

Minutes

OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET held at
The Town Hall, Hendon, NW4, on Tuesday 20 April 2004

PRESENT:

*The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Melvin Cohen, LLB,)

*The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Wendy Prentice)

Councillors:

*Steve Blomer	*Eva Greenspan BA, LL.B	*Susette Palmer BA (Hons)
*Maureen Braun	*Christopher Harris	*Kanti Patel MBE, MCI, OBE, FFB, MCMI
*Fiona Bulmer	*Helena Hart	*Barry Rawlings
*Terry Burton	*Lynne Hillan	*Colin Rogers
*Anita Campbell	*Sean Hooker, BA (Hons)	*Paul Rogers
*Wayne Casey BA (Hons) MIA	*Daniel Hope	*Brian Salinger
*Danish Chopra	*Anne Hutton	*Gill Sargeant
*Jack Cohen	*Mark Langton	*Joan Scannell
*Brian Coleman, GLA	*Malcolm Lester FCCA	*Alan Schneiderman
*Katia David BSc, MBA, JP	*Victor Lyon, BA (Hons)	*Gerard Silverstone
*Jeremy Davies BA (Hons)	*Kitty Lyons	*Alan Sloam
*Peter Davis Ctext, FTI, FCFI	*John Marshall	*Agnes Slocombe
Aba Dunner MCIJ	*Linda McFadyen	*Ansuya Sodha MBA (Middx) DipM (CIM), Cert Ed
*Kevin Edson	*Kath McGuirk	*Susan Steinberg
*Olwen Evans ACIS	*David Mencer	*Leslie Sussman, MBE
*Claire Farrier	*Alison Moore	*Andreas Tambourides
*Anthony Finn B.Sc (Econ) FCA	*Jazmin Naghar	
*Mike Freer	*Robert Newton	*Soon-Hoe Teh
*Vanessa Gearson BA AKC, PhD	*Matthew Offord	*Jim Tierney
*Arun Ghosh BSc BVSC AH Mphil CBIOL MIBIOL, MAPHV, MRSM	*Monroe Palmer OBE FCA	*Allan Turner
*Brian Gordon, LL.B		*Phil Yeoman

*denotes Member present

193. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1):

Apologies were received from Councillor Dunner, and from Councillors Farrier and Sargeant, for lateness.

194. PRAYER (Agenda Item 2):

The Mayor's Chaplain offered prayer.

195. MINUTES (Agenda Item 3):

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 March 2004 be approved.

196. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 4):

The Mayor made the following announcement concerning the recent death of former Councillor Doreen Neall:

“I am sure that you will remember that, at our February meeting, I advised you that former Councillor Doreen Neall was seriously ill.

“I am now very sorry to announce the death of Doreen Neall, on Friday 19 March. Councillor Agnes Slocombe represented me at the funeral, which was held on 2 April.

“Doreen was very much liked and respected by all Members of the Council. I can say, with confidence, that we all admired Doreen’s energy and the total commitment she gave, not only to the residents of West Hendon Ward, but to the whole Borough. This commitment never diminished, even when she retired from formal Council duties.

“The London Borough of Barnet has, indeed, lost a very good friend.

“I ask you all please to stand and join me for a minute’s silence in memory of Doreen Neall.”

(A minute’s silence was observed).

197. RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION (Agenda Item 5):

Moved by the Deputy Mayor, duly seconded and

RESOLVED –

- 1. That we, the Members of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet, hereby express to the Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Melvin Cohen, LL.B., our appreciation of the excellent service he has rendered to the London Borough of Barnet as its Mayor during the period May 2003 to May 2004 and for the friendly and conscientious way in which he has performed the duties of that office.**

We offer him our sincere gratitude for the concern that he has shown at all times to promote the welfare of the London Borough and, particularly, for his willingness to support the many organisations and individuals who called on his time and services during his year of office. We congratulate him on the success of his appeal for The Shooting Star Trust.

We compliment him on the manner in which he has upheld the dignity of his office on all public occasions and on his untiring enthusiasm and pleasant approach to his duties.

- 2. That the foregoing resolution be engrossed over the common seal of the Corporation and presented to the Worshipful the Mayor.**

The Mayor expressed his gratitude to the Council for passing the resolution.

198. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS (Agenda Item 5):

Interests were declared by the following Members in respect of Agenda Item 9.5:

- Councillor Freer – a personal and prejudicial interest as he was a trustee of Finchley Charities. Cllr. Freer did not vote on the matter.
- Councillor Coleman – a personal and prejudicial interest as he was a co-opted trustee of Finchley Charities. Cllr. Coleman did not vote on the matter.
- Councillor Sussman – a personal and prejudicial interest as he was a member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Trustees of Finchley Charities. Cllr. Sussman did not vote on the matter.
- Councillor Newton – a personal and prejudicial interest as he was a member of the Executive Committee of Friern Barnet Day Care Centre for the Elderly. Cllr. Newton did not vote on the matter.
- Councillor Colin Rogers – a personal and prejudicial interest as he was a trustee of Finchley Charities.

199. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Councillor Danish Chopra, duly seconded, moved that the order of business be varied to allow agenda items 9.2 and 9.5 to be transposed in Part 3 of the meeting.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was declared lost.

200. QUESTION TIME FOR MEMBERS (Agenda Item 8):

Questions were put to the Leader and the relevant Members of the Cabinet. Those questions, together with the original answers provided and the text of any supplementary questions and answers are set out in the Appendix to these minutes.

201. MEMBERS' MOTIONS (Agenda Item 9):

A motion was moved by the Mayor, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: - That 60 minutes be allocated for debate on this item in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4(a).

The Mayor stated that, using his discretion under Rule 34.2, he would allow 19 minutes each for Motions 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 and then put the remaining motions and amendments to the vote without debate.

202. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR KATH McGUIRK (Agenda Items 9.1, 13.1.1 and 13.1.4):

Motion 9.1 in the name of Councillor Kath McGuirk was moved.

Amendments in the names of Councillors Brian Coleman, Monroe Palmer and Colin Rogers were also moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman was declared carried. The amendment in the name of Councillor Colin Rogers was declared lost. Councillor Coleman stated that he accepted the amendment proposed by Councillor Monroe Palmer. The substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – Council congratulates the Administration on the exciting, radical and innovative approach to recycling in Barnet. Council notes the positive national media coverage. Council also notes that following the recent publicity early signs are that doorstep collected tonnage is up by around 20% and over 3,000 Barnet residents have requested recycling

boxes. Council also supports the ongoing discussions with our contractors ECT for further improvements to the recycling provision in the Borough.

Council notes the negotiations currently underway between North London Waste Authority, Barnet Council and partners for the future reprovision of the Hendon Waste Transfer Station as part of the Cricklewood redevelopment plans.

Council urges the Cabinet to replace a Civic Amenity Site in the South of the Borough with access from the North Circular Road and not to confuse this provision of this public amenity, for disposing of mainly household rubbish, with the proposed recycling and waste transfer station in the vicinity of a valued conservation area.

**203. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR DANISH CHOPRA
(Agenda Item 9.2):**

Motion 9.2 in the name of Councillor Danish Chopra was moved.
Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was declared lost.

**204. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR FIONA BULMER
(Agenda Items 9.3 and 13.1.4):**

Motion 9.3 in the name of Councillor Fiona Bulmer was moved.

Amendments in the name of Councillors Colin Rogers and John Marshall were also moved. Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor John Marshall was declared carried. The amendment in the name of Councillor Colin Rogers was declared lost. The substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED: - Council notes that Barnet's roads and pavements had been shamefully neglected by the previous Labour/ Liberal Democrat administration, leaving a huge backlog of repairs and maintenance. Council notes the progress that the Conservative administration has made since May 2002 in improving more than 180 roads and Council welcomes this year's programme of road maintenance which will see a further 300 roads across the Borough resurfaced and 50 pavements repaired. Council also notes the significant progress in removing unnecessary and dangerous humps and other failed traffic measures that have significantly improved safety for all road users in the Borough.

Council notes that the resurfacing and traffic management programmes are approved by Area Environment Committees and condemns the disgraceful attempt by Ken Livingstone to interfere in the democratic process in Barnet by threatening to withhold TfL money allocated to Barnet.

**205. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR VICTOR LYON
(Agenda Item 9.4)**

Motion 9.4 in the name of Councillor Victor Lyon was put to the vote without debate and was declared carried.

RESOLVED: Council congratulates Sir Sydney Chapman MP, who on 3 May 2004 celebrates his twenty-fifth anniversary as Member of Parliament for Chipping Barnet.

Council notes that Sir Sydney was first elected to represent the constituency of Chipping Barnet in May 1979, and has been returned to the House of Commons at each of the five general elections thereafter.

Council agrees that throughout a quarter of a century of representing the people of Chipping Barnet, Sir Sydney has demonstrated impeccable standards of diligence, dignity and probity.

Council notes that in July 1995 Sir Sydney was knighted by the Queen.

Council notes that Sir Sydney will retire at the next general election. Council thanks Sir Sydney for his outstanding contribution to public life in general and Chipping Barnet in particular.

**206. MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR PHIL YEOMAN
(Agenda Items 9.5, 13.1.1 and 13.1.4)**

Motion 9.5 in the name of Councillor Phil Yeoman and amendments in the names of Councillors Linda McFadyen, Maureen Braun and Sean Hooker were put to the vote without debate.

The amendment in the name of Councillor Linda McFadyen was declared lost. The amendment in the name of Councillor Maureen Braun was declared carried. The amendment in the name of Councillor Sean Hooker was declared lost. The substantive motion was declared lost.

207. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:

In accordance with the Agenda, the Mayor adjourned the meeting for 15 minutes. The meeting reconvened at 9.15 pm.

**208. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2002/2005 (2004/2005 UPDATE) – Report of Cabinet of 22 March 2004
(Agenda Item 10)**

Councillor Victor Lyon moved reception and adoption of the Report of Cabinet dated 22 March 2004 “Youth Justice Plan 2002/2005 (2004/2005 Update), with the following recommendation:

That the update to the Youth Justice Plan be approved for submission to the Youth Justice Board.

Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED: That the Report of Cabinet of 22 March 2004 be approved and adopted.

**209. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION 2004 – Report of the Special (Constitution Review) Committee of 1, 11, 23 and 30 March 2004
(Agenda Items 12.1 and 13.1.4, 5 & 6)**

Councillor Victor Lyon moved reception of the Report of the Special (Constitution Review) Committee dated 1, 11, 23 and 30 March “Review of the Constitution 2004”, with the following recommendations:

- 1. That amended Article 4, detailed in the Appendix, be approved.**
- 2. That the amendments proposed to Article 12, detailed in the Appendix, be approved.**
- 3. That amended Part 3, detailed in the Appendix, be approved.**
- 4. That amended Part 4 (Council Procedure Rules – The Council; Committees and Sub-Committees; Public Participation; and Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules), all as detailed in the Appendix, be approved.**

5. That Part 4 (Financial Regulations), detailed in the Appendix, be approved.
6. That Part 4 (Rules for the Disposal of Land and Real Property), detailed in the Appendix, be approved.
7. That the Assistant Chief Executive be instructed to consult Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees on options for changes to the operation of the Overview and Scrutiny function, and to report to a future meeting of the Special Committee with final proposals in this regard.
8. That minutes/ decisions should record reasons given by Members for their absence at any meetings.
9. That the possibility of providing an index or thematic guide to the Constitution be explored further by the Special Committee in future once resources for its development could be identified.
10. That staff arranging Member-level meetings be instructed to avoid scheduling these to start earlier than 7pm unless there were exceptional circumstances.
11. That the approval of the Chairman of the Planning and Environment Committee be obtained in order to reschedule any meeting of an Area Planning Sub-Committee.
12. That the Scrutiny team be instructed to publish on the Council's website, the programmed dates for meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
13. That any changes to the responsibilities of the Chief Executive the Borough Solicitor and the Borough Treasurer be deferred pending publication of the report of the Underhill Inquiry.
14. That any review relating to appeals and licensing activities be deferred pending clear definitive guidance from Government on the requirements of the new licensing regime and when it is expected to be implemented.
15. That the operation of revised Part 4 arrangements specifically relating to the new themed policy debate within Council meetings, and the new arrangements for public speaking at meetings of Planning and Environment Committees and Area Planning Sub-Committees be reviewed by the Special Committee once they have been operating for six months.
16. That no action be taken in respect of the following proposals:
 - Including reference to CIPFA Governance Code in the Introduction to the Constitution;
 - Including a full text of debate in minutes;
 - Requiring Chairmen's approval to Members' requests to refer to an Area Planning Sub-Committee and application which would have been for decision by officers. (In considering this matter, the Committee decided to recommend to Council that Members be reminded that they must give full supporting reasons for any such requests);
 - Restricting Members of Planning and Environment Committee from also serving as Members of the Planning and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
 - Changes to Part 3 (Executive functions of Area Environment Sub-Committees) to recognise the formation of Barnet Homes.
17. That the Head of Committee and Administration be instructed to publish the amendments, and to arrange for the Special Committee to meet again in order to progress the actions referred to in recommendations 7 and 15, above.

