

Appendix 1

Council Questions to Cabinet Members 10 September 2013 Questions and Responses

Question 1

Councillor Jack Cohen

Can you confirm that contracts have been exchanged for the sale of land at Hendon Football Club? If so, have all the conditions set out in the exempt report of Cabinet Resources Committee 24th June 2013 been complied with. For the sake of transparency, will you provide the amount of monies paid over on exchange and the amount of monies yet to be paid at a future date? Will you confirm that the purchaser has withdrawn the extant planning application?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

A contract was exchanged for the sale of the land at Hendon Football Club in early July. The sale price and commercial terms remain confidential at this stage but it can be confirmed that these are in accordance with the exempt report presented to Cabinet Resources Committee in June and that a substantial deposit was paid to the Council by the purchaser on exchange of contracts. With regard to the planning permission previously granted in 2004, it is not envisaged that this will be implemented but rather that a further planning application will be submitted by the purchaser in due course for consideration by planning committee.

Supplementary Question

There are two issues for which specific assurance is required. 1) The deposit paid is actually the amount that was set down in the report to the Cabinet Resources Committee and 2) in relation to the planning permission, it is understood that as part of the agreement, that planning application would be withdrawn this is not clear from the reply. Could both points be confirmed?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

In Councillor Thomas's absence neither point can be confirmed but Councillor Thomas will be asked to write to Councillor Cohen to confirm. It seems highly unlikely that contractual commitments can be got out of.

Question 2

Councillor Brian Salinger

Will the Cabinet Member for Housing please advise the Council:-

- A) How many Barnet properties have been let to people from other Boroughs under the Pan London Mobility Scheme?
- B) Which Boroughs have those people or families come from?
- C) How many Barnet residents have been housed elsewhere in London under the same scheme?
- D) Which Boroughs have each of them gone to? Would the Cabinet Member give his assessment of the scheme and its impact on Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

- A) There have been four Barnet properties let via Housing Moves.
- B) The successful applicants have come to us from Croydon, Tower Hamlets and two from Westminster.
- C) One Barnet resident has been re-housed through the scheme.
- D) They moved to Tower Hamlets.

Supplementary Question

The question asked for an assessment of the scheme and its impact on Barnet which has not been answered. So could that be done, possibly in writing? In Councillor Davey's absence, can the Leader advise how the scheme has been publicised for people looking for accommodation both in Barnet looking elsewhere and across London into Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The impact of this scheme appears to be small but Councillor Davey will be asked to write and confirm that. The other points cannot be addressed in Councillor Davey's absence and written confirmation on these matters will also be asked for.

Question 3

Councillor Alison Moore

Will the Cabinet Member actually commit to writing to all residents who are entitled to a refund of parking charges and for whom they have contact details but no banking details to effect an automatic refund to advise them that they can reclaim the money that they were unlawfully charged?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The Council has been setting up a process to ensure that all those that are contactable do receive notification of the amount refundable. Residents have also been asked to apply for refunds with continued local press and web based advertising with the aim of trying to capture all concerned. For residents who have not contacted the Council, I have committed to try and contact all those that have had resident permits and/or vouchers, whether that is by email, letter or phone.

Supplementary Question

How many people have been emailed or written to, to date, and if the answer is none – why? And in addition, for those people who have picked up from other media and applied for the refund, could he confirm that they are being told that it is taking up to eight weeks to process that refund?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

A figure is not available, it can be emailed, however confirmation was given that people are being advised that it can take up to eight weeks to process the refund.

Question 4

Councillor Jack Cohen

You will be aware of the widespread local concerns about the demolition of the Castle Public House in Childs Hill. Why doesn't the Council have a policy to include the protection of established local public houses?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Planning permission is not required for demolition of public houses which are neither protected by listed status or being located within a conservation area. The Castle public house is neither a listed building nor located within a conservation area. Whilst the Council's Local Plan policies (adopted September 2012) do not specifically seek to protect public house uses, they do safeguard community facilities and the National Planning Policy Framework document (NPPF) does seek some protection where there is a lack of community facilities locally, in particular public houses located in villages and other isolated communities. When assessing the planning merits of losing a public house use, the impact on the local community is a planning material consideration. In this particular case, officers are of the opinion the loss of the Castle public house would not lead to the local community being socially isolated and as such they have no planning objection to its loss in principle.

Supplementary Question

This relates particularly to the closure of the Castle in Childs Hill. The Ward is considered to be like a village. There is no public house between Golders Green and Swiss Cottage. The public house was a local amenity with rock bands, music evenings and even a kosher pub (possibly the first in the country) It is felt that the answer given does not take the issue seriously enough and a member of the GLA is pursuing this matter. Reconsideration is requested and plans for better protection for the borough's public houses.

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

The written answer contains everything. The borough is bound by national guidelines. Public houses which are community facilities can be protected. In London, very few places can be considered 'community facility' in the understanding of the National Planning Policy Framework. They are talking there about pubs which are in isolated villages and maybe the only meeting place for 20 – 30 miles. It is believed that nowhere in London fulfils that criterion. Unfortunately we cannot have our own independent protection for public houses unless they are listed buildings or heritage assets. Our hands are tied on this one.

Question 5

Councillor Brian Salinger

How many of the Head Teachers in the Borough's Primary and Secondary Schools a) resigned or b) retired at the end of this summer term?

How many of those schools have made permanent appointments for new Head Teachers for the start of this term?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

Eight Head Teachers from Barnet's schools including academies retired at the end of the summer term and eight resigned their posts.

However in total at the end of August 2013, seven substantive appointments have been made for the start of term. However for all schools, there are satisfactory interim arrangements in place pending the completion of permanent recruitment processes.

Supplementary Question

Has the member been briefed on how the figures quoted compare to previous years?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

A reply will be provided in writing in terms of information for last year. But the opportunity was taken to wish those retiring head teachers within the Authority every success in their retirement and those going onto new appointments much the same.

Question 6

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Why won't the Cabinet Member simply agree to give an automatic refund of parking charges to residents that have been unlawfully overcharged and for whom they have bank credit / debit card details?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

As stated, the Council is in the process of ensuring that all those entitled to a refund receive a refund. As card and contact details expire, those residents will need to provide updated information and the process for ensuring that data is being captured properly is being agreed.

Supplementary Question

Why does it take two months to provide a refund?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

It doesn't take two months. It is 'up to' two months.

Question 7**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Did the Council engage consultants to assist in the consideration of the application to redevelop West Hendon estate? How much have they been paid and has the contract now ended? Did they attend the Planning and Environment Committee which considered the application on 23rd July 2013, if so what was the point of their attendance and how much did they charge for attendance?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Council has engaged 'Aecom' as consultants to assist in consideration of the application to redevelop the West Hendon Estate. This has been done through a Planning Development Agreement with the developers Barratt Metropolitan LLP (BM LLP). This requires BM LLP to meet their costs up to a ceiling of £135,425.

Two Aecom consultants were in attendance at the Planning and Environment Committee meeting - the Planning Lead Tom Venables and the Environmental Statement Officer Jane McEwen. Consultants were in attendance in order to support council officers in their responses to any technical queries raised at the committee meeting.

Their attendance at the meeting was billed for 1.5 hours, charged at their standard hourly rates and included in the Planning Development Agreement:-

Tom Venables - 1.5 x £66.25 = £99.38

Jane McEwen - 1.5 x £62.50 = £93.75

Aecom are still providing the Council with assistance in the determination of the planning application.

Supplementary Question

This relates to the consultants who attended the planning committee that considered the plans for the regeneration of West Hendon Estate. The developer was actually meeting the costs of the consultants (ie, they were paying the consultants) but the consultants were sat at the top table with our officers. Does this give the wrong impression?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I was not at the meeting, therefore unable to comment on the seating arrangements but agrees it would have been more usual for them to have been seated in the gallery and be called forward when required. The matter will be raised and ensure all protocols will be observed in the future.

Question 8**Councillor Brian Salinger**

How many times has the Mayor's car broken down in the last 6 months?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Since March 2013, the Mayor's car has broken down on two occasions.

