an upper limit. The exempt DPR noted at the time 'circa' £2m. It is recognised that the spend₂ is

over that £2m indicatively estimated however the contract was designed for flexibility to accommodate large scale transformation which, at the time when the contract was procured, was still in the process of being defined. It is therefore unfounded that there are any procurement failures identified by this example.

Question 7

Councillor Brian Gordon

Is it possible to hold the Residents' Forums at various community locations, as used to be the case, rather than just the Town Hall?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Alternative community locations do not always match the suitability of the facilities at the Town Hall for holding meetings e.g. in terms of public transport, disabled access, loop system, audio system and availability of staff to set up the different room configurations required for the Area Environment Sub-Committees that follow on from the Resident Forum meetings. There are also cost implications for holding meetings in non-Council buildings as there is no budget provision for payment of hire charges.

Question 8

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

According to the Borough Economic Insight 2011 the public sector 'represents nearly 1 in 4 employee jobs, with the Council and NHS representing two of the largest employers in the borough. The anticipated reduction in employment (both of employee jobs in Barnet and the employment of residents) in this sector over the next few years is likely to lead to a number of challenges for the borough, the implications of which need to be understood, and potentially managed through policy.' Over a year has passed - what are the challenges, what does the Leader/Cabinet Member understand by the implications and where is the policy?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

From 1st April 2011- 31st March 2012 there were 37 redundancies at the London Borough of Barnet and from 1st April 2012 to date there were 2 redundancies. Added to 4 known redundancies made at Barnet and Chase Farm in the same period, that is a total of 43 redundancies at both employers. Although the report was right to be concerned about the effects of redundancies from the public sector it transpires that just 0.26% of the current Borough unemployment figure is due to redundancies from two of Barnet's largest public sector employers (and this is assuming the staff concerned lived in the Borough). The implications on the Borough as a whole are therefore very minimal and a specific policy to address this issue is not currently needed.

Of more relevance is the Council's efforts to avoid redundancies which were significantly lower than the number of 'at risk' letters issued during the period. This has been achieved though a mix of measures including the Council's flexible resourcing strategy which maximises the opportunity for at risk employees to displace temporary workers. Additionally, the council's managing Organisational Change policy ensures that assimilation occurs as often as possible, this is because the assimilation threshold is set at a 55% job and grade match which means that employees are not unnecessarily made redundant when there are lower graded jobs available.

As part of the £1m funding package agreed by Cabinet in June to tackle the issue of getting more young people into work, funding is being provided for 20 internships in the council. Directorates are now being encouraged to put forward a bid for a portion of this funding by being allocated an intern to work on a project for three months. This has benefits for the directorate by getting extra staff resource while also giving unemployed young people from Barnet an opportunity to access the workplace.

Question 9

Councillor Brian Gordon

Could you confirm the Council is doing all it can to keep the parks and the equipment therein well maintained all around the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The parks budgets are focused on repairs and maintenance to ensure the parks are safe for people to use, the current budget is sufficient to achieve this. However, resources do not stretch into replacing and providing new equipment. Other avenues are being utilised to provide improvements through a series of successful joint bids with residents to access funding and the use of capital monies where possible. Which have seen extensive improvements to the play areas at Mill Hill, Friary, Lyttelton, Windsor OS, Riverside Walk, Brookside Walk, Princes Park and later this year Edgwarebury Park. Officers are currently progressing opportunities/bids alongside residents groups at Highlands Gardens to restore the pond, Northway Gardens and Malcolm Park.

Question 10**Councillor Alison Moore**

The Agylis contract clearly demonstrates that Barnet has failed to learn the lessons of the MetPro scandal and still has no control over expenditure on consultants and other contractors. Will you invite the external Auditor to carry out an urgent, impartial study of procurement and contract management practice at the Council before entering into any further large scale contracts?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

External Audit has been involved in reviewing the council's progress for implementing change in procurement activity. The year of the MetPro review, 2010/11, the external auditors issued an unqualified value for money opinion taking into consideration the issues within procurement. The draft audit opinion for 2011/12 also refers to an unqualified audit opinion.