Councillor Lyon also moved an amendment to the Report.

Amendments in the names of Councillor Alison Moore, Monroe Palmer, Wayne Casey and Jack Cohen were also moved.

Debate ensued.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Victor Lyon was declared carried. The amendment in the name of Councillor Alison Moore was declared lost. The amendment in the name of Councillor Monroe Palmer was declared lost. The amendment in the name of Councillor Wayne Casey was declared lost. The amendment in the name of Councillor Jack Cohen was declared lost.

The substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – That the report be adopted and approved subject to amendment of the Appendix thereto as follows:

- **Part 4 Section 4 (Public Participation) rule 2.3.6 be amended to read “requests from Council employees or their trade unions on employment matters, all of whom have other processes for accessing decision takers.”**
- **Part 4 Section 4 (Public Participation) insert a new rule 2.3.7 reading “requests from members of the Council, members of Parliament, the member for the GLA and members of other public bodies except at the discretion of the Chairman of the body who may give consent where he or she considers it appropriate. Where the Chairman exercises such discretion, the speaker will speak in addition to any of those members of the public speaking in accordance with the provisions of Rule 3.”**

**210. REPORT EXEMPTED FROM CALL-IN PROCESS – GRAHAME PARK COMMUNITY SPORTS PITCH
(Agenda Item 13.1.1)**

The Head of Committee reported that, in accordance with paragraph 16(1) of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules, the Chairman of the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been consulted and had agreed that the decision on the Leader’s report relating to the Grahame Park Community Sports Pitch, taken under delegated powers by 31 March in order to meet funding deadlines, was reasonable in the circumstances, and could be treated as a matter of urgency and thus be exempted from the call-in requirements.

**211. CHIPPING BARNET AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING – 14 APRIL 2004: Report of the Monitoring Officer
(Agenda Item 13.2)**

RESOLVED – That the Report of the Head of Planning concerning the Outline Planning Application reference NA0326/04 relating to Middlesex University, Trent Park, Bramley Road, in the London Borough of Enfield, be remitted to the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee on 28 April 2004 for fresh consideration and that the consideration of this matter by the Chipping Barnet Area Planning Sub-Committee be deemed void on the basis that the required arrangements under the Constitution for speaking by non-Members of that Committee had not been adhered to.

**212. OPPOSITION POLICY ITEM – TACKLING CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR
(Agenda Items 15, 13.1.1 and 13.1.4):**

Councillor Alan Schneiderman proposed the item and moved that it be adopted.

An amendment in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman was moved. An amendment in the name of Councillor Allan Turner was also moved. Councillor Turner, in terms of Rule 17B, amended his amendment by deleting the first sentence of the third paragraph.

Councillor Alison Moore moved that the question be now put. Upon being put to the vote, the motion that the question be now put was declared lost.

Debate ensued. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman was declared carried. Councillor Brian Coleman stated that he accepted Councillor Allan Turner's amended amendment. Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED: Council welcomes the most recent full-year figures for Barnet showing the Borough is one of the safest places to live in London with reductions in robberies, street crime, racist crime and burglaries. Council congratulates the Community Safety Partnership, chaired by the Council's Chief Executive, and the Borough Police, for this success. Council notes the close working relationship between this Administration and the police.

The Council supports the "Step Change Programme" to permanently base six police officers and police community support officers in every ward in Barnet who will not be available for transfer to other duties, starting with the local wards with the worst crime rates of Burnt Oak, Colindale and Childs Hill. Council also welcomes the establishment of Community Safety Action Zones across the Borough.

This Council notes that the alternative Conservative budget would have produced a below inflation increase of 1.1% in the GLA precept, and would have provided an additional 140 police officers, if it had been passed by the London Assembly. This Council calls on the Government to ensure adequate funding for London to ensure that step change can be properly implemented.

The Council congratulates the Greater London Assembly Member for Barnet and Camden for consistently supporting additional police officers for Barnet.

The Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Chairman of the Metropolitan Police Authority reinforcing the points made by the Leader of the Council, the GLA Member and others during the recent visit by Lord Harris to Barnet over the need for the forthcoming review of the Resource Allocation Formula to be open and transparent and to take account of the particular needs of Barnet.

Council notes that the most recent Barnet Crime and Disorder Audit shows that Burnt Oak town centre in the vicinity of the underground station is one of six general crime hotspots in the Borough, and that all the other five hotspots either already have CCTV or have money allocated for installation this year.

Council notes the Audit shows there is a definite link between street crime and transport centres such as Burnt Oak station, and that the Audit also shows Burnt Oak is one of four areas with the highest levels of violence within the Borough.

Council urges the Cabinet to install CCTV cameras in Burnt Oak town centre as a matter of urgency during the year 2004/5.

**213. COMMENTS ON THE WORK OF THE CABINET
(Agenda Items 17 and 13.1.3):**

Councillor Ansuya Sodha commented:

This administration has let down the residents of this borough. The residents have paid a massive increase in council tax hike and instead of being rewarded with better services they will receive massive cuts in services. These redundancies mean that there will be cuts in services, cuts in services to some of the most vulnerable people in the borough. The worst thing is that there does not seem to be any logic in these redundancies or cuts. It's at the whim of the Cabinet Member. Cuts in pest control are already having an impact on many residents in West Hendon. In that small area alone people are complaining that they can actually see rats in the streets. With no such service this problem can only get worse thus affecting the quality of life of people who live in such a rat infested area.

The closure of Springwood Day Centre is doing exactly what the Tories promised – “looking after the vulnerable people”. Closing a day centre is not looking after the vulnerable people.

The slashing of the equality unit means - who is going to carry out some of the work that that unit did regarding equality for all? - nobody.

There are cuts in street enforcement officers thus undermining the cleanliness and the safety of the street.

There is all this hardship being inflicted on people who are being made redundant and yet this could have been avoided or minimised by carrying out a proper skill audit. There are still 200 vacancies in the borough and very little has been done to redeploy these staff. The Tories' appalling financial mismanagement has landed the council in a mess and the staff are the ones who are paying the price for the incompetence of the Conservatives who prefer to waste money on senior officers' pay while perfectly happy to see poorly paid junior staff and their families go to the wall. This Cabinet has let down the people of Barnet and it's a great shame.

Councillor Victor Lyon responded:

I'm going to take this Mr Mayor because it's a general matter for the council rather than my appropriate Cabinet colleague. Firstly can I make this point. Any reductions we've had to make are solely at the door of the government. In two successive settlements they've screwed this borough mercilessly. But nevertheless, in spite of the £11m of savings we had to make last year and the £13m this year, I would make the point that the alarmist speech by Councillor Sodha is entirely misplaced. We are talking about originally 171 posts out of many thousands. I'm glad to tell council that the actual figure now is probably somewhere in the region of 77. Many of those will be by agreement and early retirement. There will not be a reduction in services. Those areas which Councillor Sodha has mentioned, I've dealt with in council on a number of occasions. We will be continuing to monitor the delivery. The important thing Mr Mayor is this, that this administration is delivering the five key promises which we made to the people of the borough when we were elected and we shall ensure that the staffing is done to make sure that that is true.

Councillor Monroe Palmer commented:

Mr Mayor the comment is about the withholding of the £1.5m. Let me say straightaway that I do not support Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, interfering in

Barnet's policies. Number one. Number one, even if I did agree with the policies I disagree with the interference. But I would ask Councillor Coleman if he is taking full regard of the Borough Solicitor's advice to us on another matter, which I'm using on this, and I quote "Members can still have a personal liability for loss arising to the authority through 'wilful misconduct under section 18 of the Audit Commission Act 1998'" and it goes on "with reckless indifference as to whether it is wrong or not." Would Councillor Coleman be aware that he is on record now as at risk of losing this council money and he could have a personal liability on this, in accordance with the advice to this group on another matter from the Borough Solicitor at the time of the budget, and that this also could be, Mr Mayor, a problem that if, God forbid, anybody is injured on a road where the traffic calmer has been taken out you, and indeed many, this council are at risk. And I wonder what Councillor Coleman has to say to that.

Councillor Brian Coleman responded:

Mr Mayor, this council will respond to a letter from the Mayor when it receives one. We have yet to receive one. Because unfortunately the Mayor has taken to dealing with this matter as he deals with so many others by press release. If, Mr Mayor, a letter arrives I'm sure the Chief Officers will respond to it in the appropriate manner. I can assure Councillor Palmer and all members of the council that schemes on which the Mayor and TfL allegedly have concerns, and these have not quite been detailed yet, have been through the appropriate democratic processes of this council, they've been to the Area Environment Committee, or through Cabinet or whatever was appropriate for the different schemes. The Mayor is so confused and so badly briefed on this, he's accused us of taking out cycle lanes on the Finchley Road when there were none. He's accused us of taking out road humps willy nilly which, as you Mr Mayor and Members will know, is not something we do in this council. Every case is taken on its merits, examined by the relevant area sub-committee and the appropriate democratic measures are taken. So we know Mr Mayor, that the Mayor is here using officers of Transport for London in a sadly, I would suggest, political way in the run up to the June 10th election. Mr Mayor, Councillor Palmer can be assured that I suspect once the Mayoral and GLA election is out of the way and we've got a Conservative administration at City Hall this matter will be quietly dropped by TfL. The huffing and puffing of political grandstanding of the Mayor of London will be forgotten.

The meeting finished at 10.28 pm

Council Questions to Cabinet Members
20 April 2004
Questions and Responses

Question No. 1

Councillor Matthew Offord

Following the successful prosecution of Zen Slocombe, can the Cabinet member for the Environment please tell me of any other developments that have occurred in his war against graffiti?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

This Administration is fighting the War of graffiti on many fronts.

We have issued 150 Anti Graffiti Kits to residents and community groups. CCTV has resulted in arrests for graffiti offences at Grahame Park, East Barnet, Tally Ho and Edgware. In addition a further 20 arrests were made in 2003 for graffiti, so far in 2004 6 individuals have been arrested.

This Administration's Graffiti Policy introduced in 2003 has had significant benefits.

Supplementary Question No. 1

Councillor Matthew Offord

Thank you Mr Mayor. Does the Cabinet Member recognise that this is yet another example of this administration continuing to deliver the priorities to the people of Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor I recognise that extremely well.

Question No. 2

Councillor Wayne Casey

What is the current schedule for the roll out of CCTV cameras across the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Cllr Brian Coleman

The ambitious roll out of CCTV across the Borough planned by this Administration is proceeding on track with preliminary work having started on the 3 schemes to be installed during the financial year 2004/5, Chipping Barnet, Burnt Oak and Cricklewood.

Supplementary Question No. 2

Councillor Wayne Casey

Thank you very much Mr Mayor, I'd like to thank Councillor Coleman for his answer, notwithstanding the spelling error. Could I just ask Councillor Coleman, could I press upon him to include Mill Hill in the, roll out of CCTV across the borough in the year 2005/2006?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, Councillor Casey makes a very valid point. I am very keen to include Mill Hill in the year 2005/06, funding allowing.

Question No. 3

Councillor Mark Langton

Is the Housing member of Cabinet aware of a housing policy that has a preferential system in the allocation of houses with gardens to young families, but excludes disabled families whose quality of life would be improved by the facility of a garden? How can this be justified by his policy that seeks a fairer allocation by a new market bidding system?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

I became aware of this problem last month and a delegated powers report making minor changes to the allocation policy and rectifying this omission was signed by me on Monday 29 March.

Supplementary Question No. 3

Councillor Mark Langton

Yes Mr Mayor, thank you. I owe Councillor Salinger an apology for submitting the same question twice by mistake, and I put my hands up to that. But could I further ask, I welcome the change in the allocation policy after I complained about this last month however I am still concerned that the change only refers to medical points and not specifically wheelchair points. Will the Cabinet Member agree to look at this issue again to make sure that the housing allocation policy specifically refers to wheelchairs points when considering houses with gardens? Thank you.

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

I accept his apology. In fact the need to change the policy was brought to my attention long before Councillor Langton's question appeared in front of me. I will have a look at the point he makes about wheelchairs to make sure that what is intended is absolutely clear.

Question No. 4

Councillor John Marshall

What was the cost of vandalism to the Council in 02/03 and so far this municipal year?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

Expenditure to repair or replace Council assets damaged or defaced by vandalism is not separately recorded in the accounts, so a full account of the cost of vandalism cannot be provided. However, the expenditure within Environmental and Neighbourhood Services in relation to Parks, Open Spaces and Street scene is projected to reach £268,000 in 2003/4.

