

CHIPPING BARNET RESIDENTS FORUM

17 February 2009

ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE FORUM MEETING

	Issue Raised	Response
1.	<p>What proposals does the council have to include the ratepayers of Barnet in the Future Shape of the Council Programme?</p> <p>Will the public have an input to the discussions before any decision is made?</p> <p>Will the public have an opportunity to vote in a referendum on any major changes?</p> <p>(Mr David Howard)</p>	<p>Response : Richard Grice (Future Shape – Programme Director)</p> <p>The Future Shape of the Council programme is a direct response to concerns raised by residents about access to and the cost of services. These concerns are reflected in the Annual resident survey and other consultation and engagement initiatives, such as whereilive.org. In the period to June 2009, a number of groups will explore ways in which improvements and savings will be made.</p> <p>Many of these will consult in a targeted way with Barnet residents. For example we have a group looking at the way we assess people with complex needs in the Borough and we will be talking to a group of families about their experiences and how these can be improved.</p> <p>We will report back to the Council in the summer detailing proposals about where savings and improvements can be made. Should the Council decide after that to change what services are provided or who supplies them, this will be done on a business case by business case basis, taking full account of the likely impact on residents and staff, and the risks involved. This is in line with the way that previous decisions of this type have been made</p>
2.	<p>Who authorised the closure of public highway in Barnet Lane, location near Ravenscroft school?</p> <p>(Mr Ashwood)</p>	<p>Response: Lynn Bishop (Assistant Director (Performance), Environment & Transport)</p> <p>Barnet Magistrates Court, 17th February 1971.</p>

	Issue Raised	Response
3.	<p>How much money is to be invested in banks by Barnet Council, and to what has this money been allocated to, if anything?</p> <p>(Mr Ashwood)</p>	<p>Response: Jonathan Bunt (Assistant Director of Resources)</p> <p>The Council does not invest in banks but places surplus cash balances on deposit. In the 2007/08 financial year, the deposits placed by the Council with banks and building societies that met the requirements of the treasury management strategy amounted to £1.19bn and £1.12bn of deposits were repaid in that year. For the first nine months of this financial year, 2008/09, the Council placed deposits with banks and building societies totalling £853m and have had £835m of deposits repaid. All deposits were placed with banks that met the credit criteria contained within the annual treasury management strategy and or the revised strategy after it was subsequently amended.</p> <p>The funds deposited represent surplus Council cash flow that is grouped together and placed with banks and building societies for various terms dependent on the Council's requirement to make cash payments in the future.</p>
4.	<p>Update on recovery of Icelandic bank deposits.</p> <p>(Mr Ashwood)</p>	<p>Response: Jonathan Bunt (Assistant Director of Resources)</p> <p>Councils with deposits in Icelandic banks have organised themselves into an overall steering committee, with two bank specific committees underneath that – Heritable, and Landsbanki/Glitrir. The Council's Director of Resources & Chief Finance Officer, Clive Medlam, chairs the Glitrir/Landsbanki committee. The overall committee has a wider remit, which includes engagement of legal support and liaison with the Treasury and CLG etc.</p> <p>Two Informal Creditor Committee (ICC) meetings for each bank have so far been held in Iceland, in November and December. These ICC meetings are by invitation only, they are not required to be held at all but the fact that they are demonstrates the desire of the Icelandic FME (their regulatory body) and the Resolution Committees to work with creditors to maximise asset value and ultimately return of deposits, bonds etc. to them. Both banks are now what in Iceland is termed Moratorium, which means the assets of the old banks continue to be actively managed but with court protection against hostile legal action. This month, there will be an Open Creditors meeting for each bank, which is part of the formal moratorium process whereby the Resolution Committees and Moratorium Appointee have to present their case for a continuation of the moratorium. One aspect of this process is demonstrating that there is sufficient value in the old banks' assets to warrant a continuation of the existing asset management arrangements rather than move to a rapid closing down process. The moratorium can be extended for up to two years, in steps of six month intervals/decisions. There is no reason at this time to think that the moratorium won't be extended.</p>

