

Council Questions to Cabinet Members
5 November 2013
Questions and Responses

Question 1

Councillor Jack Cohen

Please provide, broken down by ward, how many residents' permits were issued at the "unlawful" price and also broken down ward by ward the number of applications for refunds applied for, as at the 30th September 2013. Please provide the same figures for visitor vouchers.

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Resident Permits - We do not hold this information by ward. This information may be available by Controlled Parking Zone but we will require time and resource to configure this, which is currently not available. The total number of permits requiring a part refund is approximately 27,000 for approximately 12,000 customers.

Visitor Vouchers - This information is not available as the electronic request for refunds that are being logged are not required to contain the full address and are not broken down by ward. The data is matched using a unique identifier not just address when applications for a refund are made. The number of visitor vouchers requiring a refund is approximately 137,000.

Question 2

Councillor Andrew Harper

Will the Cabinet Member please clarify Barnet Council's position on recycling collection methods, in light of the recent Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) guidance to local authorities as the UK prepares to implement the revised EU Waste Framework Directive in 2015?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The DEFRA guidance in respect of separated recycling materials requires local authorities to consider the alternative options for the disposal of its various waste streams with a preference towards separation. Councils may however consider the cost of changing collection methodologies, availability of disposal sites and other operational considerations when reviewing its recycling methodology. Our view is that it is environmentally and economically sensible to continue with a co-mingled collection method.

Question 3

Councillor Alison Moore

Why have redundancy notices been served to all IT staff by Capita, and did the Cabinet Member and Leader know this was going to happen?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Redundancy notices have not been served, but some at risk notices have been. Consultation is underway.

Question 4

Councillor Jack Cohen

Please provide details of section 106 monies unallocated and allocated but not spent for green spaces that remain outstanding for developments in Childs Hill ward.

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Planning Ref	Date of agreement	Site	Purpose of Contribution	Payment Received	Committed - Approved by DHR/ Committee	Committed - Earmarked
C02856P/04	07-Apr-05	779-783 Finchley Road NW11	£85,000 Open Space - Childs Hill ward	104,336.00	104,336.00 Kara Way Pocket Park	
C03021DF/06	12-Dec-06	Staples Corner Retail Park	improvements to the public realm and street planting within the Cricklewood/ Brent Cross regeneration area	24232.856		24,232.86
C03097G/04	04-May-05	66-70 Granville Rd, NW2 2LA	£15000 index linked towards improving open spaces	15,000.00	15,000.00 Kara Way Pocket Park	
C01922M/08	02-May-08	135-177 Granville Road, Childs Hill	towards the improvement and enhancement of recreational public amenity in parks and open spaces located within the London Borough of Barnet as identified by the Parks and Open Spaces Officers	50,488.14	50,488.14 Childs Hill Park - FOG Priorities Project	
F/04245/09	02-Mar-10	214-218 Cricklewood Broadway	contribution towards the design improvements to and/or improvements to the Kara Way Playground	5,000.00	5,000.00 Kara Way Pocket Park	
F/00588/11	15-Aug-11	3 Woodstock Road, London, NW11 8ES	means the sum of £3,000 (three thousand pounds) Index linked towards the improvement and enhancement of open space space located within the Childs Hill Ward of 'Permission' 'Site Plan' the London Borough of Barnet as identified by the Parks and Open Spaces Officers	3,072.31	3,072.31 Kara Way Pocket Park	

Question 5**Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner**

Does the Leader feel that the recent changes to Members' IT have been handled well and can he explain why passwords have had to become more arduous, why remote working has been cut off and why Members can no longer auto-forward their emails?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

This has not been handled well. The changes have, though, been introduced at the insistence of the Cabinet Office.

Question 6**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

When will we hear about plans for Phase B for the redevelopment of Grahame Park?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The plans will be revealed as soon as fully developed and I remain committed to the scheme. We have a good record in carrying these schemes forward.

Question 7**Councillor Jack Cohen**

Will you guarantee that Planning Officers who will deal day to day with planning applications for the Borough will remain based in the Borough for the whole contract with Capita? If you can not give such a guarantee please explain why.

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Capita offered that the service will remain in the borough as part of their bid (although the council did not require this from them) so general day to day Barnet planning activity including processing of planning applications will be carried out by planning officers based in the borough during the term of the contract.

There may be occasions however, during periods of high workload for instance that some Barnet planning work is dealt with by the wider Capita partnership.

Question 8**Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner**

How much more would the average household pay in Council Tax next year without the One Barnet savings?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The One Barnet programme has made savings to enable a reduction in the Council's annual budget by £16.5m per annum by 2014/15. If these savings had not been made, Council Tax would be 11.8%, or £130, higher in 2014/15.

Question 9**Councillor Anne Hutton**

The information given in the leaflet to residents about the new waste and recycling service states that recycling materials 'will ...be transported to different re-processors both in the UK and abroad. Would the Cabinet Member tell us where in the UK material from Barnet is sent, what proportion is sent abroad and to which countries?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The comingled recycling collected from residential properties is delivered to the materials recovery facility in Edmonton which is managed by Biffa. It is not possible to quantify the proportions of waste that are sent to UK or overseas re-processors as this will change over time in line with market conditions.

Question 10**Councillor Jack Cohen**

I refer you to your answer to Question 33 at the September 2013 meeting. Now that Capita has appointed its own subsidiary (related) company to act as Bailiffs, what guarantees will you give that Capita will continue to show the same restraint as the Council did in enforcing Council tax and other debts?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Council's interest is to maximise council tax collection. Part of this involves the proportionate use of bailiff services, which is governed by the local policy framework and national legislation. Capita shares the same interest in maximising council tax collection and is governed by the same policy and legal framework in its delivery of the revenues service.

The clear statutory guidelines that set out for all Councils the stages of recovery and enforcement that must be completed where a Council Tax or National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) debt has not been paid include the timescales within which a customer must pay before the case can be moved to the next stage. Prior to a case being referred to a bailiff, a customer will first have received a bill, at least one reminder, a summons and a liability order. The referral of any Council Tax or NNDR case to the bailiff can only happen when a case has completed each of these stages. The collection of sundry debt is not subject to national legislation however, local policies ensure that before the use of any external recovery agents are considered discussions with the service regarding the potential vulnerability of a client take place and a jointly agreed recovery action plan is implemented.

The Council has a policy of putting a hold on recovery activity where debtors are identified as vulnerable which ensures that they are not referred for bailiff action inappropriately. In line with this policy Capita has committed to develop a single view of customer debt across Council Services and ensure it identifies the "won't pays" as opposed to the "can't pays". This commitment is focused on ensuring that the vulnerable, who should be entitled to benefit or require additional support and advice on debts, receive the help they need to manage and reduce their debts and claim benefits to which they are entitled. Capita's approach will also ensure that customers do not get progressed to Bailiff or any other recovery action where intervention and/or benefits may resolve the issues.

Any breach of Council policy or legislation would be treated as a Service Failure and would lead to Capita being financially penalised for non-compliance. Additionally, a breach of legislation could lead to legal action being taken against Capita.

Question 11**Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner**

What would Council Tax be next year had it risen in line with inflation since 2010, rather than being repeatedly frozen and now cut?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

For 2014/15, at band D, Council Tax would have been £1,311.88 if it had risen in line with inflation since 2010. Budget proposals recently published set out a proposed 1% cut to Council Tax meaning that the band D Council Tax will be £1,102.07.

Question 12**Councillor Alison Moore**

Now that all directly employed staff are going to receive at least London's Living Wage, will the Leader agree that we need to work towards all contracted out staff being paid at least London's Living Wage?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

As discussed at Remuneration Committee, I agree that the principles that underpinned our decision to bring the lowest paid staff in the Council up to the London Living Wage, namely that no-one should do a hard day's work for less than they can live on, should apply equally to our partners and contractors. Inevitably this is a difficult area, given the nature of our contracts with third parties.