In 2002/3 Environmental and Neighbourhood Services expenditure amounted to £156,000.

Greenspaces in addition have spent £278,000 for year 2002/3. The figure projected for year 2003/4 for Greenspaces is £147,000.

This does not include expenditure on graffiti removal incurred within housing, public buildings, schools etc.

Supplementary Question No. 4

Councillor John Marshall

Can I thank Councillor Finn for that answer. Would he like to tell the council whether investment in CCTV is actually reducing the amount of graffiti? Would he not agree that waging war on graffiti is a very good investment of the council's money because graffiti is costing us an awful lot of cash?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

It would indeed, thank you for bringing it up Councillor Marshall. Graffiti and waste and vandalism is something which must be stamped out. It's costing this council money. It's pointless, it's a waste of public money, it's a waste of time and we must stamp this out as far as we can. CCTV is helping. CCTV is part of our process and we are increasing spending on CCTV, £175,000 this year. We are increasing cost spending on graffiti removal by £40,000 for this year. Part of our corporate plan, which is continuing, is tackling crime and providing a safe environment for the people of this borough.

Question No. 5

Councillor Monroe Palmer

In the light of the admission by Human Resources that up to £700,000 has been overprovided in the Budget for a liability to Inland Revenue, does the Cabinet Member not agree that the decisions to reduce services at Libraries, Day Centres and Welsh Harp Sailing base can now be reversed?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

The budget monitoring reports to Cabinet Resources Committee have for some months now shown a provision for National Insurance (NI) under-recovery, resulting from the way the payroll system has calculated employees and employers NI in respect to staff who have multiple contracts of employment with the Council.

The figure reflected in monitoring reports is an initial assessment of the liability that the Council might face and further work will be undertaken during the coming months to determine the level of provision to be included in the 2003.

It is proper that when a new liability is identified that it is provided for within the Council's budget and accounts, and I am sure Cllr Palmer will recall the external auditor recently reminding Council of the need to make adequate provision for self-insured risks.

If provision were not made in the accounts, then any payment falling due would have to be met from balances – and I am sure I do not have to remind Cllr Palmer of the very low level of balances that the Council currently has.

(Reply subject to Monitoring Officer clearance)

Supplementary Question No. 5

Councillor Monroe Palmer

Thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you for the answer. Can I ask the supplementary. As officers have publicly admitted that it is certain that Barnet Council is not liable for additional national insurance on a payroll service, on a managed agency basis, and I quote from the reply from the officer there, and that the Inland Revenue are prepared to negotiate a reasonable settlement for the rest of the disputed amount, it is clear that most of this provision of £700,000 salted away will not be needed. Leader, is it therefore not justified to use approximately £600,000 of this £700,000 salted away to save Springwood, to restore the cuts in Flightways and Age Concern and to save two libraries from closure? Leader is it not over prudent to salt this unneeded reserve away whilst your administration destroys frontline services.

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

I am surprised at Councillor Monroe Palmer's supplementary because he would well know that any matters in which one deals with the Inland Revenue are always problematical and I think it is prudent to allow the sum that has been mentioned, although, obviously, I will review the situation as and when I feel it is prudent to so do.

Question No. 6**Councillor Phil Yeoman**

The Chairs of the Age Concern Trustee Boards of the Meritage Centre, Friern Barnet Centre and Ann Owens Centre alleged at the Cabinet Scrutiny committee on 29 March (at which you were not present) that you came to a verbal understanding at a meeting held with them that the three day centres could continue to operate for the existing amount of grant. Why have you broken this promise?

Answer by Councillor Maureen Braun

No promise was made. Last autumn I entered into informal talks with the three chairmen of the trustee boards, as Age Concern had acted very precipitately on the basis of a leaked discussion paper (when they announced that Friern Barnet Centre would close if we cut their grant by £100,000), to discover if there was a possibility of their continuing to run the centres if Age Concern pulled out altogether. At the beginning of this year they seemed to me to have reached a feasible solution, at which point I told them that the new Head of Community Care would now take over, and would conduct discussions over the future of the centres with themselves and with Age Concern in a formal and appropriate manner.

Supplementary Question No. 6**Councillor Phil Yeoman**

I thank the Cabinet Member for her response. Can the Cabinet Member explain then to the council why three very experienced chairs of Age Concern all left the meeting with your good self on, I think about New Year's Eve, with the very clear impression and the verbal agreement that you had given agreement that all the centres would remain open. Are they lying or does your seeming about U-turn of which this is the first thing we've heard about [will it close or will it open Ann Owen Centre, this evening]. Will that mean that you have been wrong all along? Either way yet again you have acted disgracefully, it is a disgrace. Thank you.

Answer by Councillor Maureen Braun

Thank you Councillor Yeoman. I must say I am always newly nauseated every time I hear the Labour Party having a spate of self-righteous hypocrisy on the matter of old age care generally and, in fact, all social services. I think my answer was quite clear. I made no promise. I said, I made no promise, I am not lying and they are not lying.

There was a basis on which if Age Concern withdrew they might be able to run the centres. As I said quite clearly, it was then over to the officers to do the formalities of this, to sort out any contract procedures and to put in place the tender. Age Concern's tender was the better one of the two. While I am speaking I think this is the perfect opportunity to repeat Ann Owen is not closing, it was never going to close and all I can think is Flightways revisited. Just like Flightways was never going to close, I am sick, weary and tired of standing up in this Council Chamber defending a position that does not exist.

Question No. 7**Councillor John Marshall**

How many places would be provided at Christchurch if it were to become a single sex school?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

The buildings at Christ Church offer capacity for 5 forms of entry for 5-year groups, i.e. 150 pupils in each year group from Year 7 (11 year olds) to Year 11 (16 year olds).

Supplementary Question No. 7**Councillor John Marshall**

Can I congratulate Councillor Hillan upon her proposals for this school, which are replacing a school shunned by local residents, by a school that will be popular both with parents and with children and will be widely welcomed. Can we have an assurance that the all-girls school will be in position by the year 2006.

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Thank you very much for your congratulations Councillor Marshall, well received. As for whether the girls school will be in position in 2006, I cannot give you assurances for that yet because we are still managing the pupils that are currently at the school and that will take a couple of years.

Question No. 8

Councillor Sean Hooker

In London tens of thousands of birds are killed or injured each year by colliding into windows. Will the plans for the West Hendon development take into consideration the effect of high-rise buildings on birds?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

As part of the planning process Metropolitan West Hendon will be preparing an Environmental Impact Assessment which will review the risk to birds from the proposed development.

Supplementary Question No. 8

Councillor Sean Hooker

Thank you. I thank the Cabinet Member for his answer. Can I ask him what does the Cabinet Member think of the suggestion put to him by Councillor Monroe Palmer that the development at West Hendon is turned around to place the higher buildings on the Edgware Road and not on the Welsh Harp?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

That has been considered and I just wait and see at the Cabinet meeting, thank you.

Question No. 9

Councillor Linda McFadyen

The Cabinet report on 22 March concerning the closure of Springwood day centre refers to seven people who have to be found day care, and may have to be found residential care, and the Council's excuse is that they are not important because they would have to go into residential care eventually anyway. Why is the Council not trying to support people at home with day care and home care, rather than forcing them into residential care, and what's going to be the extra costs of providing residential care, and who pays for that?

Answer by Councillor Maureen Braun

The Council supports 1,638 older people in their own homes through home care services. The department funds 780,000 hours of home care through its contracts with the independent sector, at a cost of £9.36M (£12 per hour which is below the London and all England average) and a further 156,000 through Housing 21 which is the TUPE transfer of the in-house service, The cost of this service is £3.744M (£24 per hour) The Council's performance against the DOH indicators for intensive home care provision, i.e. more than 10 hours per week and 6 or more visits per week, is in the upper quartile. The costs of residential care, for any Springwood users who require it, will be offset by the cost of the care package that ends. In some cases, the cost of care packages that maintain people in the community is in excess of the cost of a bed in residential care. This is the case for a number of Springwood service users.

Supplementary Question No. 9**Councillor Linda McFadyen**

Thank you, yes I do have a supplementary and if we are going to mention the Ann Owen Centre yet again in this context, it's my understanding that there is no guarantee that it will be there after May for either the service users or the staff. But to this particular question, the final sentence of the written response says it all and I quote "The cost of care packages that maintain people in the community is in excess of the cost of a bed in residential care. This is the case for a number of Springwood service users." Can the Cabinet Member explain to the council why the council is quite happy to force elderly people into cheaper care homes while denying them the choice of independent living at home? When is she going to realise that she has lost the confidence of the service users and the people of this borough, and when is she going to resign.

Answer by Councillor Maureen Braun

I'll do the last bit of your question first Councillor McFadyen. I am going to resign when one of two situations arises. One when my Leader decides he no longer wishes me to occupy the post, and the second one if, I myself, decide I no longer wish to occupy the post. I've said before none of us have a freehold on the position.

Now in regard to the question that you have asked me, nobody's being forced into anything. I feel this is like a Heinz 57 Varieties, I just wonder how many more times you're going to ask the same questions on Springwood and I must congratulate you on your extensive vocabulary because you make it ever so slightly different each time. We referred to seven users where there was a problem, there is now three or four. I could answer you Councillor McFadyen and I will do so about their particular things but I will do so in writing because I think this is not the forum to discuss confidential reviews. It is quite easy to identify who these people might be but I will answer everything that you have asked me about them in writing.

Question No. 10**Councillor Matthew Offord**

On 12 February, the Prime Minister made a speech in Brent naming 17 LEAs who would receive funds from the 'Building Schools for the Future Programme'. Having been so poorly treated under the past two local government settlements, can the Cabinet Member for Education please tell me if Barnet was one of the 17?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

No, Barnet was not selected to be part of the first wave of BSF (which relates to secondary school buildings). The rules for BSF have now been changed. Despite asking LEA's to submit expressions of interest with outline proposals, last December, officers have been told by the DfES that further BSF funding will be allocated on the basis of free school meals and GCSE results. No official announcement has been made.

In meetings with the Minister, we have been assured that the DfES was prepared to look at Barnet's proposed capital programme. These assurances were given in response to one of the findings of the KPMG report into school funding in Barnet which pointed out that Barnet has a high number of small schools, which raises our unit costs, and KPMG indicated that it would be financially advantageous to look at ways of reducing the number of small schools. In response, officers have:

Held lengthy discussions with DfES officials (with the LDBS) to consider Barnet's innovative proposals for secondary school Church of England provision. Despite these discussions, Barnet was not included in the first wave of BSF funding.

Held initial discussion with DfES officials to consider Barnet's proposals for improving our building stock in the primary sector. Again, the DfES could offer little encouragement and therefore officers are working up self-financing schemes to carry out essential and long overdue improvements and I will be bringing proposals to Cabinet later on in the year.

Supplementary Question No. 10

Councillor Matthew Offord

Thank you Mr Mayor. Is the Cabinet Member aware that of the 17 authorities who will receive BSF money 12 are Labour controlled, 4 in no overall control where Labour are hoping to take control in the forthcoming elections and just one is a Conservative authority. Does she agree this is yet another example of the government fiddling education funding to help themselves?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

It certainly does seem disproportionate, out of the 17 authorities for only one to be Conservative, particularly prior to the forthcoming elections. It's a great disappointment to Barnet because the KPMG report clearly highlighted that we had too many small schools; the DfES particularly requested that we put proposals forward, only to be turned down yet again.

Question No. 11

Councillor Sean Hooker

Will the London Fire Service be consulted over the West Hendon development?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

Yes.

Supplementary Question No. 11

Councillor Sean Hooker

Thank you Mr Mayor. Is the Cabinet Member aware that the local fire service does not have the equipment to deal with fires in buildings over five storeys and if so what safety provision is he examining for the safety in any tall buildings planned for the future?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

The all risks assessment and appraisal have been considered and the answer is there will be strategy with regards to the fire services' new development in the borough. So all the points have been considered and there will be an available service and equipment to cater for high buildings.

Question No. 12

Councillor Mark Langton

There was no mention in the decision to close Springwood Day Centre (without the provision of a brand new day centre at Wood Court) of the Cabinet on 22 March that friendship groups would be kept together if new day centre provision were found for service users. Will the Cabinet Member guarantee that such friendship groups will be kept together?

Answer by Councillor Maureen Braun

As we have said time and time again, where possible friendship groups will be kept together. Officers are making every effort to keep groups of friends together within the new arrangements. While I cannot guarantee that an entire group would be kept together, I do not envisage anyone moving in isolation.

Supplementary Question No. 12

Councillor Mark Langton

Thank you Mr Mayor. The real answer to keeping the entire friendship groups together would be to open Wood Court Day Centre, as planned by the Labour Group. How many more times does the Cabinet Member have to get it wrong before she resigns?