It is reiterated that there is a compliantly procured contract in place with Agylis. Expenditure for transformation is in line with the budget papers of November 2010.

We believe that further review of procurement practice, outside of our own work to date and that of external audit, would not provide value for money.

Question 11**Councillor Brian Gordon**

What progress is there in Barnet pursuant to the Government's reinvigoration of the Right to Buy scheme for Council Tenants?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Following the Government's announcement, there has been an increase in requests for information about the right to buy from Barnet council tenants for 14 in 2011/12 to 85 from April 2012.

Question 12**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

The employment rate for ethnic minority working age residents in Barnet fell from 66.5% (April 2005-Mar 2006) to 56.9% (October 2009-Sep 2010). How does the Cabinet Member explain this decline - greater than the rest of the population and what is the Council doing about it?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

It is always interesting to work with statistics and derive conclusions. This statistical change is caused by parents at home, students and carers being included in the figure. It may even be a sign of greater affluence. The disappointment is that there is a percentage of this group without work. The Council is working to help youth worklessness in all communities across the Borough. In the most deprived estates there is also the workfinder project. We fully support the welfare reforms that Ian Duncan Smith is introducing. This will make sure that work pays whilst continuing to give help where it is needed, whilst it is needed.

Question 13**Councillor Darrel Yawitch**

Would the Cabinet Member give me a progress update on the Heronsgate Garages site in Edgware?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Planning permission has been granted for two houses on the site. The garages have been demolished to a point where residential occupation is virtually impossible. The two entrances to the site have been closed; the pedestrian entrance is secured by a high fence, the vehicular access is secured by 2 large lockable gates.

Question 14**Councillor Alison Moore**

Can the Cabinet Member provide the figures for spend on consultants for each year of the Future Shape / One Barnet programme, including a breakdown of the number of consultants that are currently working on personal service agreements or contracts or are being paid through personal service companies?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Spend on Consultants for each year of the Future Shape/ One Barnet Programme;

2010/11 £ 1,067K

2011/12 £ 2,554K

2012/13 to date £ 938K

No consultants are currently working on personal service agreements or contracts or are being paid through personal service companies.

Question 15**Councillor Sury Khatri**

The Olympic Torch Relay was an enormous success when the Olympic flame passed through Barnet. Will the Cabinet Member join me in congratulating all those who organised the event?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

I am very pleased to join Councillor Khatri in thanking all the officers and our partner organisations who put in a tremendous amount of work over several months to organise a fantastic torch relay across the Borough. Over 155,000 residents lined the streets of Barnet to cheer on the Olympic Torchbearers.

Question 16**Councillor Arjun Mitra**

How many times a week are the bins at Cherry Tree Woods emptied, and is there a plan to review the current rate, given that the bins fill up quickly?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The bins located throughout the park of which there are eleven, are emptied three times a week - Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

The play area is cleaned and the bins emptied every day between Monday and Friday and if full bins are identified in the vicinity these are also emptied on the Tuesday and Thursday.

Weekend emptying is dependent upon weather and the Greenspaces Manager will take a view based on predicted weather conditions. In general bins are emptied every Saturday, if the weather is fine they are also emptied on a Sunday. On particularly busy weekends such as bank holidays, very hot weather a further empty takes place on a Saturday and/or Sunday afternoon also.

Bins do become full during the course of the day and will be emptied on the subsequent day, there are no plans to increase the frequency of bin emptying at this time, due to budget constraints and as it is not possible to provide for continual emptying. Installing more bins will also not prevent this routine from occurring.

There has been an offer from McDonalds which pilots a bin that compacts waste and notifies you when it is full. They had previously advised that they were willing to trial this bin on-street, but we could see if they are willing to pilot the bin in the park.

Question 17**Councillor Reuben Thompstone**

Would the Cabinet Member give the Council an update on Police efforts to combat burglary in our Borough?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Reducing burglary on the Borough remains the top priority for Barnet Police. A range of tactics are employed as part of the overall strategy to tackle burglary. Such tactics utilise every asset the

Metropolitan Police Service has available. These include undercover operations, surveillance, deployment of additional resources from other MPS departments such as dog units, Territorial Support Group units and Automated Number Plate Reading equipped Traffic units. As a further example of continuing work in the week commencing 3rd September, Police Officers from Romania will be joining local Police to assist in the fight against burglary.

