

**COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS**  
**23 SEPTEMBER 2009**

**Question 1 from Councillor Lamprecht to Councillor Vince, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services:**

"Will the Cabinet Member for Education please inform the Council of the GCSE and A Level results for Enfield that were published earlier in August?"

**Response from Councillor Vince:**

"As Members will have seen from reports in the local press Enfield students have performed extremely well in GCSE and A levels this year. The best ever GCSE results have been achieved this year. At GCSE the 5+A\*-C measure has improved again by 8.8% pts to 67.2%. This continues the upward trend shown over recent years giving an overall improvement of 15.5% over the last four years (2005-2009). The new national performance indicator (NI75 5A\*-C, including English and Mathematics) has also improved from 48% pts to 50.4% pts, a modest but significant increase of 2.4%. The results are provisional and may change but this is, by anyone's standard, an extremely good set of results. National comparison figures will be released later in the year.

At A level pupils achievements also matched the best results ever in Enfield. The provisional pass rate was 96.5% which is broadly similar to last year (96.6%). Encouragingly, 28.8% of students achieved grade A, which is above the provisional national figure of 26.7%. Enfield has therefore had a very good year. The 'points per entry' measure also showed an excellent improvement on last year with a 15.4% increase, from 203.6 to 219. Again this is the highest ever score achieved.

There is no doubt that these results are due to the hard work and determination of our students and the dedication of teachers. I am sure Members would wish to join me in congratulating our young people and their teachers on these excellent results. These results highlight once again the excellent work that is being done by our schools, the School Improvement Service and Governors to raise standards for all pupils in our schools. However, we are not complacent and we will continue to challenge our schools, to match our ever increasing expectations for the young people of Enfield.

I commend these results to you."

**Question 2 from Councillor Rodin to Councillor Lavender Deputy Leader of the Council:**

"In response to my comment in the Evening Standard of 21 August that there is the first Black Conservative Councillor in Enfield, you pointed out on the paper's blog "Candidates who happen to be black have stood for the

Conservative Party in Enfield in seats previously held by the Conservatives, but regrettably have failed to get elected ". Can Councillor Lavender give the Council details of the elections, wards and candidates that he was referring to?

**Response from Councillor Lavender:**

"We do not record the ethnicity of candidates in our records. Therefore I cannot confirm whether what follows is an exhaustive list. However I can provide sufficient information from my own knowledge to evidence the claims made in the blog in their entirety.

In 2006 Sarah Macdonald stood for the Conservative Party in Jubilee Ward and polled 1,431 votes. Although not elected she polled 48 more votes than the late Chris Andrew had polled in 2002, when he did get elected for that ward.

Amos Charles stood for the Conservative Party in Edmonton Green Ward in 2002 and polled 579 votes. He stood again in Edmonton Green Ward for the Conservative Party in 2006 and polled 978 votes.

Joe Smith also stood for the Conservative Party in Edmonton Green Ward in 2002 and polled 538 votes.

Malake Fessehazion polled 778 votes when he stood for the Conservative Party in Upper Edmonton in 2006. The Upper Edmonton ward comprises part of the old Angel and part of the old Weir Hall wards. Angel ward has in the past returned a Conservative councillor."

**Question 3 from Councillor Boast to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene:**

"Does Councillor Neville share my concern at the risk of injury, particularly to the elderly or infirm, from paving stones that have risen above the level of adjacent paving stones? If so, what is he doing about it? In particular, how much is the council spending on (a) repairs to paving stones and (b) renewal of stretches of paving and how does this compare with the expenditure on these items by the previous administration?"

**Response from Councillor Neville:**

"I m grateful to Councillor Boast for putting this question down, as I know the subject matter has formed the basis of an article in the July/August edition of "Enfield Over 50s".

I can tell the council that I do indeed share Councillor Boast's concern about the risk of injury to all our residents caused by uneven and badly broken paving stones. It has been a subject dear to my heart since I became Cabinet Member in 2002 and because of that I have been pleased to bring to the

cabinet each year since then a major programme of pavements renewal and an increasing maintenance budget for day to day repairs.

Since 2002, 85,700 yards (48.71 miles) of pavement have been renewed out of a total of 722miles. We have spent in excess of £15.75m over that time. Notwithstanding this historically major expenditure on the borough's pavements, there is alas still much to do and sadly we are unable to eliminate the risk of further trip accidents.

