

## **COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS**

**31 March 2010**

### **Question 1 from Councillor Dreblow to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene:**

"As the Cabinet Member for the Environment will be aware, the London Borough of Enfield recently had its accreditation renewed as a Fairtrade Borough for the coming two years. Will he congratulate the volunteers who have worked so hard to enable this to be achieved?"

### **Reply from Councillor Neville:**

"Enfield was first recognised as a Fairtrade borough in September 2008 with support from the council. The local steering group has gone from strength to strength thanks to the commitment and legwork of the core members, who are all volunteers.

The Fairtrade fortnight event in 2009 saw schools across the borough taking part in the Go Bananas event (children simultaneously eating Fairtrade bananas);

the Prince of Wales Primary School received Fairtrade status - the first in London - in July 2009;

My Coffee Shop (Fairtrade coffee stall on Enfield Chase station platform) received Enfield Green Business of the Year Award in November 2009; and finally.

The Chicken Shed theatre group took their performance workshop created specifically for Fairtrade Fortnight covering important issues about Fairtrade into local primary schools - 10 performances overall.

These achievements are a result of the tremendous effort of the people involved in this project and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate them on their successes."

### **Question 2 from Councillor Giladi to Councillor Vince, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services:**

"Can Councillor Vince confirm her confidence in the independence of the process in place to adjudicate appeals from schools with significant reserves?"

### **Reply from Councillor Vince:**

"The arrangements for challenging schools that hold high levels of reserves which include the mechanisms for the recycling of reserves in some instances, and the arrangements for considering appeals from schools where it is proposed to recycle the reserves, were put in place following consultation with all schools. Appeals are considered by a panel of three members of the Schools Forum with the individuals on the panel being appointed by the full forum. The Schools Forum itself is a statutory committee, of which you are a member, established

under government regulation and the council's constitution to advise and make decisions concerning school funding. The forum has a considerable degree of independence: members are elected to represent specific interest groups. The Cabinet member for Education, Children's Services and Youth attends as an observer. The chairman is elected annually by members of the forum.”

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

“Following the recommendations of the Independent Review Panel (IRP) in July 2008, it would appear clear that despite the best efforts of many, the TWG has failed to fulfil the recommendation stating that transport must be focussed on 'as a priority' (recommendation 12,).

The few changes to transport systems that have been proposed so far will not compensate for the losses of local services for Enfield residents which the reconfiguration proposals will involve.

The IRP stated explicitly (recommendation 12) the need to ensure 'that complete involvement and engagement of all relevant bodies takes place'. Since TfL are now refusing to attend the TWG meetings and there is no representative from the transport companies, would the Cabinet Member agree that the IRP recommendations relating to transport have not been implemented? And if so, would the Cabinet Member inform us of how the London Borough of Enfield proposes to pursue this issue.”

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

The Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Transport Working Group comprises representatives from the NHS, Enfield Council, London Travelwatch, Enfield Transport User Group and both public and patient representatives. Clearly, TfL (Transport for London) are key to the delivery of any service changes needed to ensure that residents can access health care by public transport and I also have been concerned about their decision not to attend this meeting.

I therefore specifically wrote to Ben Plowden, the Director of Integrated Programme Delivery at TfL, in January to express my concerns about the situation and received the following response:

“TfL has attended the Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Transport Group but have unfortunately had to make it clear that we are unable to routinely attend every meeting. We would always aim to respond in writing to questions received in advance of the meeting. In addition a TfL officer has confirmed that if there are specific items on the agenda they will attend meetings.”

Whilst this is not an entirely satisfactory arrangement, TfL are clearly not saying that will never attend any future meeting and I will certainly continue to press TfL to give this group the attention it deserves. I was also particularly pleased to learn that the Trust has recently appointed a dedicated resource to drive forward the work of the BEH Transport Group.”

**Question 4 from Councillor Rodin to Councillor Rye, Leader of the Council:**

"In the past you have criticised national politicians for using public money for self-publicity. What is your view of local authorities using Council Taxpayers' money to promote the achievements of the politically-led administration?"