There have been two high profile operations in recent months (4th July and 22nd August) that have resulted in the arrest of 115 people for burglary related offences, leading to over 400 charges. As of 26th August the current burglary performance picture is an 8.6% reduction in the number of burglaries compared to the same period last year (this equates to 115 fewer victims).

The Police are also a lead partner agency along with Probation and the Council in developing the approach to Integrated Offender Management in Barnet, which has a specific focus on the enhanced management of burglary offenders within the Criminal Justice system to break the cycle of re-offending.

Question 18

Councillor Alison Moore

Many of the services within the scope of the DRS bundle are of critical importance to the health and well-being of the Borough. In order to reassure the people of Barnet will the Administration immediately publish a full list of operational risks on a service area by service area basis indicating the likelihood and severity of each risk, along with details of how it intends to minimise the likelihood and mitigate the impact of each, and if not why not?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

The importance of all the DRS services to the residents and businesses of Barnet is fully recognised. With regard to health and well-being the largest risk would be for services not to be delivered to the standards required which are set at least as high as those levels currently delivered. These standards relate to both the quality and quantity of the services delivered (for example inspection of premises), and in terms of staff safety and well-being in delivering those services.

Both of these elements are the subject of contractual performance requirements that the successful bidder will be bound by with legal remedies associated with their failure. In addition the Council will actively monitor performance to ensure compliance with these requirements.

Question 19

Councillor Brian Salinger

Will the Leader please make a statement outlining the discussions that he held earlier this year with the Chairman of Barnet Football Club?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I met the Chairman and owner of Barnet Football Club. The Director of Commercial Services accompanied me. This was a cordial meeting where Mr Kleanthous expressed his views as to the conduct of this Council its actions and attitudes. I was able to re-assure him that the London Borough of Barnet is keen that the club should stay in its Underhill home which is owned by one of Mr Kleanthous's companies and undertake the improvements for which there is a planning consent. I reassured him that Barnet would continue to negotiate in good faith for access for football purposes over Council property.

Question 20

Councillor Andreas Ioannidis

What consequences does the Council Cabinet Member for Health expect the current consultation on reconfiguration in North West London Hospital Trust will have on Barnet residents using either Barnet Hospital, Chase Farm Hospital or the Royal Free?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

The stated purposes of the proposed reconfiguration of services are fourfold;

- 1) To try and ensure that Care is delivered in the most appropriate setting.
- 2) To seek to make better use of the Clinical Workforce
- 3) To centralise some services in order to secure better Clinical Outcomes

4) To enable more efficient use of resources.

Whilst different configuration Options are still being considered and no decision has yet been made, in any event, NHS North Central London does not anticipate any increased flows of patients from Northwick Park Hospital into Barnet as a consequence of the current proposals - particularly as the A&E service at this hospital is proposed to remain unchanged.

Question 21

Councillor Mark Shooter

Will the Leader kindly update members on the situation regarding new premises for Torah Vdaas School?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Torrah Vodaas is a private orthodox Jewish school, which has to find new premises very urgently. The Council has been helping with search and will make the former Barnet Hill School available subject to not delaying the redevelopment of Dollis Valley. The school will pay an appropriate rent and the governors will guarantee to vacate in a timely fashion.

Question 22

Councillor Alison Moore

Many of the services within the scope of the DRS bundle are of critical importance to the health and well-being of the Borough and its residents - will the Council publish details of the Equalities Impact Assessment for local people?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

The Council has a strong commitment to making equalities and diversity integral to everything it does. It has adopted a model that recognises that people are often disabled by their environment and other people's attitudes.

It is recognised that such a significant transformation of the services within the scope of DRS is likely to have an impact upon staff and other stakeholders.

The council has reviewed the work previously carried out on internal and external equalities in order to see if there are any impacts at this stage.