Question 13

Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner

How much more expensive would Council Tax be if central government had not cut their share since 2010?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Barnet has been able to cut Council Tax in real-terms by 20% at a time when the government is making a 40% saving on local government funding. London Mayor Boris Johnson has successfully cut the Greater London Authority (GLA) precept in both the last two years, by 1% and 1.2%, thus reducing Council Tax and this council is committed to a 1% cut next year followed by a further two year freeze.

Question 14

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Would the Cabinet Member detail the future plans for Health provision in Colindale?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

The adopted Colindale Area Action Plan sets out a Policy Framework and Strategy for securing Health Facilities in Colindale to meet the requirements of the planned growth. Officers are liaising with the Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Head of Primary Care at NHS England for the London region to understand their Strategy for healthcare provision in Barnet and specifically Colindale - particularly with regards to identifying future need for health facilities. As part of this process, Planning and Regeneration officers will sit on the CCG Estates Working Group. Officers are also continuing to engage with developer partners on key sites to explore future opportunities to secure health facilities within new developments.

Question 15

Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner

How is the joint Legal Service performing?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The general view is that the Joint Legal Service ("HBPL") service is performing well. In Quarter 1 all performance targets were met and in Quarter 2 all targets were met with the exception being for one target for opening files in a timely fashion. File opening is a largely administrative function so this did not have any impact on services and the matter is being addressed.

In Quarter 2, of the 78 client satisfaction surveys returned, there was a 100% satisfaction with the service.

HBPL has gained accreditations from both LEXCEL (the law society administered quality accreditation in relation to legal practice management standards) and Investors in People.

Historically the legal budget was a central budget, since the 1st July, costs are being distributed to delivery units based on a usage against a monthly allocation. The de-centralisation of the budget will ideally create greater cost control and will ensure that the charging of hours is reconciled to the delivery of services. A number of Delivery Units complained about the de-centralisation of

budgets and the impact on base budgets where they had overspent their allocation. This level of complaint will obviously occur as the new process is embedding however we are convinced that this will drive better value for money from our shared legal service.

Question 16

Councillor Julie Johnson

Are plans for the second phases of Grahame Park and West Hendon being scrapped?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

There is no intention to scrap the next development phases of Grahame Park and West Hendon. Phase 1b (i) at Grahame Park is currently being built out and due for completion towards the end of next year and we are expecting a new planning application for phase 1b (ii), also known as Site A8 next month.

At West Hendon, the Council with its development partners intend to start the next development phase known as Phase 3a this December with a target completion in March 2015.

Question 17

Councillor Andrew Harper

Will the Cabinet Member join me in congratulating everyone involved in the creation of Etz Chaim school, which after surmounting numerous hurdles opened officially in its new premises recently?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

I am delighted to join you in congratulating the governors, staff, parents and everyone involved in establishing this welcome addition to the Barnet family of schools. The creation of this new school adds to the existing diverse educational offer in Barnet and I wish it continuing success in its new premises.

Question 18

Councillor Anne Hutton

The proposals for the planning of the Finchley Memorial Hospital site included the provision and use of sports facilities for the primary school at the south end of the site, Our Lady of Lourdes, and for public use when not required by the school. The hospital is now up and running but there appears to be no sign of the sports facilities. Would the Cabinet Member update us on progress – what these will be and when they will be available for residents to use?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

The original scheme for Finchley Memorial Hospital was passed by Planning in January 2010. The vision for the re-development of Finchley Memorial Hospital was based on creating a “health campus” through the integration of the new building and the open space in to a fully integrated site of healthy activity. The space is intended for use by local residents and the local community whilst a proportion of the space was to be made available for use by Our Lady of Lourdes (RC), the Primary School adjacent to the site. The scheme for the green space surrounding the Hospital included a Memorial Garden, Rehabilitation Gardens for Patients, Grass Pitches for 5 a Side Football, a Junior Grass Pitch and a Wildlife Garden.

The landscaping work around the Hospital was completed in September 2013 although the largest open area, to the east and south of the Hospital will not be open to the Public until next Spring when the playing field area has matured and been prepared to pitch standard.

During the development of the site, Our Lady of Lourdes School was approached in relation to the use of the space and how this could be facilitated. The School expressed an interest in using a fully fenced and gated all weather pitch. This was not possible within the available budget. The grass pitches which will be on the site could still be made available for use by the School, and the

option remains to upgrade the pitch to an all weather one, if resources become available to either the School or the Community in future.

Currently the green space around the Hospital includes a Memorial Garden, Rehabilitation Gardens (for use by hospital patients), paths across the space, a circular path around the pitches that can be used as a running/ walking track and three sports pitches. A scheme to install outdoor gym equipment (in keeping with the health campus concept) and a small children's play area is currently being finalised, with a view to opening in 2014. An area has been set aside for a wildlife / community garden with raised planting beds, and it is hoped that a community organisation will become engaged in developing this activity

All of the open space around the hospital, other than the gardens for patients, will be open and accessible to the public.

Question 19

Councillor Maureen Braun

How many council employees will benefit from the council's decision to pay at least the London living Wage?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

341 directly employed staff are currently paid below the London Living Wage, with a further 497 employed in community schools.

Question 20

Councillor Alison Moore

Does the Cabinet Member agree with the latest missive from Education Secretary Michael Gove, who has just decreed that only the results of the first exam attempt by a pupil in any subject should count towards the schools' league tables? Is the Cabinet Member aware of the chaos and anxiety this is causing students, their parents and the schools? And what is he going to do about it?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

Yes I agree with the Education Secretary. No, I do not recognise the chaos or anxiety the Councillor refers to for students and parents. The impact on schools of these changes is for schools to prepare their own response to.

I am delighted that the government has chosen to support the refocus our schools need on the importance of outcomes for our young people. Under the new rules, students continue to enjoy the opportunity to re-sit exams where they fall short of expectations as before. The major change is that schools will not benefit from resits and their league tables will contain the results only of first attempts. This removes the perverse incentive schools had to enter students for GCSE final exams in year 10 when very few students were ready and then subjecting them to a battery of resits to seek improvements. In summer 2013, 23% of maths entries (170,537 entries) and 10% of English entries (70,134) were from students who were not yet at the end of their key stage 4 study. Overall, entries from 15-year-olds increased by 39% from 2012 to 2013.

I would like to refer to the Secretary of State's comments in which he has described early entry as a "damaging trend that is harming the interests of many pupils". The evidence shows that candidates who enter early perform worse overall than those who do not, even after resits are taken into account. It seems likely that candidates are being entered before they are ready, and 'banking' a C grade where their performance at key stage 2 would suggest that if they had continued to study the subject and taken the GCSE at the end of year 11 they could have achieved a top grade.

This is of particular concern in maths, where there is high progression from A*/A grade at GCSE to A level, but low progression from grades B and C. The Secretary of State believes that this speaks more generally of a narrowed curriculum, focused not on sound subject teaching as a basis for successful progression, but on preparation to pass exams. Good schools know the targets and the grades students are actually working at and will enter students for exams when they are ready and for the student's benefit.

Some schools will change their procedures to reflect this change as the incentive to enter students earlier than when they are ready has been removed. Barnet schools enjoy high academic results through rigour in teaching and learning and a drive for high standards. They will not be impacted negatively from this change and many will in fact be able to demonstrate how their systems were ahead of the curve already.