**Reply from Councillor Rye:**

"When the current Conservative Administration gained control of the council we introduced a new protocol setting out exactly what the council would and would not support in its publicity. This protocol is part of the council's constitution and was agreed by full council. It ensures the council complies with the law on its publicity and follows the national guidance.

Local taxpayers have the right to know how their money is being spent and who is making the decisions so that they can be held to account. They want to know about changes in services and how to access services when they need to. The protocol clearly sets out that council resources should not be used to promote individual politicians other than in their nominated role at the council."

**Question 5 from Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Rye, Leader of the Council:**

"The expansion of the Central Library building in Enfield Town has clearly been one of the largest civic projects undertaken by this Council in recent times. Members of the Conservation Advisory Group have spent a great deal of time examining the various applications relating to this project with keen interest. Can the Leader of the Council explain why neither Opposition Members of the Council nor members of the CAG group were invited to this event?"

**Reply from Councillor Rye:**

"Officers followed the council's protocol whereby the Mayor, Leader, cabinet members and ward councillors are invited to a press launch. This protocol has been used for similar events for the last few years, the latest of which was the opening of John Jackson Library. Press launches are not widely advertised because they are not an open public event and numbers of attendees are often limited.

However other invitations can be issued and I regret that members of the Conservation Advisory Group were not included. As a result I have asked the council to review the protocols to try and avoid any future such omissions.

The refurbishment of Enfield Town Library and the Library Green has created a wonderful facility and outdoor space that will also help to support the economy of the western side of the town centre. Unlike many other authorities across the country, Enfield is investing in libraries and putting them at the heart of our town centres. This has been reflected in the very good coverage the new library has achieved in both local newspapers last week. I would like to thank the Conservation Advisory Group and everyone else involved in the project for their contribution to making it such a success.

This is a wonderful facility that will benefit residents for many years to come.”

**Question 6 from Councillor Pearce to Councillor Vince, Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services:**

“Will the Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services update the Council on the position of secondary school transfers?”

**Reply from Councillor Vince:**

“Enfield was again part of the PAN London Co-ordinated Admissions System. All London authorities, together with Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey and Thurrock authorities exchanged information about applications to each other’s schools and worked together to reduce the number of children receiving multiple offers.

Enfield Council, along with all of our partners worked hard to ensure parents in Enfield were sent their information on National Offer Day, 2nd March 2010. I am pleased to advise Councillor Pearce that 96% of Enfield children whose parents or carers applied on time have been offered a place at one of their preferred schools.

The impact of co-coordinating admissions across London and surrounding authorities, together with the work undertaken to increase the number of school places in the borough has meant that we have again been able to offer every child living in Enfield a secondary school place for September. I would like to pass on my appreciation and thanks to Jo Fear and the Admissions Team for achieving the above results.”

**Question 7 from Councillor Rodin to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment & Street Scene:**

"Does Councillor Neville agree with me that the Council should rigorously enforce breaches in planning regulations, even when the offender is a political party?"

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

“Council will know that throughout my term as Cabinet Member, unlike the Labour government, I have sought to apply a fair but firm enforcement policy regardless of the identity of the offender. Accordingly, the Planning Enforcement Team vigorously enforces all forms of unlawful advertising, and I am pleased to say with increasing success. In fact, recent large political advertisements were removed to ensure that the relevant legislation is applied in a fair and transparent way. We are aware that further advertisements have been placed and appropriate action has been commenced following due process. However, I am sure Councillor Rodin is aware that once an election has been called political advertisements can be displayed with the permission of land owners.”

**Question 8 from Councillor R Hayward to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene:**

“Would Councillor Neville tell council of his departments recent successes in national awards?”

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

“Enfield Council was highly commended in the Enforcement Award category at the British Parking Awards. The award ceremony took place on Friday 12th March and recognised achievements in the regulation of moving traffic offences (bus lanes, congestion charges, speeding), management of the street-scene and tackling anti-social behaviour - such as blue badge fraud and vehicle tax evasion. It also covered activities aimed at tackling persistent evaders, such as debt recovery operations.