What I can say however, is that we inherited a situation where the previous Labour administration had spent virtually nothing on pavement renewal throughout their eight year period of office, which significantly contributed to the decline of borough pavements. It is reasonable to suppose that if they had continued in office the situation would have been very much worse today than it is. I can also say that this administration is committed to continued spending on pavement and carriageway renewal.”

**Question 4 from Councillor Goddard to Councillor Prescott, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny:**

“Can Councillor Prescott inform Council of the date of the first meeting of the Place Shaping Scrutiny Panel?”

**Response from Councillor Prescott:**

“The first date for the place shaping scrutiny panel will be set following the appointment of the conservative members and the chairman, It will follow the effective process of the panel being briefed by the Director and Cabinet Member on the key issues and current work in the arena of place shaping. All scrutiny panels use this meeting to set their work programme, and this follows standard procedure.”

**Question 5 from Councillor R Hayward to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene:**

“Would Councillor Neville inform the Council what action he is taking to combat fraudulent use of disabled parking badges (blue badges)?”

**Response from Councillor Neville:**

“Enfield council has appointed a blue badge team in a bid to investigate perceived misuse of disabled badges in the borough. The last British Crime Survey figures showed a 16% increase in fraud and forgery with the Department of Transport saying at least 10% of blue badges were misused.

The team from the Blue Badge Fraud Initiative (BBFI) are working on reducing parking fraud from the theft or cloning of blue badges and misuse (family

members and friends using blue badges without the blue badge holder being present).

Since the operation started in June we have either issued summons or have pending court cases against 5 people, have confiscated 30 badges for misuse, impounded 12 vehicles and have a further 60 ongoing cases which include 18 potential prosecutions.”

**Question 6 from Councillor Georgiou to Councillor Laban, Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety:**

“Can Councillor Laban tell the Council how much money has the Labour Government awarded Enfield Council to tackle mortgage repossessions?”

**Response from Councillor Laban:**

“Enfield Council has received a one off grant of £85,000 towards assisting local residents, and has established a small service in partnership with the Citizen’s Advice Bureau and Catalyst Housing Association as part of the Community Housing Service.

Currently 31 households in mortgage difficulties are being assisted with debt counselling and money advice, with four applications made for further financial assistance.

This is against a background of only 6 mortgage rescue cases across the whole country which have been through the complex and bureaucratic processes surrounding the scheme.”

**Question 7 from Councillor Lamprecht to Councillor Vince, Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services:**

“There has recently been a lot of publicity about safeguarding arrangements for children. Would Councillor Vince please advise what the position is in Enfield?”

**Response from Councillor Vince:**

“Enfield, as with most other local authorities has experienced a significant increase in referrals and workload since the case of ‘Baby Peter’; we are aware that most London authorities have reported an increase in referrals of between 30-40% since November 2008 – Enfield has experienced a sharper increase than this, possibly because of our close vicinity to Haringey, but may also be indicative of wider demographic changes that have taken place within the borough. The heightened awareness of child protection issues has resulted in more children being made the subject of child protection plans as well as an increase in the number of children in care. Since October 2008 activity levels have increased as follows;

80% increase in referrals

100% increase in initial assessments completed

39% more children with a child protection plan

16% increase in Looked After Children since October 2008

Senior officers from LBE took immediate steps to ensure there was sufficient staffing capacity to respond to this unprecedented increase in reported child abuse and have carefully examined the quality of practice in LBE, to ensure local children are adequately protected. During this period of high anxiety, I have been reassured about the effectiveness of our local position by

- An audit of child protection practice by academic experts in this field
- A mock unannounced inspection by ex inspectors
- An unannounced inspection of assessment services by Ofsted
- Direct observation of decision-making processes by the Risk Management Panel, chaired by the DCS.

Whilst I am delighted that the unstinting efforts of staff have been recognised by these quality assurance mechanisms, this is not an area of activity where anyone can afford any complacency. Staff remain vigilant, identifying and protecting children who are at risk of suffering serious harm and require the ongoing support of the council to continue to do this effectively.”

**Question 8 from Councillor Rodin to Councillor Hurer, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources:**

“In his written reply to question 3 at the Council Meeting on 6 May 2009, Councillor Lavender wrote that a total of £1,940,000 had been allocated by the Council to the restoration of Broomfield House. As the Cabinet member for Finance and Resources would you not agree with me in pointing out that for this money to be spent would require further authorisation from the Council, and if you do not agree can you let the Council know why?”