	Issue Raised	Response
4.	cont....	There is obviously a net surplus of assets over liabilities in the two new banks, otherwise the FME would have a problem in allowing them to continue trading. The value of this surplus will be converted into a Bond, which will be held by the old banks and be a further asset available to the creditors. The valuation of this Bond is some way off.
5.	Are the Councillors of Barnet intending to accept increase in expenses in the next financial year? (Mr Ashwood)	Response: Nick Musgrove (Senior Democratic Services Officer) The Council will decide on this when they consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel at their meeting on 3 March 2009.
6.	He raises concerns with regards to the increase in financial remuneration to Senior management given the current chaos in the Borough. (Mr Ashwood)	Response: Jacquie McGeachie/Peter Dempsey <i>Needs clarification as what Mr Ashwood means by 'the current chaos in the Borough.'</i>
7.	Why do Barnet Council management think they can completely disregard the law of the land with regard to the Freedom of Information Act? (Mr Ashwood)	(Vinod Mandora) Information Governance Consultant, Corporate Governance Directorate We have to disagree with Mr Ashwood's statement. We have written to him on numerous occasions and supplied a lot of information. We have even had 2 meetings with him to go through his requests. At present we have one outstanding query which we will be responding to this week. Barnet Homes have written to him on numerous occasions as well.
8.	How much is Barnet Council paying for financial advise? Who chaired and sat on the finance committee when this question was raised? (Mr Ashwood)	Jonathan Bunt (Assistant Director of Resources) <i>Questions need to be more specific. i.e how much has been paid in the last year ? Or over a specific number years? We need a time frame. Different financial advise is given to different areas, Mr Ashwood needs to narrow it down. Second question unsure as to who he means by the 'Finance Committee.'</i>

	Issue Raised	Response
9.	<p>How much are Barnet Council paying out to regeneration personnel and advisors like, Delare and Henderson since 2002, when the regeneration project started.</p> <p>How much new rented accommodation has been added to the council stock?</p> <p>(Mr Ashwood)</p>	<p>Response: Roger Arklell (Regeneration Project Director,)</p> <p>The Council's estate regeneration programme incorporating the 4 large Council Estates at Grahame Park, West Hendon, Stonegrove/Spur Road and Dollis Valley is expected to produce over 7500 new homes with total private investment in excess of £1,700 million. Approximately 2,500 new high quality affordable homes will be produced for existing residents and for applicants to the Council. Although the programme is still at an early stage, 94 new homes have already been completed, including 58 homes for rent and 20 intermediate homes.</p> <p>Since 2002, the Council has invested approximately £5 million in consultants' fees, the vast majority of which will be recovered from the Council's development partners as the projects proceed. This expenditure represents less than one third of one percent of the investment that will be attracted to regenerate key parts of the borough.</p> <p>Most of the cost associated with staff time, planning applications, highways orders, resident engagement, project evaluation and validation, contract negotiations and other associated activities, will be recovered from the development partners, through cost recovery, and fees.</p>
10.	<p>When will consultation on the LDF Supplementary Planning Document for culture recreation and open spaces take place? It is true that this consultation has been "put on hold"? (Mr Dix)</p>	<p>Response: Martin Cowie (Head of Planning and Development Management)</p> <p>A comprehensive borough wide review of open space and recreational facilities is currently being undertaken. An interim report will be completed by the Spring and this will inform the work being carried out in relation to the Local Development Preferred Options document that will be available for public consultation in the Summer.</p>
11.	<p>When is Barnet Council planning to undertake a sports facility audit and when will it develop a sports facility strategy that identifies Barnet's sport and physical activity facility gaps and future investment priorities?</p> <p>(Mr Dix)</p>	<p>Julian Mauger (Third Sector Commissioning Manager – Resources)</p> <p>The Council will carry out leisure facilities strategy addressing in 2009/10. Mr Mauger has a couple of telephone conversations with Mr Dix regarding this matter.</p>
12.	<p>Is the Council continuing to work with Tesco's regarding their proposals for a major store in New Barnet (The large optex and other buildings site not the 9 -11 Victoria Road Tesco Express site)?</p> <p>(Mr David Howard)</p>	<p>Response: Martin Cowie (Head of Planning and Development Management)</p> <p>The local planning authority has provided professional advice to Tesco during formal pre-application discussions and will continue to do so if it is requested.</p>