Congratulations to the Highway & Transportation Teams for winning the London's Most Improved Transport Borough award at the London Transport Awards, which took place recently. The team was rewarded for their pro-active and sustainable approach to Highway Maintenance. The winning approach included the prioritisation of programme planning, incorporating good streetscape design into all council plans, an excellent working relationship with the council's Highways Work contractor, ongoing investment in highway maintenance and the recycling of materials when resurfacing carriageways. Also at the same event Haringey Council's Road Safety and Enfield Council's Road Safety and Travel Awareness teams won the "Partnership of the Year" award for their joint work on the Haringey and Enfield Communities Road Safety Project. Enfield Council's Traffic and Transportation were also commended in the category of Transport Borough of the Year.”

Waste were nominated for a National Award at the Keep Britain Tidy Awards ceremony which took place on Monday 15 March. We were runners up in the 'Cleaner, Safer, Greener ' category under the title of 'Prevention. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate and publicly thank all of the staff involved in achieving these successes for the borough.”

**Question 9 from Councillor Rodin to Councillor Vince, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services:**

"Does Councillor Vince consider in her position as Cabinet Member for Children's Services that the best place to site a library which it is hoped will be regularly visited by children is next to a leading fast food take-away establishment?"

**Reply from Councillor Vince:**

“Public libraries are better located in shopping areas and the evidence both locally and nationally is that libraries are better used when they are in highly visible locations. A library in a town centre will be in close proximity to any number of eating outlets and Palmers Green is particularly well served with all different kinds of restaurants and cafes.

Libraries want to attract young people through their doors. A location right next door to a globally recognised brand gives us a high degree of visibility and the opportunity to attract all users of the restaurant into the library. It also offers an alternative venue for young people to spend time without having to spend money. It appears that wherever one is, one is always in close proximity to a fast food outlet. The council and its partners are doing all they can to encourage healthy eating and healthy lifestyles for children and young people.”

**Question 10 from Councillor R Hayward to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene:**

“Would Councillor Neville highlight to Council the principal achievements of the Environment Directorate over the last four years of this administration?”

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

The Environment Department has been responsible for many noteworthy achievements over the past 4 years, coming in for particular praise in the most recent assessment by the Audit Commission for the extensive work carried out to make the borough’s streets cleaner and reduce crime.

Levels of cleanliness have continued to improve over the past 4 years. This is reflected in both the independent physical surveys, which have shown reductions of 1/3 in both litter and graffiti levels over the past year alone, and MORI surveys, which, between 2006 and 2009, show an 8% reduction in the percentage of residents who believe rubbish or litter lying around is a problem and a 7% reduction in the number who think vandalism and graffiti are problems. Moving waste operational services to area-based working for recycling, refuse and street cleansing in 2009 has aided this improvement. Enfield was the winner of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Most Improved Street Cleansing Services award in both 2007 and 2008.

The percentage of household waste recycled has risen above 30% in 2009-10, whilst the amount of non-recyclable waste has reduced so that between April and September 2009, the average Enfield household disposed of 60kg less than over the equivalent period in 2006. We have increased the range of materials recycled and reduced the level of contamination of recycled materials. The recent full rollout of our estates recycling service should help us to further increase recycling rates and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. Between April and September this year, Barrowell Green Recycling Centre will stay open until 7.30pm on Tuesdays and Fridays, to allow residents improved flexibility in accessing recycling facilities.

Since 2006, nearly £40m has been invested in the borough’s carriageways and footways, with more than 70 miles of roads and over 40 miles of pavements resurfaced. This investment has resulted in a greatly improved road condition as judged by independent survey results, and fewer successful insurance claims against the council.

Having implemented a substantial number of road safety and traffic improvement schemes Enfield recorded its lowest ever road casualty figures in 2008.

