

Council Questions to Cabinet Members
8 April 2014
Questions and Responses

Question 1

Councillor Mark Shooter

How many new school places have been provided in the Borough in the last five years?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

7,852 school places have been created over the last five years. These places are made up of both temporary and permanent places and have been provided in primary, secondary and special schools across the borough.

NB: Not all of these places are currently being used as some schools are filling from Reception / Year 7 upwards.

Question 2

Councillor Alison Moore

Would the Cabinet Member confirm how many council tenants subject to the bedroom tax are still in arrears, and what percentage of those subject to the bedroom tax that represents?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Based on Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) information, there is no such Tax levied in the UK.

Question 3

Councillor Barry Evangeli

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that the Police will have access to Barnet's CCTV images 24/7?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

As part of our investment into upgrading the borough's CCTV there will be two viewing platforms (Colindale and Hendon) enabling the police to connect to the CCTV camera's whenever they need to.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Barry Evangeli

Does the Cabinet Member agree that the comments by some Members at the last council meeting were misleading?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The comments regarding the switching off of CCTV and the new system was erroneous. The cameras will run 24 hours a day.

Question 4

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Why have Tory councillors not attended any of the 'question time' events organised across the Borough despite being regularly invited?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Conservative Councillors have not chosen to attend these meetings as they are organised by those with a pre-determined view. We have met many of them at meetings in the Town Hall.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Does Councillor Cornelius agree that it is not the organisers of public meetings that have got pre-determined views, it's the Tory Councillors who have got the pre-determined views and they should be willing to listen to members of the community and local residents who want to come along to those meetings and ask their questions? The fact that they have refused to do that will be taken into account when they go to the ballot box towards the end of May.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Perhaps, after the election, Councillor Schneiderman can be invited to be interrogated by a Conservative group meeting.

Question 5**Councillor Barry Evangeli**

Following the Council's resident engagement and feedback exercise in relation to the new recycling system, what is the latest information with regards to resident satisfaction?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Results from the waste and recycling door-stepping campaign which ran from 15 October until 14 December 2013 showed that 81% of residents are satisfied with the new recycling service. The campaign delivered by Enventure Research involved conversations with 41,610 residents and was designed to assist them with any queries and ensure that they had all the information they needed to make full use of these services. Resident satisfaction will continue to be monitored as part of the twice-yearly council survey.

Question 6**Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb**

Will Council commit to a ten year lease for Friern Barnet Community Library?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The Council is working with the Friern Barnet Community Library to enable them to develop a community library that is compliant and sustainable. An initial two year lease has been granted and in addition revenue and capital funding to improve the WC facilities has been committed. The community property strategy is being prepared to consider all community buildings and how they may be most effectively used to deliver community benefit. This will also address financial support, rent, repairs and compliance. On completion of the strategy consideration will be given to the agreements on all community buildings to ensure a consistent and effective approach.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb**

Three simple things to answer: when will the strategy be completed? Will a further lease be granted and will it be a 10 year lease?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

After the election, all things will be decided.

Question 7**Councillor Lisa Rutter**

Have the first council houses now been completed?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

I am delighted to confirm that the first three homes completed on 28th February and three families moved out of temporary accommodation the same day into the properties. The three units came in £24,000 under budget which is an excellent start to the initial programme of 41 units. The remaining 38 units are at different stages of planning submission but remain on target for their

completion in 2015.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Lisa Rutter

I congratulate the council for building the first new council houses in Barnet. Especially as Labour built none when they were previously in control of the council. Can the Cabinet Member please state if there will be more council houses built after next year?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

There are plans to build more social housing this year with plans for some sites to go to Planning pre-election.

Question 8

Councillor Geof Cooke

After the last local elections you and the other Conservative councillors awarded yourselves inflation-busting rises in allowances while residents were suffering under austerity. Now you say you will defer a decision on allowances till after polling day. Do you agree that residents are right to expect that a Tory win would see another hike in allowances for Tory councillors?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

There will be a proposal that there will be a fall in the overall cost of councillor allowances after the election.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Geof Cooke

The public money taken by politicians is pretty controversial at the moment. Given what happened last time, after the election, with the hike in allowances up to £20,000 for certain Councillors, would it not be better if the Conservative Party put on record its view on this matter before the election.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Credit is not really given where credit is due in that the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet, declined the rise, they did not accept the rise. And credit should be given on that basis. Did Councillor Cooke accept the rise in allowances at that time?

Question 9

Councillor Hugh Rayner

Could the Leader confirm the amount deposited in the Icelandic Banks before the financial crisis and the amount the council has now had back?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Council had £27.4m deposited in Icelandic Banks before the financial crisis. The Council has now received £28.6m back, which represents the principal deposited and an element of the accrued interest.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Hugh Rayner

Can I congratulate the Leader and Cabinet on the prudent handling of the council's finances and in particular in regard to the Icelandic Fund and condemn those that go on about this without recognising that all of the money back and more, and can this be an end from the Opposition?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I am sure that the whole council rejoices that the money was returned.

Question 10

Councillor Alison Moore

Would the Cabinet Member confirm how much of Barnet's award of just under £2m of

Discretionary Housing Payment has been allocated to helping local residents who are struggling with the government's welfare reforms to date? Please would he provide a breakdown of what sums of money have been allocated to help people with the benefit cap, the bedroom tax, Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reforms or a combination, and how many awards have been made to date?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Each application for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) is determined on its merits, and there is no specific amount allocated to each of the government's welfare reforms. A breakdown of the amount spent to date is as follows:

Benefit cap £565,796.59

Removal of Spare Room Subsidy £108,607.08

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) restrictions £413,373.08

Combination £25,968.41

Other Reasons £112,313.56

Total: £1,226,058 (out of £2,000,000)

Between April 1st 2013 and February 28th 2014 1300 households received DHP awards.

Question 11

Councillor Hugh Rayner

Barnet is increasing social tenant rents below inflation for the second successive year, delivering a real-terms cut. How does this compare to our neighbouring Boroughs?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Very favourably. Barnet's rent increase of 2.5% for council tenants is significantly below those of neighbouring boroughs as set out in the table below:

Borough % Increase	Average Increase
Barnet 2.50%	£2.46
Brent 4.39%	£4.67
Enfield 4.60%	£4.43
Haringey 4.98%	£4.90
Camden 5.44%	£5.65
Islington 4.93%	£5.21
Harrow 5.1%	£5.43

Question 12

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

What has been the cost of removing fly tipping in each of the following years 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The total cost of removal and disposal of flytipping, for the years 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14, is as follows:

2010/11 – £228,611

2011/12 – £235,849

2012/13 – £251,560

2013/14 – £271,107

Supplementary Question**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Does the Councillor agree that the cost of fly-tipping could be cut if Labour's policy of a free bulky waste collection were introduced?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

I do not agree. The intelligence shows that fly-tipping is not caused by people that were using the free collections or the free skips previously. It's people who are not and wouldn't have used those and the cost of these skips was £540,000 per year compared to the figure as tabled.

Question 13**Councillor Hugh Rayner**

How much has been invested in the last year by Barnet Homes on improvements to social housing?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

During the 2013/14 financial year an estimated £26m has been invested in maintaining Barnet Homes managed stock. This has included:

£2.4m replacing roofs

£2.1m replacing windows

£1.0m replacing kitchens, bathrooms and associated works

£1.0m replacing boilers and or heating systems within dwellings

£0.9m on redecorating of externals of buildings, communal areas and associated repairs.

£0.9m on adaptations enabling residents to remain within their homes (such as level access showers, stairlifts etc.)

