

CHIPPING BARNET RESIDENTS FORUM

22 FEBRUARY 2011 AS AT 22 FEBRUARY 2011

ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE FORUM MEETING

	Issues Raised	Response
	<p>Counsel and Care Presentation To receive a short presentation from Helen Finch</p>	
1a	<p>Increase in CPZ and Parking Charges</p> <p>(a) Did the council use comparators from the surrounding area before setting the charges for High Barnet?</p> <p>(b) Has the council factored in the possible fall in income from CPZ,s and car parks due to the increased charges?</p> <p>(c) Has the council considered the possible fall in revenue and damage to business in the local area due to the £4 visitor charge?</p> <p>(d) Does the council think that there will now be an increase in footway crossovers, to the detriment of the environment, due to the increase in charges?</p> <p>(Mr Massey)</p>	<p>Interim Director of Environment and Operations</p> <p>(a) Prior to making recommendations on the revised charges officers undertook a survey of charges for comparable services in neighbouring boroughs and found those in Barnet to be at the lower end of the scale in most instances.</p> <p>(b) It is anticipated that the increased charges will generate additional income. This income is ring-fenced towards improvements to the parking service and highway maintenance works thereby relieving the burden on the Council Tax-payer. There are a number of income streams covered by the plans and any shortfall on one line will be taken up by increasing the emphasis on other sources of revenue.</p> <p>(c) As Visitor Vouchers are available only to residents and are used for a small proportion of parking activities across the borough it is not considered that any change in the take up of this facility will have a significant impact on local business.</p> <p>(d) Whilst there may be an increased demand for footway crossovers to allow residents to park within the boundary of their property rather than on the street it is not anticipated that this will be at a level which will have a significant impact on the environment.</p>

1b	<p>Increase in CPZ and Parking Charges/Budget Setting</p> <p>A concern raised about the council's budget considered at Cabinet, in particular the increased CPZ and parking charges.</p> <p>(Mr Dishman)</p>	<p>1(b) 1(c) It is considered necessary to review all charges for services across the borough, including parking charges. These were subject to detailed consultation before going through a rigorous approval process. If this review is not implemented then savings will have to be found elsewhere, a process that is likely to result in service cuts.</p>
1c	<p>Increase in CPZ and Parking Charges/Budget Setting</p> <p>A resident, together with a number of neighbours in the Wrotham Road, Falkland Road and St Albans Road have expressed concern at the increase in the cost of resident and visitor parking permits and vouchers</p> <p>(Mrs Bayley)</p>	
2	<p>Flood Defences</p> <p>A question as to what the council has put in place/planning to put in place in the Parkside Gardens/West Walk area in terms of flood defences since the Environment Agency redesignation in 2007 as this area now being in Zone 3 of the flood plain (it was previously deemed to be outside the plain).</p> <p>(Mr Mullen)</p>	<p>Interim Director of Environment and Operations</p> <p>The Pymmes Brook is classified as a main river and the maintenance of flows in all main rivers is the responsibility of The Environment Agency (EA), not the Council's.</p> <p>The Flood Zones in this area were prepared in June 2007 as a result of the Lee Modelling & Mapping Study. This study took into account detailed information on local rainfall, river flows, river channel shape, historical information, local defences and local topography to map the extent of the Flood Zones. The EA update their flood zones from time to time when better information, or better techniques, to determine flood risk areas become available. Zone 3 has an Annual Excess Probability of 1:100 (Flooding with a probability of occurring of 1:100).</p>

		<p>As part of the Lower Lee Flood Risk Management Strategy (including the Pymmes Brook) EA are currently investigating options for flood risk management on the Pymmes Brook. This includes looking at using Oak Hill Park as potential storage as this, with other storage areas, provides the best benefit cost ratio. This is in the very early stage however and a more complete study is needed to determine the best option for Pymmes Brook. As I am sure you can appreciate, this will of course depend on funding and viability of the scheme.</p> <p>It should be mentioned that EA also carry out blockage / debris clearance as part of their incident response procedures. EA's incidents hotline is 0800 807060.</p>
3a	<p>Gritting</p> <p>A question as to the cost of the operation on the night of 26 January 2011 as there was no hard frost/snow that night or the following day. What was the weather forecast for that night. How was it determined to grit that night?</p> <p>(Mr Ashwood)</p>	<p>Interim Director of Environment and Operations</p> <p>The Council's action on the evening of 26 January was to grit all eight Priority 1 routes with 20gr/m2 of salt. This decision was based on the 12.00 noon weather forecast and the 18.30 hrs weather update both of which are provided specifically for the Barnet area. This warned of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road temperatures of -1C as from 02.00 hrs on 27 January, • Snow showers after midnight, and • Increased risk of snow showers with accumulation of up to 1 cm from 06.00 hrs on 27 January <p>The weather forecast service is provided to the Council by the Met Office and in general is very accurate. In this case, however, our records show that the lowest actual temperature on the night was +0.5C. It must be emphasised, however, that the Council considers the cost of gritting to be secondary to the need to keep the road network safe.</p> <p>The Council's variable cost for gritting the Priority 1 roads (238 kms) is estimated at approximately £2200. This includes the salt, the driver's time and fuel (variable costs) and does not include the Council's fixed cost for the provision of the gritting service (gritting vehicles, depot, etc).</p>