Question 21

Councillor Maureen Braun

Could the Cabinet Member please comment on the new parking arrangements in Hendon?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Following local consultation as part of the borough wide town centre and shopping parade parking review, certain changes were introduced in the Hendon area, with a view to improving and encouraging usage for the identified locations. The parking initiatives are designed to help boost local trade, by maximising on-street parking and encouraging a continuous turnover of vehicles.

The parking improvement measures in Hendon came into operation on 7th October 2013 and were introduced on an experimental basis and included the following:

- A new 15 minute tariff option was introduced within certain existing on-street short stay 'pay by phone parking bays in Brent Street, Bell Lane, Lodge Road, Finchley Lane, Parson Street, Church Road and Vivian Ave
- The 'short stay' (90 minutes max) pay by phone parking bay on Church End, outside the Meritage Club, was converted to a 'long stay' pay by phone parking bay
- The 'short stay' (90 minutes max) pay by phone parking bay in Allington Road, was converted to a 'medium stay' (4 hours max) pay by phone parking bay.
- New 'at any time' waiting restrictions were introduced in Short Street, with a view to deterring obstructive parking.

Credit card/debit card on street meters are due to be installed in the next few weeks to add a further type of payment.

Question 22

Councillor Julie Johnson

Would the Cabinet Member give me the latest update on the number of homeless families housed outside the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Since 1st April 2013, Barnet has placed 492 households outside the borough. 420 of these households were placed in emergency accommodation on a temporary basis, with most of these moves into Barnet's neighbouring boroughs.

Question 23

Councillor John Marshall

Could the Leader describe the impact that the imposition of a 'Mansion Tax' would have on Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Mansion Tax proposal (not supported by the government), as currently planned, would affect over 2000 households in Barnet, with those affected having to pay on average some £23,500 per year. This tax would be severely damaging for many people who may be asset-rich but cash poor and would compromise the local housing market. Barnet's suburban London location means we are one of the top ten councils nationwide for the number of properties worth over £2 million. In the future many more would likely be affected. Firstly, if the threshold fails to rise in line with property prices then in just a decade the number of households subject to the tax will have tripled. Secondly, taxing properties over £2 million would not raise the £1.7 billion and £2 billion claimed by the Liberal Democrats and Labour respectively, so the threshold would have to fall to £1.25 million, affecting many more of Barnet's households.

Question 24

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Shared ownership residents on Beaufort Park have found their services charges have doubled - does the Cabinet Member think this is affordable?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Service charges are for services provided to a particular scheme within any year and these are rechargeable to the owners of the properties.

For Beaufort Park this will include services provided within the individual blocks e.g. cleaning and decorating of the communal areas, lifts, door entry system and also the management of the blocks and grounds maintenance for those areas exclusively for the use of the residents of any particular block.

In addition there is a service charge for grounds maintenance of the larger amenity space and the public realm which all the residents living at Beaufort Park have access to and contribute to.

Question 25

Councillor John Marshall

What does the Leader think has been the impact of publishing the New Support and Customer Services Organisation (NSCSO) contract online?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The publishing of both contracts reaffirms the council's commitment to transparency and is a groundbreaking step in local government.

Question 26

Councillor Jim Tierney

In our recently adopted Local Development Framework (LDF), we accept the need to provide 40% affordable housing on applications for 10 housing units or more, or where the site covers 0.4 hectares or more. At present this policy is not being enforced instead planning committee members are told the 'viability' report for the application being considered has 'found' the provision of affordable housing unaffordable. Members are given no sight of these 'viability' reports and are told they are 'confidential'. Can I ask the Cabinet Member to ensure that these viability reports are made available to planning committee members in future?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

The policy wording in the adopted Development Management Policies document of the Local Development Framework (LDF) is quite clear on this matter. Policy DM10 states that the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing will be required on site subject to viability. The reports prepared in relation to viability are independently assessed by expert consultants

appointed by the Local Planning Authority based on established methodology and carefully reviewed by your officers.

The viability reports are treated confidentially as they contain commercially sensitive information but officers will seek the consent of applicants in the future to make these available to planning committee members if necessary.

Question 27

Councillor Brian Gordon

The government has recently been consulting on reforms to parking laws which would include stopping the use of CCTV for on-street parking enforcement. Whether or not the government does eventually stop this, please would you confirm that this intensive form of enforcement is not something that would be favoured in this Borough?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The council does not enforce parking using CCTV and does not envisage doing so.

Question 28

Councillor Alison Moore

Local Government Minister Brandon Lewis has said that councils must protect the vulnerable when agreeing their Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS). What is Barnet doing to protect the vulnerable in their CTS?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The council set its Council Tax Support scheme by setting the discount level for working age as high as possible at 91.5%, which means that Barnet is charging those people that previously did not pay Council Tax 8.5% of the bill. This is a lower level than some of our neighbouring boroughs (Brent has set its charge at 20%, Enfield 19.5%, Haringey 19.8% and Harrow at 22.5%). Furthermore war pensioners are not charged the 8.5% and the following groups are protected as far as possible through various mechanisms including the crisis fund: elderly, those who are incapacitated, parents and single parents. The specific mechanisms for each of the groups are listed below.

Elderly

Anyone of Pension Credit age claiming Council Tax Support would effectively receive a discount on the same basis that they would have received Council Tax Benefit. They will not have to pay the minimum 8.5% contribution that working age customers have to pay.

Those who are incapacitated

Income from Disability Living allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) is not taken into account in the calculation.

Disabled single people or couples who receive certain disability benefits or are registered blind have a higher needs allowance than other single people and couples.

There is a £20 per week. extra earnings disregard for those receiving a disability benefit. In certain circumstances this can rise to £99.50 per week. Non-dependent charges are waived for those who are registered blind or receive Disability Living Allowance or PIP.

Parents

Child Benefit is not taken into account as income

The needs allowance increases with family size

We can disregard from parents earned income up to £175.00 per week for one child or £300.00 per week for two or more children. Conditions regarding the hours worked, age of the children and nature of the child care apply.

Those who are on maternity leave, paternity leave or adoption leave can still receive child care disregards for up to 39 weeks.

Single Parents

Single parents benefit from a higher earnings disregard than single people or couples.

Question 29

Councillor Brian Gordon

Is there some way we can speed up the process of implementing relatively simple traffic improvement measures, such as the “Keep Clear” sign/markings at Broadfields Heights, Edgware or the much-needed pelican crossing further north in Broadfields Avenue?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The introduction of traffic and road safety improvements such as those mentioned along with many other types can unfortunately take some time to deliver. Often this is due to the nature of the measures such as the Pelican crossing on Broadfields Avenue which can require detailed investigation and design and where applicable involvement from other authorities such as Transport for London (TfL) for the implementation of the signals.

Many of the measures to be introduced involve engagement and consultation with local residents and can also be subject to statutory processes. Depending on the scheme being considered, decisions on progress may be influenced by committee cycles. Resource availability also determines the speed of delivery.

We are currently circulating a Delegated Powers Report for the implementation of the ‘Keep Clear’ Marking outside Broadfield Heights and a number of other locations across the borough. This is also give approvals for future Keep Clear markings to be implemented in a more timely manner.

Question 30

Councillor Gill Sargeant

What is the Cabinet Member doing to ensure Beaufort Park residents get to see accounts that show what their service charges are being spent on?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

The Council will write to St George requesting that this information be passed to the residents in accordance with current legislation.

If the residents are still dissatisfied they are able to have their case considered by the London Property Chamber – First Tier Tribunal Leasehold (previously known as the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal). Further independent advice can be offered by LEASE (Leasehold Advisory Service).

Question 31

Councillor Brian Gordon

Could you please summarise how successfully the new “multi-agency safeguarding hub” is operating with regard to our Council’s support and safeguarding process for children.