The percentage of successful appeals against parking enforcement notices in Enfield has reduced by 10% since 2006. Since October 2008, Enfield has consistently been the best performing London borough on parking appeals, with an appeal success rate of just over 30%, compared with the worst performing borough's average rate of over 90%. Additionally, in 2009 we introduced special parking bays for the over 70s.

With the introduction of an enhanced programme to tackle underage sales, particularly of alcohol, the percentage of successful test purchases improved from 40% in 2006-07 to only 11% during 2008-09.

As part of the PFI street lighting programme, over 13,000 new lamp columns have been installed, relighting more than 1,200 streets in the borough. To further improve community safety we have installed nearly 200 alley gates over the past 4 years. In 2009, the Home Office published national examples of effective Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, entitled "Ten of the Best", with the community safety work in Enfield used in three of these examples.

While part of the Environment Directorate, the number of parks achieving Green Flag status rose from 1 in 2006 to 6 in 2008. In addition, more than 3000 trees have been planted since 2006 along Enfield's roads.

**Question 11 from Councillor Goddard to Councillor Lavender, Deputy Leader Place Shaping and Enterprise:**

"In connection with the New Southgate Industrial estate (Ladderswood), has the advice in paragraph 3.2 (report 137) regarding the requirement to renew leases to tenants been followed by the council and if not, why not?"

**Reply from Councillor Lavender:**

"The council is following the advice contained in paragraph 3.2 (report 137) to renew leases on the New Southgate Industrial Estate. Since report 137 was adopted by cabinet agreement has been reached with lessees on the terms for 3 new leases. Negotiations are on-going with a number of other lessees with a view to renewing their leases."

**Question 12 from Councillor E Hayward to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene:**

"Would Councillor Neville inform council of the action he intends to take in light of the recent rise in dog fouling on public footways?"

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

"Dog fouling is particularly disgusting and potentially harmful to small children because of the presence in dog faeces of a parasite that can cause blindness. Sadly there has over recent months been an unexplained increase in the incidence of this nuisance in the borough, which is a matter of some concern. Building on the success of our litter enforcement, I have launched a specific dog

fouling patrol to target hot spot areas. In addition we will be undertaking an advertising campaign to increase public awareness of the problem. Enforcement officers are combining a programme of education awareness and enforcement to ensure dog owners/walkers clear up any mess left by dogs under their control. Anyone permitting their dogs to foul without clearing it up will be issued with an £80 fixed penalty notice, and prosecuted if this is not paid. I hope that this action will drive a message that this practice is socially unacceptable and will not be tolerated in Enfield."

**Question 13 from Councillor Brett to Councillor Lavender, Deputy Leader Place Shaping and Enterprise:**

"What Covenants are there on the current Palmers Green Library Site?"

**Reply from Councillor Lavender:**

"For clarity the response below refers to the site that includes the existing Palmers Green library and Southgate Town Hall building and car park -

The land contained in the 1893 Conveyance was transferred to the council subject to two restrictive covenants relating to user, which the council (as transferee) and their successors are bound by. The said covenants stipulate:

- the land shall not at any time be used for the erection or use thereon of any building to be used for an infectious hospital dust destructor lunatic asylum or prison but this does not preclude user of the back portion of the land at a distance of one hundred feet from any existing public highway for the purposes of a mortuary for the district or districts and shall not preclude user of any part for a cottage hospital for non infectious diseases.
- not to do anything which may grow to be a nuisance or injurious to the transferor or his heirs or assigns or other persons entitled or to tenants of property in the neighbourhood.

**Question 14 from Councillor Stafford to Councillor Hurer, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources:**

"Last year's Council Tax brochure states that "we are among the top ten Councils in outer London for value for money". What does Councillor Hurer constitute as an "Outer London Borough"? If this is the outer ring of boroughs, then there are only 14 to begin with, which makes this a below average performance. Would Councillor Hurer agree with this?"

**Reply from Councillor Hurer:**

"I am surprised that Councillor Stafford is only now reading a leaflet that was sent out with council tax bills a year ago but I would like to thank him for giving me the opportunity to set out our record on council tax.