**Response from Councillor Hurer:**

“Councillor Rodin, like a number of politicians within his party, appears confused between council publications and political publications and the respective roles of the party and the relevant organ of government. They are not the same. If the publication had been a council publication and it had stated that the council had decided to ring fence the monies as stated, then I agree there would have been a need for a decision to have been made by the council. Given the publication is a Conservative Party publication it states the views of the Conservative Party only. There is nothing misleading in it at all, since it states the view of the Conservative Party that the proceeds of the sale of assets in Palmers Green should be used to top up any shortfall required to

restore Broomfield House. That is something this administration is committed to and we will take this forward as part of this year's budget process, where it will be considered alongside all other priorities, the economic outlook and the prospects for public spending.

So far this administration has received criticism from you for the decision in principle by Boris Johnson and ourselves to support the restoration of Broomfield House for non-commercial purposes fully in conformity with the covenants. Something you and your party could never achieve.

We have had to suffer misleading and selective quotations from one of your colleagues at a previous council meeting deliberately misquoting the position of Boris Johnson, who, like us, remains committed to the regeneration of the area around the A406, again something your party could never achieve.

The Conservative Party is now being taken to task for its political stance, accurately set out by our agent Henry Lamprecht, of ring fencing the proceeds of the sale of Palmers Green assets, for the people of Palmers Green. “

**Question 9 from Councillor Barker to Councillor Lavender, Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Enterprise:**

“Will Councillor Lavender confirm the circumstances surrounding the theft of the commemorative plaques in the remembrance garden in Broomfield Park and any steps being undertaken for their replacement?”

**Response from Councillor Lavender:**

“At some time during the evening of the 13 of August some eight large metal commemorative plaques were stolen from the Memorial Garden in Broomfield Park.

The Memorial Garden is locked at around dusk everyday, as part of the routine parks security process. Nothing untoward was noticed that evening.

Subsequent to the theft, the LBE Parks Police have conducted extra patrols, and Metropolitan Police are conducting a full investigation.

The Council has offered a reward of £5,000 for the safe return of the plaques and information leading to the successful prosecution of the thieves, but so far there has been no fruitful lead.

The process of replacing the plaques is underway and everything is currently progressing well, and all names previously on the memorial plaques, have now been confirmed by the Imperial War Museum.”

**Question 10 from Councillor Rodin to Councillor Hurer, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources:**

"In a Conservative Party leaflet recently distributed in the Palmers Green area, it states that any money realised by the sale of Southgate Town Hall will be used for the restoration of Broomfield House. Will Councillor Hurer inform the Council when this decision was taken either by the Council collectively or under delegated authority, and state the decision reference, or if as I suspect no such decision has in fact been taken, will he join with me in condemning this misleading political propaganda put out under the imprint of his colleague, Councillor Lamprecht?"

**Response from Councillor Hurer:**

"In relation to question 10, we can confirm that, to our knowledge, the sale of Southgate Town Hall has not been linked to Broomfield Park in a Finance context."

**Question 11 from Councillor Dey to Councillor Kaye, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture, Olympics and Voluntary Sector:**

"Would Councillor Kaye tell us what facilities there are for local community groups to meet up in Palmers Green and what there could be in the future?"

**Response from Councillor Kaye:**

"For many years now we've had countless enquiries from local community groups to hold meetings in the area and sadly we've not had the provision to be able to assist. Currently, librarians have to direct enquiries to other libraries where such rooms do exist in Edmonton, the new Fore Street Library or Oakwood library but clearly that is not satisfactory for local people and a major town like Palmers Green ought to have a similar facility. That is why, central to our plans to re-locate Palmers Green Library, will be the provision of a meeting room, which can be hired by local people."

**Question 12 from Councillor Brett to Councillor Rye, Leader of the Council:**

"Enfield's Fairtrade application is due to be renewed on 21st September. Can Councillor Rye let the Council whether or not fairtrade coffee is being offered at Council Meetings, as agreed in the original motion?"

**Response from Councillor Rye:**

"The Restaurant Manager, Clive Longman, has confirmed that Fairtrade tea and coffee is available in the staff restaurant and can be ordered for Council meetings."