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) became fully operational in August this year. In Barnet it operates as a single point for all referrals regarding concerns for a child or young person (unborn- 18 years) or where it is felt they would benefit from additional support. This has enabled us to provide the public and professionals with a user friendly, consistent, effective referral process. The MASH is led by a dedicated children social care team manager who is responsible for assessing risk together with the police sergeant.

Detective Superintendent Richard Henson, who is responsible for the MASH roll out in London, spent several hours in Barnet's MASH in October and was very positive regarding the progress to date. He observed some good examples of multi- agency working in safeguarding children and will be using a Barnet example in his presentation at the MASH annual conference on 4th November 2013.

Question 32

Councillor Arjun Mittra

Will the Cabinet Member for Education please explain the difference between "apocalyptic" and "apoplectic" to the Cabinet Member for the Environment?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

If Councillor Mittra would like me to explain the difference between these two words then I will happily oblige. I would however ascribe it as iniquitous to attribute his fascination with the context and syntax of our loquacious colleague in Environment as an intimation that the aforementioned Member has erred. This would be as erroneous as the suggestion in subject and perhaps proffers auspicious pause for Councillor Mittra to reflect on the garrulous yet frequently misaligned monologue in which he seeks to engage with such propensity.

Question 33

Councillor Brian Gordon

Would the Cabinet Member give some details regarding the "safe places" scheme launched by the Council earlier this year aimed at helping people with learning disabilities to keep safe while out and about in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

In November 2012, money was awarded to ten projects to support disabled and older Barnet residents to live more independent and fulfilling lives. The Safe Places project is a joint initiative between Your Choice Barnet, Barnet Mencap and Mill Hill Safer Neighbourhood Team, funded from the Supporting Independence Fund within the Adults and Communities department. The aim of the project is to work with local businesses to support independent travellers with learning disabilities to feel safer in their community and to offer safe havens for them if they encounter difficulties.

Nine local businesses in Barnet are now established as a 'safe place' and the project is working towards having twenty in total by the end of the year. Locations include High Barnet, North Finchley, Mill Hill, Edgware and Golders Green. Local businesses are offered training and a 'safe places' logo to display in their window. There are currently over seventy people with a learning disability who have signed up to the scheme. The person receives a membership card which includes their chosen emergency contact numbers. If the person encounters difficulties when they are out in the community, that can go to a 'safe place' and someone who works there will call an emergency contact for them.

The organisations delivering the project are currently completing an evaluation. They are continuing to engage with other providers and organisations, both in Barnet and other Boroughs to explore opportunities for scaling up the Safe Places initiative, and potentially to offer the same to other groups of vulnerable people, for example people with dementia. There have been additional benefits to the project, especially in the working together of social care providers, local businesses and the police and how this has raised awareness of learning disabilities. The Ambulance Service has also engaged with the project and sees the opportunities presented by the use of membership cards with emergency numbers.

Question 34**Councillor Arjun Mitra**

The state of the lavatories in Cherry Tree Woods is a disgrace. Given a local school uses the field for PE and at playtimes, will the council commit to renovating them and bringing them up to standard as soon as possible?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The toilets in Cherry Tree Wood are the subject of continuous vandalism unfortunately. There are plans to replace the roof and windows at the site with more durable anti-vandal materials dependent upon costs.

A quotation request is out at this present time for the installation of hand driers and a general refurbishment of the toilets. They would be renovated during the winter.

Locks and toilet roll holders that have been removed from the site and will be replaced as a matter of course and the cleansing contractor has been reminded to report broken locks and missing items to ensure these can be replaced quickly.

Question 35**Councillor John Marshall**

What was the impact of the recent teachers' strike on the Borough's schools?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

Overall in Barnet:

- 38 schools were fully open
- 40 schools were partially open
- 41 were closed
- 7 not known

Of the 100 maintained / VA schools where we were required to collect more detailed information:

- 30 schools were fully open
- 31 schools were partially open
- 39 were closed.
- A total of 805 staff were on strike (in maintained / VA schools)

Question 36**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

According to Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC), data concessions for exploratory drilling / fracking could be granted for parts of Finchley, Mill Hill and areas to the south of these suburbs. Will the Leader join me in opposing any fracking in the Borough, and what will he do to ensure it never happens?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I do not believe that fracking can be undertaken in a suburban environment.

Question 37**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Please give details of measures in place this coming winter to provide advice and facilities to assist vulnerable residents in the payment of fuel bills?

Answer by Councillor Sachin Rajput

The Council's Winter Well programme, led by Public Health, will run again this winter. The key focus is to identify vulnerable adults and provide assistance in a variety of ways. This includes: advice and guidance regarding fuel poverty and bills; provision of extra emergency equipment

such as heaters, duvets and sleeping bags, via social services; the piloting of a 'warm zone' initiative; and advice on fuel poverty and energy efficiency via healthcare professionals and voluntary organisations.

The Council is also working with 23 other London Boroughs on a Scheme called the "Big London Energy Switch", which aims to give households who register, access to the cheapest possible market rates for gas and electricity, as well as helping to bring down the cost of living. As of 17th October 2013, 218 households in Barnet have signed up to the scheme and registration is open until Tuesday 19 November 2013.

Question 38

Councillor Arjun Mitra

Can the Cabinet Member guarantee the future of East Barnet Library?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Yes - As the Councillor well knows, there are no plans to close East Barnet library or any other library in Barnet. We are currently working on proposals to improve the facilities provided from the library including re-provision of the public toilets, improved accessibility to the first floor and creation of a community meeting space. Thank you Councillor Mitra for allowing me to highlight all of this.

Question 39

Councillor Brian Salinger

Will the Cabinet Member please quantify the impact on the Borough's pension fund of the transfer of all our legal staff to the London Borough of Harrow? Will he comment further on the general impact on the Pension Fund of the transfer of large numbers of other staff to other organisations and will he advise Members as to how the pension arrangements will work for those staff (c.82 of them) who are on joint contracts with Capita?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The implications for the Borough fund should be net £nil – an assessment of the total value of the liabilities transferring to Harrow was carried out by our actuaries, and a payment was made into the Harrow fund to compensate. The on-going liability for the Barnet fund reduces accordingly.

Although large numbers of staff have been transferred to other organisations, they are still part of the LGPS and therefore there is no impact on the Pension Fund. If new staff are appointed or staff take up new roles in these organisations then they will no longer be part of the LGPS. This will mean the numbers of staff included in the LGPS will reduce over time. This means that the longer term pension liability for Barnet will reduce over time, but it also means that the numbers of staff contributing to funding the liability will reduce.

There are a number of factors that impact on the future viability of the Pension Fund, including future government reform of the LGPS and the new requirements around staff being automatically enrolled in pension funds. The continued cuts to local government funding mean that all Councils are facing significant reductions in the numbers of staff contributing to pension funds.

At the moment the pension fund is "cash flow positive" meaning that investment income and contributions in outweigh benefits paid out. Over time, all local authority pension funds are expected to see this positive position diminish, and these considerations will need to be picked up in triennial actuarial valuations. The next valuation for Barnet is due by the 31st March 2014.

Join venture contract employees will retain continued membership of the Legal Government Pension Scheme.

Question 40**Councillor Charlie Omacauley**

How many people are on the 'housing list' in Burnt Oak and what is the waiting time for them to be re-housed?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Barnet Homes does not run a housing list, rather a banding system. There are currently 38 customers from the Burnt Oak area that have an open transfer case. There are a large number of variables that effect how long the rehousing process takes. It varies between individual cases dependent on the band a customer is placed in, the availability of accommodation, the type of accommodation they are placed into and if a customer locates their own accommodation (such as a private sector property).