£1.6m rewiring and upgrading electrical installations within dwellings

£6.5m rewiring electrical rising mains and communal lighting installations

£2.1m on fire safety works including replacement of dwelling doors

In addition to the £26m of capital investment a further 7.8m has been invested through responsive repairs, minor planned works and estate works programmes.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Hugh Rayner**

Does the Cabinet Member agree that Barnet Homes should be congratulated on their careful and fastidious maintenance of the managed stock.

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Agreed.

Question 14**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Could you let me know how much bailiffs have received in fees from Barnet council in 2011/12 and 2012/13 and if possible year to date 2013/14?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Council's bailiffs are not paid any fees by the Council. The bailiffs however do charge fees to defaulters. These are regulated by statute and these fees are deducted from any payments that they collect, before paying over to the council.

Council receipts from bailiffs for the years 2011/12, 2012/13 and to 31 January 2014 for 2013/14 are as follows:

2013/14	£ 2,822,320.41
2012/13	£ 3,048,085.37
2011/12	£ 1,590,516.60
	£ 7,460,922.38

Supplementary Question**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Council receipts from the bailiff for the years 2011/12 were £1.5m, they had doubled in 2012/13 to £3m. What methods were used to obtain this increase in bailiff? Hard-working residents are concerned about some of the methods used. We need a full understand of why this was the case.

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Labour attack when 100% council tax is not collected and when attempts are made to do so, they attack again. The way to collect 100% council tax is unfortunately through the use of bailiffs and they have been very effective.

Question 15**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Does the Cabinet Member think it is right, as in Labour's budget amendment, to provide free parking in just four of the Borough's twenty-one town centres and completely neglect the other areas such as West Hendon?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

I certainly believe Labour have not thought through their proposals, with their budget amendment betraying the discrepancy between what they are promising and what they can provide costings for. Labour only had proposals for 4 of Barnet's 21 town centres and we are advised this did not include West Hendon.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

I was disappointed that West Hendon was not included in the free parking, however Councillor Dean Cohen has managed to negotiate with Transport for London that West Hendon will now have 50 mins of free parking. The traders and residents are delighted with the news. Does this not show that this Administration is committed to helping residents and traders in the area where the help is most needed?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Labour's proposal missed out West Hendon. This Administration is providing not only free parking but parking that didn't exist in West Hendon before.

Question 16**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

How many mattresses are dumped across Barnet each year?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Categories / or types of fly-tipping are not recorded, only the number of fly-tipping incidents that are reported and cleared is recorded. It is not possible to answer this question, or record this data going forward as it would require the introduction of additional administration processes and resources to facilitate this, with the data having little value. It is, however, intended to undertake some sample surveys going forward to gauge fly-tip composition, offenders and to inform decision making. The new customer contact system being introduced at the end of April will enable the classification of fly-tipping in terms of category – household or commercial and size of fly-tipping.

Question 17**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

Does the Cabinet Member agree that the new housing in West Hendon is providing excellent homes for people and that in light of this, and its high quality of maintenance by residents and managing agents, we should be building more such accommodation?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Yes. It is a shame that Labour do not believe in building new homes for people having opposed the West Hendon Regeneration.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Ansuya Sodha**

The new housing in West Hendon looks spotless. Does the Member not agree that we are now moving with the times and in this age of globalisation we should not be living in slums?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Agreed. It is a shame that Labour repeatedly oppose all regeneration schemes, desperate to keep people living in poor quality accommodation. This Administration does everything it can to improve the lot of all residents across the Borough as was evidenced by the money that Barnet Homes is spending on improving its existing stock. Despite repeatedly requesting Councillor Julie Johnson and Councillor Moore to state what they would do on affordable housing, they cannot provide a single piece of evidence to say where they would build, how they would fund it, nor how many units they would construct. It is clear that the Conservative Administration is on the side of all residents and helping all people in this borough.

Question 18**Councillor Alison Moore**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm the up-to-date figures for how many residents are paying council tax under the Council Tax Scheme (CTS) are in arrears and how many have been issued with a courts summons for non-payment? Would he also confirm how many of those are in arrears or have been issued with a court summons under each category of the CTS including those paying council tax for the first time? Would he further confirm how much council tax has been collected under the CTS to date versus how much the council expected to collect, and how much it has cost the council (or the contractor) to collect it?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Due to the nature of claimants joining and exiting the CTS scheme throughout the year, it is not possible to exclude arrears in respect of periods when residents are not in receipt of support.

As at 10 March 2013, in respect of the year 2013/14, there are 35,801 residents claiming CTS. Of those 9,373 have been in arrears or are currently in arrears. Of those 6,286 have been summonsed for non-payment.

Of the 9,373 residents in arrears, 415 are of pension-age, 8,958 are from residents of working age. Of these 3,740 are paying council tax for the first time.

The Council anticipated a 70% collection rate of the contribution to be made by claimants in receipt of CTS. It is possible to determine the amount of council tax that has been received against accounts where residents are in receipt of CTS, however due to the nature of claimants joining and exiting the scheme throughout the year, it is not possible to exclude payments made in respect of periods when residents are not in receipt of support. Whilst this does not allow us to report the exact outturn against the anticipated 2013/14 70% target, as at 28 February 2014 the CTS collection rate was 87.15% (target 69.15%). This includes all accounts where CTS has been credited to the account, for all or part of the year. This outturn is distorted by the payments made

for periods when taxpayers are not in receipt of support.

It is not possible to disaggregate the cost of collecting CTS, as whilst some cases are being processed by a dedicated team, many council tax processes do not differentiate nor add further cost when the volumes are increased. The cost of these activities are all included in the management fee paid to Capita.

Question 19

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

Does the Cabinet Member welcome the building of new council homes in Barnet, the first in more than twenty years?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Yes, and I am looking forward to building more.

Question 20

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Does the Cabinet Member agree that it was public pressure and determination that led to the council closed Friern Barnet library being handed over to local trustees on a two Year lease?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

If by public pressure she means the personal insults towards myself and my family then I cannot agree with her. I would like to especially praise Councillor Salinger who worked hard behind the scenes, to ensure the best outcome for the residents of Friern Barnet - unlike the Labour councillors who did not ask to meet with me once on this matter.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

This was not meant personally and by public pressure I was referring to the endless campaigning of the 'Save Friern Barnet' Group and support of residents and the pop-up library whilst the council had closed the library. Do you agree that without public pressure, the library would have stayed closed and by now marketed for sale?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Not once did the Councillors ask for a meeting to discuss this issue. Councillor Kate Salinger was the driving force behind this not the Labour Party Councillors in Coppetts.

Question 21

Councillor Joan Scannell

Will the Cabinet Member confirm that the protected status of the Green Belt will continue to be respected and defended by the administration with reference to future development in the borough?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Yes, the Council will continue to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development as enshrined in the Local Plan.

Question 22

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Prior to the removal of cash parking meters in 2011, how often were they emptied?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Parking meters were emptied on average 3-4 times per week, with the cashier team collecting from the busier machines more frequently than those less used.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

I am pleased that the question was eventually answered as I suggested. Can Councillor Cohen explain why cash parking in meters is so popular with traders?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Once Councillor Schneiderman gets his budget correct when he says £180,000 less for pay by phone which is half of the cost of pay by phone, assuming that half of the people using pay by phone are going to move to cash and he's proposing to collect the money twice a week in 10% of the machines that were there, then ask again.

Question 23**Councillor John Marshall**

What is the latest estimate of the savings from the restructuring of the senior management?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The total saving for the restructuring of senior management in 2012 equated to £1.2m.