Supplementary Question

How often did the car break down when the vehicle was merely leased and can confirmation be given that these break downs have only happened since the car was purchased?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Confirmation was given that the decision to purchase the vehicle was made on the basis that the car

had performed well for its comparatively short period of leasing. It is unfortunate that it did break down and it is further unfortunate that it required a part that was difficult to get and the delivery of which was said to have been delayed by the earthquake in Japan, causing a power reduction in Japan and a delay in the production of the unit. But the Mayor's car is now up and running and is a vehicle of prestige that does not nothing but enhance the value of the Mayoralty in the borough.

Question 9

Councillor Andreas Ioannidis

I'm sure we're all very glad that Theresa Villiers has finally taken time out from Northern Ireland to come and help her constituents with the ongoing issue of Brunswick Park Health Centre, so can the Cabinet Member confirm that Brunswick Park Health Centre will be re-opened in December 2013?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

As I am sure the Councillor knows, the Rt. Hon. Mrs. Teresa Villiers MP has been involved in trying to bring about a resolution to this long running saga for some time and together with members of this Administration continues to press for a speedy resolution to a situation which has gone on for far too long.

As he also knows, as the re-opening of the Brunswick Park Health Centre is in no way within the Council's control, I am not personally in a position to be able to confirm one way or another a definite re-opening date. I will, of course, continue - as always - to press all the parties who are responsible to facilitate this at the earliest possible opportunity.

Question 10

Councillor Jack Cohen

What progress has been made since my Question number 20 to you at the last Council meeting regarding the Application for a modification Order in respect of the footpath running between West Heath Road NW3 and Finchley Road NW11?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Legal advice and assistance has been obtained to progress this matter. A schedule of the necessary actions to complete the process of determining the application has been drawn up commencing with issuing initial consultation letters week commencing 2 September 2013 and proceeding through completion of investigations, production of the investigation report and further required consultation prior to determination at the Planning and Environment committee meeting in February or March 2014. The Planning Inspectorate has also contacted the authority regarding an application to the Secretary of State for a direction requiring the authority to determine the application by a given date and a response to them regarding current progress is also being sent.

Question 11

Councillor Brian Salinger

Will the Leader give Members of the Council his assessment of the state of each of the Borough's Town Twinning arrangements?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Each town twinning arrangement/relationship is reliant on the independent "Friends of" committees and how active each of these committees are.

Chaville – The last exchange visit was in June 2009 to mark the 50th Anniversary of the twinning arrangement. A tree was planted in Friary Park marking this anniversary. A Barnet delegation went to Chaville in November 2009. Each November a wreath is sent for Remembrance and is laid at their War Memorial by a member of Chaville Council or "Friends of Barnet".

Le Raincy – The last visit took place in October 2009.

Ramat Gan – The last visit to Barnet took place in 2010. A Council delegation visited in May 2012. There may be a visit to Ramat Gan later this year at Members own expense.

Morphou – Visits continue to and from Barnet each year. Most costs are borne by Morphou Municipality. The only costs to Barnet are for a civic dinner, token gifts and a tour of the borough showcasing areas of current interest.

Jinja – We plan to host an event later this year celebrating our link with the city.

KreisSiegen Wittgenstein – An annual link accepting visitors arranged by the Friends of Barnet Committee and with visiting students on an exchange programme.

Templehof – Earlier this year we hosted two officers from the Council of TemplehofSchonenberg on a work placement for 3 weeks at the Council.

Montclair – This is an active partnership with regular exchanges.

Supplementary Question

Whose assesses the town twinning arrangement? Is it the personal assessment of the Leader? Or does guidance come from representatives of the friends' organisations or from council officers?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Slightly composite answer in that it is officer-briefed but as the question is addressed to the me, it is effectively the my answer, heavily edited by me and whilst Montclair is a very active partnership, knowing who was asking the question and the other councillor here who will know far more about the situation, it is a very brief answer to avoid contradiction.

Question 12

Councillor Jim Tierney

Smoking remains the biggest individual cause of premature death in many areas. It is therefore surely inappropriate in the extreme that Barnet Council chooses to invest pension fund money in tobacco. Investing in a product that may ultimately kill half its users is wrong for any organisation but particularly a Council which is there to serve the community and now has increased responsibility for health matters. There is also the £14 billion cost nationwide of treating smoking-related illnesses. Can the Cabinet Member therefore instruct our two pension fund managers to discontinue all future investments in tobacco?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

As of 31 July 2013, the Council's investment in tobacco is as follows:

Schroders

Maturities Corporate Bond fund: 0.93% of total portfolio

Life Diversified Growth Fund: 0.3% of total portfolio

Newton Investment Management Ltd

Bond portfolio: 1.07% of total portfolio

Real Return portfolio: 4.77% of the market value

The Pension Fund Committee is responsible for overseeing the Fund and the Councillor can approach the Pension Fund Committee to discuss this matter further.

Supplementary Question

The recommendation is that this matter should be taken up with the Pension Fund Committee. However having been a member of that Committee for a year, during which the ethics of investing in tobacco was questioned, no satisfactory response or reassurance was given. Now that we have taken on the Public Health role to include a smoking cessation service, at a time when we have national campaigns like 'Stoptober' Smoke-free resource centre, tobacco-free futures and others, at a time when the Health Minister has given her backing to plain cigarette packaging and to the local government declaration on tobacco control which the Health Minister recommends and other councils have signed up to – that is an executive decision not one for the Pension Committee.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

That matter will be taken under advice but it is believed that it was a matter for the Pension Fund Committee to maximise the investment return for the pensioners and anything that mitigates against that is difficult. If the council in general were to interfere, this could be a dangerous precedent when there are already suggestions that council pension funds should be invested in loss-making infrastructure projects. We don't want to mess around with it; it is something that would be kept within the pension fund committee.

Question 13

Councillor Jack Cohen

How many residents have made a claim for a refund of their residents parking permit excess charges as of 30th August and ditto for visitors' vouchers and how much money does this amount to?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

As at 17.00 on the 28th August, 3329 electronic and 147 written claims have been made in conjunction with all types of resident applications. It is not yet known what the value of these claims is however an in-depth analysis of each account will be undertaken as refunds are processed. The expected total amount to be repaid is currently calculated at £2.2 million.

Supplementary Question

We now know that by the end of August 3500 applications have been made for refunds of the parking charges. When this was proposed did you vote in favour? If so, why?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Yes I supported the rise. That figure is now approximately 4500.

Question 14

Councillor Stephen Sowerby

We know the Council is to build the first council houses for over twenty years, to add new capacity to the stock, but how is the borough performing in terms of the speed at which vacant properties are re-let?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Barnet Homes has seen significant improvement over the last two years in terms of the average number of days until vacant properties are re-let. Between April 2011 and March 2013, the average number days reduced from 28 to 19.1.

Progress this financial year has also been good, with quarter 1 performance at 16.7 days, compared with the 19.2 days recorded for the same quarter in the previous year.

Question 15

Councillor Geoff Johnson

When is the Council going to negotiate with Transport for London (TfL) to have Cross Now pauses installed at Kingsbury Road Junction Edgware Road NW9 and West Hendon Broadway Junction with Cool Oak Lane as we have already had a fatality at Kingsbury Road and several near misses at West

Hendon Broadway, This was asked for at the Hendon Environment Sub-Committee when it discussed road safety, the committee Members were told it would be looked into but have not received any update on this crucial issue?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

A5/Kingsbury Rd

Officers continue to work with TfL on this difficult location and are evaluating possible improvements that could be introduced to enable pedestrians to cross the road(s) with more confidence. Officers are hopeful of being able to update ward members on progress within the next few months.

A5/Cool Oak Lane

This signalised junction has been reviewed previously with a view to establishing whether a pedestrian aspect could be incorporated which has proved problematic due to a pressure on moving traffic on this road which is part of TfL's strategic road network. However, it is envisaged that improvements will be made in due course as part of the overall area improvements as part of the West Hendon Regeneration project although at this time it is unfortunately not possible to be able to give definitive timescales for this element of the project.