	Issue Raised	Response
13.	<p>Has the Council registered the latest planning application from ASDA? If No when is it likely to be registered?</p> <p>(Mr David Howard)</p>	<p>Response: Martin Cowie (Head of Planning and Development Management)</p> <p>The local planning authority is in the process of validating the application which was placed on hold pending the submission of further information. It is will be formally registered within the next few days.</p>
14.	<p>Once a planning application from ASDA has been registered will the council be organising a public consultation meeting?</p> <p>(Mr David Howard)</p>	<p>Response: Martin Cowie (Head of Planning and Development Management)</p> <p>The local planning authority will undertake a comprehensive consultation exercise in accordance with its statutory responsibilities. This will entail notifying several thousand local residential properties and businesses. Details of the planning application will be made available on the Councils website, in local libraries and at the councils planning reception in Barnet House.</p>
15.	<p>I thought that a condition of approval of Barnet College redevelopment plans was a S.106 contribution. If so how much was this, will it be spent in High Barnet, and indeed in the vicinity of the College.</p> <p>(Ms Helen Massey)</p>	<p>Response: Martin Cowie (Head of Planning and Development Management)</p> <p>The application for the construction of a new college facility which was considered by the Planning and Environment Committee and granted consent 19 Sep 2007 secured a range of key community related benefits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A contribution of £30,000 towards open space improvements to be spent within the Old Court House Recreation Grounds. • A contribution of £20,000 towards maintenance costs in the Old Court House Recreation Grounds. • A contribution of £85,000 towards Public Realm, footway and Junction improvements to the Wood Street-High Street Junction and the immediate area. Works to take place within 5 years of the occupation of the new college building. • A contribution of £50,000 towards a parking review of the area surrounding Barnet College and any required changes to the parking controls resulting from the review. • The works approved under applications N01076AP/07 (Erection of brick wall of 1600mm around existing car park, including provision of timber gates across Wood Street entrance.) and N01076AR/07.

	Issue Raised	Response
15.	cont...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A CCTV System around the college must be implemented in consultation with the local planning authority and the Metropolitan police. <p>The local planning authority is currently working with highway and environment colleagues and the College to deliver a scheme of public realm improvements within the vicinity of the site. Further details will be provided at future forum meetings as the project progresses.</p>
16.	<p>We were told by Mr Cowie at the meeting on 23.6.08 that the Council was undertaking a borough wide town centre strategy review and that individual town centre reviews were not planned. In response to Q6 at the meeting on 6.11.08 he said that as part of the Suburban Town Centres Strategy (is this the same as the borough wide review referred to above?) the Council is undertaking "planning frameworks" for six of the centre including High Barnet. What is the difference between a "planning framework" and a "town centre review". Another document from Cllr. Harper on 13.1.09 talks about the overarching document being a parent document to individual "town centre strategies"? So are they going to happen after all and what might be the terms of reference?</p> <p>(Ms Helen Massey)</p>	<p>Response: Martin Cowie (Head of Planning and Development Management)</p> <p>The local planning authority is currently undertaking a borough wide review of its town centres and retail sector. This will inform the emerging Local Development Framework and relevant core strategic planning policies contained therein, which will form the basis of the councils Suburban Town Centres Strategy.</p> <p>As part of this strategic policy agenda, the council is also in the process of preparing a number of town centre planning strategies for its key centres including North Finchley, Finchley, Edgware, New Barnet, Chipping Barnet and Whetstone. These local strategies are intended to assist in delivering economic and environmental improvements to Barnet's key centres and guide future development opportunities with the full engagement and support of the community.</p>