Question 24**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

Could you let me know the increase in council tenant rent arrears in 2013/14 as compared to 2012/12?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

The accounts have not yet closed for the 2013/2014 period so it is not possible to provide an accurate number. This will be provided once the accounts are closed. However it is anticipated that this year's rent collection will exceed the previous years.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Gill Sargeant**

The reply has not answered the question, which was please advise the increase in council tenants rent arrears in 2013 as compared to 2012.

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

The answer provided does answer the question. The question cannot be answered until the accounts are finalised.

Question 25**Councillor John Marshall**

How many applications to fell trees in Garden Suburb have been rejected since May 2010?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

There have been 13 tree applications refused to fell protected trees (tree preservation trees) in the Garden Suburb ward since 1st May 2010 to date – list below:

- Electricity Sub-Station Adjacent to 11 Northway, London, NW11 6PB
- 32 Willifield Way, London, NW11 7XT
- The Lewis W Hammerson Memorial Home, The Bishops Avenue, N2 0BE
- 11 Spencer Drive, London, N2 0QT
- 48 Helen Close, London, N2 0UU

- Plot 3, 65 - 79 Winnington Road, London, N2 0TS
- Asmunds Place Allotments (Rear of 7/9 Asmunds Hill), London, NW11
- Plot 3, 65-79 Winnington Road, London, N2 0TS
- 33 The Bishops Avenue, London, N2 0BN
- Asmunds Place Allotments (Rear of 7/9 Asmunds Hill, London, NW11 6ES
- Grassed Area Adj to 27 - 47 Willifield Way, London, NW11 7XU
- Plot 3, 65 - 79 Winnington Road, London, N2 0TS
- 59 Kingsley Way, London, N2 0EJ

Question 26

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Has the Cabinet Member now had time to identify the key messages coming out of the parking focus groups held in December and January; and if so what are they?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Yes and the key messages are as follows:

1. That we should relax enforcement – Civil Enforcement Officers are considered to be “ruthless and inflexible”
2. Free or cheap parking – free parking for 15-30 minutes are suggested in shopping streets and centres
3. Straightforward payment methods
4. Level of fines – it is suggested that there should be reduced car parking fines (but this is not under the Council’s control.)
5. Council Policy and Engagement – This supports the development of a comprehensive parking policy and further engagement but suggested that residents would also like to have reviews of all controls and that we should provide additional parking.
6. Controlled parking – residents are concerned about the “myriad of variations in restrictions” so clearly we need to better explain the need for locally appropriate controls
7. Parking costs – residents and businesses both suggest reduction of business and resident permit costs

These issues will be considered and addressed in the Council’s parking policy which is under development.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

I am pleased that the key messages were identified out of the £14,000 parking focus group at a cost of £250 per attendee. Could it be explained on the message what item 3) straight forward payment methods, are?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

All payment methods: pay point, scratch cards, pay-by-phone and credit card/ debit card machines.

Question 27**Councillor John Marshall**

What is the latest estimate of the increase in recycling since the implementation of the new policy?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Between the launch of the new services on 14 October 2013 and 15 March 2014, 11,629 tonnes of recycling has been collected compared with 8,519 tonnes for the same weeks the previous year (a 36.5% increase). For the same period, 3,088 tonnes of food waste has been collected, compared with an estimated 200 tonnes per full year with the previous service.

Question 28**Councillor Julie Johnson**

Would the Council agree to put all planning applications affecting the Granville Road Estate on hold until after a full public consultation on the final proposals has taken place amongst residents living on the estate and in the surrounding streets?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

A number of local consultations have already taken place over the course of the project. The development partners are currently in the process of preparing a planning application which will have regard to the responses received through this consultation. Any application that is submitted in due course will be subject to a further full consultation as part of the statutory planning process and representations received through this will be material to the consideration of the proposals.

Question 29**Councillor Andrew Harper**

Could the Leader expand on the two mentions of Barnet in the Budget?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The budget contained two important announcements for Barnet, relating to two of our major regeneration schemes.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a new fund to support the rebuilding of large regeneration estates, citing the Grahame Park Estate in Colindale as a potential beneficiary.

The second announcement related to Brent Cross Cricklewood, where we have been lobbying Government for support to deliver the planned Thameslink Station early. This will mean that existing and new residents can benefit from excellent connection to central London from day 1, and give visitors to the expanded shopping centre better access by public transport. It will also help improve the financial viability of the scheme, and speed up delivery. The Chancellor announced that the Treasury would work with the Council and the GLA to forward the scheme.

These announcements are the result of many months of careful lobbying by Barnet Council.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Andrew Harper**

Like the Leader, I was glad to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer visiting a successful and forward-looking borough. Would the Leader elaborate a little more on how these developments are going to be progressed?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

This will be mentioned later in meeting but there are two announcements. 1) the opportunity to get

the funding to move ahead with Graham Park and get rid of the concourse which will be a great step forward for the residents there and all the people of Barnet and 2) the Council will have to consider after the next election how we progress with the Thames Link Station which will be the key to getting proper access both to the new shopping centre and the housing development.

Question 30

Councillor Alison Moore

Does the Leader regret not consulting residents more on key policy and service changes?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Consultation is always a good thing.

Question 31

Councillor Andrew Harper

Would the Cabinet Member update the Council as to how many professionals volunteered in the Interview Skills at East Barnet School event on the 13th March?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

There were 35 professionals from 30 different organisations at the event including BT, Waitrose and Microsoft.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Andrew Harper

Would the Cabinet Member share his experience of this event and comment on the quality of the candidates coming forward for the jobs?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

It was an opportunity to see the maturity and the professionalism of some of our youngest potential employees preparing themselves. They had such skills that they put forward, they addressed themselves impeccably. They were a real tribute to themselves and to the education system in Barnet.

Question 32

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

The recent Parking Task and Finish Group recommended a review of the enforcement approach undertaken by NSL to ensure that it is fair and appropriate. Does the Cabinet Member agree, and if so when will this review take place?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The Task and Finish Group report is due to be considered by Cabinet at its next meeting and this will include consideration of all recommendations, including any related to reviewing the enforcement undertaken by NSL. Should this specific recommendation be agreed by Cabinet then this review will be arranged in due course.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Could the Member give his view on the current nature of enforcement of parking in Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The parking enforcement does need improvement and I have instructed officers as recommended by the Task and Finish Group to get on with that work and that has commenced.

Question 33

Councillor Brian Salinger

What progress, if any, has been made in investigating the nature of any data loss connected to the censuring of the non-aligned member at the last Council meeting?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Questions were raised with Councillor Coleman's solicitor regarding the potential data loss. Councillor Coleman's solicitor has stated that he has no instructions from Councillor Coleman on this issue. Questions were therefore raised by the Monitoring Officer of Councillor Coleman to assess the risk. Councillor Coleman has stated that he does not consider any direct questions on the matter by the Monitoring Officer to be appropriate. As the Council has tried to seek reasonable and valid assurances as to how the laptop has been disposed of and these attempts have been unsuccessful we have taken the view that this incident requires reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for them to investigate the matter and seek assurances.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Brian Salinger

Has the Leader or the Chief Executive taken the opportunity to remind all members of the need to protect council owned computers and to ensure that council owned computers are not used for non-council uses particularly if those uses might give rise to acute embarrassment to the member involved.

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Not explicitly but this will be done in the new council. It will be very important that there are clear guidelines for all members in the use of council computers and not the state of affairs that existed whereby slightly different briefing was given to different groups.