As part of the Council's commitment to promoting equalities, the DRS Project examined what equalities work the services in scope currently carry out at the start of the competitive dialogue process.

Following the completion of the outline submissions evaluation it was established that none of the proposed changes to the services indicated any significant issues or risks at this stage, and bidders have, in particular, shown awareness of the equalities requirements around changing population in relation to regeneration.

Equalities will form a contract schedule for the DRS procurement - no bidder will be able to form a partnership with the council unless it agrees to meet our Equalities requirements.

A separate staff equalities impact assessment carried out at the start of the DRS project was reviewed against the bidders' outline submissions. No significant issues were found.

Question 23

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

In the new policy on parks Cherry Tree Wood, Friary Park and Victoria Park can all host events for less than 1,000 people but not for any over 1,000. Does this mean an end to the community festivals and shows at these venues which all have well over 1,000 attending?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The Policy is new and it was acknowledged in its development that Officers would need to be able to amend it to accommodate changing needs and demands. The decision included the delegation of powers to the Cabinet Member to be able to do so as required.

Where there are already established events taking place over the set thresholds (the locations listed have been highlighted as possible issues following publication of the policy) these will need to be looked at on a case by case basis which is currently taking place.

Question 24**Councillor Alison Moore**

Can the Leader of the Council please update Members on progress with responding to the infraction pilot and explain why, despite assurances given after the MetPro procurement scandal, the Council is now being investigated for suspected breaches of European law in relation to the award of a £4.9m contract for a Central Management System for street lighting. In view of the impact of Part 2 of the Localism Act in making Local Authorities liable for financial sanctions, has the Council calculated the possible financial consequences if the investigation finds that the Council has indeed acted unlawfully?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Cabinet Office is investigating an alleged infraction regarding dimmer switches on street lights, which will save money for the council and protect the environment. The Council does believe that there has been no such infraction. The Cabinet Office has reported this to the EU. There is no indication as to any potential costs etc.

Question 25**Councillor Anne Hutton**

Has the feasibility study been completed into the use of the artsdepot? If yes, what are the conclusions, if no, when can we expect it to be completed?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The architect has completed a study which has identified that there are a number of options for the inclusion of a library within artsdepot: he is currently completing his written report.

Question 26**Councillor Alison Moore**

Does the Leader of the Council agree with the comments of Sir Merrik Cockell in speaking out against a blind faith in the virtues of outsourcing council services, and criticising the philosophy that Councils should become commissioners rather than providers of service, including the comment that *"My belief is that revolution is very difficult because you've tied yourself to a set of principles as being the right ones. So if you say 'we will commission everybody, we are simply commissioners' then you can get stuck in that mantra"*

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Sir Merrick Cockell is of course a pre-eminent Councillor and leads the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea as well as being chairman of the Local Government Association. I can confirm that the Conservative party does not have a blinkered approach to ideology and is determined within this Council to deliver excellent services at the best possible price to the tax paying resident.

Question 27**Councillor Julie Johnson**

What is the Cabinet Member's reaction to the review into the UK's private rented sector and its threat to social housing?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

The Council does not have a formal position on the recommendations in the *Review of the barriers to institutional investment in private rented homes* recently published by the department for Communities and Local Government.

However, the council's housing strategy recognises the contribution that private sector renting makes to meeting housing need in the borough, along with our desire to encourage institutional investment in the sector.

We should always welcome flexibility and fully consider all options which provide the best value for money to the tax-payer.

Question 28**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

What is the Council doing in partnership with the police to ensure that drug use and violence on our estates are dealt with effectively?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The response to tackling violence and drug use, along with other key crime, is planned at the Police's Operational tasking group and Fortnightly Intelligence Meeting, which utilises intelligence from across all agencies and partners.

As well as the tactical response to such issues, which has included closure of premises related to drugs, implementation of dispersal zones and the continued presence of safer Neighbourhood Teams at a ward level, there are a range of partnership mechanisms, services and programmes that are integral to the solution. For example the work of the Troubled Families Programme, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements, the Integrated Offender Management programme, Youth Service programmes, Domestic Violence services including Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference's and the provision of drug and alcohol services for both adults and young people.