	Issue Raised	Response
17.	<p>In August 2008 Barnet Residents Association proposed to the council a restructuring of parking provision in High Barnet town centre. We suggested that these proposals should improve the availability and take-up of shopper parking and at the same time significantly increase revenue for the council. The response has been to refer the issue to a future CPZ review or a proposed High Barnet Town Centre Strategy. As neither of these reviews appear to be imminent, is the council content to continue to ignore the possibility of increasing income or will it now address our proposals?</p> <p>(Mr G Massey)</p>	<p>Response: Lynn Bishop (Assistant Director, Environment & Transport)</p> <p>The Association has received a reply, by way of a letter to the secretary dated 13 January 2009, relating to car parking across the town centre, the summary of which is as follows:-</p> <p>The Council has been proactive in introducing amendments to the on-street parking arrangements. The proposed changes to the pay and display bay operating times on High Street, were implemented on 8th December 2008 and now provide extended hours of general parking in the peak traffic periods. This will significantly improve accessibility and convenience for motorists wishing to visit the shops etc in the town centre. Reduced parking tariffs were also available across the board over the Christmas and New Year period which attracted more people to come into our local town centres and support our local retail economy.</p> <p>In regard to the controlled parking zone review, it will be carried out early in the Council year 2009/10. This forthcoming review, unlike previous ones that were undertaken to address specific issues at the time, will look at the whole zone. In practice, the Council will send out questionnaires to all occupiers within the current CPZ requesting responses to a range of questions, constructed in such a way as to ascertain the community's satisfaction with the CPZ, at the same time providing an opportunity for respondents to comment on what changes, if any, they feel would improve the way the CPZ serves their needs and demands. The result will be a holistic view of the zone as it currently operates, forming a basis for taking forward changes/additions. These will include adequate parking provision for residents, their visitors, short-term and long term visitors to the area and workers.</p>
18.	<p>Can the council now advise when the review of CA-C CPZ will take place?</p> <p>(Mr G Massey)</p>	<p>Response: Lynn Bishop (Assistant Director, Environment & Transport)</p> <p>Early in the Council year 2009/10. (May / June 2009)</p>

	Issue Raised	Response
19.	<p>Following the re-surfacing of Carnarvon Rd the parking bays have been narrowed to the permitted legal minimum of 1.8m. Was any consideration given to the advantages and disadvantages of doing this, and why were residents not informed?</p> <p>(Mr G Massey)</p>	<p>Response: Lynn Bishop (Assistant Director, Environment & Transport)</p> <p>Parking bays should be marked with a minimum width of 1.80m. The width of the parking bays in Carnarvon Road are 1.80m, the bays are narrower than before but still comply with the current legislation and the traffic order.</p> <p>Parking bays are provided to make it easier for residents to park near their homes, to help residents, users of local services, businesses and shops and to ease congestion caused by inconsiderate and inappropriate parking.</p> <p>The width of the parking bay does not and cannot of itself offer protection to a car from damage from passing vehicles – the parked car takes up the same space on the road whether in a parking bay or is just adjacent to the kerb.</p> <p>Residents are consulted on traffic schemes where change is envisaged, but were not on this occasion as the project was a resurfacing replacement.</p>
20.	<p>The agreement between Barnet Council and Mr. and Mrs. Walsh, owners of Barnet Market, which allows for the Market to be held on the Council-owned car park in Stapylton Road is due to expire on June 9th of this year, 2009. This is very much down to the wire for the market stall holders, who find that they have only a few months left to survive, because without a venue, there can be no market in Chipping Barnet. Would the council give its assurance AT THIS MEETING that the market will be allowed to take place for, say, the next three years?</p> <p>(Mr Chris Carstairs)</p>	<p>Response: Martin Cowie (Head of Planning and Development Management)</p> <p>In seeking to assist the continued operation of the market, the council has agreed in principle to an extension of the lease for the use of the car park site.</p> <p>It is currently waiting for confirmation from the owner of the market that she wishes to proceed on the basis of a three year lease extension when formal terms and conditions will be prepared.</p>

	Issue Raised	Response
21.	<p>Since the demise of the market in St. Albans Road, the Market is held in the corner of a small car park, where it is virtually invisible to Barnet's through-traffic. The St. Albans Road site was highly visible to passing traffic, at least coming in and out of Barnet that way. Would the Council consider installing 3 double-sided signs, to be fixed to existing posts, one at the junction of the Great North Road and St. Albans Road, one at the junction of Wood Street and Stapylton Road, and one at the junction of the St. Albans Road and Stapylton Road? The signs to read: "BARNET MARKET" with perhaps the words "Wed. and Sat." in smaller letters below?</p> <p>(Mr Chris Carstairs)</p>	<p>Response: Martin Cowie (Head of Planning and Development Management)</p> <p>The market is not a council owned facility and it has not yet been confirmed that it will remain in its current temporary location.</p> <p>The council is not therefore in a position to erect any signs but the suggestion will be considered and a response provided at the next forum meeting.</p>