Question 34

Councillor Gill Sargeant

Could you let me know the result of investigations into whether reminder letters are being sent out to those owing council tax and how much notice are people being given before receiving a court summons?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Reminder notices are sent out to all taxpayers who are in arrears with their council tax.

Reminders are sent in accordance with council tax legislation and can be sent if payment is not paid by the instalment due date. Upon receipt of a reminder, the taxpayer has 7 days to bring the account up to date. If payment is not made within 7 days the whole year's Council Tax is due. A reminder can be sent at any time after the council tax has become due.

In practice reminders are issued every month and usually 12 to 15 days after the due date. The council aims to get the overdue payment collected within the month that it is due. A second reminder can be sent if the customer pays on a first reminder and falls behind again. A maximum of two reminders will be issued.

A final notice may be issued in some circumstances and as with reminder notices; payment is due within 7 days.

If payment is not made within 14 days of a reminder notice, or within 7 days of a final notice then the council may apply for a liability order from the magistrates' court. This process starts with the issuing of a summons.

Therefore, usually the minimum notice period for a summons would be 14 days from the date of the instalment, but good practice and other considerations extend this time to approximately 28 days.

Question 35**Councillor Brian Salinger**

Does the Council have proof that Councillor Coleman did destroy his council laptop and that he did so in a manner which would prevent data being recovered from it?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The Council has written correspondence from Councillor Coleman's solicitor that he destroyed his laptop. Questions posed to Councillor Coleman's solicitor regarding the way in which he disposed of his laptop have neither been answered by his solicitor or Councillor Coleman himself. As a result we are unable to confirm whether the data contained on the computer was safeguarded appropriately.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Brian Salinger**

How much has it cost to investigate council Councillor Coleman's transgressions?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The information not available but I will write to the member concerned with that information.

Question 36**Councillor Alison Moore**

Will the Leader confirm that he will work with the police to ensure that 20mph limits across the Borough are properly enforced?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Yes.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Alison Moore**

No supplementary

Question 37**Councillor Graham Old**

Can the Cabinet Member confirm the number of Marked and Measured Routes being installed in the Borough and update Council on progress in this regard?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

In all, there will be a total of 10 Marked and Measured Routes installed in parks across the Borough.

9 of these have already been completed and installed using Public Health funding, with the 1st one at Edgwarebury Park being opened to the Public on 27th February. A further eight have been completed and installed at the following locations:

- Barnet Copthall
- Barnet Playing Fields
- Bethune Park
- Clitterhouse Playing Fields
- Montrose Park
- Scratchwood Open Space
- Sunny Hill Park
- West Hendon Playing Fields

The 10th route will be at Oak Hill Park and is expected to be installed by the end of April 2014. This Route is being delivered under a separate project to the 9 listed above.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Graham Old**

Could the Member give her thoughts on how effective these routes will be?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

I am sure that the routes will be exceedingly effective. I have tried the first one in Edgwarebury Park just before it was initiated as part of the FAB Campaign and it was a very enjoyable experience. The point of these marked and measured routes is that they are very varied; they go from one to 5 kilometres. They are over a variety of different parks across the borough and that in two of the parks, Sunny Hill and Watling parks, the actual route is fully paved and that will be very beneficial to the less able and those with pushchairs. It is also a very good way if you run, cycle or walk these paths to meet the Director of Public Health's challenge.

Question 38**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Is the Cabinet Member disappointed that the recycling rate remains below the 40% target?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

I am far from disappointed, quite the opposite. For the period between 14 October 2013 and 1 March 2014 the proportion of household waste recycled, composted or reused is 38.1% (provisional). For the same weeks the previous year the figure was 29.4%, and the full year outturn for 2012/13 was 33.02%. The waste transformation programme expected that the recycling performance would increase to 43% by 2016/17 and the recent step-change in performance shows that this will be achieved by 2016/17. The target within the Corporate Plan 2013-2016 is 40%.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Could Councillor Cohen point out to his Conservative candidates who are leafleting saying that recycling rate is 40% when that is not the case?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Councillor Schneiderman should be encouraging his to increase their recycling.

Question 39**Councillor Graham Old**

Would the Cabinet Member like to comment on the launch of Fit and Active in Barnet?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

I cannot over-emphasise the importance of physical activity to the health and wellbeing of Barnet residents with countless studies showing that it can actually prolong life expectancy as well as prevent illness and enhance mental health. However, whilst health outcomes of Barnet residents have consistently been better than those for London and England as a whole, our levels of physical activity have very much lagged behind.

That is why I was so delighted, together with Dr Andrew Howe, our joint Director of Public Health, to be present at the Launch of our Fit and Active in Barnet campaign (FAB for short) with the installation of our first Marked & Measured route at Edgwarebury Park at the end of February. In addition to both these and our Outdoor Gyms, the FAB programme has also invested in a whole variety of activities to take place throughout the year to encourage **all** of Barnet's residents - whatever their level of fitness and ability - to be much more physically active.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Graham Old**

The Cabinet Member refers to 'a whole variety of activities'. Would she mind giving us some

examples of these?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

The first outdoor gym will be in Watling Park Park, hopefully, at the end of the week. In answer to the question, firstly the 'Give it a go' Programme provides free taster sessions at sports clubs across the borough and a whole variety of activities. There's a whole range of activities centred around the football world cup. Thirdly, the borough is partnering with providers to support the 5K run across the borough. This is in conjunction with the 'couch to 5k' programme which aims to get non-participants (couch potatoes) away from the couch and fit and able to run 5K.

Question 40

Councillor Charlie Omacauley

How many CCTV cameras have been taken off service in Barnet, and specifically how many in Burnt Oak? Was there any consultation?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

No cameras have been removed from Burnt Oak.

Barnet has 131 cameras across the borough. 5 cameras have been taken off service due to technical issues (this is since the CCTV was installed in Barnet approx. in 1999/2000). The details are as follows:

Camera 1: High Road Junction with Woodhouse Road

This area is sufficiently covered by three other cameras in the locality situated on the Kingsway Junction with Ballards Lane, High Road Junction with Nether Street and Woodhouse Road opposite Lambert Way.

Camera 2: Stanhope Road

Originally placed to monitor the Autumn House Public House which is now closed.

Camera 3: Lodge Lane Car Park

Placed to monitor the cash pay and display machine which is now no longer there.

Camera 4: High Road Junction with Woodside Park Road

This area is covered by two other camera's situated locally:

- High Road Junction, Torrington Park
- High Road, opposite Avenue Road

Camera 5: Cricklewood Lane, opposite Elm Grove

There are three other cameras in the local area

Barnet's current CCTV system is supported by BT cabling, the cameras and technology is outdated and we have now invested in the most up to date cameras supported by a wireless network. The system will be regularly maintained and the camera network extended following consideration of the CCTV consultation and analysing crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots, resulting in greater effectiveness.

There will also be an additional 20 Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras at entry points around the borough.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Charlie Omacauley

Would the Member agree to come and visit this point where the CCTV camera has been removed

and if that is so would he apologise to the residents of Burnt Oak?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

I have been advised that no cameras have been removed from Burnt Oak. There is no reason to go to Burnt Oak until evidence can be provided of from where the camera was removed, then a visit will be arranged and an explanation given.

Question 41

Councillor Kate Salinger

Can the Cabinet Member now confirm that the Council has been able to ensure a future for Community Focus, following their dispute with the ArtsDepot?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

I am happy to confirm that on 25 February, Cabinet Resources Committee agreed funding to re-fit the vacant first floor of Friary House to allow Community Focus to move in. Community Focus has agreed a 20 year lease for the space, which provides them with the certainty they require. Works are on course to be completed to allow Community Focus to take up residence in July.