Question 29**Councillor Ross Houston**

What is the Cabinet Member's view of the GCSE English downgrading scandal, what is the effect on Barnet schools and pupils, and will the Cabinet Member support any collective legal challenge?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Currently no schools in Barnet have reported to us any significant effect on their performance due to the changes in the grading of GCSE English.

Question 30**Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb**

Will the Church Farm House Museum items remaining in storage in North Finchley library ever be on display again, and if so where?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Yes, selective items will be on display in some libraries periodically e.g. a selection of items are currently on display at Hendon Library. Some items have been lent to other museums and travelling exhibitions e.g. items are currently on display at the Toy Museum at Bletchley Park.

Question 31**Councillor Geoff Johnson**

Several local authorities have got food banks that supply food for financially stretched people. Can the Council tell me how many are there in the Borough of Barnet, and how well used are they?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I know of one Food bank operated in Barnet but have not explored how well used it is. Food banks are one aspect of assistance that can be given but surely it is better to help people back into work and obviate the danger of creating a dependency culture.

Question 32**Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb**

Are the Church Farm House Museum items being stored in museum conditions?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Items are professionally and securely packaged and stored in a dry, secure area.

Question 33**Councillor Arjun Mittra**

What communications has the Cabinet Member had with the Walksafe N2 Campaign in the last three months?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The Council have engaged in meetings both on-site and at North London Business Park with the Walksafe N2 Group and carried out a number of investigations. The areas of study, including consideration of safety in the vicinity of local schools, have also been the subject of discussion at the Council's Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on more than one occasion and it is intended to submit a report on the study and any recommendations that have resulted to the next meeting of the Finchley and Golders Green Area Environment Sub-Committee in October for them to determine what improvements should be formally agreed for the area.

Question 34**Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb**

Were any of the Church Farm House Museum items being sent to auction offered to Barnet museum?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Yes, Barnet Museum was offered and received a number of items from the collection.

Question 35**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

What are the Council's plans to set criteria and administer the community care grant and crisis loans part of the Social Fund - and if demand increases how will they ensure it is met?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Council's proposals around community care grants and crisis loans will be considered alongside the Council's proposals on Council Tax Support and are scheduled to be approved by Cabinet in December. Our plans will be set out at that time however I would be pleased to hear Councillors Rawlings' suggestions in the meantime.

Question 36**Councillor Anne Hutton**

The new legal shared service with Harrow was completed and signed on the 17 August. In what capacity were Harrow Legal Officers providing advice at Barnet Committee meetings prior to the signing of the legal shared service agreement?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Harrow Legal Officers were providing advice in the same way that any lawyer would. Barnet Lawyers were not able to cover just one meeting.

Question 37**Councillor Claire Farrier**

In line with the consultations on car parks will the Council reconsider the charges for the station car park in Burnt Oak because of the effect that the charges have on the local area?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The Council has from the 3rd September introduced lower parking charges in the majority of its car parks and intends to monitor on an on-going basis whether further changes to the tariffs can be made.

Therefore, whilst the existing charges in Watling Avenue car park are already relatively low we will be happy to consider in due course whether it may be appropriate to introduce even lower charges.

Question 38**Councillor Arjun Mittra**

How is the review of pedestrian safety around the Martin School area progressing?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Please see the answer to question 33.

Question 39**Councillor Anne Hutton**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm that Community Focus will be able to remain in the artsDepot once the new Library opens?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Yes.

Question 40**Councillor Andreas Ioannidis**

What would be the alternative Police Station for Brunswick Park residents to use when the Southgate Police Station closes?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Southgate Police station is part of Enfield Borough Police. The nearest station in Barnet would be the Police Station in Whetstone.

Question 41**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

Is the Council responsible for cutting back the shrubs along Playfield N.W.4, and if so when will they be cut back - it has been a year since this has been an issue and I haven't yet had a reply?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The shrubs and hedges located on Playfield are maintained by the Council. The hedges in the road are cut twice per annum. Accordingly, they have been cut twice during the last 12 months on 14.12.11 and 24.08.12. The next cut is therefore due during this winter.