Following the restaurant refurbishment and to coincide with the Enfield Fairtrade Steering Group seeking renewal of its Fairtrade status, we would ensure greater publicity and awareness of Fairtrade products, with posters, flyers and other promotional materials supplied gratis from the Fairtrade

Foundation. The Enfield Fairtrade Steering Group (EFSG) is now a properly constituted organisation and seeks to raise awareness of Fairtrade, monitor availability of Fairtrade products in Enfield retail and catering outlets and to encourage retailers and caterers to stock Fairtrade products. Currently over 20 places of worship in the borough have Fairtrade status, including the progressive synagogue, and over 40 places of worship overall, have a link to Fairtrade by using Fairtrade products, holding stalls or other connections. These include several CoE churches, a Hindu temple, mosques, United Reform Churches and Catholic churches. Further high profile events are being planned for Fairtrade fortnight in February/March 2010. There is a link to the EFSG form the Council's website with further information. “

**Question 13 from Councillor Zinkin to Councillor Lavender, Deputy Leader:**

“Can the Deputy Leader provide an update on what progress you have made with Transport for London and the Homes and Communities Agency to bring an end to the currently unacceptable situation of the 79 empty houses owned by TfL along the North Circular in Palmers Green, Southgate Green and Bowes?”

**Response from Cllr Lavender:**

“I am conscious that, when a question on this topic was asked at the Mayor for London's question time, that a member of the Labour party opposite deemed it fit to selectively quote only part of the answer given, in order to deliberately mislead.

I am grateful therefore for the opportunity given to repeat in full the answer to this question, which was asked of Jonathan Cornelius of TfL.

I am pleased to report that TfL and the London Borough of Enfield are close to concluding a proposal, which will look to bring forward the regeneration of this area. This will deal with not only the empty properties, but the entirety of TfL's surplus portfolio along the A406. I hope to be able to make a more formal announcement in the very near future.”

**Question 14 from Georgiou to Councillor Rye, Leader of the Council:**

“Will Councillor Rye inform the Council what action he and his colleagues have taken in response to the letter from the Shadow Communities Secretary, Caroline Spelman MP advising Conservative Councils to delay major commercial and housing developments?”

**Response Councillor Rye:**

“None whatsoever, for the simple reason that as Councillor Georgiou well knows, the guidance does not apply to London authorities. The Deputy Leader attended the London Congress hosted by Boris Johnson at Guildhall



on 3<sup>rd</sup> September at which this very issue was raised by the leader of Bexley. I understand that it was acknowledged there that the letter did not apply to London and that is my understanding, the understanding of the Mayor for London and the understanding of members of all parties at that congress.

The letter from Caroline Spelman was written in the context of the Conservative Party's policy of reviewing regional planning bodies and guidance to counter the Labour Party's intention to further rape the countryside by imposing artificial housing and development targets, in rural areas and the green belt.

This is good news for Enfield and for areas such as Edmonton and areas around the A406 which Councillor Georgiou himself represents. There is a clear distinction between the advisability of new build in the regions (which we reject) and the regeneration or existing urban areas (which we support). This administration and Boris Johnson remain committed to regenerating existing urban areas such as Edmonton and the A406 rather than seeing resources removed from London to meet regional housing targets. So should you.

Caroline Spelman has this administration's full support."

**Question 15 from Councillor Jukes to Councillor Hurer, Cabinet Member for Finance**

"Is Councillor Hurer able to give us an update with respect to our deposits with the Icelandic Banks?"

**Response from Councillor Hurer:**

"Early in October 2008, certain Icelandic Banks collapsed and the UK subsidiaries of the banks went into administration. The authority had £5m deposited in one of these institutions for one year with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> January 2008, namely the Heritable Bank. At the time the investment was made, the bank's credit rating was within the parameters set and within the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

The Bank went into administration on 7th October 2008.

The administrator made an initial assessment that the assets (at book cost) of the bank matched their liabilities. The administrator expected that at least 70% to 80% of the investment would be recovered. Much would depend on the improvement in the property market.

The administrator made the first distribution in July 09, amounting to £839k (16.3%). A further provisional distribution of £515k (10%) has been announced. This is due to be made before the end of December 2009. Further distributions are planned for 2010 and 2011 with the final distribution due in 2012.

Members will be kept up to date with all developments.”