Question 42

Councillor Alison Moore

Does the Leader think it is fair for councillors to get free parking while residents and those that have businesses or come to work in Barnet have to pay for parking?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Some Councillors accept parking permits that can only be used on Council business.

Question 43

Councillor Kate Salinger

Can the Cabinet Member tell me how many potholes have been filled in over the last year, how many miles of road have been resurfaced and how many streets have been resurfaced? How much has been spent on capital works on roads and pavements in the last year?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

During 2013/14, the Highways department spent £3.4 million on carriageway resurfacing and £5 million on Footway repairs (total of £8.4 m on planned maintenance).

4544 potholes have been repaired this year.

On the carriageway resurfacing, the £3.4 m spending covers a total of 43 schemes/roads. The length of carriageway resurfaced or to be resurfaced during 2013/14 is 14.144 km or 8.79 miles.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Kate Salinger

What has happened to the 78 potholes in Coppett Ward identified.

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

I thank Councillor Salinger who took the initiative to go around her ward and identify where there were still potholes and I am pleased to announce that those have all been rectified.

Question 44

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

How much has been spent to date on security for the closed Church Farmhouse Museum?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

£43,120 (September 2012- February 2014)

Going forward the cost will be reduced as a new agreement has been negotiated with the guardians as a result of the installation of the shower and sink. The daily charge has been reduced from £85 per day to zero, and the guardians are contributing £100 per month to the running costs.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Given the position with this building, this A* listed building, is there a time-line indicating when there will be new tenants in there or any council offices in there? Given that the borough seems to be receiving money from the custodians who are looking after the ex-museum, are there any other council properties that council would like to offer to residents for £100 a month?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

I was not aware of any properties in the same situation. There isn't a deadline or timescale but we're working with Middlesex University to bring this building back into use.

Question 45

Councillor Barry Evangeli

It is now a few months since I put a question at Council about reducing or eliminating the council's advertising in the local press. Can the Leader provide us with some details of progress to date?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

It is important to minimise the use of adverts and to reduce the cost as much as possible. This is being done but there are still occasions when the press is the best way to inform the public.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Barry Evangeli

Does the Leader agree that huge savings can be made by advertising on the council's website and also Barnet First which is distributed in the borough and for all intents and purposes will have the same effect and is probably more widely read?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Wherever it is possible, that should be done.

Question 46

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Does the Cabinet Member now accept that £2 million due to the Council from its disastrous Icelandic deposits will never be recovered?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The Council has now received back an amount in excess of the principal deposited in Iceland, although it has not received back the accrued interest in full. This matter has been subject to significant press over the 5 years and affected many authorities in the country, and also the Audit Commission. Given the previous uncertainty over the recovery of these funds, and the significant amounts that had to be set aside in reserves and provisions, this is a positive result for Barnet Council.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Does the Member accept that although some money has come back £2m is not going to be recovered? And further does he accept that those Icelandic deposits should never have been made in the first place because they were contrary to the council's agreed Treasury Management Policy and that's what sets Barnet's Tory Icelandic disaster apart from other authorities, it should never have happened if the Council's agreed policy had been followed.

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

This was looked at years ago and I declined to comment further.

Question 47

Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner

What percentage of the Council's total budget is covered by the two contracts with Capita?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Prior to the letting of the Customer and Support Group (CSG) and Re contracts, these two service areas constituted 11% of the Council's budget. In 2013/14, the CSG and Re contracts now make up 8% of the Council's total budget.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner

Could the Member comment on the claims that would lead the public to believe that vast swathes of the budget has been outsourced?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Scaremongering is the speciality of the opposition.

Question 48

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

What changes have taken place to accommodate a security presence at the closed Church Farmhouse Museum and what costs have been accrued due to these changes?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The installation of a portable self-contained shower has been made in the former WC and a sink unit has been replaced at a cost of £1,450. English Heritage carried out an inspection on 10 December 2013, and is in full support of the security solution in place and works carried out.

Question 49

Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner

Have Customer Services achieved their customer satisfaction target since transferring to Capita?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The latest Customer and Support Group (CSG) quarterly Performance Report for Q3 2013/14 showed that 15 out of 15 performance targets were met with Customer Services achieving the Quarterly Customer Satisfaction Target of 60% despite an additional 45,000 calls when compared to the same quarter last year. The additional calls were a result of the Waste Project resulting in the rollout of new bins and recycling regime.

For Quarter 4, this target increases to 65% and in February the overall rating across all channels rated as "good" was 68%.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner

Would the Member welcome the instant success of the CSG contracts?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Agreed.

Question 50

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Does the Cabinet agree with a quote from a recent article on the Conservative Home website "Maude praises the Barnet formula" which said that "the Council has made mistakes - for instance a short lived proposal to hike councillor allowances"?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I agree with much in this article.

Yes, all institutions make mistakes and have to put them right. However, this is not the main message of the article, which is to highlight the success and innovation of the council.

I totally agree with Mr Maude's comments in the referenced article. What he said was the following:

"Every part of the public sector has to adapt to tough economic times. For local government, the challenge of providing services on reduced budgets means taking a fresh look at service delivery and finding imaginative ways of delivering more for less. But we know that the voluntary sector, SMEs and mutual or joint ventures offer the chance to drive up productivity everywhere.

"Barnet is rising to the challenge by becoming a Commissioning Council. Instead of delivering all services directly, it is working with a range of service providers in the public and private sectors, and involving communities in the design and delivery of services. This is the sort of flexible, innovative approach that is needed to produce better value for money and better outcomes for citizens."

I agree with its assessment of Labour's contribution to the direction of the council in the last four years:

"The response of the Labour Party has been to attack it without offering a credible alternative of where they would find savings."

Finally, I also note that the conclusion of the piece states that the Conservatives deserve to win the forthcoming election for *"taking the borough in the right direction."*

Question 51**Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner**

What action is the Council taking to remove grime and gum from the Borough's town centres?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The Council has been investigating and trialling a number of pieces of equipment to address this particular problem. Following a successful trial, two machines have been identified that will deliver the desired outcome of both chewing gum and grime removal. One machine will 'zap' the chewing gum, removing all traces of it. Then a scrubbing machine will wash away the dirt and grime leaving the areas clean and chewing gum free. A team of staff will deliver an intensive cleansing programme to tackle all the boroughs town centres each year with the first town centre being cleaned week commencing 7th April.

Question 52**Councillor Arjun Mitra**

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety will have heard of the dreadful assault on a 79 year old resident on Fortis Green. What measures can he take that might help to prevent such attacks?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Tackling Violence against Women and Girls including domestic violence and sexual exploitation, are a key priority for the Safer Communities Partnership. We run various community partnership days, which will continue, where we provide the local community and especially vulnerable

people, women and girls, with personal attack alarms – these are provided free and funded by the partnership.

This particular incident is very unusual in that it took place on a busy residential street with a high number of cars going by. It was in broad day light at 10.30am.

The partnership will continue to raise awareness and ensure appropriate support for victims is in place.

We work closely with the police and an incident of this type would be managed by the police.