The shrubs on the boundary of Silkstream Park are cut once per annum and were last cut on 12.12.11, they will next be cut again this winter.

Question 42**Councillor Charlie O-Macauley**

How many Apprentices do we have in Barnet and what type of wage do they get? Do they get a travel allowance?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Our latest data are for the academic year 2011/12. In that time, 1,915 Barnet residents undertook apprenticeships (over 1,000 of these were starting an apprenticeship). This is around 680 more apprenticeships than in the full academic year 2010/11. 17% were 16 to 18, 32% aged 19 to 24, and 51% aged 25+.*

Employers must pay all apprentices under 19, and those aged 19+ in their first year of the apprenticeship, the apprenticeship minimum wage of £2.60 per hour. This includes time working and the time spent training, both on and off the job. Apprentices aged 19 or over who have already spent a year on their apprenticeship must be paid at least the full National Minimum Wage rate appropriate to their age. Research has shown that many employers pay more than the minimum wage and apprentices receive an average of £170 per week. There is no obligation for employers to pay travel expenses, although some employers choose to do so.

* Please note that these figures include residents working with employers based outside the borough.

Question 43**Councillor Alison Moore**

Is the Cabinet Member happy with the quality of road resurfacing work that is being done across the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Yes – And in response to residents concerns in general about road and footway condition a further significant investment (£3.5 Million in addition to £3M already allocated within the capital programme) has been made available to extend the programme of carriageway resurfacing and footway relay works this financial year.

Question 44**Councillor Anne Hutton**

Would the Cabinet Member advise how much money has been spent on the temporary artsDepot Library to date, and how much will be spent on the new Library, including any ongoing costs for rent?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The cost of the temporary library in artsdepot from its opening until the end of August 2012 has been £35,197.34. The costs will be resolved once the details are decided and negotiations complete.

Question 45**Councillor Ross Houston**

What is the Council doing to protect playing fields, including school playing fields, in the Borough and encouraging sports use? In particular, how many have been taken out of use?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Playing fields are protected by "Policy DM15: Green Belt and Open Spaces" of the Local Plan. This planning policy protects open spaces, including school playing fields, from development.

Over the last few years Barnet has been following a policy of improving school buildings and recreational facilities by disposing of surplus land and property. Broadfields School, Northway and Fairway Schools now have Sport England approved playing fields for the first time and Northway also has a new swimming pool. Improved sports facilities, which will be available for community use, are also proposed at a new build Orion primary school.

Question 46

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing tell us how many secure tenants are on the waiting list in Burnt Oak?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

There are 28 banded secure tenants who live in Burnt Oak seeking a transfer.

Question 47

Councillor Barry Rawlings

The Health & Well-Being Strategy and to a greater extent Barnet's Public Health responsibilities rely on several agencies including both Environmental Health and Trading Standards. What incentives and sanctions will be in place to ensure these services will support these agendas if they are part of a multi-national conglomerate?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

As highlighted in the response to Question 18 from Councillor Alison Moore, the importance of the DRS services to Barnet are fully recognised and the need to collaborate across a number of agencies in their delivery is both understood and a contractual requirement. The performance and monitoring regime within the DRS Contract sets service standards which are at least as high as those levels currently delivered and the successful bidder will be contractually bound to achieve these standards. Failure to meet these standards has, initially, financial implications for the bidder and repeated failure can lead to a rapid increase in such penalties. For more severe failures, other remedies up to and including Termination of the Contract, potentially at a substantial cost to the successful bidder, are also available. In addition, both bidders have aspirations to generate new business based on their successful delivery of these services in Barnet and this will act as a further incentive to meet or exceed performance standards.

Question 48

Councillor Ross Houston

In the Annual report of the Director of Public Health it is stated that Barnet has over 18,000 children living in poverty - at 23.7% compared with a national average of 20.9%. Could the Cabinet Member detail the Council's plans to deal with this and comment on the likely affect of welfare changes to the number of children in Barnet condemned to live in poverty?