<p>3b</p>	<p>Gritting</p> <p>Various issues raised by a resident as to how roads were prioritised and that gritting vehicles pass down low priority roads en route to another destination, and a view that they could grit as they went along</p> <p>(Mr Dishman)</p>	<p>Interim Director of Environment and Operations</p> <p>Carnavron Road can not be classified as a Priority 1 route as is neither a main commuter route nor a bus route. However, the presence of the library means that this road can be upgraded to Priority 2 and this will be done as from the next winter season.</p> <p>Normally the drivers of the gritting vehicles are instructed to grit a particular route and are not able to deviate from this. There are various reasons for this including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All routes have been optimised to reduce as much as possible the dead mileage and to enable their completion to within 2 hours. • Allocation of salt is done on a route basis and any departure from this will result in more salt spread than allocated. Please note that during the last few years we were required by the government to conserve the salt as much as possible and report the amount of salt spread against each route. <p>However, drivers of gritting vehicles can grit a road which is not on their route if they find the condition to be icy or by prior arrangements with their supervisor. It may well be that the gritting vehicle that Mr Dishman saw was not gritting a particular route but was supporting the refuse collection programme. In any case, please note that drivers are expected to report to their supervisor the condition of the roads they drive through.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Footpath Work vs Potholes</p> <p>A question as to why work was undertaken on the footpaths at the junction of Underhill and the High Road, when there was more urgent work required to repair potholes?</p> <p>(Mr Ashwood)</p>	<p>Interim Director of Environment and Operations</p> <p>The footway relay works on Underhill are being funded by TfL under the Safer Routes to School Budget, which seeks to promote safer walking routes to schools. This budget is ring fenced and can not be spent on routine highway maintenance and potholes.</p> <p>These works are on the north footway of Underhill between Barnet Hill and No 24 Underhill and are expected to be completed by the middle of March.</p>

5	<p>Temporary Repair of Potholes</p> <p>What is the reason for continuing to repair potholes temporarily when in many cases they are lasting only 6 – 12 months?</p> <p>(Mr Ashwood)</p>	<p>Interim Director of Environment and Operations</p> <p>The Council aims to repair all potholes with a permanent repair. However, as a result of the numerous potholes created by the recent cold weather, the Council may use temporary low cost treatments on carriageway areas that are low trafficked and areas that may be dangerous to road users if left untreated, until a permanent reinstatement can be organised.</p>
6	<p>Supplier to the Council</p> <p>Clarification sought as to the Catalyst Group and what goods/services they supply to the Council.</p> <p>(Mr Ashwood)</p>	<p>Adult Social Services</p> <p>Catalyst delivers, on behalf of the Council, the residential and day care services within the borough. This service is sub-contracted to a company called Freemantle. However, in addition to the care contract Catalyst is also responsible for the maintenance of the homes. A report in respect of the Care Home Contract is due to be considered at the next meeting of Cabinet Resources Committee on 2 March 2011.</p>
7	<p>Stopping Up of a Road</p> <p>A question as to the legal status of a road that has been stopped up? The road in question is in the area of Ravenscroft School who are the only people who now use this road which is gated and locked. Is it legal to restrict the use of this stopped up road to a particular group?</p> <p>(Mr Ashwood)</p>	<p>Legal Services</p> <p>The stopping up of a road (or any other Highway) extinguishes any public rights over the road and as a consequence, permission to use the road would reside with the owner of the subsoil who can grant rights, easements etc over the road. Any person who uses the road other than with the authority of the Owner of the subsoil will be classed a Trespasser.</p> <p>Any private rights which existed before the stopping up of a road are not affected by the stopping up of the road</p> <p>Information as to the ownership of the land will be included in the action notes.</p>