Question 53

Councillor Andreas Tambourides

What has been the overall percentage increase or decrease in crime in the last year?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

In the last 12 months, up to 25 March 2014, there have been 22,793 crimes in Barnet. This is a 10.2% reduction compared to the same period one year ago, where there were 25,371 crimes.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Andreas Tambourides

Would the Member congratulate the police and council partners in winning the battle against crime? Does the Member have the latest figures for domestic burglary in Barnet?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The police and the partners are thanked for their work in fighting crime and excellent reductions have been seen in the last year. On the fight against domestic burglary which is one of the priorities of the Safer Community Partnership Board the last year has seen a 22% reduction in burglary and with the introduction soon of the ANPR cameras, further reductions of burglary are anticipated in the borough.

Question 54

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Has Councillor Cornelius published his report into being a commissioning council a bit too early given that the section on "what we've achieved" only identifies savings that are yet to be delivered?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

No. The document sets out the approach the Council has taken to deal with the challenges of funding cuts and rising demand over the past few years. We have achieved a great deal by living within our means in a responsible way that allows us to continue to invest in what people like about the borough – schools, green spaces, infrastructure – and give something back to residents through a reduction in their Council Tax. This is in contrast to a number of authorities who have had to make more draconian cuts to the front line services residents depend on. We haven't done that in Barnet and the report sets out how we have achieved it. The two partnerships with Capita you refer to – by guaranteeing savings of £165m over the next 10 years – and our transition to a commissioning model provide the foundations for dealing with the challenges that still await us and continuing this responsible approach.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

The answer does not address the question. Councillor Cornelius talks about 'living within our means' and then he talks about savings over the next ten years. Isn't it a bit too early to be harping on about successes we are yet to see? We have yet to see any savings from these One

Barnet projects

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Harping and carping is a speciality of this Council chamber. The great tribute that has been paid to work on this side is that Labour accepted so much of it in their budget.

Question 55

Councillor Andreas Tambourides

What has been the change in the number of burglaries in the last year?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The following statistics are for the 12 months up to 25 March 2014 (compared against the equivalent period one year ago):

All burglaries: 3,972 vs. 4,812 a year ago (17.5% reduction)

Of which:

Residential: 2,738 vs. 3,439 a year ago (20.4% reduction)

Non-residential: 1,234 vs. 1,373 a year ago (10.1% reduction)

Question 56

Councillor Arjun Mitra

Despite years of complaints, the junction of Church Lane and Long Lane in East Finchley remains in a poor state. Why is it so hard for the Council to repair brickwork and re-pave the brickwork? It is enough to make residents "Apocalyptic".

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

This section of public Highway is Inspected every six months. Following a recent inspection all defective areas noted were passed to our contractors for attention. The next inspection for Church Lane AND Long Lane is April 15th 2014. I am pleased to confirm that the brickwork around the tree bases have been noted and will be passed to our contractor for attention within the next 28 days.

Question 57

Councillor Andreas Tambourides

What is the Council doing to tackle benefit fraud and how many prosecutions were there in this last financial year?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

In financial year 2013/14 there have been 27 successful benefit fraud prosecutions.

Question 58

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

What is the breakdown of how the £1.4 million Outer London Fund money is being spent in North Finchley?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The total amount of funding for the Outer London Fund project in North Finchley is £1,453,140 including matched funding provided by Barnet Council of £379,080. The breakdown is as follows:

£12,000.00 to support 3 Apprenticeship opportunities in the town centre.

£24,000.00 for town centre events - £8,000 of this was spent on the Christmas event 2012 with the remaining £16,000 to the Summer event 2013 and Christmas event 2013.

£42,000.00 for Business capacity building and training including business events, promotional activities, setting up a town team, research and benchmarking, business training and development.

£127,000.00 was spent on celebrations and activities during the Olympics, including public realm improvements and activity to support the torch relay through North Finchley, along with two celebratory events - a Youth Festival and a 'Spectacular' Event.

Approximately £200,000 is being spent on a range of light touch improvements in the Grand Arcade, North Finchley which include new signage, flooring, roof cleaning and painting as well as on a grant which has been awarded to the North Finchley Town Team to activate three units within the Arcade for community purposes.

The remaining funds are for public realm improvements, the majority of which will be in the southern end of the town centre, around Tally Ho Corner but with approximately £300,000 on wider public realm improvements along the high street. £25,000 was spent on the traffic and parking review and improvements (now complete) which was delivered in September 2012. The funding also supports a Town Centre Officer post over the duration of the project.

Question 59

Councillor Stephen Sowerby

How much has the Council saved from its budget since 2010?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Since 2010 settlement the Council has saved £75.9m, breakdown below:

	Efficiencies	Reductions	Income	Total
2014/15	(15,997)	(2,403)	(610)	(19,010)
% of savings	84%	13%	3%	
	Efficiencies	Reductions	Income	Total
2013/14	(12,425)	(1,426)	(641)	(14,492)
% of savings	86%	10%	4%	
	Efficiencies	Reductions	Income	Total
2012/13	(9,304)	(2,584)	(1,413)	(13,301)
% of savings	70%	19%	11%	
	Efficiencies	Reductions	Income	Total
2011/12	(13,592)	(10,613)	(4,900)	(29,105)
% of savings	47%	36%	17%	

Question 60**Councillor Arjun Mittra**

Will the Cabinet Member for Environment lobby Transport for London to do their job and maintain their land properly, such as The Causeway N2? The Council has been requesting them to trim back the hedges, repair the pavement and fix a broken fence for about 6 months.

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Transport for London (TfL) has been contacted regarding the bushes from the railway side. A Section 154 Notice (Over hanging-foliage) Highways Act 1980 has been issued to tube lines. Highways can confirm that according to the last cyclical inspection which was recorded on 30th May 2013 (Please note this is an annual inspection) there were no intervention level defects noted. The next inspection for this area is due May 2014 at which stage any defective areas noted will be passed to our term contractors for immediate attention. The damaged fencing also falls under the responsibility of TfL (Tube Lines) who have been notified on a number of occasions of the required repair works.

Question 61**Councillor Stephen Sowerby**

By what amount has the Council's funding from central government been cut since the last election?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Since 2010, the Council has received £90.5m less in funding from central government.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Stephen Sowerby**

Would the Member say what the likely future to our cut in funding is going to be?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

We do expect cuts in the time frame of the next council, through both the Conservative and Labour Parties, whoever wins the national will still be faced with a continued need to make economies and Barnet can expect its share of them. Rather more worryingly that is coming to us through the Treasury as well. We have to prepare for a very difficult council in the next period.

Question 62**Councillor Julie Johnson**

Does the Cabinet Member think it is fair to charge leaseholders tens of thousands of pounds for building works they will not benefit from, and will he agree to only charge them for the time they continue to live in their properties?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Please refer to the Cabinet Resources Committee paper on Discounts for Leaseholders on Regeneration estates which covers this.

Supplementary Question**Councillor Julie Johnson**

I understand that the question of deciding the amount to be levied for service and capital on West Hendon estate leaseholders will now be reappraised by Barnet Homes following the recent cabinet resources committee. Is the Member in a position to advise when this information, following the reappraisal will be made available to him, the West Hendon leaseholders and appropriate Councillors?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

No.

Question 63**Councillor John Marshall**

What savings have resulted from the work of the Remuneration Committee?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

I refer to the answer to Question 23. £1.2m has been saved on senior management. The groundwork to bringing a logical and fair pay schedule for all council staff has been laid.

Question 64**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Given the closure of Whetstone Police station and the fact that Woodhouse ward, along with other wards, now only has one dedicated police officer, what can the Cabinet Member say to reassure residents concerned about burglaries and the fact they rarely see a police officer patrolling their streets?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

For the 12 month period March 2013 – February 2014

Number of crimes in Woodhouse Ward: 1,211

Change vs. one year ago: Reduction of 320 crimes (20.9% reduction)

The reduction of 320 crimes in Woodhouse Ward was the largest reduction of all wards in Barnet.