Question 41**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Given that we now expect residents to have 4 bins for their rubbish, what instructions have been given to planning officers with regard to the size of areas needed for the storage of such bins when they are determining planning applications?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Planners have been working with amended guidance provided by the Waste and Recycling department since August 2013 in preparation for the changes introduced earlier this month. The guidance lists the number and sizes of bins required for new dwellings to ensure that satisfactory storage provision is made within any new development.

Question 42**Councillor Arjun Mitra**

What are the Council's current plans for Hendon Library and Hendon Town Hall?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Hendon Library remains one of the borough's landmark libraries and provides a comprehensive library service to local residents. It is important that this historic library remains as such for the long term for all its users.

Hendon Town Hall is leased to Middlesex University for a term of 20 years from 31 March 2010, expiring in 2030. The council hold an underlease of part (ground and first floor offices, council chambers, committee rooms, political party rooms, reception and cashiers) for the same term.

Question 43**Councillor Brian Salinger**

At the Council Meeting on 22nd January 2103, the Council unanimously passed the following motion...

"Council recognises that it is 40 years since Idi Amin expelled the Ugandan Asian population from that country. Council recognises that this has proved to be a major turning point in the life of Barnet and the United Kingdom.

Council recognises the importance of the wider Asian community to the life of Barnet and Council calls on the Leader and the Mayor to find an appropriate way to celebrate the beneficial contribution that the community have made to the Borough, in particular in the last 40 years.

Council also recognises that Barnet is twinned with Jinja in Uganda, and that in the aftermath of the terrible floods a few years ago LB Barnet organised a successful fundraising dinner to help support projects in Jinja and the surrounding areas. Council asks that the Mayor to work with the High Commissioner and the local Ugandan Asian community, as well as the broader Asian

community to bring forward proposals for this celebration."

Can the Leader tell Members what steps have been taken to implement this decision of the Council?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Mayor has confirmed that a suitable celebration will be held to mark the occasion in March/April 2014. It is currently in the planning stage with Councillor Sodha.

Question 44

Councillor Geoff Johnson

Telephone parking has been reduced in price but not the parking vouchers that businesses buy to sell to their customers. Surely the council should reduce the price of the vouchers accordingly and reimburse the difference to the businesses?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Traders currently receive a discount when purchasing the vouchers with this scheme being introduced last year. Vouchers are available in addition to the comprehensively used Pay By Phone network, permits from libraries and council offices and the Paypoint shop system as well as the continued roll out of pay and display machines at strategic locations. The vouchers are reasonably priced and can be used anywhere in the borough.

Question 45

Councillor Barry Evangeli

Could the Leader report on the state of Barnet's twinning relationship with Morphou, particularly with changing events on the island?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

We have a good relationship with the exiled Town Council. The situation in Cyprus is depressing as the occupying forces are desecrating graveyards and attempting to wipe a culture from the pages of history.

Question 46

Councillor Arjun Mittra

What discussions have the Council had with English Heritage about the future of Church Farmhouse Museum?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

English Heritage have been advised that an approval is in place to negotiate a lease with Middlesex University. Since this approval the University have further inspected the building and carried out further expensive intrusive survey work to understand in more detail the costs to be able to use the building for meeting rooms. The costs have come out to be more than originally the University was expecting and have approval for. These costs have been tabled with the Council and they are currently under review with the estates team, once there is confirmation over the costs, the revised options available will be put together for a further management decision to be taken.

Question 47

Councillor Barry Evangeli

Could the Leader provide his assessment of the recent public event held at North London Business Park?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

It was an interesting evening with a wide variety of views presented.

Question 48**Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb**

Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the proposed rental / lease of the former Church Farm House museum building to Middlesex University and if this has fallen through please explain why?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Since this approval the University have further inspected the building and carried out expensive specialist intrusive survey work to understand in more detail the costs to be able to use the building for meeting rooms. The costs have come out to be more than originally the University was expecting and have approval for. These costs have been tabled with the Council and are currently under review by the estates team, once there is confirmation over the costs, the revised options available will be put together for a further decision to be taken and if necessary further recommendations will be made to the Members.

Question 49**Councillor Stephen Sowerby**

Could the Cabinet Member please update Council on the implementation of the new in-house waste collections?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The issues relating to the roll-out of the bins are well documented and for which I and the supplier have apologised. The in-sourcing of the Kier May Gurney staff has gone very well and the waste and recycling joint teams are now working well together ensuring that operational collections are made effectively. The new vehicles have experienced some teething problems, but nothing that depot based maintenance teams have not been able to fix reasonably quickly.

The service has collected 777 tonnes of comingled recyclate and 120 tonnes of food waste in the first week. This is more recycling per week than compared with the previous collection system (even though this was a double week) and this will be continually monitored as the service beds in. It can be assumed that the 120 tonnes of food waste collected in the first week of the new separated collections has been diverted from residents' refuse bins.

Question 50**Councillor Arjun Mitra**

If Middlesex University do not wish to invest in Church Farmhouse Museum, how will he ensure the building is up to standard?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Currently our understanding is that Middlesex University wish to take up the opportunity to invest in Church Farmhouse Museum. The impact of the extra costs needs to be reviewed from both sides.

The Council continue to keep the building secure, compliant and the grounds maintained.

Question 51**Councillor Stephen Sowerby**

Can the Cabinet Member detail what is being done to improve street cleansing in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

As a first phase of transformation to improve cleanliness standards, the Council is investing significant sums into street sweeping technology with the purchase of:

- 10 Green machines to be used by Town keepers throughout the course of the day
- 10 Compact road sweeping machines that will visit the town centres at 6.00 am to clean the pavements and roads of litter and then carry out the 6 weekly residential road sweeping

programme. Currently this is all carried out manually with only kerb channels in some areas being swept.

- 3 large sweepers to clean major roads at least weekly instead of the current 5 weekly programme.
- Improved green bag collection – same or next day.

In addition to the above improvements to the cleansing programme, there will also be a one-off jet wash of some town centres to remove chewing gum and stains.

A second phase of transformation including the alignment of Highway grounds maintenance operations will commence early next year with a phased implementation from October 2014.

Question 52

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Will the Cabinet Member carry out an urgent review into Barnet's bin shambles?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The transformation of the waste services has been extremely successful. This is a huge exercise logistically and in terms of transformation. Vehicles and bins purchased, 98% of bins distributed, in-sourcing of staff has been seamless, collections of both recycling food and refuse proving successful at 777 tonnes of recycling and 120 tonnes of food. Officers will review the issues raised in January to learn lessons and improve the service offered to residents.

Question 53

Councillor Brian Salinger

Will the Cabinet Member join me in welcoming the enactment of the legislation that makes the sub-letting of Council owned accommodation a criminal offence?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Yes, I am pleased to see the Government has responded to the letter I sent in June last year to Grant Shapps MP where I highlighted the need for a tougher stance on tenancy fraud and illegal subletting.

Barnet is at the forefront of reforming social Housing, and our local agenda is setting the national agenda.

Question 54

Councillor Arjun Mittra

Will the Cabinet Member guarantee that any negotiation over the future of Church Farmhouse Museum will ensure some public access and benefit?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The current negotiations with Middlesex University are on the basis that there will be some public access.

Question 55

Councillor Hugh Rayner

Would the Leader join me in congratulating former Mill Hill and Hale councillor Jane Ellison MP on being promoted to the Government as Minister for Public Health?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Absolutely, it is good to see another Barnet Conservative in high office.

Question 56**Councillor Charlie Omacauley**

How many secure and unsecured tenants are there in Burnt Oak and what is the criteria used to be in the list of secure tenants?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

The total number of Council tenancies in the Ward of Burnt Oak is 1533.