Answer by Councillor Maureen Braun

Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. I am sorry, you have won, I cannot say it again in a different manner. Wood Court is not going to provide a day centre; everybody at Springwood who requires or is eligible for day care will be placed alternatively and, I must say, some of the reviewing has come out quite strangely. Some of the so-called friendship groups have resulted in the fact that they actually do not love each other and a couple of people have said (no this is absolutely true) thank God you know I do not have to be with that old b---r any more, and I can go elsewhere.

Question No. 13

Councillor Brian Gordon

Please could more be done to ensure that refuse collectors replace wheelie bins in their correct position on properties after they have emptied the refuse.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

All refuse crews are reminded in writing on a regular basis about the need to return bins to correct locations after emptying.

Individual locations, where non-return of bins is subject of customer complaints, are monitored by supervisors and crews called back as required to replace bins. Crews may be disciplined in some circumstances

Collection teams who fail to replace bins correctly and exceed a complaint level of over one non-returned bin a week will have pay reduced. An audit of the last 12 months complaints (based on CCU data) relating to non return of bins has shown that the average weekly complaint rate for the issue averages less than 3 complaints per 100,000 collections per week. The recent campaign by Barnet Borough Sight Impaired has highlighted this problem but I am certain that we have the issue under control in the Borough.

Supplementary Question No. 13

Councillor Brian Gordon

I am very grateful to Councillor Coleman for the interest he shows in rubbish bins and that he agrees with me, that they should be returned by the refuse collectors to their rightful position. Could he please confirm that the refuse collectors understand they must put the wheelie bins right back in the position from which they have been taken, so that residents do not have to go through the difficult procedure sometimes of pushing them back to where they should be.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I think the answer is yes.

Question No. 14

Councillor Sean Hooker

For what reasons is Welsh Harp Sailing Club being closed?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

After careful consideration, the decision was taken to cease the service at the Welsh Harp Youth Sailing Base from 1 April 2004 as with the limited resources available to the council, we are not in a position to continue to deliver a sailing programme that meets all of the very high standards expected of a responsible local authority. These relate to the council's overall duty of care with regard to water safety, legal and best practice requirements and the availability of suitably qualified staff. The main focus of the Leisure Service will now be directed upon the council's strategic decision to take forward the proposed development of new facilities as part of the overall regeneration of West Hendon.

Supplementary Question No. 14

Councillor Sean Hooker

Thank you Mr Mayor. Cabinet Member, if such careful consideration has been given to the future provision of the sailing club why have some residents been told by the council that sailing will not be possible ever again on the Welsh Harp due to Thames Water's plans to lower the water level. Is the Cabinet Member aware that English Nature will not permit this on a SSSI and, therefore, that this will not be a factor stopping the sailing being reintroduced?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

Thank you Mr Mayor. With the question of water level, this affects the sailing base in its present location. We are not saying that there won't be any sailing provision on the Welsh Harp, it will be moved to the other side of Cool Oak Lane. This is something that is a known fact and will be happening hopefully within the next two years.

Question No. 15

Councillor Arun Ghosh

When are the residents of Spencer House being moved, where are they going, and what measures are being taken to avoid any risk and danger to the elderly residents?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

The decanting of Spencer House has already started.

The residents at Spencer House have been consulted about their future housing needs and will receive a personal meeting with the Sheltered Housing Project Officer to discuss their particular needs. This meeting often includes family and carers.

On going support is provided by the Sheltered Housing Officer, the Project Officer and Social Worker if they are receiving a care package.

We have kept a number of vacancies free in surrounding sheltered schemes and we can also access sheltered housing through local Housing Associations. We will seek to satisfy the tenants' choice of future accommodation.

We provide full support services for residents moving out of sheltered housing and have extensive experience in re-housing vulnerable, elderly people. Recently we have successfully decanted seven sheltered schemes and have had a high level of satisfaction from tenants. Most tenants are allocated a much higher quality of accommodation than they currently occupy. Most move to self contained sheltered housing although some choose to move to independent homes. We have also successfully found homes for tenants outside Barnet to be nearer relatives.

Finally, all tenants are entitled to Home Loss (£3,100) and Disturbance Allowance (based on individual assessments). Officers also arrange and pay removals expenses.

Supplementary Question No. 15**Councillor Arun Ghosh**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I have got a supplementary on this. Does the Cabinet Member have any definite plans and consideration how the whole process will take place and what impact is the move having on the care packages provided by the social services?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

The council has decanted a number of blocks similar to this and we have plenty of experience doing it and I am absolutely confident that the needs of all the residents will be taken into account.

Question No. 16**Councillor Brian Gordon**

The Conservative Leader, Michael Howard, recently told a local councillors' conference that the Liberal Democrat idea of a local income tax would be quite unworkable and would "hit many more people much harder than Council Tax". Would you agree with this analysis, especially in the light of the suffering that has already imposed on Barnet's Council taxpayers due to the Labour Government's inequitable policies?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

Yes.

Supplementary Question No. 16**Councillor Brian Gordon**

Thank you for your endorsement of Michael Howard's criticism of the silly policies, very silly policies of the Liberal Democrats wanting a local income tax. Will you once again reiterate, Councillor Finn, that if it were not for the penal and vindictive policies of this government coupled with the wasteful and very damaging and irresponsible approach of London's Mayor then, probably the increase in council tax of this council, would be one of the lowest in London.

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

Most of Councillor Gordon's questions invite the simple answer yes, because it's easier so to answer. But he's quite right. We do not want local income tax, we do not want local inspector of taxes, local Danish Chopra's poking around in our business, it's enough with them as they are. We do not want them there. What we want is the government to give us more money, equitable money to London and not to hive it off to the northern boroughs, to the northern parts of England for their Labour Party places. Fairness is what we want, not this change of policy.

Question No. 17**Councillor Sean Hooker**

What pieces of land owned by the Council have been identified by the Council for potential asset disposal?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

Those properties and parcels of land which have been the subject of reports to the Cabinet Resources Committee and approved for disposal, or are referred to me for approval under delegated powers procedures, are the only ones which have been formally identified for asset disposal.

However, as part of the Council's property review process, officers have been and are continuing to undertake an on-going review of all the Council's property assets to identify under-utilised assets, those that may contribute to alternative service delivery and any that may be surplus to the Council's requirements. Once identified, reports about these potentially surplus assets are presented to the Cabinet Resources Committee for consideration.

Supplementary Question No. 17

Councillor Sean Hooker

Thank you. Councillor Finn given the near mistake of selling the land at the top of Marsh Close, in Mill Hill, which turned out to be very well used public open space, what public consultation do you propose to ensure that any asset that you are prepared to sell is truly under utilised.

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

All our policies are written down quite clearly. When we decide to sell something it goes to Cabinet Resources, it's stated clearly. Marsh Close was a typical example when the Liberal Party did not read their papers and it was the local people who had to tell them what was in the Cabinet papers. What a disgrace and incidentally, Jeremy Davies, I did correct the minutes of the meeting. It says Jeremy Davies himself used to play in Marsh Close, so Jeremy thanked me for correcting that for him.

Question No. 18

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

Would the Council consider sending out questionnaires to residents in Neeld and Rundell Crescents in my ward, which clearly ask for a yes or no response as to whether they wish to be included within the West Hendon CPZ?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes.

Supplementary Question No. 18

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

Thank you Mr Mayor, I've got a supplementary to the Cabinet Member. I welcome the Cabinet Member admitting that he was in the wrong and backing down. He seems to be doing rather a lot of that lately. All that is left now is for him to apologise to the residents, especially the ones that he has been rude to. Is he big enough to do that or is he still sulking? Thank you.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, I am glad Councillor Slocombe read that question because I suspect she did not write it herself. Mr Mayor, we have not made a U-turn. This administration is not like Tony Blair, there have been no mistakes. The residents wanted a reconsultation, as a listening administration, we are reconsulting.

Question No. 19

Councillor Brian Gordon

How much use has so far been made of the new Anti-Social Behaviour legislation within the Borough particularly with regard to housing estates?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

In so far as the Council's role as a landlord is concerned, the main powers in respect of anti-social behaviour, contained in the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 do not come in to force until 30th June 2004. The Council is still awaiting the guidance notes and best practice that we will be expected to follow.

I have repeatedly made clear that the Council under this administration will do everything within our powers to tackle anti-social behaviour utilising any appropriate legislation.

The Housing Scrutiny committee, of which Cllr Gordon is a member, is in the process of finalising a report on Ant-Social behaviour and I look forward to reading that report and considering the recommendations that I expect to be within it.

Supplementary Question No. 19

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Salinger, would you please take on board that you have the full support of the intelligent members of this council, which narrows it down a bit, in utilising the new legislation on anti-social behaviour to ensure that our council estates remain as peaceful, harmonious, tranquil and as safe as possible.

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

I am delighted with that support from Members, frankly from wherever they come. But I have to say it's not just a question of our housing estates. A lot of the problems that exist in this borough are not related directly to council housing. We will use those powers wherever we feel the need to use them.

Question No. 20

Councillor Susette Palmer

When the Cabinet consider any tenders for the site of South Friern Library will they undertake that such a tender will only be acceptable to them if the new library provision for South Friern will be as least as spacious as it is at present for this well used community library. Furthermore will they agree to keep the present library open until building work actually starts on a replacement?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

We will need to be assured that any plans for a new library provide sufficient space to enable a modern and fully accessible service to be delivered. The Library is currently remaining open until September to enable proposals for the redevelopment of the site to be considered. Cabinet will consider the future arrangements for maintaining the current opening hours once this period of investigation is completed.

Supplementary Question No. 20

Councillor Susette Palmer

Thank you for the reply, Councillor Davis. But would you just like to clarify that the reply actually means no South Friern Library replacement will not definitely be as spacious as it is now, and that no, you are not undertaking to keep a continuous library provision for the people of South Friern.

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

Thank you. Our intention is we do want to keep, obviously, a continuous library provision in South Friern and during the six months consultation period we are looking to make sure this is happening. We also, when we are reprovisioning the library, are going to make sure that there is a recommendation the library will be the same size as the existing one and that, I hope, makes this clear. Thank you.

Question No. 21

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

The Cabinet Member will be aware that the residents of Neeld and Rundell Crescents are very unhappy to have been included in the West Hendon CPZ, and that there has been much confusion as to the process of consultation and implementation. Will the Cabinet Member immediately begin an urgent review of the inclusion of these two roads, including a simply yes/no consultation questionnaire to residents as to whether they wish to be included within the CPZ?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes.

Supplementary Question No. 21

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Councillor Coleman this is yet another U-turn. I have got here a pile of correspondence. Councillor Coleman, in some of them your officers say yes Rundell Crescent and Neeld Crescent won't be included in the consultation or there won't be any CPZ. After a meeting with Councillor Coleman what happens?- the roads have to be included. My question to you, Councillor Coleman, is that my residents are absolutely fed up with your U-turn, can you now please give us a guarantee that whatever the results of the consultation, that the council will implement the choice of the residents. This is a democratic country. This is not a dictatorship here and people should have a right to choose.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Well Johnny Come Lately Councillor Sodha to this subject. I repeat there has not been a U-turn on this. This administration will always listen to reasonable requests from our residents. Do I take it though from the tone of Councillor Sodha's comments, that she's not in favour of a reconsultation.

Question No. 22

Councillor Brian Gordon

What plans are there for this year's Passover refuse skip facility?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

This Administration has increased the number of skips available. They were provided over the weekend of 2nd to 5th April, (skips being on site on Friday 2nd, Sunday 4th and the morning of Monday 5th).

The service was advertised in advance in the Jewish Press and seems to have been heavily used.

Supplementary Question No. 22

Councillor Brian Gordon

Thank you. My ward, and of course us personally, as well were very grateful to have the skips. Would you and the relevant council officers please accept the expressions of appreciation from the Jewish community for the excellent and the helpful and efficient way in which once again the Passover skip facility was operating this year. Thank you.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes indeed I will Councillor Gordon. I know that you have been very involved in the expansion of this service which is appreciated by the Jewish community across the borough. I was very taken with the photo opportunity featured in the Finchley and Hendon Times as I hadn't thought of that one myself.

Question No. 23

Councillor Susette Palmer

Has the cabinet member agreed to allow Totteridge residents to commission an independent report on the safety of the Totteridge library building?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

At an on site meeting with 2 residents on 30 March 2004 the residents were provided with a copy of the council's independent stock condition survey and DDA survey. The residents viewed the building at first hand with officers and the Cabinet Member. The residents have asked for no further information since this time.

Supplementary Question No. 23

Councillor Susette Palmer

Councillor Davis thank you for the reply but is there anything else positive that has happened recently with regards to reprovisioning this library with which you would like to update us with.