Answer by Councillor Andrew Harper

Since these figures for 2008 were published, the percentage of children in Barnet living in poverty has reduced to 22.7% (2009) and to 18.6% of under 16s (2010). Of course, our task is to reduce this further.

Barnet's Children and Young People Plan incorporates the Borough's strategy to reduce child poverty. Our key objectives include equipping young people with skills to improve their employability, ensuring access to affordable and suitable childcare, supporting parents to build confidence and skills, and addressing health both as a cause and consequence of poverty.

The Children's Trust Board continues to have a strong focus on child poverty. Research (commissioned from University College London) on the attitudes of Barnet parents towards their children's development, focusing on those living in poverty, is being discussed at the next meeting of the Board on Thursday (13 September).

It is difficult to estimate the likely impact of welfare changes on the number of children in poverty. Although poverty is measured as those living in families in receipt of out of work benefits, we look at a range of outcome measures for our children and young people. It is fundamentally important that we continue to identify and support all children to achieve their potential.

Notes

- 2008 data – 23.7% (all children) and 24.1% (under 16s) in poverty.
- 2009 data – 22.7% (all children) and 22.9% (under 16s) in poverty.
- 2010 (most recently available data) - 18.6% (under 16s) in poverty.
- Data for 2011 will be published in the autumn.

Question 49

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

Can the Council tell us if pharmacies are a retail or non retail business

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Pharmacies are classed as retail uses.

Question 50

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Many shopkeepers in my Ward have told me that their business has completely gone down as a result of regeneration (streets closed to provide access for lorries for months) and the blunder of the Council's parking policy by this administration. Don't you think you should now have a dialogue with these businesses, seek their views and compensate them?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Retail business has been difficult because of the recession and changing patterns of shopping. The parking changes have been perceived to have been the major factor but retail sales have declined in areas with no parking charges as well. Dialogue with business is improving and will improve further as the reviews continue.

Question 51

Councillor Barry Rawlings

What assurances has the Cabinet Member had that the Barnet Enfield Haringey Clinical Strategy will remain a commitment to whichever preferred partner creates a Foundation Trust with Barnet & Chase Farm Hospital?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

The Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Clinical Strategy will be delivered irrespective of which Organisation Barnet and Chase Farm NHS Hospitals Trust partners with. In fact, one of the main criteria for partnership is that any partnering Organisation should clearly demonstrate its commitment to and ability to successfully deliver the Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Clinical Strategy.

Question 52

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

What are the possibilities for ex-service men and women currently serving abroad to securely acquire accommodation - and what exactly is the criteria?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

The Council's allocations scheme gives additional priority to ex-service personnel, awarding them community contribution alongside people who are working and volunteering. This means that ex-service personnel who are in priority housing need will be placed in at least band 2 for re-housing.

Question 53

Councillor Barry Rawlings

What concerns does the Cabinet Member have arising from the doubling of the numbers waiting for more than 4 hours for a bed from A&E?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

We are unclear about the reference to a doubling of the number of patients waiting more than four hours for admission following an A&E attendance. Data provided by NHS North Central London shows that, for example, A&E departments at the Royal Free and Barnet and Chase Farm hospitals have achieved the 4-hour wait target each year since the beginning of April 2009. Recent weekly data shows that this has also been the case in these three hospitals from 22 July. This does not necessarily imply that there were not any breaches but average waiting times so far this year have continued to meet the target.

It should be noted Barnet & Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust provides composite data for the whole Trust. It is not possible to disaggregate all of the activity in Barnet and Chase Farm hospitals separately.

Question 54

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

Can the Cabinet Member tell us what the difference is between secure and non-secure tenants in a regeneration area and with regards to moving tenants?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Secure tenants on the regeneration estates will be entitled to be re-housed in one of the new properties on the estate where their existing home is to be demolished. This will include entitlement to a new secure tenancy.

Non –secure tenants on the regeneration estates will receive an holistic assessment some months prior to their being required to move, and will generally be offered a home elsewhere in either the private rented sector or social housing depending on the availability of accommodation at the point that they are required to move.

Question 54

Councillor Barry Rawlings

When can the residents of the following streets expect their pavements to be brought up to a decent standard?