Supplementary Question

It seems that West Hendon will have to wait about 15 years for regeneration. All they are going to do is remove the bus lanes so why don't they remove the bus lanes now and then a crossing can be situated at the lights because the traffic will move.

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Traders were met approximately a month ago and officers are now working on certain projects that will hopefully improve the situation in West Hendon way before the completion of the regeneration.

Question 16

Councillor Jack Cohen

Does the contract with NSL provide for a 24hour service, if not what are the contracted operational hours?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The current contracted hours are from 7am – 11pm. The contract does of course allow for 24 hour service albeit that this aspect of service is not currently activated.

Supplementary Question

Residents in Railway Cottages, Cricklewood have agreed for an extension of their CPZ to 3am. Can it be confirmed that once this is implemented, NSL will be asked to patrol the area and issue penalty charge notices if appropriate?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

This issue was supported at the Area Environment sub-Committee and assurance was given that enforcement will be available for the proposed new timings.

Question 17

Councillor Stephen Sowerby

What is the satisfaction rate among council tenants for repairs and maintenance work carried out in 2013 and how does this compare to the rate calculated in 2010?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

1,125 tenants returned a completed repairs and maintenance satisfaction survey in May 2013. The

purpose of the survey was to obtain an accurate customer opinion of the two main repairs contracts (Mears & Mitie) over the first year of new contracts. The survey uses a nationally recognised methodology across the industry.

The main result pertaining to overall satisfaction with the repairs service shows a 7.6% increase in satisfaction from the same survey undertaken in 2010, from 67.5% to 75.1%.

It was particularly positive to see vast improvements in satisfaction in two wards that recorded lower than average results in 2010 - Hale and Burnt Oak. Barnet Homes has focussed heavily on improving satisfaction in these wards. Satisfaction in Hale increased by 18% (with a result above the average at 77.6%) and satisfaction in Burnt Oak increased by 21% (with a result above the average at 76.3%).

Barnet Homes is undertaking further analyses of the data to fully understand all that has contributed to the substantial increase in satisfaction. However, it is clear that the implementation of the service improvements residents asked for, such as: 2 hour appointment slots, text reminders when the workers are en-route, targeted environmental improvement schemes and an effective and efficient working relationship between the Barnet Homes Contact Centre and contractors have all contributed to increased satisfaction.

Question 18

Councillor Alison Moore

For how many parking permit holders does the Council hold email addresses and what percentage is that of the total number of parking permit holders?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The Council has 7,964 accounts with email addresses out of the 10,539 permits issued from 23.07.12 to 23.07.13, which is 75.5% of the total residents' permits.

Supplementary Question

As it costs nothing to email people, why haven't all those nearly-8000 individuals been emailed yet?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

There's no point in emailing people that have emailed us. The system has been set up so there is no doubling up of the work.

Question 19

Councillor Jack Cohen

Are you satisfied with NSL performance in enforcing double yellow lines restrictions on Cricklewood Broadway at the junction with Cricklewood Lane and if so can you provide evidence by way of the number of penalty charge notices issued since NSL took over the contract.

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

NSL have and continue to enforce the junction and adjacent points. 1 penalty charge notice (PCN) has been issued between the 01/05/2012 and the 27/08/2013 at the exact junction. But during the same dates there have been 204 penalties issued for 01 (waiting restriction, single and double yellow line) contraventions and 353 penalties for 02 (loading/unloading restriction) contraventions, on the whole Cricklewood Broadway NW2 length of road. It should be noted that enforcement should not always result in PCN's being issued.

Question 20

Councillor Kate Salinger

Is it the intention of this Council that Community Focus remains at the Artsdepot? If so, what is the Council doing to ensure it happens?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The Council believes that there is enough room in the Arts Depot building for Community Focus to remain, alongside the London Studio Centre dance college. The Council is continuing to broker discussions between the Arts Depot Trust and Community Focus in an attempt to resolve this dispute. As the holder of the sub-lease, the council is bound by the terms of the Landlord and Tenant Act and wants to avoid this entering the courts and becoming a lengthy legal dispute which would do no good at all for those concerned.

I said at the time of the original eviction notice in March that I would support Community Focus in this matter and I stand by that. Through the Council's intervention, the eviction notice has been extended by 8 months to allow more time to reach a satisfactory resolution. As part of this process, the Council has been working to identify alternative premises for Community Focus - it is right that we do this as a contingency measure. The Council also provides significant grant support to Community Focus and agreed a 3 year funding arrangement in 2011 worth over £225,000.

Supplementary Question

When it is considered that the Arts Depot are in the same position as Community Focus in that they both hold periodic tenancies perhaps the council would consider serving notice on the Arts Depot just like the Arts Depot did to Community Focus. The Arts Depot could then be used as council offices, rent-free, not paid to anyone and Community Focus and its users would be absolutely delighted.

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

This is not the best way to resolve this issue. An amicable resolution to this matter will be found by working with both sides.

Question 21**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Does the Council's pension fund invest in payday loan companies, and, if so, how much?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Pension fund has no investments in payday loan companies.

Question 22**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Who do you blame for the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) permit and visitor voucher fiasco?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The way this decision was handled caused the legal action and subsequent court decision. It would not be productive to apportion blame.

Supplementary Question

I asked who was thought to be to blame for the parking charge fiasco. Is it Councillor Coleman to blame or the whole group?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

An enjoyable trapping question which is quite impossible to answer.

Question 23**Councillor Barry Evangelii**

How has Barnet's Integrated Offender Management Scheme been performing since its inception?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Barnet Integrated Offender Management (IOM) has been performing extremely well. There are currently 98 clients on the Barnet IOM Cohort.

- 64 out of the 98 are Statutory Offenders
- 34 are Non-Statutory offenders (those who have served less than twelve months in custody)
- 23 out of the 98 are Priority and Prolific Offenders (PPOs).

A recent comparison of offending levels based on pre and post membership of the IOM has provided a strong indication of a correlation between IOM membership and a reduction in offending.

The table below shows the stats for convictions based on a 12 month period before IOM membership (12 months from 6th June 2011) and for the first 6 months of the offender's membership of the IOM programme (6 months from 6th June 2012). There is a considerable reduction in the monthly rate of offending for both the Stat and Non-Stat offenders.

The decrease in offending is particularly marked amongst the Non-Stats - perhaps indicative that the Non-Stats who engage with the program, on a voluntary basis, are particularly likely to benefit from the support and diversionary interventions the IOM provides.

	Number of offences per month (total for all offenders)		
Cohort type	Pre IOM	Post Joining IOM	Change in monthly offending rate
Stat offender	22	14	-37%
Non Stat offender	11	5	-59%

Question 24

Councillor Arjun Mitra

How does the Council aim to tackle the level of dog fouling on pavements in the borough?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

We aim to send a team to remove any reported fouling within 24 hrs. We are currently posting advice / warning notices regarding dog fouling in all affected areas of the borough. Officers and operational staff constantly monitor and tackle dog fouling when it is witnessed to endeavour to change behaviour and require dog owners to be responsible. The Street Scene service will be looking to bring an effective and appropriate enforcement process to Members for approval, as part of the changes to the Street Cleansing and Greenspaces service.

Question 25

Councillor Jack Cohen

What step are you taking to check, monitor and deal with concerns about the proliferation of "beds in sheds" especially in the southern part of the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Where the construction of a building or change of use of a building are carried out without planning permission and the matter is brought to the attention of officers, then planning enforcement action would be taken, where expedient, in order to ensure the cessation of the unauthorised residential use.

Where officers are made aware of dwellings which potentially do not meet basic standards, Environmental Health ensure that the conditions and facilities within them are suitable and they can

take action to improve the facilities or where this cannot be achieved prohibit their use.

Council actions are co-ordinated with the Police and Immigration Service where the occupation is known or suspected to be illegal or where it is suspected that the occupiers may not be lawfully in the country.