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

No not at this present time. We are still going ahead with the consultations there and, at this moment, I do not think there is any more I can add. Thank you.

Question No. 24

Councillor Colin Rogers

Please state the total number and percentage results for each individual road where consultation has taken place with residents as to whether they wish their road safety measures to be retained.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I am unaware that this Administration has removed any road safety measures indeed we have installed numerous additional road safety measures, under the safe routes to school programme and from the Highways budget.

Supplementary Question No. 24

Councillor Colin Rogers

Thank you Mr Mayor. I am surprised that the Cabinet Minister doesn't know the answer to the question but let me give him one example. Naylor Road and Ridgeview, there were 182 consultation forms sent out after the safety measures had been ripped out

When is the Cabinet Minister going to start listening to residents

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor I've answered the question. No road safety measures that I am aware of have been removed in this borough. Councillor Rogers of course is referring to traffic humps. The London Ambulance Service would not agree with him that traffic humps are road safety measures. They wouldn't agree with him because there are 500 unnecessary deaths in London each year caused by road humps.

Question No. 25

Councillor Brian Gordon

Please would you comment on the rumour that a significant part of Edgwarebury Park might be allocated for the prospective Edgware City Academy.

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

While the potential for use of parts of the Edgwarebury Park for the Academy have been investigated, there are no plans for such use, nor are there any plans to develop such proposals. As stated in the report to Cabinet on 22nd March 2004 regarding the Academy: "There will be no use of Edgwarebury Park, as this was considered unsuitable in light of the school's requirements and likely concern about restricted access."

Supplementary Question No. 25

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Davis thank you for your reassurance that Edgwarebury Park will remain intact. Would you please reiterate that this council regards the maintenance of good quality parks and accessible recreation facilities as a matter of the highest priority?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

I would indeed reiterate this and also take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in the matter of Edgwarebury Park and also to thank the proactive interest of the Edgware councillors, Councillors Scannell and Hart in this matter. Thank you.

Question No. 26

Councillor Monroe Palmer

Can The Leader explain why Barnet Council are delivering our magazine to Brent residents. Are we doing this to other neighbouring boroughs. Does this not make Barnet look even more foolish and wasteful than usual under your administration?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

It is our aim that every household in the borough of Barnet receive a regular copy of the Council's magazine for residents, Barnet First. To help us achieve maximum circulation, the magazine is delivered by Royal Mail with the post, and is supplemented by door-to-door delivery by private contractors where Royal Mail delivery is not available. However, Royal Mail door drops can only be booked by full postal sector. Since local authority and postal boundaries do not coincide, it means some residents living outside the borough of Barnet do receive the publication. A short note explaining the reason why households outside the borough receive a copy of Barnet First is printed on page 2 of every edition of the magazine.

This is more cost effective than door-to-door delivery and is common practice amongst other local authorities.

Supplementary Question No. 26

Councillor Monroe Palmer

Mr Mayor, to Councillor Lyon. This is about the fact that the Barnet magazine is delivered wonderfully to neighbouring boroughs as well as Barnet. As you say it's normal practice Councillor Lyon, for boroughs' magazines to go to different boroughs. Can you not agree that this gives a very bad image because it does make us look like absolute idiots that we do not know where the boundaries are. Can you therefore confirm, because I am not sure that this does happen everywhere, that this happens not only in NW2, where I discovered it, but also in NW9, N2, N10, N14, to name but a few because we border on an awful lot of places where the postal codes not only affect Barnet but other boroughs. I know you're trying to portray Barnet as a good borough throughout but surely this is crazy.

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

No, Mr Mayor, it's not crazy. It is the most economic way of doing distribution and I would have thought those residents who happen to fall within the postal district where they may not have the good fortune to actually be in Barnet will realise, when they read our magazine, how much they are missing.

Question No. 27

Councillor Anne Hutton

If the Council is not to consult with local residents before road safety measures are removed, will residents at least be consulted within three months of completion of the removal of roads safety measures as to whether or not they want the road safety features reinstated?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

This administration has not removed any road safety measures. Traffic calming measures will be examined in line with agreed council policy.

Supplementary Question No. 27

Councillor Anne Hutton

Thank you Mr Mayor. Perhaps Councillor Coleman you could explain why Barnet has been criticised by the London Assembly Transport Committee for ripping out the 150 road safety measures, including safety cushions, humps and cycle lanes at a cost of a quarter of a million pounds.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I suggest Councillor Hutton gets a correct briefing, because that is incorrect.

Question No. 28

Councillor Brian Gordon

The Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer Oliver Letwin, recently stated that on the first day after the next General Election, a Conservative administration would "freeze recruitment to the Civil Service across the board" and exercise a radical pruning of civil service wastage. Are these policies not equally appropriate for local government, such as we have in Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

As everyone knows the number of people employed in the Civil Service has grown under this Labour Government. The Cabinet Office announced on 16 October 2003 that the number of full time permanent civil service posts was increasing at an annual rate of over 5% a year.

It is not surprising that the Shadow Chancellor recognises the need to take urgent action to put right an unsustainable spending spree and re-introduce responsible government.

In Barnet we inherited the consequences of just such an unsustainable spending spree two years ago and we took just the sort of measures that are being advocated nationally to ensure sound and sensible management.

We have introduced tight controls on recruitment and have had them in place for several months. These will continue so that we concentrate on filling key service delivery posts, and those required for essential projects. We have a programme to ensure value for money and effectiveness, and this will continue. We have started to modernise the Council's core systems to make best use of modern IT and to help staff to become more efficient and will implement these systems over the next year.

We have also set up systems to root out and prevent fraud which have proved very successful, and we believe that it is unfortunate that the previous Administration did not take up similar actions themselves.

So we should all be pleased to see that the next national government will be following the example set by the current administration in the this Borough.

Supplementary Question No. 28

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor David thank you for your helpful answer. Would you please join me in congratulating Councillor Freer for being perceptive enough with all those who have helped him to root out the fraud that was taking place within this council so early on in the time of this administration.

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Why yes, Councillor Gordon I will join you in congratulating Councillor Freer. It took Councillor Freer just weeks to discover the fraud that was going on under the previous administration's noses for years and years and years. But then again the previous administration did not believe in having a Cabinet Member for Value and Effectiveness, they ran a dictatorship with a Leader who had 9 portfolios himself and had some 'yes' boys and 'no' boys but just did exactly what he'd told them to.

Question No. 29

Councillor Kath McGuirk

The Council is threatening to prosecute and fine residents in East Barnet, Brunswick Park, Oakleigh and Totteridge if they place recyclables in their wheelie bin rather than the recycling black box. In order to threaten prosecution the council must have made financial plans to support such action, otherwise residents will suspect the council is bluffing. What finances have been set aside to pursue such prosecutions, for which service budget will these come, and what estimate of the number of prosecutions has the Council made for the financial year 2004/5?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Should the council prosecute anybody we would expect to recover any costs. However perhaps Councillor McGuirk would kindly tell me whether she supports the scheme or not?

Supplementary Question No. 29

Councillor McGuirk

I thank Councillor Coleman for his question to me and unlike Cabinet Members I'll actually answer it. He asked if we are in favour of the scheme. Of course we are in favour of the principle but the key issue is enforcement. The problem is that the council has no financial plans to prosecute anybody. In fact, there are no plans to prosecute anybody at all. Staff are not searching wheelie bins, residents will only receive a letter. I adhere to what you say. As the chances of a prosecution are next to none what will the Cabinet Member be going to do when residents realise he's bluffing and recycling rates start to fall.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Councillor McGuirk is wrong on matters of fact and on matters of policy. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, a good piece of Thatcherite Conservative legislation, we have all the legal powers we need. But she's right on one point Mr Mayor, we are not searching people's wheelie bins. That is not the way the scheme works. The scheme works in that you have a black box you will put something in it, simple acid tests as to whether you have taken part, whether there is something in your black box. I have to say her rather carping attitude is in contrast to the more positive attitude from Councillor Hooker in the Ham & High letter that he wrote last week. If we prosecute blatant and persistent offenders who will not take part and behave in an anti-social manner by not recycling, then I am sure this council would obtain the costs as well as any fines that Magistrates might impose. We are determined to make a success of recycling to achieve our targets and the financial benefits that will accrue to this council. We are ground breaking in this policy. We are leading the way in the United Kingdom and I am proud of that and this administration is proud of that.

Question No. 30

Councillor Brian Gordon

What is your opinion on the effect on Barnet concerning the London Mayor's desire to extend the congestion charge to cover a wider area?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I refer Councillor Gordon to the report agreed by the 22nd March meeting of Cabinet and the conclusion that the proposed extension to the Congestion Charging Scheme is widely regarded as premature and is unlikely to have a positive effect on Barnet.

The consultation currently underway on the proposed western extension (responses due Friday 23 April 2004) is based on inadequate technical information and a decision to extend the scheme should not be made until the full effects of the existing scheme are better understood.

At a local level, Barnet has concerns for the following reasons:

The borough is unlikely to benefit in terms of a reduction in traffic movement, and must consider the possibility of a potential increase in commuter parking.

Barnet could experience increased congestion, particularly along major routes such as the North Circular Road, due to traffic displacement.

The current proposals of a combined charging area with the possible inclusion of two free routes through the extended zone, may lead to an increase in traffic flows and congestion on the A5/A41 corridors leading to Marble Arch.

TfL predict the capital cost of implementing the proposed extension to be in the region of £100-120m. With operating costs, TfL's figures show the enlarged scheme will cost in the range of £135m to £155m per annum with the majority of this being paid to the commercial organisations operating the scheme.

Original projections for the central area scheme suggested net revenue of £200m, and net revenues in future years for the central scheme are now projected to rise between £80 and £90m. The shortfall on the original scheme highlights the difficulty in making accurate predictions for this type of scheme.

If no changes to the scheme are made, such as an increase in the daily charge or penalty levels, the cost of running the extended scheme will be almost twice the net revenue.

The scheme would further increase the relatively high levels of transport expenditure in central London at the expense of outer London boroughs such as Barnet. For example, it is estimated that the cost of running additional public transport services associated with the western extension will be in the region of £10m per annum.

The London Mayor's current allocation of funding for borough projects is currently £160m per annum and boroughs have been warned that this is likely to fall long term, perhaps by as much as 50%.

Supplementary Question No. 30

Councillor Brian Gordon

Councillor Coleman I am sure that Barnet's public will view with dismay the negative effects of extending the congestion charge as you set out in your answer. Would you not agree that the Mayor of London has shown himself to be an enemy of the private motorist. Is he not disgracefully abusing his position as Mayor in penalising Barnet for refusing to accept his half-baked traffic policies?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor I would agree indeed with Councillor Gordon, what's more not only is the Mayor ignoring results of the consultation on congestion charging, even the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority has come out officially against the extension of the congestion charging zone. The officers of our authority advised members only last week that it would be very unwise indeed, for operational fire brigade reasons to extend the congestion charge. I do not expect the Mayor of London to listen even to the fire brigade. I do expect him to listen to the views of the London residents when they vote him out of office on June 10.

Question No. 31

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Was the £72,000 saving originally envisaged from closing South Friern Library for a full year, and if not, for how long?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

The saving was for the financial year from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005.

Supplementary Question No. 31

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Thank you. Can I just ask Councillor Davis that while the six month reprieve for South Friern Library was welcomed, will he reassure the local residents by giving them a commitment to extend the reprieve until building work starts to reprovide a new library on that site.

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

At the end of the six-month period we will be reviewing the situation and then I can answer you on exactly what we will be doing with the strategy. Thank you.

Question No. 32**Councillor Matthew Offord**

With the appointment of a new Borough Police Commander, Chief Superintendent Mark Ricketts, can the Cabinet member for Environment please tell me if he knows the Chief Superintendent's views on alcohol free zones?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The new borough Police Commander attended the launch of the borough's first alcohol free zone in North Finchley. He is extremely supportive of the Council's initiative and has taken a rigorous view on enforcement.

Supplementary Question No. 32**Councillor Matthew Offord**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Does the Cabinet Member expect a U-turn by local Labour politicians who have tried to talk the schemes down?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Well Mr Mayor you will recall when you inaugurated the alcohol free zone with the Shadow Home Office Minister that Councillor Slocombe and Councillor McGuirk were there to give it their full support, I assumed they were there to give it their full support, and it has been a success, the first prosecution is already going through the courts. It has improved the quality of life for residents using the North Finchley shopping centre. If the pilot scheme proves to be a success I will roll it out into any other areas that any member of this council feels will be beneficial and I assume some Labour and Liberal Democrat colleagues would like alcohol free zones in their wards. If so I will entertain requests for those alcohol free zones favourably.