Between March 2013 – February 2014, 11 out of the 12 months had a lower level of crime than the same month a year ago.

Burglary remains a priority for the Safer Communities Partnership Board (SCPB). We have established a multi-agency working group to meet on a regular basis and consider the trends in burglary and ensure areas suffering from burglary are targeted with appropriate interventions.

To date our local police, supported by the partnership have:

- Disrupted cross border criminal networks that have been targeting the borough.
- Caught burglars – Barnet has an exceptionally high sanction detection rate.
- Effectively targeted offenders committing burglary and managed their offending resulting in reduced re-offending. (SCPB performance in the internet).
- Targeted more handlers of stolen goods resulting in increased arrests and convictions.
- Delivered a relentless partnership crime prevention campaign, promoting awareness of the risk of burglary, providing knowledge, advice, and assistance that can reduce the risk of being burgled.
- We have secured £30,000 a year for the next three years from Mayor's office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) so we can target harden the homes of the most vulnerable.
- Increasing ANPR – investing in 20 new automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras around the borough to deter cross border borough burglars. Cross border burglary is the most significant contributor to Barnet's overall burglary levels, during a 12 month sample period,

64% of suspects were from off borough.

- Barnet's sanction detection rate for burglary (19.7%) is the highest of all 32 London boroughs – this indicates our police are detecting, catching and convicting those committing burglary at a higher rate than other London Boroughs regardless of a closure of a police station.

Buildings do not solve crimes, Police officers do.

The facts demonstrate that our police have achieved good results.

Burglary is falling in Barnet.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

The Member's answer does go through lots of statistics but what does he say to residents in Woodhouse who are disappointed that the Safer Neighbourhood Team dedicated to Woodhouse Ward and other wards, which previously had nine members now only has two and the number of officers dedicated to Woodhouse ward has therefore been greatly reduced and the chances of members of the public seeing someone patrolling their streets are consequently also being reduced.

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

Coming from Woodhouse Ward which has seen the biggest reduction in crime over the last year, you would think Councillor Schneiderman would be pleased but as he was rather see, speak to and chat with police officers rather than catching criminals, then that is typical of the Labour choice; let the criminals run free. This is the Conservative choice; chase the criminals, catch them and lock them up.

Question 65

Councillor Mark Shooter

As the economy continues to recover and grow, what has been the local impact on unemployment?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

The unemployment rate peaked at 8.6 % from July 2011 to June 2012, and fell to 6.9% from July 2012 to June 2013. Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Population Survey.

Barnet's Benefits Claimant Count peaked at 11.6% at the height of the recession in Aug 2009 but is now steadily declining, reaching 10.2% in August 2013.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Mark Shooter

It is good to see the local unemployment rate falling sharply. How is the economy doing locally and are we seeing any growth?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Growth is being seen in the borough and one of the tributes to that success is the great increase in the number of parking transactions that's being recorded. This has escaped Labour's notice in their spirit of harping and carping and negativity and the great increase in the number of parking uses is an indication that the economy is improving.

Question 66

Councillor Alison Moore

Does the Leader agree with Lord Tebbit that the Bedroom Tax will cost the Conservatives votes at the next election?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

No. This is an important measure to ensure that tax payer subsidised housing is used to help as many people as possible.

Question 67

Councillor Mark Shooter

What is the latest NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figure for Barnet and how has this changed compared to a year previous?

Question 68

Councillor Charlie Omacauley

How many people are on the (now closed) housing list in Barnet as a whole and in Burnt Oak specifically and how many have been waiting over ten years to be re-housed?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

Barnet does not operate a Housing list and has not done for a number of years. I am concerned if this is the information the Member is providing to his residents and suggests he contacts Barnet Homes for a training session, or alternatively, reads some historic Cabinet papers. Officers will be able to provide a copy of the relevant policy paper.

Question 69

Councillor Ansuya Sodha

The recent investment of £50,000 in Malcolm Park and £50,000 in Hendon Park is welcomed by the residents of West Hendon. Does this not show this administration's commitment to investment in parks and in making them more attractive for residents?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Absolutely. Parks and particularly play areas are integral to the wider community, contributing to community cohesion and the health and well-being of Barnet's Residents.

In addition to Malcolm Park and Hendon Park, a further four parks are receiving a make-over this April and May with Cricklewood Playground benefitting from a £300k make-over (funded from OLF – £123,345, GLA Pocket Park - £40,000, S106 - £136,655).

Further play area improvements are planned for this year. A bid for a further round of pocket park funding (to be match funded by the Council) for Percy Road Playground, Stonegrove Park is to benefit from £75,000 and the Friends Groups at the above Parks and a number of others are seeking funding to deliver phase 2 of their projects.

Question 70

Councillor Arjun Mittra

Will the Cabinet Member provide an update as to the status of negotiations between Middlesex University and the Council regarding Church Farmhouse Museum?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

The proposed lease to Middlesex University was based on estimated costs of works of approximately £200,000. Following detailed surveys and consultation with English Heritage costs are now in the region of £500,000. As a result the terms of the proposed lease and options for funding are being investigated and if provisional agreement is secured, a report will be submitted to Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee for approval.

Question 71

Councillor Andrew Harper

Would the Cabinet Member inform Council of preparations to support young people in Barnet to take advantage of job opportunities that arise from the expansion of the Brent Cross Shopping Centre?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

Brent Cross Cricklewood regeneration scheme will generate up to 27,000 new jobs and many of the new jobs will be in service industries requiring retail skills. Up to a further 10,000 other retail or related opportunities are projected to emerge across North London over the next 5 - 10 years, offering accessible opportunities for Barnet residents.

London Borough of Barnet Children's Service is leading on the Lets Talk Shop project which was recently successful in its funding bid of £155,000 for the Leader's Priority Fund. The vision of the Let's Talk Shop Project is to ensure that we capture both existing and future retail opportunities and ensure that Barnet residents are able to take advantage, with quality progression routes to successful careers in this sector.

This project will work through the aegis of the locally-based Retail Skills Academy at Hospitality House in East Finchley to inform and prepare Barnet residents for a career in emerging and future retail vacancies.

Let's Talk Shop in Barnet will develop quality progression routes and career pathways in retail, whilst also addressing feedback from the Brent Cross Shopping Centre (BXSC) that they would like a single point of contact that BXSC can work with to enable early joint working.

The project will deliver a clear pathway for residents to acquire skills and accreditations which will be developed through to graduate level. Schools will be supported and equipped to promote retail career opportunities for Barnet's young people. Links will also be made with Job Centre Plus and Work Programme Providers. The project will also help to reduce the number of young people who become NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) by working with existing NEETs and preventing younger pupils from becoming NEET by supporting them to join a retail pathway of learning and work.

Question 72**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Given the 1p cut in beer duty in the budget, will the Cabinet Member reconsider his decision to refuse the application to list the Castle Pub in Childs Hill as an asset of community value?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

No.

Question 73**Councillor Lisa Rutter**

Does the Cabinet Member agree that the transition of our planning function to Capita seems to have gone very smoothly?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

Yes, the transition has been very smooth. In particular, the Planning Department has continued to maintain its high performance when making planning decisions and is now in the top four Local Planning Authorities in London (34 planning authorities in London) for speed of decision making (based on Communities and Local Government performance tables).