The Department for Communities and Local Government recently announced additional funding to help tackle rogue landlords and Environmental Health are currently preparing a bid to assist the Council in identifying and tackling the poorest properties in the borough including beds in sheds.

Supplementary Question

As every member of the Planning Committee knows, at almost every site visit we make we spot a large shed that we are told in all innocence by the developer, is just used for storage; no matter that it has got six windows, a front door, bathroom, shower and kitchen facilities. When Capita take over, will all the good work promised in tackling this problem be taken on by Capita or will they say it is nothing to do with them?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Planning Enforcement Officers will continue to do their planning work which includes enforcement. There is no question that they will not continue to do enforcement and it is up to every resident and every Council Member to report these cases and if you are worried that they are not being pursued vigorously enough, please pass on that information so that it may be monitored. We do our best to enforce 'Beds in Sheds' as much as we can, however if somebody says they are using an outbuilding for storage and we have no evidence to the contrary, we are forced to believe the resident.

Question 26

Councillor Barry Evangelii

What are the combined guaranteed savings to the Council and therefore the Barnet taxpayer of the New Support and Customer Services Organisation (NSCSO) and Development and Regulatory Services (DRS) contracts, finally signed last month?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The total savings for the NSCSO contract are £125m, and the total savings for the DRS contract are £39m.

Question 27

Councillor Alison Moore

The last Council meeting agreed unanimously to bring forward proposals to pay all directly employed council staff at least London's Living Wage if the One Barnet programme went ahead. Now that both One Barnet contracts have been signed, will the Leader bring forward a report to the next General Functions Committee or Cabinet meeting implementing London's Living Wage for all directly employed staff that currently fall below £8.55 per hour?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

That will be too soon, but we will bring forward early proposals.

Supplementary Question

When?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Very soon.

Question 28**Councillor Graham Old**

Would the Cabinet Member please share with this meeting the percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time in 2012/13?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

In Barnet, of children who became subject to a Child Protection (CP) plan in 2012/13, 9.6% were subject for a second or subsequent time, down from 13.8% in 2011/12. The England average for 2011/12 was 13.8%.

Background information

The data for the number of children subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time shows the number of children subject to child protection plans who come back onto plans at any time in their life. A high percentage could suggest that the decision to initially remove children from a CPP was premature and that measures to sustain improvement have not worked. The national average for England is fairly constant at 13-14%.

Question 29**Councillor Julie Johnson**

What is the Council's current target for bringing empty homes back in use, how many empty homes are there currently in the Borough and how is the Council doing against their target?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

The most recent data indicated there were 3016 empty properties in Barnet. The target for 2013/14 is to bring back 100 properties into use and we have already over-achieved by bringing 198 back into use to date.

Question 30**Councillor Graham Old**

Is the Council prepared for the launch of the new waste service on October 14th?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Yes. Fleet vehicles have been procured and will commence a phased delivery from 9th September 2013. Recycling bins have been procured and will commence roll-out throughout the Borough from 9th September 2013 for 4 weeks. May Gurney staff will become Barnet staff from 6th October 2013 and all Barnet crews will receive intensive training from 7th October 2013. Lots of communication is already underway and further leaflets explaining the full details of the new service are due to be distributed in Barnet First September issue. This is a significant and major step forward for Barnet to ensure that residents are given all the mechanisms to make it easier to recycle more. It is also a huge logistical exercise and plans are being put in place to deal with large numbers of questions raised so that the service fine-tuning can be properly managed throughout January and February 2014.

Question 31**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Could the Cabinet Member enlighten the Council as to the level of success that she, alongside Mike Freer had in getting TfL to provide a bus service to Finchley Memorial Hospital?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Mike Freer MP, the Leader and I had a high level meeting with Isabel Dedring, the Deputy Mayor For Transport, at City Hall to thoroughly explore the matter. It was finally concluded that to route a conventional bus to the Hospital was not a viable option but that other community transport options would be pursued. A further meeting is scheduled between Transport for London (TfL) and Members for 24 September and a further update will be provided after that meeting.

Question 32**Councillor Maureen Braun**

How many children have been placed in Barnet Schools in preparation for the 2013/14 academic year?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

4675 reception aged children have been offered places. 100% of on time Barnet applicants have been offered places with 92% of these offered one of their top 3 preferences. This has been a fantastic achievement for the Borough given the growing demand for primary school places and has required an additional 15.5 forms of entry coming on line for this September. I am grateful to the co-operation of local Head Teachers and Governing Bodies in helping us achieve this.

The total number of secondary transfer places offered for year 7 children is 4647 with 100% of Barnet pupils being offered places and 90% of all applicants being offered one of their top three preferences.

Question 33**Councillor Alison Moore**

How many people subject to the new Council Tax Support Scheme have been issued with a court summons for non-payment, how many have been evicted and in each case (summons / eviction) how many are classified as disabled?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

It is Council policy only to issue a summons where the account is two months in arrears or the customer has had more than one reminder. Since the introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme, of the accounts now brought in to contributing towards their Council Tax, 2903 have been summonsed for non-payment.

The Revenues service has endeavoured to be pro-active in making contact with these customers, for example, with outbound calling, to provide advice and support on payment options. If contact is made with the customer in this way or if they call us in response to our correspondence they will be offered the opportunity to pay their instalments over 12 months instead of the usual 10 months. Providing a customer adheres to an agreed arrangement plan, the summons and liability costs are removed at the end of the arrangement.

None of our Council Tax Support customers have been referred to the bailiffs (in recognition of the additional costs they would incur as a result). Instead we have opted to request an Attachment of Benefits from the Department of Works and Pensions as this is recognised as a cheaper alternative for the customer. Of the 2903 accounts we are able to identify 161 accounts as belonging to a customer with a degree of disability in the household. These accounts either have disabled relief applied to them or their benefits claim has a disability premium registered on it.

Unfortunately we do not have an indicator on the Revenues and Benefits systems to flag when a Council Tax Support Scheme customer has been evicted and so cannot report on this.

Question 34**Councillor Maureen Braun**

How many new homes and how many new jobs will be delivered by the Council's regeneration schemes?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

In total it is expected that over the lifetime of the regeneration schemes over 20,000 new homes and over 30,000 new jobs will be delivered. Within the next 5 years we anticipate that over 3,000 new homes and 450 new jobs will be delivered.

Question 35**Councillor Geof Cooke**

Does the Cabinet Member support closure of tube and over ground rail ticket offices?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The Council has not received any proposals for closing down tube or rail ticket offices but should it do so we will consider the implications very carefully to ensure that our residents would not be adversely affected.

Supplementary Question

Residents want to know is whether or not you are in favour of complete withdrawal of staffing from any Barnet tube station.

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Answer previously given.

Question 36**Councillor John Marshall**

How does Barnet compare to our statistical and geographic neighbours in London in terms of the number and percentage of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

The latest figures available are for June 2013, and show that Barnet has a lower proportion of 16-18 year olds not in employment, education or training than England, London and our statistical neighbours. While Barnet has a current rate of 3.2%, our statistical neighbours have NEET rates as at June 2013 ranging between 3.3% and 8.0% - Barnet is the highest performing local authority out of all our statistical neighbours.

Area	% of 16-18 year olds NEET, June 2013
England	5.9%
London	4.8%
Barnet	3.2%
Mean of statistical neighbours	5.0%

Our strong performance against this crucial measure has of course been supported by the Platforms programme funded from the Leaders £1m Service Priorities Fund for 2012/13. During this period £700,000 has been invested in a range of innovative programmes for 16-24 NEET young people as part of our Platforms programme which saw 225 young people actively taking part in projects and over 70 local employers offering an opportunity to a young person.

Supplementary Question

This answer shows that the prospects for Barnet children are much better than those of our neighbours and the rest of the country. The council is to be commended upon these figures.

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

This has been due to a lot of hard work from officers in building the partnerships with our local businesses in supporting and promoting enterprises and also the new Platforms Programme so it is quite an accolade for Barnet.