There are 20 outer London boroughs and due to our prudent financial management we have consistently been below the Outer London average throughout our administration.

In 2009 Enfield was 8th lowest out of the 20 outer London councils and due to our decision to freeze council tax this year, we will remain 8th in 2010 and £23 per household cheaper than the average."

**Question 15 from Councillor Bond to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment & Street Scene:**

"Now Councillor Neville is aware that the orange bags sold to businesses are of poor quality and probably smaller than they should be, what compensation is he going to offer the business community who have bought these bags in good faith from the Council?"

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

"A new contract for the supply of commercial sacks commenced on 1st April 2009 where we asked the supplier for a sack specification of 30-35 microns. Following a small number of complaints received from businesses that the sacks were thinner, the sacks have been tested independently. The results showed that a batch of the sacks supplied had a specification of 23 microns instead of 30 - 35 microns, this lack of quality is being taken up with the current supplier. Any customer who has reported the faulty sacks has been offered replacements and the supplier will be required to bear the cost of replacing these defective bags. From the 1st April 2010 a new supplier will be selected."

**Question 16 from Councillor G Savva to Councillor Vince, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services:**

"Education Standards forum no longer sits. Can it be reinstated to help us keep an eye on schools who are under performing? "

**Reply from Councillor Vince:**

"I'm sure Councillor Savva remembers the long and involved discussions that took place at the Education Standards Forum (ESF) when it was agreed that the consideration of reports and schools that are falling below the expected level would be relocated to the Cabinet Leaders Performance Challenge Board in ECSL (Education, Children's Services and Leisure). This internal board sits every six weeks to examine carefully the work of the department. This is the most appropriate home for this type of discussion and in keeping with the commitment given to the Education Standards Forum we are keeping to our promise to review the situation to ensure that schools are challenged effectively by the School Improvement Service. The review will take place in the summer, some 12 months after the disbanding of the ESF."

**Question 17 from Councillor Rodin to Councillor Lavender, Deputy Leader Place Shaping & Enterprise:**

"Does Councillor Lavender think it is important for the Council's officers to inspect a large property before it agrees to sign a 25 year lease on that property?"

**Reply from Councillor Lavender:**

"Yes. Any property in respect of which the council proposes to take an interest or dispose of an interest is inspected by the appropriate officers before authority is sought to acquire or grant that interest"

**Question 18 from Councillor Giladi to Councillor Vince, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services:**

"Given increasing levels of worklessness, poverty and deprivation in the borough, can Councillor Vince explain why Enfield is not taking up the possible extension of free school meals?"

**Reply from Councillor Vince:**

"The opportunity to bid to become government pilot for the provision of free school meals was carefully considered. There were a number of difficulties with the proposed scheme including the need to demonstrate sufficient physical capacity to deliver a universal service without additional capital investment, the need for substantial match funding to be provided by the council and uncertainty about the duration of the pilot or government policy thereafter. The selection criteria indicated that a bid from Enfield was unlikely to be successful."

**Question 19 from Councillor Stafford to Councillor Lavender, Deputy Leader Place Shaping & Enterprise:**

"By the administration's own admission (Place Shaping agenda, March 8 2010), "At present Enfield does not have a specific strategy or policy framework for attracting inward investment and supporting enterprise". Would Councillor Lavender agree with me that this is a lamentable indictment of this administration, given that the borough has rising unemployment, rising benefit claimants and dropping house prices, and his dismal attempt at a Recession Action Plan is too little too late?"

**Reply from Councillor Lavender:**

"The report to which Councillor Stafford is alluding sets out our comprehensive approach to supporting business in the borough and is based on the principle that creating the right environment for businesses to succeed is at the heart of realising economic growth, whether during times of national economic prosperity or recession.