<p>8</p>	<p>Icelandic Bank Update</p> <p>A request for an update on whether the Council had recouped any of the funds 'lost' during the collapse of the Icelandic Banks.</p> <p>(Mr Ashwood)</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive</p> <p>Our current balance sheet assumes that the Council retains priority status as a creditor of the two banks through the wind-up process. Priority status, and other matters, will be considered by the Icelandic Courts in February and March 2011. Any decision is likely to be appealed, so there is likely to be a continued period of uncertainty. The most significant risk for the Council is that ultimately priority status will not be maintained leading to a much lower level of eventual recovery of funds. To mitigate the potential disruption to our financial plans, the Council needs to set aside funds in the risk reserve accordingly. The additional potential cost is estimated at £14.1m, and this could crystallise in 2010/11 when the accounts are closed, or subsequently in accordance with events in the judicial process. The Council applied for a capitalisation direction in 2010/11 to provide additional flexibility in dealing with the potential additional cost, but this was declined by government. A key aim of financial strategy is therefore to set aside sufficient revenue funding in the risk reserve. Should this risk crystallise prior to sufficient funds being identified in the risk reserve, other reserves would need to be utilised and then replenished as a priority within the financial strategy.</p> <p>The trial of the Landsbanki tests case will be held on the 14th to 17th of February and Glitnir test case will be heard on the 11 of March. Judgement has to be delivered within 4 weeks of the trial, although the judges have the discretion to extend their period of deliberation by 4 weeks.</p> <p>Each party will have 2 weeks from the date the judgment is delivered to appeal the decision. Our solicitors, Bevan Brittan are of the view whichever party loses is likely to appeal the decision to be determined by the Supreme Court. If an appeal is made to the Supreme Court, judgment is unlikely to be delivered before autumn 2011.</p>
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<p>9</p>	<p>Barnet Museum</p> <p>(a) At the last forum residents were informed that the £23,000 funding to the museum was being withdrawn. Can the council assure residents that no further costs would be imposed upon the museum?</p> <p>(b) Does the council have a view of transferring the asset? (Mr Massey)</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive/Richard Grice</p> <p>The £23,000 relates to the annual running and building costs of Barnet Museum to the council. At its meeting on 14 February, Cabinet agreed the proposal to withdraw this funding from 1 April. It also agreed to use the next three months to look at future options for both Church Farmhouse and Barnet Museum, including those put forward by supporters of these museums. The Council has asked the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to help with the development of supporters' business cases if required. Importantly, the guidance from English Heritage on asset transfer sets high standards, including stating that responsible transfers of publicly-owned assets require due diligence, examination of the recipient organisation to ensure they are able to deliver the objectives of the transfer successfully, and a clear audit trail recording the decision-making processes for accountability purposes. The Council will apply these standards to consideration of future management of the museum buildings. Cabinet agreed that any future operation of the museums should be at zero cost to the Council.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Barnet College Junction Improvements at Wood Street</p> <p>An update requested on the s106 monies due to be allocated for junction improvements, and an assurance that all the funds will be spend on this project. (Mr Massey)</p>	<p>Interim Director Environment and Operations</p> <p>Money has been secured to improve pedestrian facilities and amenities at this junction as part of the planning process of the Barnet College Site.</p> <p>A trial aimed at assessing the impact of banning the right turn from the A1000 into Wood Street and the left turn from Wood Street into the A1000 to provide a large area for pedestrians outside the church was cancelled in January due to traffic concerns in the area.</p> <p>The Council is currently reviewing options to improve pedestrian facilities at this junction without banning any traffic movement.”</p>

11	<p>The Arts Depot</p> <p>A question regarding the contents of a consultation carried out in 2002 and whether this was in the public domain.</p> <p>(Pam Edwards)</p>	<p>A written response will be sent to Ms Edwards after any documents have been located</p>
12	<p>Pledgebank</p> <p>A resident has asked whether the council's investment in the new Pledgebank website represents value for money</p> <p>(Mr Dix)</p>	<p>Communications</p> <p>The investment in Pledgebank is part of the a series of projects that Barnet Council is undertaking with My Society with a view to opening up council services and supporting wider community activity. My Society is a small not for profit agency with an excellent national reputation and we are confident that their work represents excellent value for money.</p> <p>The council already worked very successfully with My Society on Fix my Street and hopes to develop this facility further over the coming year.</p> <p>Unlike that first project, It was not possible to simply 'piggyback' on the existing Pledgebank site as there was concern that the national prototype was not technically robust enough for the council's needs.</p> <p>The next project with My Society, planning alerts for residents, will be launched by the council later this week.</p>
13	<p>Payments Over £500 October – December 2010</p> <p>When will the revised and corrected list be published?</p> <p>(Mr Dix)</p>	<p>Assistant Director Financial Services</p> <p>The revised list is due to be published 22 February 2011</p>