Question 37**Councillor Andreas Ioannidis**

Could the Cabinet Member inform us who has the responsibility in maintaining the car park behind the Brunswick Park Health Centre, and to whom does the land belong?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

The freehold of the car park is owned by the Council and falls within the Libraries portfolio. The maintenance of the car park will be undertaken by Property Services.

Question 38**Councillor John Marshall**

The Barnet Alliance twitter feed recently stated that a fire station was soon to be axed. Will the Cabinet Member clear up any confusion?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

There are no plans to close any of Barnet's Fire Stations. Hendon Fire Station has acquired an extra fire engine, which will improve response times.

Supplementary Question

Would the Cabinet Member like to condemn the individuals who made these allegations which caused a lot of heartache to people in this borough?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

I agree that people spreading lies on Twitter are not helpful to this borough.

Question 39**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Is it not a waste of money to force all residents to have a large recycling bin when the new service starts and then review this next year when there are residents who already know that they can manage with or only have room for a smaller bin?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The Council is working to provide residents with the same level of capacity for recycling as they currently have for refuse. The provision of the same sized containers for recycling will assist by making it easier for residents to recycle bulkier items such as cardboard and additional materials not currently collected such as mixed household plastic packaging. The large recycling bins will also provide the capacity to achieve higher recycling targets in the medium term, in line with the national target of 50% by 2020. It is intended that the Council will review locations where space is a particular issue during January 2014 and consider providing alternatives, including smaller refuse containers only where the standard container cannot physically be accommodated.

Supplementary Question

Why provide people with a bin that they have got no room for or no need for? Why not provide them with a smaller bin upfront rather than pay to give them a large one and then have to go round and change it three months later?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The reason why the bins have been rolled out logistically, it is much easier to roll it out in one go. It is also to encourage people to recycle who are not fully recycling now.

Question 40**Councillor Bridget Perry**

Would the Cabinet Member join me in congratulating the Staff and Governors of Foulds Primary School in High Barnet on "Outstanding" status in their recent Ofsted inspection?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

I am very happy to join Councillor Perry in congratulating the head teachers, staff, governors, pupils and parents on this truly outstanding result. The new Ofsted inspection framework, which has applied since September 2012, has 'raised the bar' considerably, and this is especially the case for schools being considered by inspectors to be 'outstanding'. It has been more usual since last September for schools to move from 'outstanding' to 'good', and I know how delighted the head teacher and governors were that their self-assessment was validated by Ofsted inspectors.

Question 41**Councillor Julie Johnson**

How many homeless families have been placed outside the Borough since 2009? And for how long?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

The table below shows the number of households placed in out of the borough temporary accommodation in each of the financial quarters since April 2009.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Q1	52	64	100	246	477
Q2	44	83	121	309	
Q3	59	68	151	359	
Q4	47	102	188	476	

Source: P1E

Of the 477 households out of the borough at the end of Q1 13/14, they have been there for an average of 223 days.

Of these 477 households, 367 are in our neighbouring boroughs of Brent, Enfield, Hackney and Haringey. The vast majority of the other households are within London, whilst we have a small number of households outside of London, 5 in Broxbourne and 3 in Luton.

Question 42**Councillor John Hart**

Will the Cabinet Member join me in congratulating the organisers of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment's parade through High Barnet in July, which proved such a successful occasion?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

I certainly will. It was an excellent parade and great to see so many residents lining the streets to enjoy the occasion and show their appreciation of the work and bravery of the most decorated of all British Army Regiments.

Supplementary Question

Does the Cabinet Member share my dismay that at an historic event like this, which we shall not see again in our lifetime, there was not one single Labour Councillor?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

It was a disappointment that no Labour Councillors turned up for the parade.

Question 43**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

How many staff transferred to the Council under TUPE from May Gurney are paid less than the London Living Wage?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Staff are not planned to transfer from May Gurney until the beginning of October. Consequently the final numbers and pay rates on transfer are not yet known. However our due diligence to date indicates that approximately 40 transferring staff are likely to be paid at levels below the London Living Wage.

Supplementary Question

In addition to his answer to Q27 to Councillor Moore, that when something goes about the living wage it includes how we deal with people TUPEd in at below the living wage.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

That is something that will have to be resolved at the same time.

Question 44

Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner

Can the Cabinet Member update the Council on the introduction of 24/7 traffic lights at Stirling Corner?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

As a result of the intervention by local ward councillors from Underhill and High Barnet, and the MP Theresa Villiers, there was a roundtable meeting of interested parties with the Deputy Mayor for Transport. Consequently, the traffic lights have been brought back into 24/7 operation and the number of complaints to councillors have dropped. There do though remain some concerns as to the smooth operation of the junction.

Question 45

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

When did the Council agree to allow dumping on the green on Mount Road NW4, why were local councillors not told, and why isn't the site being cleared regularly?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

We certainly do not allow dumping on this green space. We have noted that there have been several recent incidents of dumping which we have removed within 24hrs. We would encourage people to report any dumping they see occurring, in particular taking note of any vehicle registration numbers as this assists enforcement and appropriate legal action.

Supplementary Question

Why it is that overnight fly-tipping in residential areas with green spaces, it cannot be collected on Saturdays and has to wait until the following week . Is there a special reason?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

A written response will be provided.

Question 46

Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner

What have been the total costs of Ms Maria Nash's legal action to the public purse?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The total cost to the public purse is £5.8m.

Question 47

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Will the Council do what it can to support residents campaigning to reopen The Bohemia, a great community pub in North Finchley which closed suddenly last month, by restricting a change of use which could see it become a betting shop, supermarket or payday lender?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

It is very unfortunate that this business has closed and the Council through its efforts as part of the North Finchley Outer London Fund project will do what it can to support the community and the Town Team.

The Council is unable to prevent a potential change of use to a retail outlet (Class A1) or office based uses including betting shops (Class A2) as planning legislation permits such conversions without the need to consent.

Supplementary Question

It is a great regret that The Bohemia pub has closed which was adding a lot to the regeneration of that town centre. Contrary to what was said earlier the council has got more powers than she realises. An Article 4 direction could be issued which would mean that the change of use would have to come to the council rather than just be able to happen automatically and it also could be listed as an asset of community value. Will she actually start standing up for some of our community pubs?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

We do have certain powers but we are unable to list pubs in London as community assets. We are unable to change or restrict the classes for planning because they are part of national government legislation. Talking about 'community assets' we would have to refer to one of my colleague who deals with that portfolio and then provide a written response.

Also Article 4 directions need the confirmation by the Secretary of State.

Question 48**Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner**

A recent Guardian article stated, "The One Barnet campaign shows local democracy is alive and well. Barnet's two-contract agreement will be the first of many such arrangements in the UK that will transform local government." Would the Leader agree with me that Barnet is leading the way in administrative efficiency to maximise service provision?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Barnet is indeed leading the way in developing a model whereby cuts in administrative costs help preserve and enhance service levels, whilst saving the council tax payer from an increased burden.

Question 49**Councillor Julie Johnson**

How many people in Barnet subject to the new Bedroom Tax are in arrears and either face eviction or have been evicted for non-payment since the policy was introduced?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

There are currently 705 Barnet Council tenant households affected by the under-occupation charge. Of these, 66% are in arrears and 34% are not. Just less than 70% of the increased rent charged as a result of the under-occupation charge has been paid and 30% has not been paid. All those who were identified as being affected by this proposal have been visited by Barnet Homes.

There is a constant movement in households who are under-occupying as their circumstances change. In the last month 100 households either became under-occupiers or are no longer under-occupying their property.

There are currently no affected households subject to either court or eviction proceedings based solely on the under occupation charges

Officers continue to work with households affected, exploring options such as: mutual exchange, trading down into smaller property, taking in a lodger, taking up employment, paying the charge or applying for a discretionary housing payment where appropriate.