Supporting business is a fundamental strand of our place shaping agenda. However, it is recognised that inward investment and strategic business support is an issue where we will see the greatest return by working across borough

boundaries – not least because many of the issues that businesses face require a sub regional response. It is for this reason that Enfield partnered with the LDA (London Development Agency) in 2005 to create a sub regional inward investment agency (North London Business) that is largely funded by the Mayor through the LDA. Enfield provide a staff resource to support their work. North London Business has commissioned extensive research to ensure that their work is based upon good intelligence about the business needs of the area.

It is right that strategies and policy frameworks for strategic business support take place at that level.

However, in terms of local delivery we are doing a great deal and have increased our level of support to business and have increased our activity in light of the difficult economic circumstances our businesses face. In particular, we have been successful in leveraging in external funds to ensure that the scale of activity is maximised. Examples of our work include:

- Via our partners at Enterprise Enfield and North London Chamber of Commerce, we are supporting our small and medium enterprise base to tackle access to finance and credit control issues;
- Supporting innovation via the Enfield Innovators Competition;
- Assisting businesses to become more low carbon and win more business;
- Providing specialist business advice to Enfield's retail tenants and enhancing our high street parades to attract more customers;
- Support for the establishment of social enterprises;
- A strategic business forum has been established to provide a platform for Enfield's businesses to meet with the decision makers in the borough. The most recent meeting in February was extremely constructive with a wide range of businesses contributing as well as our business support agencies;
- An A-Z of services available to businesses has been published giving all of our businesses easy access to the support which exists in the borough.

In terms of the place shaping agenda ensuring the right planning policies are in place to encourage business growth is a vital strand of our Core Strategy. For example, our proposals for Meridian Water which are now at Masterplanning stage envisage a minimum of 1,500 additional jobs in the borough whilst we are in advanced discussions with the LDA to put our industrial estates at the forefront of their industrial renaissance proposals.

Finally, we have increased capacity within our Sustainable Communities team to ensure that we maximise our dialogue with our SME (small/medium sized enterprises) base in taking our wider place shaping proposals forward.

There is no doubt that the changed economic circumstances will mean that there should be a review of our support to businesses going forward. This review should be a considered one and based on the intelligence we are gaining from our discussions with businesses. It should not be a short term knee jerk reaction to changing circumstances."

**Question 20 from Councillor Bond to Councillor Laban, Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety:**

"Enfield Homes now advise me that it is up to the Council, not them, to make the money available for the much needed improvements to Leighton Road kitchens. Can Councillor Laban advise the Council when the money will be made available for this work?"

**Reply from Councillor Laban:**

"As with all major housing improvement projects, the cabinet takes the decision on the funding arrangements for work to the council's housing stock.

The council and Enfield Homes are working together to identify a way forward for the residents of Leighton Road, and the decision to authorise the expenditure will follow the normal process.

Enfield Homes has produced a feasibility study which indicates that a significant sum will be required to fund the overall improvement programme for Leighton Road, therefore the funding streams for this significant investment are being actively explored.

Councillor Bond knows that I am committed to improving the homes of the residents of Leighton Road and have requested that officers find a way forward in the next financial year."

**Question 21 from Councillor Rodin to Councillor Lavender, Deputy Leader Place Shaping & Enterprise:**

"Would Councillor Lavender agree with me that if the Council is promoting as part of its Local Development Framework 6% growth of retail floor space in the Palmers Green district by 2015, that this will be made more difficult by the Council's decision to turn one of the few major retail units in Palmers Green into a library?"

**Reply from Councillor Lavender:**

"No.

Although the immediate consequence of the decision is an absolute reduction in retail floor space, the medium and long term consequences of the decision will be to support and enhance the retail proposition in Palmers Green by protecting existing and stimulating demand for more retail floorspace.

The relocation of Palmers Green library to the shopping area of Palmers Green is not intended to be at the expense of promoting retail growth in the district centre, as supported by the Core Policy 18 – Delivering shopping provision across Enfield in the Core Strategy.

A key strand of Enfield's Library Strategy is to relocate poorly sited and therefore less well used libraries into shopping areas where there is evidence that usage will increase and new customers will be attracted to the service. Palmers Green is one such library, where the footfall to the library will also have a beneficial impact on the district shopping centre, enhancing opportunities for growth in retail floorspace.