There has also been an extension to the scope of enforcement actions taken, in so far as, a number of direct planning enforcement actions have been taken against unauthorised development, subject to enforcement notices, where illegal developments have been physically removed by contractors employed by the Council (some of these actions were against "beds in sheds").

The Planning Service has also been able to accelerate delivery of the Council's regeneration and major developments programme.

Question 74

Councillor Zakia Zubairi

Building works at Colindale School have been of a poor quality, with roof leaks, doors warping and window's cracking for example. What is the Council doing to ensure that contractors perform repairs and refurbishments to a high standard, and the council tax payer gets value for money?

Answer by Councillor Reuben Thompstone

The Council appoints technical advisers to challenge contractors' design and building work and ensure value for money is achieved throughout the design and build process. A dedicated adviser has been identified to investigate the issues at Colindale School. The contractor has been contacted and appropriate action will be taken.

Question 75

Councillor Maureen Braun

In a city such as London, there will always be concerns about violent crime. What has been the change in serious youth violence and knife crime in the last year?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The following statistics are for the period 1st April 2013 to 16 March 2014 (compared against the equivalent period one year ago):

Knife Crime: 297 vs. 387 a year ago (23.2% reduction)

Serious Youth Violence: 178 vs. 206 a year ago (13.6% reduction)

Question 76

Councillor Julie Johnson

Does the Cabinet Member agree that non-secure tenants on the regeneration estates who have lived locally for over ten years and are an established part of the local community deserve to be re-housed in the Borough?

Answer by Councillor Tom Davey

I believe in fairness and this is facilitated through our housing allocations policy. Each application is assessed against this.

Question 77

Councillor Maureen Braun

Does the Leader agree with me that meetings of full Council will become more meaningful under the committee system, which will commence at the next meeting?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Yes. Full Council will again become the ultimate decision making body for all council matters.

Question 78

Councillor Arjun Mittra

How much are the estimated costs of repair work to Church Farmhouse Museum?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

The costs to make the property fit for purpose are estimated at £483,000.

Question 79**Councillor Joan Scannell**

Would the Cabinet Member join me in welcoming the news that Barnet has the second lowest rate of teen pregnancy in London? What is the Council doing to ensure the continuation of this downward direction of travel?

Answer by Councillor Helena Hart

These latest figures are indeed to be welcomed with the most recent figures representing a 39% fall in the teenage conception rate across Barnet from 1998 to 2012.

However, we must never be complacent. Rates of teenage pregnancy generally are still high when compared with those internationally and maintaining progress in this area is critically important. That is why it is essential that we maintain our Public Health support to our sex and relationship education programmes which have contributed so much to getting these rates down and keeping them low. The Public Health service will continue to work hard to ensure even better access for young people to sex and relationships education, contraceptive services and emergency hormonal contraception. The investments the Public Health team have made in the Barnet Schools Wellbeing Programme and sexual health services properly reflect our extremely strong commitment to continuing this downward direction of travel.

Question 80**Councillor Alan Schneiderman**

Will the Cabinet Member do more to consider the cumulative effect of developments in North Finchley rather than simply looking at each application in isolation?

Answer by Councillor Joanna Tambourides

The Local Planning Authority considers all planning applications on their merit, taking careful account of any relevant planning policies and guidance. The assessment carried out will include evaluating the cumulative impacts of a particular proposal and any other relevant committed schemes (for example a consented scheme on a nearby site). Such an approach was taken in the assessment of the recent application at 931 High Road in North Finchley.

Question 81**Councillor Agnes Slocombe**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm if the cycle route from West Hendon to Cricklewood will be improved using any of the money from the government announced in the budget?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The cycle route from West Hendon to Cricklewood is planned to be improved with the provision of a new route through the Brent Cross Cricklewood Regeneration scheme area, and this will be funded by the Brent Cross developer partner for the northern part of the route in the vicinity of the shopping centre which is expected to be completed in 2020.

The southern stretch of the new route will come forward as part of the substantive redevelopment of the regeneration area to the south of the North Circular and the delivery of this may be assisted by the Government's recent announcement.

The existing cycle route along the A5 between Staples Corner and Cricklewood town centre is also currently being examined as part of the development partner's funded study of the corridor.

Question 82**Councillor Charlie Omacauley**

What is the crime rate in Barnet and specifically Burnt Oak?

Answer by Councillor David Longstaff

The following statistics are for 12 months: March 2013 – February 2014:

Annual rate of crime in Barnet: 62 per 1000 population

Annual rate of crime in Burnt Oak: 67 per 1000 population

Question 83

Councillor Brian Coleman

Do you think an attendance rate of 57% at Council and Committees is acceptable for a perfectly fit Councillor?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

All councillors make a commitment to public service as they seek election.

Question 84

Councillor Brian Coleman

Can you reveal the details of the "parking recovery plan" which according to an Officer briefing received by me is currently being worked on?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

Nothing entitled a "parking recovery plan" exists to my knowledge.

Question 85

Councillor Brian Coleman

Can you tell Council what financial measures have been adopted to deal with the £1 million overspend at quarter 3 on the recycling contract?

Answer by Councillor Dean Cohen

The £1 million overspend in waste and recycling was only in part due to the reduced income from recyclates at £700,000. The income estimated to be received from the North London Waste Authority (NLWA) co-mingled scheme is £322,000 for the part-year period October 2013 to March 2014 and income of £726,000 for 2014/15. Resulting in a net cost of £31,000.

It should be noted that the value of source separated recyclates has declined in recent years.

The change of the waste offer provided residents with the ability to more than double their recycling alongside collecting additional materials. This enables residents to reduce the materials placed into their residual bin, and thereby results in reduced costs for waste sent to land-fill. This can be equated to a likely reduction of the Levy (based on the current data) in the region of £235,000 for this half year (noting that NLWA landfill levy savings are 2 years in lag).

Question 86

Councillor Brian Coleman

Approximately what proportion of shelf space in the mobile library unit is given over to books as opposed to DVDs, CDs and videos? Could it be said that the mobile library has become a mobile branch of bankrupt Blockbusters?

Answer by Councillor Robert Rams

Videos and CDs are no longer stocked on the mobile library. A small number of current DVDs are available equating to approximately 10% of the mobile's total stock. Blockbusters failed because it did not adapt – our library service is adapting all the time and is going from strength to strength.

Question 87**Councillor Brian Coleman**

How many current Councillors belong to the Local Government Pension Scheme and does the Leader support the disgraceful decision of Brandon Lewis to end access to that scheme for Councillors, Assembly Members and indeed the Mayor of London?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

20 Barnet councillors are members. One trusts that Brandon Lewis will now reform MPs pensions to complete his work.

Question 88**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Following revelations that Haringey Council spent £16,000 in Cannes, did Barnet Council have any involvement in MIPIM (*Le marché international des professionnels de l'immobilier*) this year?

Answer by Councillor Daniel Thomas

Following the recent publication of a Prior Information Notice (PIN) notice for potential partners for the Brent Cross South development, one member of staff from Re attended MIPIM in March 2014 to publicise the opportunity, and to invite interest and discussions with potential development and funding partners. He was supported by a member of Capita who is assisting with the procurement activities for this project. Another Capita representative attended in a business development capacity to promote Re and its service offering across London. All costs incurred in undertaking the above were met by Re and Capita.

Question 89**Councillor Brian Coleman**

Does the Leader agree with me that the reported suggestion from the Local Government Association that single occupancy Council Tax discount should be withdrawn from larger properties is fundamentally wrong?

Answer by Councillor Richard Cornelius

Yes.