Question 50

Councillor John Marshall

Would the Cabinet Member comment upon the GCSE and A-Level exam results achieved by the Borough's students this year?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

I am pleased to inform Councillor Marshall that the excellent attainment levels at GCSE that Barnet parents value so much has been consolidated in 2013. In the context of a national fall (the details of which are not available presently) in 5 'good' GCSEs with English and Mathematics, I am pleased to say that overall, almost three – quarters (73%) of Barnet pupils achieved the 'benchmark' level, an almost four point and 5.8% increase over the 69.2% achieving this level in 2012. As I said on the week of the results, 'I would like to congratulate young people across the borough on their GCSE results and also wish them luck in whatever career paths they choose. The GCSE exams are now tougher than ever before, the national picture reflects this – so credit should also go to teachers and school officials around the borough who have made sure that schools in Barnet are of a very high standard'.

With regard to A level results, while there have been several outstanding results reported by individual schools, presently we are awaiting complete information from 10 schools and colleges in order to build an accurate initial picture. I will ensure that this is forwarded onto the Councillor when this is completed which I expect to be able to do by mid September at the latest.

Supplementary Question

These results demonstrate that Barnet have a first class education service which means that the children of the borough can look forward to very good life prospects unlike those in many other local authorities.

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

Agree.

Question 51

Councillor Arjun Mitra

Will the Cabinet Member guarantee that no Barnet Libraries will be closed in the next 2 years?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Consistent with Barnet Library Strategy, there are no plans to close any libraries in Barnet in the next 2 years. Officers continue to investigate a number of options for future savings including improved efficiencies and increased income.

Question 52

Councillor Brian Gordon

It has been reported that there has been a ten percent increase nationally in the number of children adopted. What are the adoption figures within Barnet for the past three years up to date?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

The Adoption figures for the last 3 years in Barnet are;

- 2010/2011 = 9
- 2011/2012 = 16

- 2012/2013 = 14

The percentage increase from years 2010-13 is therefore 56% in Barnet, well above the 10% increase seen nationally.

In addition, the numbers of Special Guardianship Orders are also increasing. These orders are most commonly used when children are placed within their extended family members and provide a legally secure foundation for building a permanent relationship between the child and their special guardian, while preserving the legal link between the child and their birth family.

Supplementary Question

Is it correct to suggest that the figures are quite low in absolute terms; the adoption figures do not seem to be very high for a borough of this size? Are there any particular criteria which vary from one borough to the next in terms of assessing people for eligibility to adopt or is a uniform process across the board?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

It is worth clarifying in these particular items of data and the initial question is the indicator; the very small numbers that we do have are very much because each local authority, the way they interpret it, each decision is taken on a case-by-case basis and they are as specific as individual cases so the data then can be called into question and the way the different local authorities deal with it would be very much by the way they interpret it.

Question 53

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Are any Barnet staff on zero hours contracts, and, if so, how many and what are their jobs?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Council does not currently have any employees on "zero hour" contracts. The London Borough of Barnet describes a "zero hours contract" holder as an "an individual who is obliged to work all hours/days required by the employer, subject to any restrictions on days/times specified in the employment contract, up to a specified maximum (usually 36) per week." A casual worker which is also known at the Council as an "as and when" worker is an individual engaged to provide their personal service via a contract for services on an ad hoc basis and is paid by the Council through payroll. The key characteristic that distinguishes the two definitions of worker at the council is the "mutuality of obligation". In both types there is no obligation on the council to offer any work, however a zero hours contract holder would be obliged to provide work (subject to the terms of the contract) when required by the council whereas a casual worker may refuse work that is offered by the Council. Individuals are not engaged at the London Borough of Barnet on zero hours contracts although individuals are engaged as casual workers. I can confirm that the Council has not used zero hours contracts since 1 April 2010. The Council does not hold information on zero hours contracts prior to 1 April 2010.

Question 54

Councillor Brian Gordon

Will the Cabinet Member join me in expressing relief that the proposal to establish a very large free school in the Broadfields section of Edgware and temporarily in The Fairway section of Hale has been discontinued? Will you also join me in emphasising that objections were purely a matter of highways concerns and logistics and absolutely nothing to do with the quality and profile of the school itself?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

As a temporary site for the Avanti House school has now been secured, the proposal to utilize the Northway/Fairway site is no longer being pursued by the Department for Education. The Council's understanding is that a permanent location for the school has not yet been announced. I can confirm that the concerns raised by residents and others in both of the potential locations in Barnet were related to logistics, particularly in accommodating the size of school proposed. The Council continues to welcome Free Schools into the borough and looks forward to the opening of three new free schools at the start of this academic year.

Supplementary Question

We know that it was only a logistical thing in relation to this school which caused the objection to it but as we know a permanent location for this school has still not been found and there are rumblings of concern in my Ward and Edgware Ward that there could be another made for this school to come within that part of the borough and I wonder whether we are prepared to use whatever methods we can, tactfully, to try to stop that happening for logistical reasons?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

Free schools as a principal are supported but it is the burden of the individual school to be able to find an adequate location and to be able to get the required planning permission.

Question 55**Councillor Arjun Mittra**

Does the Council encourage "guerrilla" gardening in parks and small green spaces?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Guerrilla gardening is done on land that is usually abandoned or neglected by its legal owner. This land is used by guerrilla gardeners to either raise plants or plant flowering plants and shrubs to beautify an area, such as a triangle in the middle of busy roads. Many of these areas are planted at night.

Our parks and open spaces are managed and maintained by the Greenspaces Team, so we would not encourage "guerrilla gardening". If residents want to get involved in enhancing their local parks and open spaces then they can join an existing or start up a friends of the park or open space group. Barnet encourages residents to become part of an 'adopt-a-place' scheme either in parks or streets, where residents would take over the care of shrub / rose beds and work in partnership with the Greenspaces team to improve and maintain these adopted areas.

Question 56**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Local Police have been warning the public about bogus police telephone callers asking people for their bank or credit card details and also using mechanical abuses of the telephone system to deceive people into believing they have genuinely telephoned the police. Has the Council taken a role in publicising these dangers?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The Council does publicise scams and frauds via our website at:

<http://www.barnet.gov.uk/info/930210/scams/1111/scams>

Our website also includes a link to Action Fraud, who are the UK's national fraud reporting centre.

Supplementary Question

What extent do we feel that problems of scams and threats to the public are our responsibility as opposed to that of the police? Whilst it is a balancing act, but would we be more upfront in being seen to be advising the public with regard to the kind of problems previously identified?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

These scams come along for two or three months and then the next one moves along and it is agreed that the borough should do more to publicise them. Currently they go out through the MPS through neighbourhood watch and various other bodies and we try to warn those most vulnerable through Care for the Elderly, etc. Point taken and propose to make those dreadful scams that ruin people's lives more widely known.

Question 57

Councillor Andreas Ioannidis

How many people have presented to the Council as homeless in the past three months?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

In Q1 2013/14 there were 271 homeless presentations, which is very much in line with the same quarter of the previous year (279 presentations).

Question 58

Councillor Julie Johnson

There are a number of non-secure tenants living on the regeneration estates who have lived there for over 10 years and have put down roots in the local community. How will they be treated under the recent changes to the housing allocations policy when it comes to re-house them?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Non-secure tenants will be provided with assistance from Barnet Homes to find alternative accommodation elsewhere in the borough. The area which non-secure tenants will be moved to will depend on which properties are available at the time they need to move. We will try to provide, but cannot guarantee, alternative accommodation in the tenant's chosen area and also to minimise any disruption to the tenant's work or school.

Question 59

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Does the Council's pension fund invest in drinks companies and, if so, how much?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Council's investment in alcoholic drinks companies is as follows:

Schroders

Maturities Corporate Bond fund: 0.04% of total portfolio

Life Diversified Growth Fund: 0.7% of total portfolio

Question 60

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Is the Cabinet Member concerned about the prospect of fracking taking place in Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Officers are not aware of any proposals for "fracking" in Barnet and do not anticipate any in the future. In the case that a proposal for "fracking" did come forward, the necessary approvals /consents / licenses would need to be granted.