Question No. 33**Councillor Jim Tierney**

With reference to the possible redevelopment of the Tesco/Whitefields site in Cricklewood, why were the Council's regeneration partners of Hammerson, Standard Life and Cricklewood Redevelopment Ltd not informed or consulted on the Council's proposal to work exclusively with Multiplex until three days after the Cabinet had decided to work exclusively with Multiplex?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

Hammerson and Cricklewood Redevelopment Limited had been advised at a meeting of the Cricklewood Working Group before the Cabinet meeting.

Supplementary Question No. 33**Councillor Jim Tierney**

I thank Councillor Patel for his answer. But I would just ask as a supplementary is this multi-million pound Cricklewood development so unimportant to the Cabinet Member that he did not see fit to pick up the 'phone himself and tell CRL directly what was going on. The CRL Development Manager said, in the Hendon Times, that he was entitled to common courtesy and indeed common sense from the council, neither of which appears to have been extended to him in this latter day, eleventh hour multi-plex episode. Will the Cabinet Member now redeem the situation by making a public apology to CRL in an attempt to build bridges with this very important partner.

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

Thank you Councillor Tierney. I make no public apology and I make no U-turn. We will not offer an exclusive zone to any developer in this borough. We have every right to encourage any developer or financier and all the people who have a viable scheme. This was a scheme envisaged two years ago by the London Tower and Dawnay Days. It wasn't viable, there was no financial agreement on it, there was no money available. Having said that, before you asked me to apologise, you spent 8 years under your administration, or probably 10 years, what have you done zero. They are only fighting each other and it was because of the good offices of the Leader, Councillor Victor Lyon, that brought Cricklewood Ltd, Hammerson and the other participants. We are here, we've got a draft development scheme, we have also got the actual scheme coming to the Cabinet meeting and I am sure everyone will support that. But as far as an exclusive zone is concerned we will not be held to ransom by any developer who feels he has got Cricklewood as part of his exclusive rights that nobody should come anywhere near. Let me make it absolutely clear, it might be cavalier, but when you offer, if anybody wants to develop they need an exclusive right for a desk top study. This was only a desktop study and it will remain so. Can I make it very clear it is only a desktop study, so we will talk to anybody who's interested to move the scheme forward.

Question No. 34

Councillor Matthew Offord

Has the Cabinet member for Education read the Government's response to the Education and Skills Committee's 'Public Expenditure: Schools' Funding report?'

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Yes I have and it is interesting how the Government have now fully taken on board the affect that the schools funding changes had on a number of our schools. They admit that mistakes were made and want to work more closely with LEA's and schools to ensure that this does not happen again.

The report says that "It was a serious weakness in the Department's strategy to implement the school's funding changes without knowing in detail how schools would be affected". Barnet told them but they would not listen.

Supplementary Question No. 34

Councillor Matthew Offord

The Cabinet Member is too modest as she fails to mention the government admits in its response that central government does not fund schools directly, local education authorities do. The government is responsible for allocating resources to LEAs. I am sure that all members recall the select committee original report, Barnet was expected to use up the whole of its increase in formula grant plus another £121m to fund education passporing. Can she tell me if she has received any apologies over the erroneous statements made by the Members opposite, particularly the letter written to all our head teachers by her Labour shadow.

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Thank you. So one year on the government admits their mistakes. However, it's too little too late for the young people who have had their education disrupted. For the teachers and staff that lost their jobs, for the Heads who have been ignored and demoralised and too late for the residents in Barnet who have had to pay the increased council tax to cover the government's mistakes. It would be nice to receive an apology both from the other side of the Chamber today but also from Mr Clarke. However, I would settle for his resignation.

Question No. 35

Councillor Alison Moore

What arrangements have been made for those parents who applied in good faith for places this year at Christ Church Secondary School and are now without a school place for their child in September?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

At the very beginning of the consultation on the reorganisation proposals, officers wrote to all parents who had indicated a preference for a place at Christ Church for September 2004. This meant that parents were aware of the proposals before the deadline for the secondary school preferences. There were 33 pupils for whom the school was identified as a sole or first preference, of whom 13 were Barnet residents, and a further 40 pupils for whom the school was a second or third preference.

Supplementary Question No. 35

Councillor Alison Moore

Thank you. There are children in the East Finchley and Finchley areas who are currently without a school place for September as a direct result of the Cabinet Member's decision to close Christ Church in the middle of a secondary transfer process this year. Despite your reply, Councillor Hillan, parents feel this was done without adequate warning to parents to allow them to make appropriate, informed and realistic choices about the schools to which they would apply as part of their three choices. Does the Cabinet Member understand the distress and anger that these parents feel and can she tell council precisely how she will ensure that they are all offered places at another school of their choice?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Every single parent of Christ Church was written to prior to Christ Church closing. They have all been written to since and they have all attended various open days from the schools that have got places. For instance in year 9 we currently have 112 children, 40 of which are Barnet children. We have enough places at Bishop Douglass, Ravenscroft, St Mary's and the Greg Academy. In fact we could place all 112 of them in Barnet, so I do not think that there is a problem.

Question No. 36

Councillor Olwen Evans

Is Cllr Coleman happy with the level of increase in the North London Waste Authority levy for 2004/2005?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

No. I am sick and tired that the Council taxpayers of this Borough have to suffer an above inflation increase in the levy from the North London Waste Authority mainly because of the lack of recycling from a few "Dirty Boroughs" in North London.

In 2003/04 the NLWA levy for Barnet Council was £7,720,005, 22% of the total levy. In 2004/05 the NLWA levy for Barnet Council is £8,279,149, a 7.2% increase on 2003/04 and 21.57% of the total levy.

The Boroughs who are completely failing to get their act together on recycling are Liberal Democrat Controlled Islington, Labour controlled Haringey and Labour run Waltham Forrester. There is no excuse for this failure except the lack of Political will and the knowledge that because of the way the levy works Barnet taxpayers will pick up the bill.

Supplementary Question No. 36

Councillor Olwen Evans

Thank you, Mr Mayor. It obviously would be preferable for Barnet if the payment for refuse disposal was on a tonnage base. Would the Cabinet Member say does he ever think the day will come when we will be paid for disposal of our refuse on a tonnage basis?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Mr Mayor, as you will know as a fellow member of the North London Waste Authority, a shift to a tonnage based system would be a considerable saving, somewhere approximately £1m to the council tax payers of this borough. The move to a tonnage base has to be unanimous. It has been consistently blocked by the Labour borough of Hackney and the usually Labour borough of Waltham Forest; two of the dirtiest boroughs in North London. They, as you will know Mr Mayor, both have an appalling record on recycling. My understanding Mr Mayor, though, is that this government is considering lifting the device by which one or two local authorities can block the move to a tonnage basis and is considering imposing a tonnage base. That cannot come soon enough for the council taxpayers of this borough.

Question No. 37

Councillor Paul Rogers

With reference to the London Academy and plans for the redevelopment of the Stonegrove and Spur Road estate, if the council cannot buy sites referred to as B and C in the Cabinet report of 22 March, it cannot release site E and F for the Stonegrove/Spur Road redevelopment because sites E and F would become the property of the Academy Trust. What contingency plans are in place for the redevelopment scheme if that should happen?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

It was a requirement of the DfES that the Council provide a fall back option that it could guarantee using land that was already in its ownership, although no party wished this option to become necessary, and all efforts will be made to purchase the land proposed for the Academy. It should be noted that the Secretary of State has the power to remove land from local authority ownership in order that an Academy be set up.

Supplementary Question No. 37

Councillor Paul Rogers

Thank you Mr Mayor. The Cabinet Member deserves to be congratulated on his rather startlingly honest reply. Given the seriousness of the situation, perhaps the Cabinet Member could update the council on the process so far made in buying the sites referred to as E and F?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

Mr Mayor, I thank him for the early part. "Discussions are ongoing" is as much as I can say this evening.

Question No. 38

Councillor Phil Yeoman

According to the Council, the Ann Owens Centre in East Finchley provides care to elderly residents with low to medium needs. The council has chosen to cut the grant to the centre, preferring to spend the money on road repairs. Please list all the social care services provided by the Council to elderly residents with low to medium care needs.

Answer by Councillor Maureen Braun

The community care department does not provide services to those assessed in these eligibility criteria bands. However the council, through the corporate grant process, funds voluntary and independent organisations to the value of £1.7M. Approximately £1M of this grant aid is allocated to organisations that either directly or indirectly support individuals with low and medium care needs. I attach the grants list as an Appendix.

Supplementary Question No. 38

Councillor Phil Yeoman

I am reliably informed at the AGM we will have a new head of that area, a new head with Cabinet responsibilities I think I'll wait 'til then to ask supplementary questions.

Question No. 39

Councillor Linda McFadyen

The Cabinet report on 22 March concerning the closure of Springwood day centre talks about an 'adverse affect' on the 51 of 88 service users who have some form of dementia or other mental health problem. What does the council mean precisely by 'adverse affect'?

Answer by Councillor Maureen Braun

Research suggests that dementia sufferers can react badly to change. In some cases change, if not carefully managed, can lead to deterioration in capacity.

Question No. 40

Councillor Mark Langton

The housing allocations policy includes preferential allocation of homes with gardens to families with young children above families with a family member with a disability. Will the Cabinet member ensure that either the Council/Barnet Homes amend the allocations policy to ensure families with a family member with a disability are not discriminated against, as they could also greatly benefit from a home with a garden?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

I refer Councillor Langton to the reply that I have given to his amazingly similarly worded question Number 3 on the list of questions for this meeting

Question No. 41

Councillor Arun Ghosh

If the Cabinet member would make a statement about the closure of the Welsh Harp Youth Sailing Base?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

As per statement in response to Q 14.

Question No. 42

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

In a letter to me dated 27 March the Cabinet Member alleged that my residents had launched personal and unjustified attacks on Council officers. Please either withdraw those allegations or be specific about what kind of attacks those were?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

In a letter dated 30 March, a local resident described a Chief Officer as sending "an inaccurate, rude and childish email". In another letter dated 14 March, addressed to the Chief Executive, the same local resident asked for a Highways Officer be removed from office. There have also been a number of quotes from this resident in the local Newspapers.

Question No. 43**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

The Council originally told residents of Neeld and Rundell Crescents in writing that the CPZ leaflet delivered in November 2002 was not part of the formal consultation, but was the first stage of presenting proposals to residents who would be consulted again at a later stage. Why did the Council break its promise to consult again?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The council has not broken its promise on this or any other matter related to controlled parking zones.

Question No. 44**Councillor Colin Rogers**

Please provide a list of roads where road safety measures have been removed – and as a result of resident consultation – been replaced.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

This administration has not removed any road safety measures. Traffic calming measures will be examined in line with agreed council policy.

Question No. 45**Councillor Anne Hutton**

Will the Cabinet Member ensure that ward councillors are informed and consulted BEFORE road safety measures are to be removed from their ward?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes should this Administration ever remove any road safety measures. As Cabinet Member I have no plans to remove any road safety measures nor have I done so.

Question No. 46**Councillor Kath McGuirk**

At the Council meeting on 12 July 2001, Cllr Victor Lyon put forward plans for a Traffic Regulation Order to ban lorries and vans weighing over 3 tonnes, such as transit vans, from overnight parking on public roads in the borough. When are you going to implement the current Leader of the Council's proposal?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I am informed that officers considered this proposal but unfortunately found it completely impractical.

Question No. 47**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Are you guaranteeing that if the South Friern library site is sold that a library will be reprovided?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

The Cabinet Resources Committee on 18 March 2004 approved the recommendation that interested parties be invited to submit their proposals for the redevelopment of the South Friern Library site and its adjoining buildings and that the data pack that the council will provide to support this process is to include the specification for a new library facility.

Question No. 48**Councillor Jim Tierney**

With reference to the possible redevelopment of the Tesco/Whitefields site in Cricklewood, why is the Council not working with its regeneration partners of Hammerson, Standard Life and Cricklewood Redevelopment Ltd to develop proposals for the site as part of the larger Development Framework?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

Any proposals for the Tesco/Whitefields site will form part of the larger development framework, and of course, the council's Cricklewood partners will be involved in that process.

Question No. 49

Councillor Paul Rogers

Without going into the figures, the expected capital receipt from the housing developer will far exceed the cost of either land designated B and C in the London Academy Cabinet report of 22 March or the Council's capital contribution to the SEN facility. Nor can it be used to pay back the prudential borrowing to fund the purchase of land A because that is a revenue spend. So will the capital receipt simply go into the general capital programme pot, or is the council intending to spend that money on the local area or given that it is school land being sold, wouldn't it be appropriate to invest the money in new school buildings elsewhere?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

The capital receipt is a Council contribution to the establishment of the Barnet City Academy, as described in reports to Cabinet of 9th September 2002 and 10th February 2004.

Question No. 50

Councillor Phil Yeoman

Has Barratt Homes in the process of or bought the Barnet College Russell Lane site, and if not, who is?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

I understand that Barrett's are the bidder preferred by Barnet College.