Palmers Green is a District Centre, as designated by the London Plan, and as such should be supported and strengthened as an important shopping and service centre to meet people's day-to-day needs. National guidance, Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (PPS4), sets out planning policies for economic development and specifically identifies public and community uses within this definition. PPS4 encourages local planning authorities to support a diverse range of uses, including services and other important small scale economic uses in promoting competitive town centres. On this basis the location of Palmers Green library within the shopping area is consistent with national and regional policy, supporting a mix of uses, appealing to a wide range and age of social groups, and enhancing the character and vibrancy of the District Centre."

**Question 22 from Councillor Stafford to Councillor Hurer, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources:**

"The Council's performance continues to improve and this year we have been assessed as among the very best in the country'. This statement has been made on the basis of the Council receiving 4 stars. As approximately 50% of the Councils awarded stars under the CPA results now have 4 stars, would Councillor Hurer agree that this statement contained in the Council Tax brochure is designed to be totally misleading as at best it makes us average?"

**Reply from Councillor Hurer**

"I would like to thank Councillor Stafford for giving me the opportunity to set out the council's record on service performance. As to the allegation of misleading information - I will let the facts speak for themselves. When the current administration gained control of the council in 2002, Enfield Council was assessed as a weak authority with a number of services underperforming and much lower levels of resident satisfaction. Since then, through strong leadership from officers and members, the quality of our services has improved significantly as recognised by independent inspection regimes. Most importantly, this improvement is being recognised by residents, as satisfaction with local services and the council continues to increase.

This improvement culminated in being awarded 4 stars by the independent Audit Commission in 2009. This was the highest score possible under the CPA system therefore it is accurate to say that Enfield became one of the best performing

councils in the country. In 2009, Enfield was one of 62 authorities to achieve 4 stars, out of a total of 175 assessed under the CPA. It would be churlish in the extreme to diminish this achievement that has been delivered through the hard work of council staff and members."

**Question 23 from Councillor Stafford to Councillor Lavender, Deputy Leader Place Shaping & Enterprise:**

"Can Councillor Lavender confirm that there is approximately £4.5m of unspent Section 106 money languishing in the Council's coffers. At a time when the borough is desperate for regeneration, £2.5m of this money relates to the 3 poorest Wards of the borough - Edmonton Green, Upper Edmonton and Lower Edmonton - and much has been available for spending for between 7-10 years. With out of work benefit claimants in Edmonton currently standing at 30%, can Councillor Lavender kindly explain why this money has not been spent to assist in the socio-economic regeneration of the area?"

**Reply from Councillor Lavender:**

"The total available balance of unspent S106 monies as of today's date is £5,147,837.55 including interest. The majority of this money is to deliver specific projects or works necessary to ameliorate particular identified harm caused by developments. These might include highways works, parks improvements and education contributions. These projects are at varying stages of authorisation, design and specification. The monies should not be viewed as a kind of 'slush fund' - they are for specified works being brought forward as development takes place. It is inaccurate, therefore, to describe them as "languishing".

The total amount of S106 funding currently available to spend under schemes within the wards Councillor Stafford referred to is £2,373,410.70. However, as stated above, much of this money is for specified ameliorating works, and cannot be appropriated for general social-economic regeneration in the three wards. It may be that some of the works done by contracted firms may produce some jobs for local people but this cannot be guaranteed or specified.

With regards the perceived time lapses, while an Agreement may be signed a number of years ago, the receipt of any monies is triggered by the developer hitting agreed targets or phases. It may take a number of years before development starts and then hits these targets - a process now rather elongated by the impact of the present recession. Once monies are received the appropriate council officers are notified and project development can commence.

Two S106 Agreements produce funds for Employment Schemes and or Training Initiatives within the 3 wards and are worth £47,426.98. Of this, £20,000 is shortly to be allocated and the balance is in development for bringing forward next year."