Supplementary Question

From the answer, is Councillor Cohen not concerned about 'fracking' taking place in Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

At present I am not concern.

Question 61**Councillor Geoff Johnson**

How many food banks are currently operating in the Borough and where are they operating?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

There are two Barnet food banks organised under the Trestle Trust:

The Salvation Army
Barnet Corps
Albert Road
East Barnet
Barnet
EN4 9SH

Novo Centre
The Concourse
Graham Park
Colindale
London
NW9 5XB

Others are organised in neighbouring boroughs, whilst some religious organisations also offer food.

Question 62**Councillor Andreas Ioannidis**

Could the Cabinet Member tell us when the dust levels from the Oakleigh Road South Railway Yard were last tested, what were the weather conditions at the time of testing, and what were the results of those tests?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Environmental Health respond to complaints of dust where these might constitute a nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In order for dust to be a statutory nuisance, significant quantities must be entering a resident's property, and affecting their enjoyment of it. On receiving a complaint we do not do testing, but visit to witness the effect and quantity of any dust, and take action as required, based upon professional judgement of whether there is a statutory nuisance.

In the specific case of the railway sidings at Oakleigh Road South, there are two waste transfer sites where dust may arise. These are regulated by the Environment Agency. The Waste Management Licences for the sites have conditions of operation. These are likely to include provisions to damp down waste sorting operations to reduce dust. Should a resident have concerns relating to the waste transfer sites then they must contact the Environment Agency in the first instance on 0800 807060 as they are the enforcing Authority, not the Council. As soon as vehicles leave the site and go on to the service road and then the public highway, then the Environment Agency cannot take action. Vehicle movements are not covered by the Waste Management Licence. Environmental Health has no enforcing powers to restrict dust arising from vehicles on roads. However The Council can take action if there are bonfires on site as this is an offence under the Clean Air Act 1993.

One of the companies, Winters, have a vehicle that wets down the private service road only. It is not roadworthy for the highway.

In May of this year, the Council's Street Cleansing Team was asked to consider the need for more frequent cleaning of road and pavement regarding the grit in Oakleigh Road South. The road and pavement are presently manually swept every six weeks as part of our residential cleansing programme and the road is mechanically swept once a week as well. We are at present liaising with all the parties in the service road and asking them to sweep the road daily.

Question 63**Councillor Alison Moore**

Will the Council lobby Transport for London (TfL) to re-instate the bus stop that was removed on Cricklewood Lane to a position close to Virgin Active and the nearby pedestrian facilities?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The zebra crossing on Cricklewood Lane was introduced in 2010 in response to a history of pedestrian related accidents along this stretch of Cricklewood Lane. Due to residents' concerns raised at the time, Officers looked at relocating the bus stop in consultation with the Police and London Buses. Unfortunately, due to a number of safety concerns raised within a Road Safety Audit, support by the Police and London Buses, it was not deemed possible to relocate the stop. Safety concerns related to the limited feasible locations available, their proximity to junctions and sight lines for motorists and pedestrians. At the time the remaining stops fell within the desired distance of 400m from local properties, which were deemed acceptable.

Officers will contact London Buses and the Police to enquire whether any further consideration will be given to this matter.

Question 64**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

How will commissioning and contracts signed under Section 75 in Health and Social Care be scrutinised by Members?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Separate (but similar) overarching Section 75 Agreements cover both Adults' and Children's services. Cabinet Resources Committee delegated authority to agree the full scope and finances of both Section 75 Agreements to the relevant Cabinet Members, who have now approved both Agreements. Additional schedules to the over-arching Agreement covering specific service areas are agreed by way of Delegated Powers Reports which will set out the partnership flexibility(ies) being used (Lead Commissioning, Pooled Budget, Integrated Provision); the partners' financial contributions and the objectives and outcomes to be achieved.

If the Council acts as the Lead Commissioner for a service covered by the Section 75 Agreement, then the Council's Contract Procedure Rules will apply and any procurement activity will be authorised and reported in line with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

The Health and Well-Being Board (HWBB) has identified, within its Terms of Reference, the responsibility for promoting and overseeing the use of Section 75 Agreements between the Council and the NHS and has established a standing sub-group – namely the Health and Well-Being Board Finance Group. The minutes of their Meetings are formally reported to each HWBB Meeting. Business Cases for additional schedules to the overarching Section 75 Agreements will be considered by this group and performance of both S75 Agreements and the contracts covered by them will be scrutinised by Annual Reports to the Finance sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing Board, of which the Director for People is the Chairman and of which the Chief Officer of Barnet CCG is a member.

The Health and Wellbeing Board's work can be scrutinised by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and of course the provision of social care services covered by the Section 75 Agreements can be scrutinised by the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee if there are any concerns regarding quality and safety and similarly the healthcare related aspects through Health OSC.

Question 65**Councillor Andreas Ioannidis**

How many evictions of emergency/temporary accommodation tenants has Barnet Homes agreed in the last year, and how many of them received a notification letter less than two weeks prior to the eviction date?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Vacancies for Emergency Temporary Accommodation from lettings agents come in on a daily basis and are purchased on a nightly basis. The tenants are given a license agreement and it is intended that this accommodation should be provided for short periods while their case is being investigated and/or until more suitable accommodation becomes available.

Accommodation placements are cancelled for a variety of reasons, including abandonment of accommodation, rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, negative homeless decisions and where alternative accommodation has been found.

There were approximately 300 cancellations in Quarter 1 2013/14 and the majority of these were for placements where households had moved into alternative accommodation. Where negative homelessness decisions are made, households are given two week's notice prior to the cancellation of their placement. Barnet Homes do not evict tenants from this type of accommodation itself as the lettings agents perform this function.

Question 66**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

In the June 2013 analysis of budgetary decisions 2010-13, the Children's Commissioner and Landman Economics concluded that 'families with children have lost more as a result of the economic policies modelled than those without children and some of the most vulnerable groups have lost the most.' Does the Leader join us in condemning this attack by the Coalition Government on the most vulnerable?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Coalition Government is tackling welfare reform as a matter of priority. At a time of financial difficulty in the public sector it is important that we help the vulnerable, but bring fairness to a complicated and potentially corrupt system.

Supplementary Question

Can an explanation be given regarding the Leader's answer when he says the welfare reforms are about fairness, given that the study showed that with children, it is the most vulnerable children that have suffered the most; can he explain the use of the word 'fair'?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The welfare system in this country is a shambles, a national disgrace. The last Labour government failed to reform it. It is essential that it is reformed for the nation's economic wellbeing, the dignity of the poor and the economy of the tax-payer.

Question 67**Councillor Barry Rawlings**

Will Barnet Council assist in finding new premises in Barnet High Street for Healthy Planet Free book store to continue its fantastic work? [Healthy Planet has been running a book store in the old WH Smith shop at the entrance of The Spires Shopping Centre. People bring them books and take out books and it's all free. You can keep the books, or pass them to friends or take them back and take more. Over 75000 books have gone through this process. It's a brilliant community minded project, it's helping the environment and educating people].

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The Council does not own any retail units in High Barnet, but Property Services will be happy to investigate the opportunities available to assist the project in finding alternative accommodation.

Question 68

Councillor Andreas Ioannidis

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that there are no plans at the moment to develop NLBP and the surrounding land for housing?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

There are no current proposals to develop NLBP and the surrounding area.

Question 69

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Are any of NSL staff providing a service in Barnet paid less than the London Living Wage and if so how many?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

26 members of staff within NSL (out of 48 enforcement staff) are paid a basic wage which is less than the London Living Wage. All staff are able to opt into shift patterns or different rotas which does enhance their salary on a regular basis.

Question 70

Councillor Barry Rawlings

Does Barnet Council monitor staff emails and how many requests to do so has it agreed to since May 2010?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Staff emails are not generally monitored. However, the IT Acceptable Use Policy states "The Council may, for authorised monitoring purposes, [...] read any email, and attachment drafted, sent or received at work [...] in particular to check policy compliance". We do not keep a central record of any monitoring that may have taken place.

