

CHIPPING BARNET RESIDENTS FORUM

17 March 2009 – As at 17 March 09

ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE FORUM MEETING

	Issue Raised	Response
1	Petition Mr and Mrs Harbour Opposition to the exchange of land King Georges Field/Ravenscroft School	Peter Cridland The Lead Petitioners will be attending the meeting and will put forward their views on the proposed exchange of land. These will be incorporated into a report which will be considered at the 29 June meeting of the Chipping Barnet Area Environment Sub-Committee.
2	Mr Magnus When will the Council carry out its responsibility for repairing the footpath from Camlet Way to The Crescent alongside the road called Hadley Common?"	Lynn Bishop The Council have previously stated that no evidence could be found of any responsibility for the pathway and would welcome such information if the Trust could provide it. Surveys have been completed (October 2008) which show that the main use is linked with school activity and timing.
3	Mrs Ballard In view of the news in the Barnet Press, what is the justification of a large rise in Councillors' allowances when Barnet has just lost £27 million due to the collapse of Icelandic Banks? Councillors knew their allowances when they presented themselves for office. If they had considered it too little, they should have stayed away. Mr Edward Carpenter What is the justification for the 53% increase in Members Allowances?	Nick Musgrove The Members Allowances scheme for 2009/10 was adopted in line with the recommendations of an independent review panel. The key feature was a cost of living rise in line with the national pay settlement for local government.

4	<p>Mr Ashwood Barnet spent over £70 million on IT equipment; why does it take over 40 days to get answers to three questions: (a) Asked Barnet Homes (Cora Vigar) to produce the Council's VAT registration number which legally should be displayed on documents when charging VAT (b) Requests a copy of the Council's Options to Tax (HMR and C)</p>	<p>Cora Vigar Barnet Homes is a separate entity to the London Borough of Barnet and can only answer questions relating to Barnet Homes. Mr Ashwood is aware that Barnet Homes and the Council are obtaining clarification from HMRC and a full written reply will then be sent. Barnet Homes' VAT registration number is 832 7638 13. Cora Vigar Barnet Homes is unable to issue a copy of the Council's Options to Tax as it does not have access to their documents and has raised this with the Council who are investigating this point.</p>
5	<p>Mr Ashwood The hourly rate for the chairman and vice chairman of the forum works out at two to three times the Prime Ministers hourly rate. Why are these rates so high. His view, that Councillors are not worth this rate</p>	<p>Democratic Services Manager Mr Ashwood's views are noted.</p>
6	<p>Mr Ashwood Mr Ashwood challenges the information given by Nick Musgrove that the requirement of a councillor to chair a forum is enshrined within the Constitution. What is the role of the Vice Chair at the Forum?</p>	<p>Democratic Services Manager Mr Ashwood's challenge is noted. The Vice Chairman deputises for the Chairman</p>
7	<p>Mr Ashwood Who authorised the erection of gates in Barnet Lane. No notices of intent were erected?</p>	<p>Lynn Bishop The gates have been installed by Ravenscroft School to deal with anti-social behaviour issues (fly tilpping)</p>
8	<p>Mr Ashwood A request to see the independent review panel's report on Councillors Allowances</p>	<p>Democratic Services Manager The report was submitted to the Council meeting on 3 March 2009 and is available on the Council's website. For those residents without access to the website, a hard copy of the report can be sent upon request.</p>

9	<p>Mr Ashwood Resignation of finance officer in respect of the Council's frozen £27 million in Icelandic Banks. Mr Ashwood has been told in the past that the responsibility for the investments lay with Leo Boland and Clive Medlam. His concern that a finance officer was able to move about vast sums of money without the knowledge of senior officers. Does Mr Lustig contemplate legal action should the money not be recovered.</p>	<p>Head of Legal Services It is not known whether the Council has suffered a loss so questions as to actions for recovery are premature</p>
10	<p>Mr Ashwood Cuts in the provision of services particularly to the elderly and vulnerable. What is the £320 million in reserves for? Why is it not being used to avoid cuts?</p>	<p>Kate Kennally (Social Services provision) Adult Social Services as the largest budget in the Council have been asked to identify areas for potential budget savings and are currently consulting on changes to how support is provided to people living in sheltered housing as part of proposals regarding the budget of the Council. This proposal will see the cessation of the resident warden service and its replacement with floating support available as and when people are assessed as needing it. The Council has also been consulting on a proposal to cease providing a Council run welfare rights unit and to provide welfare benefits advice through continued investment in the voluntary sector. The budget for 2009 / 10 however sees some significant investment into Adult Social Services in respect of meeting the costs of young people with complex disabilities requiring services and has protected investment in the voluntary sector which provide a range of invaluable services to help people stay independent.</p> <p>Clive Medlam (£320 million reserves) The £320m is not reserves, it is cash balances.</p> <p>At any one point in time the Council has a significant amount of cash deposited in the money market. This cash comprises a number of things, e.g. balances and reserves, council tax income, grant income, capital receipts unapplied, business rates income, etc. It also includes amounts borrowed to fund future capital schemes as we undertake this borrowing at the most opportune time rather than the day before the capital expenditure is incurred.</p>