Question No. 51

Councillor Linda McFadyen

The Cabinet report on 22 March claimed the plans set out to close Springwood (and not open Wood court day centre as planned) are based not on the financial imperatives to close Springwood but instead are firmly rooted in continuing to meet service users needs during this transition phase. Do you think residents would have more respect for the council if it was just honest and said the closure was all to do with saving money and nothing to do with improving services?

Answer by Councillor Maureen Braun

By closing Springwood a year or so in advance of the planned closure, some £300,000 is saved. However the review of all day care services, of which it may be said that the Springwood closure was the catalyst, will certainly bring about an improved and more efficient service not only to the Springwood users, but all users of day centres.

Question No. 52

Councillor Arun Ghosh

Will the Cabinet Member confirm in writing the Council's proposals to re-open the Welsh Harp Youth Sailing Base by 2006 at the latest, the timetable for this and the detailed plans for doing so?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

The plans for the redevelopment of the Welsh Harp Sailing Base are included in the overall plans for the regeneration of West Hendon and the timetable and detailed plans for this scheme will be available in due course.

Question No. 53

Councillor Agnes Slocombe

Would the Council consider taking yellow lines out of roads in West Hendon where residents do not want them (and where are no safety issues involved)?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

The council carries out a review of yellow lines each year, and requests for yellow lines to be removed by residents are included in this review if officers feel that the request meets the council's criteria which were approved in 1995. I suggest Councillor Slocombe writes to the Head of Highways and design or raises the matter at the Area Environment Committee.

Question No. 54

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

In September 2003, the Council told residents of Neeld and Rundell Crescents in writing that the recommendation to Members would be for Neeld and Rundell Crescents to be excluded from the West Hendon CPZ. Can the Cabinet Member confirm this was the case, and if so, on what grounds the decision was taken to ignore officer advice?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

At no time have I or Councillor Offord ignored or overturned officers' advice on any matters related to this CPZ.

Question No. 55

Councillor Colin Rogers

When will the council start to consult with local residents and ward councillors BEFORE road safety measures are removed?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I refer Cllr Rogers to my answer to Q27. This administration is installing additional road safety measures and is not intending to remove any road safety measures.

Question No. 56

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

What consultation is going to take place with residents firstly on whether they want the current South Friern library retained or the council's proposed mixed-use development, and secondly at a later stage on the specific proposals for any mixed-use development that includes a library?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

The Council has taken note of the views of residents with regard to South Friern Library and is continuing to provide the full range of services available from the current site for the next 6 months to enable proposals for the redevelopment of the site, including the specification

for a new library facility, to be explored. We will engage with the local community when we have collated all of the responses from those parties who are interested in developing the site. Whilst the submission of proposals is being progressed, officers will continue to work with the local community and Friends of Barnet Borough Libraries and respond to issues relating to South Friern Library. There will be further consultation at a later stage on details of proposal as part of any planning application.

Question No. 57

Councillor Jim Tierney

The 22 March Cabinet report on the council dumping the London Towers Arena proposals included reference to “associated enabling development”. What does the Council envisage such development including or has Multiplex been given no guidance on what would be permissible to the Council?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

Multiplex have been provided with copies of the council’s corporate plan. The purpose of the proposed six-month exclusivity period is to enable them to examine the development potential of this area of Cricklewood and bring forward proposals for the council’s consideration. It is from Multiplex in the instance to determine what type and extent of enabling development might be appropriate.

Question No. 58

Councillor Paul Rogers

Is the Council considering using a compulsory purchase order to buy the land shown as A, B and C in the London Academy Cabinet report of 22 March, and would the Council be prepared to use that CPO if necessary?

Answer by Councillor Anthony Finn

As stated in the report received by Cabinet on 9th September 2002 "The Council will work with the trustees to assist in the acquisition of the green belt land on the north side of Spur Road (All Souls) for use as playing/sports fields by the London Academy. This will involve joint negotiations with the owners of the land, but if these prove unsuccessful then it is probable that the use of CPO powers will be necessary...".

Question No. 59

Councillor Phil Yeoman

What discussions has the council held with the purchaser/prospective purchaser of the Barnet College Russell Lane site?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

There have been informal discussions including council officers with Barrett’s but no planning application has been submitted.

Question No. 60

Councillor Linda McFadyen

The Cabinet report on 22 March concerning the closure of Springwood Day Centre mentions the financial cap imposed by the temporary Head of Community Care for homecare. What practical impact will that have on the homecare service provided, and what difference will users notice as a result?

Answer by Councillor Maureen Braun

The financial cap referred to in the report is the hourly rate cap the head of Community Care imposed on the tender process for the new homecare contracts. This Cap was imposed to meet budget constraints and to limit the increase on expenditure to what the council could afford. The tendering agencies have all re-tendered within this cap, allowing for the first time the council to apply a standard rate across all its home care providers, with the exception of Housing Twenty One where the council is tied into a further eight years at £24 per hour with above annual RPI increases as a term in the contract.

The impact on service users and the service is nil, other than when allocating work to independent agencies. It will be done on quality and availability rather than on cost.

Question No. 61

Councillor Arun Ghosh

How many Street Enforcement officers are allocated to each ward, including West Hendon, and how often do they remain in the ward?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Councillor Ghosh fails to understand the nature of the Street Enforcement Service in that it provides the flexibility to cover issues across the whole Borough in marked contrast to the Neighbourhood Warden Service set up in such a hasty rush by the last Administration that failed to provide any service for vast swaths of the Borough.

However we ensure that one officer is allocated to exclusively to each ward between Monday and Friday. This officer works 8am to 4pm and is in the ward on each day. If the designated officer is absent on any day an officer from our 10am start shift will cover for that day and will work to 6pm.

In addition if there are specific issues the Street Enforcement service allows for flexible deployment into West Hendon from across the Borough.

The designated officer for West Hendon is Colin Bowell whom I would have thought Cllr Ghosh would have taken the trouble to meet up with.

Question No. 62

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Residents of Neeld and Rundell Crescents would be very happy for the Cabinet Member (and the Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee Chair) to visit the roads to see the particular issues involved as to why they do not wish to be part of the CPZ. Would the Cabinet Member agree to such a visit?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Yes.

Question No. 63

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

With reference to the future of South Friern Library, the Council has promised that the data pack for the sale of the site will invite proposals for a new library as part of the redevelopment of the site. Will the specification require reprovision of all the services and facilities currently available at the library with the same amount of floor-space as a minimum, and that what the Council is looking for is an improvement on that?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

We would wish to ensure that any new library facility would provide full access, public toilets and predominantly open plan space designed on one floor to give as much flexibility as possible to provide a modern and innovative library service that will deliver the Administration's vision for libraries as a community resource available to all.

Question No. 64

Councillor Jim Tierney

What brief has the Council given Multiplex to assist their drawing up of proposals for the redevelopment of the Cricklewood site covering Tesco, Hendon Sports Centre and the three schools?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

Multiplex have not been provided with a brief. In the light of the Cabinet decision of 22 March an exclusivity agreement is currently being prepared. Multiplex will only commit resources to this project once the exclusivity agreement has been completed.

As I indicated in my reply to Question 57 Multiplex have been provided with copies of the council's corporate plan which clearly sets out the council's five key priorities. They have indicated to me that they will want to have an initial series of meetings with myself and relevant council officers to discuss the potential opportunities in this part of Cricklewood and how these might be best used to meet the council's stated priorities.

Question No.65

Councillor Paul Rogers

Now that the workload of the Cabinet Member for Housing has been severely reduced due to the creation of the Barnet Homes Board running management of council housing in the borough, has the Council Leader decided on the future of the post and responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Housing, and if so, what are these to be?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

The responsibilities of all Cabinet posts are often under my consideration. As and when I feel it necessary or desirable I shall make the necessary changes.

Question No. 66

Councillor Phil Yeoman

What discussions has the Council held with the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone and/or the GLA about the future of the Barnet College Russell Lane site?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

See response to Questions 50 and 59. There is no planning application before the council and therefore there has been no consultations or discussions with any statutory bodies. Until a scheme emerges it will not be possible to confirm whether a future planning application will be of strategic importance and referable to the Mayor.

Question No. 67

Councillor Linda McFadyen

The drug rehabilitation centre, Turning Point on Colney Hatch Lane is very important. What are the options for any re-provision if the South Friern library site is sold bearing in mind the joint funding with Enfield and Haringey and the need to keep the centre accessible to all three boroughs?

Answer by Councillor Maureen Braun

The Council owns the whole of the property freehold. The former clinic was occupied by Barnet Healthcare NHS Trust under a licence pursuant to the National Health Reorganisation Act 1973 as it had a minority user interest. By 1999 it had vacated the building pending possible re-use at a later date. At that time Turning Point, an organisation providing programmed drug counselling and support services for young people, was looking for accommodation. Turning Point is joint-funded by Barnet, Haringey and Enfield. The

Trust relinquished its rights and it was agreed that the Council would grant Turning Point a tenancy of the clinic for a term of 18 months from February 2000. Turning Point pays a rent and contributes to service supplies, heating, maintenance, insurance and business rates. It was agreed in 2002 that the tenancy should be extended to August 2003. Turning Point is still in occupation, holding over under the terms of the agreed tenancy.

The Cabinet Resources Committee considered a report on 18 March relating to the future proposals for the South Friern Library and the adjoining buildings. The decision included examining the relocation options for Turning Point.

Question No. 68

Councillor Arun Ghosh

What is the Council doing to repair or replace the out-of-order parking charges machine in the Perryfield Way car park?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

My understanding is that all pay and display machines in Perryfield Way car park are now working and I have instructed officers to keep regular vigilance to make sure this remains the case.

Question No. 69

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Please list all the roads consulted on their inclusion within the West Hendon CPZ and the dates the consultation letters were sent to residents.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Roads	Questionnaires Sent
Cool Oak Lane	May-03
Stuart Avenue	May-03
Woolmead Avenue	May-03
Seeling Avenue	May-03
Dehar Crescent	May-03
Esmar Crescent	May-03
Audley Road	Dec-02
Dartmouth Road	Dec-02
Edgeworth Avenue	Dec-02

Edgeworth Close	Dec-02
Edgeworth Crescent	Dec-02
Elliot Road	Dec-02
Faber Gardens	Dec-02
Woodward Avenue	Dec-02
Station Road	Dec-02
Talbot Crescent	Dec-02
Vaughan Avenue	Dec-02

Question No. 70

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

What consultation did the Council conduct with local residents before closing the Welsh Harp Youth Sailing Base in West Hendon?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

The Council engaged with the Friends of the Welsh Harp Youth Sailing base via meetings and correspondence and also responded to numerous enquiries and queries from individual users, residents, schools and user groups.

Question No. 71

Councillor Jim Tierney

With reference to the possible redevelopment of the Tesco/Whitefields site in Cricklewood, has the Council informed Multiplex whether the Council is in favour or opposed to high-rise buildings on the site?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

The council has not yet discussed any specific site proposals with Multiplex.

Question No. 72

Councillor Phil Yeoman

Has the purchaser/prospective purchaser of the Barnet College Russell Lane site indicated to the council that no social housing or affordable housing should be provided on the 11 acre site and that instead the Council should accept a cash sum, and if so, what is the Council's response?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

As stated in question 59 above, there is no planning application before the Council, only informal discussions at officer level and therefore, no specific proposals have been made to the council.

Question No. 73

Councillor Arun Ghosh

I continue to receive numerous complaints about serious rat infestations in West Hendon. What is the Council doing to resolve the rat infestations?

Answer by Councillor Brian Salinger

Rear of Esmar Crescent and The Harp Public House car park

This area has been fenced off both on the public house car park and the bottom of the gardens in Esmar Crescent. There is rubbish and rodent harbourage material dumped on the land. There is also some evidence of rat activity present. Efforts are being made by Environmental Health to trace the present owners of the land so as to oblige them to take pest control measures.

Corner of Cool Oak Lane and West Hendon Broadway

This is Council owned land. There is an accumulation of rubbish behind the billboard hoarding. There is also evidence of rat activity within the compound area and rat holes are evident on the pathway and side fence to the rear and side of 129 West Hendon Broadway. Rats are also undermining the pavement adjacent to the traffic control box on the corner of Cool Oak Lane and West Hendon Broadway.

A total of nine visits have been made between the 19/12/03 and 24/3/04 with a total of 5.4kg of bait being laid because of the severity of this infestation. Further visits are programmed to eliminate this infestation.

Consideration has been given to removal of the accumulation at the rear of the billboard but it is feared that if this done the rats will disperse further round the area.

211 West Hendon Broadway Euro Fried Chicken shop.

Rats have undermined the pavement outside the shop. Investigations are being made to trace the source of the rat population. In the meantime our Pest Control Team will carry out treatment to control the infestation.