Question 71

Councillor Brian Coleman

Will the Cabinet Member update the Council on recent developments with the Police Inquiry into Swaylands School? Will he set up an Independent Inquiry into suggestions that Barnet Council "hushed the matter up" in the period leading up to the closure of the School in 1994?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

There is a current and on-going police investigation into Swaylands school which was closed by the Council in 1994. There have been a number of victims who have come forward to speak to the Police and subsequently some arrests. Running parallel to the police investigation, the Council has commissioned the Lucy Faithful Foundation, an independent and specialist organisation to review how the Council responded to the allegations of abuse in 1993 which led to the arrest and conviction of two staff members, together with a review of the current systems and frameworks that exist to safeguard children placed by the Council in residential schools or homes. In addition, the Lucy Faithful Foundation will provide support, information and guidance for any ex-pupils of Swaylands School who require it in conjunction with the Police. It is not possible to make comment on a 'live' police investigation. However the Lucy Faithful Foundation is due to report on their findings in September and it is planned that the outcomes from this will be reported to Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Question 72**Councillor Brian Coleman**

What is the current status of "Belmont petting Zoo"?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Planning permission was granted in June 2013 for the relocation of the unauthorised children's farm to the indoor riding centre at Belmont Farm. This followed an appeal against the enforcement notice served in respect of the original children's farm, which was dismissed by the Planning Inspector. Officers are in discussion with the owner to agree a timescale for the relocation.

Question 73**Councillor Brian Coleman**

How many farms does the Council currently own and what plans are there for disposal?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Council currently own 6 holdings which are let on Agricultural Tenancies; there are also 3 vacant holdings. Any applications to buy the freehold of these areas are considered on an individual basis. The land at Burtonhole Lane has recently become vacant and has been marketed for lease or sale. The outcome of the marketing will be reported to Cabinet Resources Committee on 24th September 2013.

Supplementary Question

Bearing in mind that these mainly exist in my Ward and Mill Hill Ward and the land was originally purchased by the council pre-war for housing development, can the Cabinet Member give some idea of what the strategy is a) to dispose of these holding and b) to dispose of them in a way the will prevent them from being used for housing development.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

It will be of paramount importance that these are preserved as a living lung for north London and it will be completely inappropriate to have urban sprawl on the farms. They are needed for agricultural purposes. That's what they are for and any marketing of them will need to make sure that it preserves them as farms.

Question 74**Councillor Brian Coleman**

How many pictures currently form part of the Council Art collection and what is their estimated value?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

One can not value many of the art works other than with regard to the amount that would be realisable in a sale. I suspect portraits of past council dignitaries would not be easily sold.

Supplementary Question

The Apthorp Fund used to purchase picture with their money from local artists which were donated to council, so these pictures are all sitting in store rooms somewhere and therefore could a proper audit and investigation be undertaken to find out whether they are in the attic, where all this stuff is and whether it can be disposed of.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Yes.

Question 75**Councillor Brian Coleman**

How many times since 2010 has the Council hired private investigators and for what purposes?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Council has not directly hired private investigators however we are aware of our insurance company carrying out investigations in relation to personal injury claims on two occasions.

Question 76**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Could Councillor Cohen outline what consultation took place with local residents and Ward Councillors before a closure of the public footpath behind properties in Lime Grove N20 was agreed?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Planning permission was granted with an expectation that access to the site was going to be via the rear of the community centre at Badgers Croft, however post granting of planning permission, this access route was rescinded by the land owner and as a result it has been necessary to identify an alternate route to the site. Lime Grove was considered but was unsuitable for the type of vehicles that would need access to the site. Therefore the only route into the development was via the footpath adjacent to Lime Grove. An urgent local agreement had to be arranged and the affected properties adjacent to the footpath were contacted by the developer and advised that this path will be used for the extraction of spoil from the site. The duration of the closure will be up to 4 months. An alternative safe route for pedestrians is via Lime Grove which does not involve much inconvenience for pedestrians as it is adjacent to the closed footpath.

Question 77**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Has the policy been changed on replacing odd paving stones with ugly patches of black asphalt? If not, why is this occurring in town centres (such as Temple Fortune), where much has been spent laying proper paving stones?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

There has been no policy change in regards to the replacement of paving stones with asphalt. London Borough of Barnet Highways will always attempt to replace on a like for like basis when undertaking works.

The use of a flexible material near trees is proven method that is used widely by Highway Authorities to combat root heave problems and remove the risk of trip hazards caused by paving stones being lifted by surface bound tree roots.

Supplementary Question

There are increasing numbers of patches of black asphalt appearing across the borough, many in the high streets that have been re-paved at great expense with proper paving stones. Can officers be asked to put a stop to this and ensure that where paving stones existed before, paving stones replace them?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

An assurance was given however often the reason why asphalt is laid is to make the pavement safe until it can be repaired correctly with slabs.

Question 78**Councillor Brian Coleman**

How much has been spent littering the Borough with unused cycle stands and how do these obstructions fit in with the aim of decluttering the street scene and improving life for the visually impaired and disabled?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Recently provided cycle parking has included stands provided using £16,057 Local Implementation

Plan (LIP) funding at locations identified from cycle parking requests made via the London Cycling Campaign or direct to the council, and stands delivered in conjunction with specific projects such as recent Outer London Fund schemes. As with all street furniture, potential impact on all road users is taken into account when considering appropriate locations. A lack of secure cycle parking is a barrier to increasing levels of cycling and a pro-active provision may be particularly needed where de-cluttering has removed opportunities to park informally.

Supplementary Question

It is all very well saying that it is not Barnet tax-payers' money that is paying for these unused cycle stands but it is still tax-payers money.

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

It is not a waste of money if people in this borough want to cycle and we should be supporting that.

Question 79

Councillor Brian Coleman

Will the Cabinet Member explain to the Council the circumstances in which Ms Nicola Francis, Barnet's new Family Services Director, left her last employment at Pembrokeshire County Council?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

This appointment falls under the Head of Paid service. Full references were taken up with the previous employer.

Supplementary Question

Would the Leader agree that this is not a satisfactory answer because it does not address the facts?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

No, I do not agree with the Councillor.

Question 80

Councillor Brian Coleman

Does Councillor Cohen intend to purchase an electric car? If he does, that would make 352 in the whole of Greater London and would Councillor Cohen then consider that would justify spending Council tax payers money on more than the 6 existing charging points in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Councillor Coleman, I am half way there as I own a hybrid and once they come out with an electric car that is suitable for my growing family I will consider it.

Following a bid for funding through the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) an allocation of £50,000 has been confirmed by Transport for London (TfL) for this financial year under the heading of Electric Vehicle Charging Points "EVCPs to be introduced in Car Parks.

Supplementary Question

There are only 352 electric cars in the whole of London, so why are we spending public money on trying to install charging points when there are probably fewer than 20 vehicles in the London Borough of Barnet.

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Just like with anything, if the infrastructure is not there people are not going to start using electric cars. So this is to encourage people to use electric cars.

Question 81**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Can the Leader confirm that the Barnet Officer / Member protocol can only apply to employees of the London Borough of Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Protocol is contained within the Constitution which guides Members and Officers in their dealings and therefore applies specifically to Officers of the Council. In relation to private partnerships, in particular the New Support and customer Services organisation (NSCSO) and Development and Regulatory Services (DRS) contracts, the constitution is referred to within the main terms and conditions of these contracts as an Authority Policy that the contractor/partner and its sub-contractors must comply with. The principles the protocol sets out on dealings and relationships would be a good starting point for other public service bodies coming into contact with Members.

Supplementary Question

Does this not drive another 'coach and horses' through the whole outsourcing arrangement with Capita if officers employed by Capita, many of whom are former council officers, are not subject to the Officer / Member protocol.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

It is very important that all members of staff, whether they work directly for the council or work for a contractors employed by the council are protected and they are not subject to abuse, etc., and I think it is a very sensible method put forward.

In answer to the direct question: no.