Ferncroft Avenue N12
Hollickwood Avenue N12
Lyndhurst Avenue N12
Thurlestone Avenue N12
Woodleigh Avenue N12
Hillside Avenue N11
Hollyfield Avenue N11

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The current programme of footway resurfacing works was derived following a Brough wide condition survey of all footpaths. Those that were deemed to require priority attention have been included in the current programme of works. A focus has also been placed on footpaths with a higher footfall to ensure that maximum benefit can be obtained. A further survey will be conducted this year and the results will assist in producing a priority programme for the next financial year. In addition to the condition survey, safety inspections take place every six months and where serious safety defects are noted instructions are issued for remedial repairs to take place in order to maintain safety.

Question 55

Councillor Alex Brodtkin

Will the Cabinet Member do everything in their power to retain the present sports facilities at the Peel Centre for the local community, preferably by making it part of any planning brief?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

The Peel Centre is identified in the adopted Colindale Area Action Plan (AAP) as a key development site in the regeneration and growth of the Colindale and Burnt Oak Opportunity Area. This area is identified in the London Plan with a target of 10,000 new homes and 500 new jobs.

The AAP identifies that the Peel Centre site could accommodate circa 1,700 homes along with the provision of a new 5Ha public park, a site for a new 2 form entry primary school, a new road link from Aerodrome Road to Colindeep Lane and potentially a site for a new student halls of residence for Middlesex University. The framework and objectives for the redevelopment of the Peel Centre are therefore already established.

The Metropolitan Police Service proposes to consolidate their facilities on the site into new buildings of circa 20,000sqm along with the retention of two existing buildings on Aerodrome Road. This will enable the majority of the Peel Centre site to be released for development in accordance with the AAP objectives.

The Colindale area is served by some large and established areas of local open space, however the quality of these open spaces is varied and in some cases poor, with few facilities and little landscape attractiveness.

The AAP recognises that new development within Colindale provides an opportunity to improve the quality of open space provision and address local issues of deficiency. The strategy within the AAP is based around provision of new parks and open spaces in addition to improving facilities, linkages and access to existing parks in the area such as Montrose Park and Heybourne Park (formerly Grahame Park Open Space) which has been enhanced as part of the Grahame Park Estate regeneration.

This is embodied in Policy 5.5 in Chapter 5 and the supporting explanatory text at paragraph 5.6.9 a) - i)). Figure 5.4 illustrates the Council's strategy for open space showing the distribution of existing spaces across the AAP area and highlighting the need for a new public park on the Peel Centre site. It also highlights where new linkages can be provided to connect these parks and spaces and improve access to them for existing and future residents. Specific objectives for new parks or improvements are also picked up in each of the Corridor of Change policies.

A new park on the Peel Centre site will provide the opportunity for a full range of open spaces including formal and informal recreation. The new park will be a public park and fully accessible to the wider community unlike the privately controlled facilities that currently exist on the Peel Centre which are not accessible to members of the public.

The consented development at the Colindale Hospital site will provide a new public entrance and pedestrian/cycle footbridge into the south east side of Montrose Park which will open up access to this park and the sports pitches within it. Improvements are also planned for Montrose Park using contributions secured from developments in the area.

The AAP therefore already provides the adopted development framework and policy context for the redevelopment of the Peel Centre which includes the provision of a new park and other essential infrastructure for the area including a site for a new primary school and new road link. The AAP also contains a clear strategy on the provision and enhancement of open spaces with improved connections between them.

The adopted Colindale AAP can be downloaded from the Council's website at http://www.barnet.gov.uk/downloads/download/774/colindale_area_action_plan.

Question 56

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Does the Leader agree that Olympics have been a great success and if so do you think you should now write a letter of thanks to the people who worked hard for the successful bidding process i.e. Ken Livingstone, Tessa Jowell and Tony Blair?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I rejoice that the Olympics have been a social, sporting and security success. The jury is still out on the commercial result. I will not be thanking those who secured the games for London at London's expense but will thank the Conservative administrations at City Hall and Westminster who ensured operational success as well as all those volunteers who made the occasion what it was.

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