Air-raid shelter West Hendon Broadway

Rat activity has been detected on this land. This is Council land and

Baiting is to commence on Tuesday 13th April 2004.

Perryfield Way land adjacent to car park.

This is Council owned land. Rat bait stations have been installed by a private contractor working for the Council. However, rat burrows are also being baited by the Pest Control Team and will continue to be baited until the infestation is brought under control.

Investigations are also being carried out for drainage problems that may be allowing the egress of rats from the sewers.

Little Treasures Day Nursery, Marquin Centre Marsh Drive and Perryfield Way Junction.

Rat holes have been located in the grassed mound on the Nursery land, and the grass verge outside the perimeter fence. Although this is on private land rodent baiting will be undertaken by the Pest Control Team and the co-operation of the owners of the land sought to bring this infestation under control.

Back yards at the rear of the shops on the West Hendon Broadway between Perryfield House and 211 West Hendon Broadway, these shops back onto the car park and wasteland.

Test Baiting will be offered in respect of this privately owned area and the drains examined for any defects that may be allowing the egress of rodents from the sewers. The owners co-operation will be sought to rectify any drainage problems found and bring this infestation under control.

Welsh Harp Lake

This is an ongoing problem due to excessive feeding of the bird population of the lake. It is a natural habitat and control of rats within this area is difficult without exposing the wildlife population to the risk of poisoning by rodenticides. A total of eleven visits have been carried out between 21/11/03 and 24/3/04. To minimise any risk to wildlife baiting has had to be carried out using both contact dust and grain rodenticide. Further visits are programmed.

Question No. 74

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Please list the total number of households consulted by each road on their inclusion within the West Hendon CPZ.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Roads	No. of households
Cool Oak Lane	28
Stuart Avenue	52
Woolmead Avenue	54
Seelig Avenue	8
Dehar Crescent	17
Esmar Crescent	18
Audley Road	238
Bertram Road	48
Dartmouth Road	45
Edgeworth Avenue	30
Edgeworth Close	83
Edgeworth Crescent	44
Elliot Road	45
Faber Gardens	25
Woodward Avenue	19
Station Road	93
Talbot Crescent	21
Vaughan Avenue	29

Question No. 75

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

The Youth Justice Plan includes a detention and training order target, which concerns liaison between the remand institution and the council as the young offender finishes their custodial sentence and is then supervised by the youth offending service. The target for the past year was 100%: what did the Council actually achieve?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

The Council achieved 18% in 2003.

In the first quarter of 2004 it has achieved 78%.

The reason for the poor figures was due to the fact that:-

the custodial centres did not have the same target as the YOT. A meeting with the centre had to be held within 10 working days. It was often impossible for staff to do this when they already had commitments.

The reason for the improvement is because:-

the custodial centres now have the same target of holding a meeting within 10 working days

(Reply subject to Monitoring Officer clearance)

Question No. 76

Councillor Phil Yeoman

If the Council takes a cash sum rather than social/affordable housing for the Barnet College, Russell Lane site, can the Cabinet Member guarantee to Council that the money will be used for NEW social housing for rent or NEW affordable housing elsewhere, rather than spent on meeting council costs relating to the decent homes standard, the regeneration schemes, etc?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

It will be for the relevant Planning Committee to decide what are the appropriate planning gain items to secure by way of a Section 106 Agreement in accordance with the relevant planning legislation, Planning Policy Guidance issued by the Secretary of State, the Unitary Development Plan, Strategic Planning Guidance and advice from the Head of Planning.

Question No. 77

Councillor Arun Ghosh

Several residents have complained to me about the locking of Malcolm Park in the evening, as residents use the park as a shortcut to reach Hendon Station and there is no notice at any of the three entrances as to what time the park is closed. What is the Council doing to resolve this?

Answer by Councillor Peter Davis

Malcolm Park is one of the parks on the council's agreed list of greenspaces locked at night (Cabinet meeting 21 May 2003).

Laminated notices have been placed at all the entrances to all these parks. However, these are regularly vandalised and replaced when reported missing. They were last replaced at Malcolm Park on Thursday 8 April.

Question No. 78

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Please list the total number of households who responded and percentage response rate by each road on their inclusion within the West Hendon CPZ.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I have asked Officers to assemble the information and write to the Member.

Question No. 79

Councillor Phil Yeoman

If the Council takes a cash sum rather than social/affordable housing for the Barnet College Russell Lane site, will the Cabinet Member support a reference to the External Auditor against the Council's gerrymandering in favour of the Conservative Party?

Answer by Councillor Kanti Patel

It will be for the relevant Planning Committee to decide what are the appropriate planning gain items to secure by way of a Section 106 Agreement in accordance with the relevant planning legislation, Planning Policy Guidance issued by the Secretary of State, the Unitary Development Plan, Strategic Planning Guidance and advice from the Head of Planning.

Question No. 80

Councillor Arun Ghosh

What progress has been made with implementing the following notice of motion I submitted, and which was agreed by Council eighteen months ago on 15 October 2002? The agreed motion read as follows:

"Council notes that more than 5,500 people in the UK, including Barnet residents, are waiting for a transplant that could save or transform their lives, but that only 2,700 transplants are carried out each year. Council asks the Council Chief Executive to write to the UK Transplant Chief Executive offering the London Borough of Barnet's support for their organ donor registration campaign. Council urges the Cabinet to promote organ donor registration via the council website, by providing a free article and advert within the council magazine Barnet Life, and in any other ways possible. Council urges the Cabinet to follow the best practice of other local authorities by enclosing NHS organ donor registration forms asking people to sign up as potential donors with the electoral registration form in 2003".

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, the Leader of the Council

I would inform Cllr Ghosh that our Chief Executive wrote to the Chief Executive of the National Health Service UK Transplant on 23 December 2002. Details of the NHS Organ Donor Register have appeared on the Council's web site for some time. The details include the address, telephone number and the web site of the register and the opening hours of the organ donor line. The suggestion that the Council should enclose NHS Organ Donor Registration forms when electoral registration forms are sent out would apparently be illegal.

The only outstanding matter from the Motion is the question of the article and advertisement on Organ Donor Registration in Barnet First. This does not appear to have been done and I am investigating the reasons for this.

I feel sure that many residents of the borough will agree with Cllr Ghosh on the importance of transplants but, of course, for some people of certain religious persuasions, this also causes them a problem.

Question No. 81

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Please list the total number of households and percentage of those for, against, do not know (and any other categories used by the Council) by each road on their inclusion within the CPZ.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I refer the member to the answer to question 78.

Question No. 82

Councillor Phil Yeoman

For income from bus lane cameras, what was the original budget estimate 2003/4 what is the latest budget outturn forecast 2003/4 and what is the budget income agreed for 2004/5?

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

I refer Councillor Yeoman to page 78 of the Council Budget 2004/2005 and Capital Programme. The outturn forecast for 2003/4 is £1.1m

Question No. 83

Councillor Arun Ghosh

Given the Council's choice to cut and close front-line services (while spending £11million on road repairs), unsatisfactory LEA OFSTED rating, worsening CPA environment services score, £10million budget overspend, mass redundancies, and general decline in the quality of council services over the past two years, what plans does the Administration have to introduce fixed-term contracts and/or performance-related pay for the posts of director and above?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

I made it quite clear during questions that were raised following my budget speech on 2 March 2004, that it was important that the under spending by the previous Administration on maintenance of roads and IT had to be corrected. Whilst it may not appear that these two services are 'front line', the effect on the infrastructure of the borough and the efficiency of Council services depend upon in the long run. In particular, the previous policy of patch and mend of roads could be a danger, but in the long run is less cost effective than proper resurfacing. Of course, I do not agree with Cllr Ghosh's statements regarding a decline in the quality of Council services. Indeed, there is much evidence to the contrary, including the improvement to our SSI rating for Children's Services from one to two stars, national recognition of our improved performance in housing and achievement of ALMO status, a much more positive follow-up on our youth service inspection, and great improvements this year in Planning & Environment PI's. I would also point out the favourable comments from the Audit Commission that Barnet is well placed for further improvement.

My appropriate Cabinet Members will consider the possibility of fixed term contracts and/or performance related pay for certain Officers in conjunction with their existing policies of looking at ways to retain and motivate key members of staff.

Question No. 84

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Please list the roads excluded from the West Hendon CPZ following consultation with residents who said they did not want to be included.

Answer by Councillor Brian Coleman

Edgeworth Close.

Question No. 85

Councillor Phil Yeoman

What improvements is the Council making to advertise and make available scrutiny committee agenda items to the general public and press – and especially interested residents – before meetings (given the lack of a published timetable of scrutiny committee meetings resulting in residents not knowing when to look for committee papers in a library, lack of scrutiny committee agendas on the council website and often prohibitive cost of subscribing to the circulation of committee papers)?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

Cllr Yeoman will be aware that a copy of each Overview & Scrutiny Agenda is sent to the local press. The Council's web site now has dedicated web pages explain what the scrutiny function is and how it operates, as well as the current Committee's work programmes. The Scrutiny Office also supplies copies of papers directly as requested to residents, community and voluntary groups. This web site also gives details of the by-monthly Overview & Scrutiny newsletter with details of the on-going scrutiny enquiries and reviews. Details of future meeting dates for each of the scrutiny committees are also given. Cllr Yeoman will also be aware from discussions at which he was present, I wish to give scrutiny committees a wider brief. In the Council timetable for the new municipal year, I hope that Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees may well be able to give greater advance warning of the dates of meetings and the work that they will be undertaking.

Question No. 86

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

If the Cabinet Member would make a statement on the latest position with regard to the Council's staff redundancies, including the number of staff still "at risk" and the financial packages being offered?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

By 8 April, the number of staff at risk of redundancy had fallen from 240 to 78.5 of whom 58 had been issued with notices. Compensation for redundancy is in accordance with the statutory and pension scheme entitlements and is based on actual earnings.

Question No. 87

Councillor Phil Yeoman

What was the cost to the council taxpayer of the administration employing staff to stand guard by the fire alarms around Hendon Town Hall during the Council meeting on 2 March 2004?

Answer by Councillor Victor Lyon, Leader of the Council

There was no increased cost to the Council taxpayer as the staff employed for the Council Meeting on 2 March 2004 were those that were there to assist those extra members of the public who were expected to attend the overflow meetings in the Committee Rooms. As part of their security duties, they were required to ensure that no disruption to the Council Meeting should take place, possibly by the setting off of false fire alarms.

I have to remind Cllr Yeoman that in 1997 the Council Annual Meeting was disrupted by the setting off of a false fire alarm and the subsequent adjournment of the Council. This stopped the possible election of a Conservative nominee for the Mayoralty. The enquiry by the former Labour/Liberal Democrat Administration took some 18 months to report inconclusively and I am sure Cllr Yeoman would agree that he would not wish to see the democratic will of the Council frustrated again by certain mischievous elements and , therefore, since that time, part of the security duties at Council meetings has been to keep an eye on the fire alarms.

Question No. 88

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

What efforts have been made to re-deploy council staff this year, how many have been re-deployed and how many have accepted different posts with lower pay?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Considerable success has been achieved in reducing the numbers at risk of redundancy. Of those actually issued with formal notice, 12 members of staff have been formally redeployed of whom three will receive salary protection.

Question No. 89

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

What arrangements is the Council making to give information to staff being made redundant about redeployment, retraining and job opportunities elsewhere?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

The Learning and Development team have run a range of training events and workshops to support staff at risk of redundancy. These have been held on site at places like Springwood Day Centre as well as at NLBP. A very successful job fair was held to inform all the affected staff of the vacancies which exist across the Council.

Question No. 90

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

How many people have been served with redundancy notices so far and what is their gender and ethnic origin?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

As at 8 April 58 redundancy notices had been issued, the distribution being:

Male = 31

Female = 27

Ethnic origin split:

Asian Chinese	1	Asian Indian	3	Asian other	1
Black African	5	Black Caribbean	5	No response	8
Other ethnic group	0	Other ethnic group	28	White Irish	1
White Other	5	White Turkish Cypriot	1		

Question No. 91

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Has the Council carried out an equal pay audit, and if so, what were the results?

Answer by Councillor Katia David

Yes, by implementing single status and carrying out the associated job evaluation procedures, the Council is one of the 20% of local authorities nationally who have carried out an equal pay audit. Equal pay for work of equal value is assured by this process.

Question No. 92

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

If a statement could be made on the withdrawal of the mini-bus that Mapledown Special School has always had, and which was used to transport vulnerable children and young people to swimming lessons and other essential activities?

Answer by Councillor Lynne Hillan

Currently carrying out transport review looking at all transport in Education and Community Care. However, a decision has been made that the mini buses used by Mapledown and Oakleigh Schools will not be included in this review.