11	<p>Mr Ashwood There has been a £55 million outlay in regeneration schemes in Barnet, producing only 58 extra properties for rent. Better use could be made of this money e.g. channel it into Social Services provision</p>	<p>Roger Arkell There is no further update than that given at the last meeting.</p>
12	<p>Mr John Dix Given that the Asda scheme in new Barnet is a Major Development which does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated and is therefore a departure to the plan, and that Asda have paid £60,830 planning application fee, why does the Council refuse to hold a public meeting?</p>	<p>Martin Cowie The planning application is now being assessed as part of the statutory planning process. The council have notified approximately 2500 local properties and have extended the statutory consultation period to give the community every opportunity to consider the proposals and make representations.</p> <p>The council will be undertaking further consultation over the course of the next 2 months as it prepares the town centre strategy for the area.</p>
13	<p>Mr John Dix Is Barnet Council happy with the fact that traffic speeds will halve at peak times on East Barnet Road when the Asda and JCoSS schemes open?</p> <p>Pete and Sarah Mitchell The traffic that generated by the Asda proposals will be huge. It is proposed by Asda to introduce a traffic light controlled junction. When traffic lights were installed there before, there was gridlock and they had to be removed. What guarantee can Asda and the Council give that this will not happen again.</p>	<p>Martin Cowie The local planning and highway authorities are currently assessing the proposals submitted by Asda. This will entail a careful examination of the Transport Assessment accompanying the planning application and associated highway implications for the local road network.</p> <p>Clearly the planning authority will want to ensure that the development proposals do not adversely affect existing traffic conditions. It is too early at this stage however to ascertain the extent of the local highway impact.</p> <p>The points raised by Mr Dix and Pete and Sarah Mitchell will however be considered as the application is dealt with.</p>

14	<p>Mr Howard Referred to the responses in Issue 1 of the last meeting and his view that the response did not address his question as to whether any changes, especially those which were not in the last elections manifesto, would be the subject of a public vote. He wants to know how the public will be able to vote on the proposals of the Future Shape Programme</p>	<p>Richard Grice Staff and service users are involved with the current phase of future shape work, which will report to Cabinet in the summer, on a targeted basis. Following Members' decisions on how to proceed, any change to what services are provided or who supplies them will be considered 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 normal Council decision making processes, which do not and have never involved referendums or plebiscites.</p>
15	<p>Mr Howard It was understood from the last forum that there would be widespread public consultation over the Asda planning application in New Barnet. Public have been advised that 2,500 letters have been sent out but a number of streets listed have not received letters as at 13/3/09. Those letters that were delivered gave an incorrect reference number for the applications and all attempts to log into the website were rejected. No e mail address was included on the public notices affixed to lamp posts and in the local press. It is Mr Howard's view that some would interpret this as an effort to restrict replies from the public re: an application that does not accord with the provisions of the</p>	<p>Martin Cowie The local planning authority has undertaken extensive consultation as part of the statutory process. This has involved notifying 2500 local residential properties and businesses, erecting site notices and placing an advert in the local press.</p> <p>The period of consultation has also been extended beyond the statutory 3 weeks to allow every opportunity for representations to be forwarded to planning authority for consideration.</p> <p>The issue in relation to the incorrect reference given was immediately rectified to ensure access to the plans via the website was available.</p> <p>The planning department has sufficient resources to manage large scheme such as the Asda submission and it has demonstrated this in its successful delivery of a number of significant schemes recently through the planning process.</p>

15	<p>development plan in force in the area and in which the land is situated and is therefore a departure from the plan application. He also puts forward a view that the Planning Department does not have sufficient resources to cope with all the large schemes at various stages of planning in the Borough. He asks whether this is 'a cock up or conspiracy'</p> <p>Pete and Sarah Mitchell They live at No. 30 Victoria Close. They are on the list of consultee addresses on the Council's website but they have not received a letter. To their knowledge no one else in their road has. They want an explanation and whether they should infer from this about the Council's attitude towards local democracy and accountability.</p>	
16	<p>Diane and Eddie Eatwell At the 16th September Forum meeting, when Mr Standing raised the problem of dog fouling in Oak Hill Park, Mr Eatwell pointed out that pupils from East Barnet School were and would continue to use these playing facilities. Mr Cowie promised to look into how the playing fields could be kept free from dog excrement. Has he found a solution yet?"</p>	<p>Martin Cowie/Jenny Warren Park keepers address residents who are found allowing their dogs to foul and provide poop a scoop bags to enable residents to pick up after their dogs. We also participate in National poop a scoop week every year. It is not possible to keep the fields free from dog fouling at all times, dog fouling is removed when the park is cleaned of litter.</p>

17	<p>Mr T Hufford The Sheltered Housing budget has been cut from £3.12 million to £250,000 with the Council's ambition to spread the fund more evenly in other types of accommodation. How can you provide an adequate services with only £250,000. what will happen to residents' daily telephone call?</p> <p>Sheltered Housing residents are asked in a questionnaire where they would suggest cuts to the Council's Budget are made. How can residents be expected to know how to answer this?</p>	<p>Kate Kennally The Council's proposals would mean a reduction of £950K in projected sheltered housing expenditure for 2009/10 of £1.3M. This would leave around £300K for continued investment in appropriate replacement services in addition to the existing range of visiting services that the council would make available to sheltered housing residents.</p> <p>The questionnaire has been designed for use by a range of different kinds of respondent. Sheltered housing residents have suggested at the consultation meetings a number of ways in which the council might make savings in other budget areas</p>
18	<p>Mr Hufford Is the proposed access road to the new JCoSS site set in stone?</p>	<p>Martin Cowie The access road was agreed as part of the planning application for the new school and cannot be altered. The road was proposed in order to facilitate direct access into the site and ensure the satisfactory movement of traffic in the local area.</p>
19	<p>Mr Gardiner Asks whether officers could provide an update on the situation regarding the market. In addition, he asks whether the owner has signed a new contract with the Council to secure the future of the market beyond June 09.</p>	<p>Martin Cowie/Peter Cridland Property Services have a meeting set up with Mrs Walsh on 27th March to discuss further options.</p>