This is made up of:

- 1498 secure tenancies
- 35 fixed term flexible tenancies (33 are on a 5 year term and 2 are on a 2 year term)

There are no 'non-secure' tenancies within Burnt Oak, as these Tenancies are only issued for properties on Regeneration Estates, of which there are none in the Ward. The Barnet Council Local Tenancy Strategy published in April 2012 outlines the circumstances which would have to exist for a secure tenancy to be issued.

Question 57**Councillor Graham Old**

Is there any indication of how Barnet is performing compared to other Local Authorities in terms of the new public health functions for which we are responsible?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

A recent Report in the Municipal Journal (MJ) gave the first results of some work they have done with researchers, Local Futures. The Report looked at a number of health outcomes such as deaths from different causes and a number of determinants of ill health such as deprivation, housing and economic circumstances. By comparing performance on the two measures, they were able to identify the extent to which Local Authority areas are performing, in outcome terms, above (or below) what would be expected, based on their determinants score.

I was extremely pleased to see that the Report said that Barnet is performing far higher than would be expected from its determinant score. With a difference of + 114, Barnet is reported to have the fourth highest performance in the Country. I cannot as yet give any more specific information as the full details of the Report have not yet been published and we are awaiting further information in future editions of the MJ. These I will make available as soon as possible.

Question 58**Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb**

Since the Cabinet Member closed Church Farm Museum what costs per week have been spent on security and what is the total to date and how does this compare to costs when the Museum was open?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The flexi guardian security cost is £595 per week.

To date some £33,600 has been spent on security since 2011.

This cost cannot be directly compared to an occupied building because vacant buildings are subject to 24 hr security, to mitigate against damage and corresponding repairs and legal costs.

Question 59**Councillor Graham Old**

Will the Leader join in congratulating local MP Mike Freer on becoming Principal Private Secretary to The Rt Hon. Eric Pickles at the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Absolutely, it is good to see another Barnet Conservative in government.

Question 60

Councillor Charlie Omacauley

What is the status for the mentally ill people in Barnet in terms of secure and unsecured tenancy and how many mental health units have been closed or have had their staff reduced? What are the repercussions if mentally ill people are not properly assessed for suitable Homes?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

At the end of September 2013, 82% of Barnet residents known to secondary mental health services were in secure or settled accommodation, which includes owner-occupation, shared ownership, tenancies, flat shares etc. This is compared to an average of 69.1% across the Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust. The remainder are in a range of accommodation without tenancy rights which includes hospital, residential or nursing care, or temporary accommodation.

The Council has not closed any supported living or residential services for people with mental health problems in recent years. Over the last 3-4 years, the Council has commissioned an additional 25 supported housing units for adults experiencing mental ill health, over and above existing units and provides floating support. This is in line with the current Barnet Housing Strategy which includes a specific section on the housing needs of people with mental health problems and those with learning difficulties.

Mental Health and wellbeing is impacted on by a range of social factors including housing. People settled into suitable accommodation have improved chances of recovery from their ill health and better opportunities for social inclusion and employment.

Question 61

Councillor Graham Old

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the implementation of new parking measures in Finchley?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Following local consultation as part of the borough wide town centre and shopping parade parking review, certain changes were introduced in the Finchley Central area, with a view to improving and encouraging usage for the identified locations.

The parking improvement measures in Finchley Central came into operation on 23rd September 2013 and were introduced on an experimental basis and included the following:

- The short stay pay by phone parking bay on Dollis Park, outside Nos. 2 to 4, was converted to a Dual Use, resident permit holders and short stay pay by phone parking bay.
- The short stay pay by phone parking bay on Victoria Avenue, at its junction with Hendon Lane, was converted to a 4 hour maximum stay pay by phone parking bay.

Credit card/debit card on street meters are due to be installed in the next few weeks to add a further type of payment.

Question 62

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Will the Cabinet Member now agree to take a more flexible approach to residents that have difficulties with the new recycling system?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

As promised, the council will review any outstanding issues at specific properties in January. Once all comments and issues have been collated and when residents have had time for the new service to embed.

The service offer is flexible, and has accommodated a number of differing solutions where residents have been in discussions with us. This includes bin sharing, removal of spare refuse bins, provision of recycling sacks, as well as providing assisted collections.

Question 63

Councillor Kate Salinger

The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) are not now planning to build a massive waste recycling facility on the doorsteps of many residents of Coppetts Ward. Would the Cabinet Member agree with me that they now have something to celebrate?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Yes.

Question 64

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

What plans does the Cabinet Member have to support small business day on December 7th?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

There will be free parking on that day, as on the other Saturdays and Sundays in December before Christmas.

Question 65

Councillor Andrew Harper

Will the Cabinet Member explain what redress he is seeking from the contractor responsible for delivering the new recycling bins and accompanying literature, in light of the failure to meet targets and promises and the resulting confusion and inconvenience experienced by residents, not least in Garden Suburb ward?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

1% of bins were not delivered by the Friday collection day, this equates to 1500 bins not being delivered, for which the Council and the supplier has apologised. Officers will be seeking redress through the contract for this non-performance.

Question 66

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

What percentage of residents eligible for a parking refund, have so far applied for one and how much money has so far been refunded?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

57% of eligible residents have so far applied. Approximately £166,000 has been processed.

Question 67

Councillor Sury Khatri

Brent Council in September revealed plans to block residents from accessing controversial pay lender firms from about 5,400 council computers used by the public in venues such as libraries and by staff in council buildings. Pay lending firms exploit people at their most vulnerable. Brent Council also plans to ban the firms from advertising on council billboards and bus stops. Will the Leader join me and agree that Barnet Council should also follow the example of Brent Council and put measures in place post haste?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I certainly share the Member's concerns about the impact that payday lender firms can have on peoples' lives and think that this proposal is worth investigating. However, I also think it is important to consider all the consequences of such a move before committing to action.

Question 68

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Why did the delivery of recycle bins have problems meeting the agreed timescale and what penalties have been imposed?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Officers are in discussion with the supplier to understand why this has happened. In short, the supplier underestimated the resource required for the deployment of the bins considering the intricacies and complexities of Barnet. A project close report will be submitted in due course which will include lessons learned in order to inform future projects.

1% of bins were not delivered by the Friday collection day, this equates to 1500 bins not being delivered, for which the Council and the supplier has apologised. Officers will be seeking redress through the contract for this non-performance.

Question 69

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

The only residents currently notified about when an application will be heard at a planning committee are those that have asked to speak. Will the Cabinet Member look into how other residents, particularly those who have submitted objections can also be informed?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Residents are able to check on the Council web site to see if an application is going to be heard at a committee meeting. I will look into the possibility of showing our Planning website link in the original consultation letter. Residents can also call the relevant planning officer who will be happy to inform them when an application is being reported to committee and their name and phone number are shown on the consultation letter. If a resident specifically requests to be informed beforehand of the progress of an application, then we will notify them.

Question 70

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Residents were told to leave their old recycle bins out for collection on the day of the new collection but not all were collected from the kerbside, why?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

There has been a larger than expected number of recycling boxes being left out for removal by residents. The removal teams are following a Monday through Friday collection schedule with a revisit mop up of all roads planned once complete. . The council's initial programme to remove the boxes within 48 hours of bin collection, unfortunately could not take place due to the high volumes of unwanted boxes.

Question 71

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

What advice was sought from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) before making the decision to switch to a co-mingled recycling system?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The council is aware of the requirements of the revised Waste Framework Directive. The council's view is that separate collection is not necessary to meet materials quality objectives, and that separate collection is not technically, environmentally and economically practicable for Barnet.

With the Council's previous recycling method, performance had plateaued; a change in method was necessary to improve performance, reduce costs and reduce environmental impact. As a result of the change in collection method, it is expected that there will be economic savings of £1.2m by 2014/15 and £4.1m by 2016/17. It is expected that a significantly greater tonnage of material will be diverted from costly disposal, to recycling, with the proportion of household waste recycled, composted and reused projected to rise from 33% in 2012/13 to 41% in 2014/15 and 43% in 2016/17. If the previous source separated collection had been continued, these economic savings and environmental performance improvements would not be realised.

Question 72

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Could the Cabinet Member please list where the co-mingle waste goes for sorting and what are the destinations/ routes for the various recycled materials. Does the council receive any income from the recycled materials and if so how much for each type?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The comingled recycling goes to the materials recovery facility managed by Biffa at Edmonton. The ongoing destinations for materials will change over time in line with market conditions. The Council pays a fixed gate fee to the North London Waste Authority and will receive an income from the sale of materials; the level of income will depend on market conditions and prices negotiated by Biffa.

Question 73

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

I appreciate that the Cabinet Member is apoplectic but what penalty will be imposed on the contractor for the repeated delays to the delivery of new recycling bins, and when will this happen?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Officers will be seeking redress through the contract for this non-performance and this will happen once the contract has been completed.

Question 74

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Does the Cabinet Member have plans to close any more libraries and if so which ones?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

No.

Question 75

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on when details of enforcement areas requiring signs and lines improvements and a schedule for completing these works will be provided, as requested at the Contract Monitoring Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

A comprehensive schedule of signs and lines work is currently being carried out by the Council's highway maintenance contractor.

The contractor has dedicated resources assigned to completing this work programme and subject to appropriate weather conditions it is anticipated that the programme will be completed by the end of November.

Question 76**Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb**

The Leader recently held a meeting with residents to discuss how the council can support the borough and its residents over the next ten years. How was this advertised, how many attended, and what was the outcome?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The meeting was promoted by a press release which was carried by two local papers. The press release was prominently placed on the council's website.

Officers wrote to the mailing list of attendees for residents' forums, contacted local head teachers and school governors and wrote to 3,000 residents who have registered with the council's website and are happy to be contacted by the council. Posters were placed in libraries and the event was prominently promoted on social media. The event was also promoted by Community Barnet.

80 residents came to the meeting. While public questions were rumbustious, they focused largely on the two contracts with Capita and, unsurprisingly given the date of the meeting, the roll out of blue bins, residents took part in table discussions about the potential to make low cost contributions to improving life in the borough. This has been published on the council website and suggestions will be considered by the appropriate department.

I am very grateful to those residents who took the time to attend the meeting and contribute their ideas.

Question 77**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

What action is being taken to deal with the fact that over a quarter of the worst pot holes are no longer made safe within the 48 hour target?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

In the six months from April 13 – 83% of pot holes reported by residents have been made safe within 48 hours. In the last quarter performance has improved with an average of 92% of pot holes being made safe in 48 hours with September's performance being the best at 96%.

Question 78**Councillor Geof Cooke**

I raised the lack of bus service into the Finchley Memorial Hospital site in Woodhouse ward at Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Why were the Woodhouse councillors not invited to a subsequent meeting on the subject organised by the Council with NHS representatives involving the Cabinet Member for Health and the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Meetings have indeed taken place involving the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Council officers and myself. Ward Councillors were not invited as this matter is an issue for *all* residents of Barnet and not an issue confined to a particular Ward. Our dialogue with the Hospital is continuing to explore further local options for community transport to the Finchley Memorial Hospital.

Question 79**Councillor Geof Cooke**

What progress has been made in obtaining outdoor gym equipment for parks as promised under the Council's public health programme and which parks will receive equipment?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

Through the Public Health programme, a number of Outdoor Gyms and Marked and Measured Routes for running and walking are to be delivered in Parks and Open Spaces across Barnet. It is the intention to ultimately ensure the provision of 12 Outdoor Gyms and 10 Marked and Measured Routes in various parks - providing all residents with access to these facilities within a 15-20 minute walk. It is hoped to have the Marked and Measured Routes and the first 5 or 6 Outdoor Gyms in place during this Financial Year.

We already have one operational Outdoor Gym in Oak Hill Park and there are also plans for a further one to be provided in the grounds of the new Finchley Memorial Hospital. Phase One of the Programme aims to deliver all 10 of the Marked and Measured Routes and the first 5 or 6 additional Outdoor Gyms concentrated in the areas that have been identified as having especially low rates of Sport and Physical Activity.

The Phase One Outdoor Gyms are in Barnet Playing Fields, Edgwarebury Park, Friary Park, Hendon Park, Watling Park and possibly Childs Hill Park.

The proposed 10 Marked and Measured Routes are in Barnet Playing Fields, Bethune Park, Clitterhouse Playing Fields, Edgwarebury Park, Montrose Park, West Hendon Playing Fields, Barnet Copthall, Scratchwood Open Space, Sunny Hill Park and Oak Hill Park.

Question 80**Councillor Geof Cooke**

What progress has been made on addressing the significant maintenance backlog for signs and lines since the last Council meeting?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

As answer to Question 75.

Question 81**Councillor Geof Cooke**

What involvement has the Council or its contractor, the joint venture company Re, had in efforts to try to get the Bohemia public house in High Road, North Finchley reopened permanently by the landlord as a community asset?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Under the Conservative introduced Localism Act we have listed it as a community asset. Voluntary and community organisations can nominate an asset to be included on a list of Assets of Community Value. The Regulations state that, with the exception of residential properties, any building or land may be listed if, in the opinion of the local planning authority, the primary current use of the property 'furthers the social well-being or social interests of the community'.

Under the terms of the Community Right to Bid, the Council must make a decision on whether to list a nominated asset, and does so, on a case by case basis. The Council made a decision to list the Bohemia public house as an Asset of Community Value on 16 October 2013 in response to a nomination submitted on 18 August 2013 by a community group, arguing that the building had become home to a wide range of diverse sub-groups which had hosted a weekend-long charity fundraiser, provided free meals and gifts to isolated older people at Christmas and collected donations for the local foodbank. The Council was not involved in the nomination of the Bohemia to be listed as an Asset of Community Value, but is required by law to decide whether the asset in question should be deemed as such.

Now that the building has been listed, a legal charge has been placed upon it requiring the landlord to inform the Council if they wish to sell. In this case, a moratorium period of six months

will follow during which time a community group or voluntary group will have the opportunity to raise the capital required to purchase the building. After this moratorium period, the landlord will be able to sell it at market value under normal market conditions. The moratorium period will only apply if the asset is to be sold by the landlord, not if it is to be leased.

Question 82

Councillor Brian Coleman

Would you agree that RE (Regional Enterprise) Ltd is a meaningless, corporate speak title for the joint Venture with Capita and has no relation to Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

It is not the clearest title, but is designed to facilitate marketing elsewhere.

Question 83

Councillor Brian Coleman

Will you be wearing a Capita lanyard that apparently former Barnet staff are being forced to wear when you are on RE (Regional Enterprise) Ltd business?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I have not been issued with a lanyard.

Question 84

Councillor Brian Coleman

What advice would you give to the Governors of Finchley Catholic High School about accepting profits from the recent book written by Mr Damien McBride?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

I would suggest that Governors from any school in a position to engage in conduct that could bring their office into question consider legal advice where necessary.

Question 85

Councillor Brian Coleman

What role has the Borough had in deciding the format of the proposed Academy on the Inglis Barracks site and what is the position following the reported rejection by Michael Gove of the proposed Academy sponsors?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

Last year, the local authority conducted a process in line with statutory guidance to identify a preferred provider for the sponsorship of the new school at Mill Hill East. Following the issuing of a financial notice to improve to the identified preferred provider, the local authority has since been working closely with the Department for Education and the local Barnet school community to propose a suitable locally based solution. This work is not yet complete but the local authority is optimistic that any local proposal would be well received by the Secretary of State who has final approval and the Barnet community.

Question 86

Councillor Brian Coleman

Was the Leader happy with the IT changes brought in on October 1st and in particular did he consider that changes affecting Members went smoothly?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Council is not happy with the IT changes that were enforced on the Council by the Cabinet Office, which led to changes to Members IT on the 1st October. Organisations such as London Councils and the Local Government Association have been lobbying the government to protest about these matters. The changes that were implemented clearly were disruptive to members,

and we apologise for the inconvenience that was caused. The IT service has now contacted all Councillors to ensure that they are appropriately supported through these changes.

Question 87

Councillor Brian Coleman

In the Leader's view, how frequently should Councillors hold advice surgeries for residents?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

As often as necessary.

Question 88

Councillor Brian Coleman

Considering the current shambles at the North London Waste Authority (NLWA), does Councillor Cohen agree that now is the time to revisit the issue of Barnet's continued membership?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

NLWA is our disposal authority and exiting from that arrangement requires approval from the Secretary of State. Barnet currently benefits from low waste disposals costs as part of this arrangement due to economies of scale and exiting from this would require Barnet to contract individually with other parties to dispose of its waste. This could lead to increased disposal costs.

Question 89

Councillor Brian Coleman

Why is the street furniture in North Finchley being repainted from a tasteful navy blue to a sombre black and at what cost?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

As North Finchley has benefitted from Greater London Authority (GLA) 'Outer London Fund (OLF)', the opportunity to repaint was taken as part of this scheme. Street furniture items are currently being painted in accordance with the approved priced 'Schedule of Rates' of our existing Street Lighting Term Contractor to a consistent black colour throughout. Final costs are not yet available as decluttering and painting of retained street furniture continues to OLF programme completion of March 2014.

Question 90

Councillor Brian Coleman

Could Councillor Longstaff disclose how much taxpayers money has been given to "My North Finchley" and what has happened to it?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The creation of a Town Team in North Finchley (NFTT) is part of Barnet Council's commitment as set out in its Grant Agreement for the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund (OLF). It is intended to ensure that the money has a positive legacy, and that local people work together in the long term to build on the OLF's initial investment. The Council commissioned consultancy firm Retail Revival (£5,750) to work on our behalf to engage with stakeholders in North Finchley and set up a Town Team, including facilitating six meetings and training. There are Town Teams in many parts of London that has been awarded OLF funding, and like the NFTT, they are made up of concerned and active volunteers with expertise to contribute.

As part of the Council's commission to Retail Revival, they are required to work with the NFTT to run two events as part of the OLF project. Retail Revival has a budget £16,000 for this purpose. The objectives is to build a base of successful programmes that will attract independent funding and allow the NFTT to continue working for North Finchley long after the OLF project has been completed.

As part of the OLF and as part of the objectives around ensuring a legacy beyond the OLF

funding, the Council may explore other ways of working with the NFTT but these are still to be agreed.

Question 91

Councillor Brian Coleman

Could Councillor Longstaff describe the Governance arrangements for "My North Finchley"?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The North Finchley Town Team (NFTT) is an independent group of local residents and business people formed from diverse sectors and backgrounds, working together to make North Finchley a better place to live and work. Every member of the Town Team is a volunteer. They are a group of people who have experience in fundraising, marketing, community engagement, culture and retail, and will look at any fund (government or private) which will help to bring the ideas to reality.

The Council is on the group to facilitate any advice they need from Council Services.

The Terms of Reference are available. Further details of the Town Team can be viewed at their website, <http://www.mynorthfinchley.co.uk/about-us/the-north-finchley-town-team/>

Question 92

Councillor Brian Coleman

Could Councillor Longstaff advise the Council what advice has been given by Council Officers to "My North Finchley" about the use of their twitter account?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Barnet Council's corporate communications team has advised the North Finchley Town Team on publicity on two occasions and this has helped support generally positive coverage of the Town Team's work. The communications team has advised the Town Team to avoid controversial issues in their tweets because of the nature of the medium and the risks of generating adverse comments.

Question 93

Councillor Brian Coleman

Could Councillor Longstaff list the individuals involved in any sort of management role or advisory role in the running of "My North Finchley"?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The Council's Skills and Enterprise Manager and I are members of the North Finchley Town Team.

Question 94

Councillor Brian Coleman

Will Councillor Longstaff condemn those who illegally squat in commercial premises situated in our High Streets?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Yes.

Question 95

Councillor Brian Coleman

What is the cost of hiring 18 "recycling promoters" 6 "team leaders" and one "project coordinator" for nine weeks?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The total cost of the door stepping campaign is £119,730.15, this is funded from the Government's weekly collection support scheme.

Question 96**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Does the Leader agree with Sir Merrick Cockell, Chairman of the Local Government Association (LGA), in his opposition to Government proposals to place the "publicity code" on a statutory basis?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I am a supporter of localism. Decisions should be made locally wherever possible and councils represent their residents.

Question 97**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Does the Leader believe that his definition of localism would be the same as that of the Secretary of State for Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Eric Pickles?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Yes. I would be unlikely to differ radically from the Secretary of State. However, localism is a concept where my aspirations may differ from Mr Pickles.

Question 98**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Has the Leader recently visited Belfast, Blackburn, Darlington or Sheffield?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

No, but I shall endeavour to visit locations relevant to the council's activities.

Question 99**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Has the Council received an open letter from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Minister, Lord de Mauley, outlining the legal requirement to separately collect certain recyclables from January 2015 and does this not mean the new Barnet recycling scheme will have to be totally revised?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Yes - the council has received this letter. With the Council's previous recycling method, performance had plateaued. A change in method was necessary to improve performance, reduce costs and reduce environmental impact. The Council's decision made in April 2012 was evaluated on all these criteria which form part of the test to ensure that the approach is acceptable for its new comingled recycling collection.

Question 100**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Can you explain your reasoning behind your decision to declare the former Bohemia "pub" an asset of Community value? Does this not contradict your answers at the last Council meeting when you stated the Council did not have the power to do this?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The Council deemed that the Bohemia had demonstrated value to the community which went beyond that of a 'chain pub'. Precedent in this regard has been set by other authorities such as Hackney and Wandsworth, where pubs have been listed as Assets of Community Value for similar reasons. This is not to say that the Council would consider any pub as a potential community asset. We are required by law to judge individual cases on their merits.

I have made no comment to council on this issue – as this question was originally directed to Councillor Tambourides. Councillor Tambourides was of course quite right in planning terms, but

less so in terms of a community asset.

Question 101

Councillor Brian Coleman

How many premises within half a mile of the Arts Depot hold an alcohol licence and would you agree with many North Finchley residents that the figure should be less?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

It is not possible to provide information in the given restricted radius.

There are currently, however:

69 licensed premises within West Finchley Ward, 58 licensed premises within the Woodhouse ward.

Licensable activities under the Licensing Act 2003 include:

- The sale by retail of alcohol;
- The supply of alcohol by or on behalf of a club to, or to the order of, a member of the club;
- The provision of regulated entertainment; and
- The provision of late night refreshment.

The type of licensed premises situated within this area are mixed, but the majority are restaurants.

The over riding concern of the London Borough of Barnet is not how many licensed premises may or may not be in an area, but rather to ensure that all premises in the borough comply with the licensing objectives.

These are:

- The prevention of crime and disorder;
- Public safety;
- The prevention of public nuisance; and
- The protection of children from harm