

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS
26 JANUARY 2011

Question 1 from Councillor Levy to Councillor Taylor, Leader of the Council:

"The Chancellor seemed, while in Opposition, to be very positive about the way the Irish economy was regulated and was performing. If the Chancellor introduced into the UK his enthusiasm for such an economic experiment, what would be the likely impact on Enfield residents?"

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

"George Osborne, in his article for the Times in February 2006, described Ireland as a 'shining example of the art of the possible in long-term economic policy-making'. The Chancellor concluded, 'They (Irish Government) have freed their markets, developed the skills of their workforce, encouraged enterprise and innovation and created a dynamic economy. They have much to teach us, if only we are willing to learn'.

The consequences of this economic approach - unfortunately - has been the Irish miracle was a mirage. Irish unemployment stands at 13.4%.

For Enfield residents, Osborne's economics are a nightmare not a dream."

Question 2 from Councillor Headley to Councillor Anwar Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Capacity Building in the Third Sector:

"In reply to the response given to Councillor Lamprecht, I am pleased to see the level of work Councillor Anwar is actively attending, and his firm stance supporting his administration's transparency policy.

In the spirit of transparency, and in connection of building with the Third Sector, a very important area of Council work that I am interested in and I would like to ask as he does not see full Council as the appropriate forum to discuss the meetings he attend, whether he would consider allowing me to attend and observe at some of his meetings?"

Reply from Councillor Anwar

"I chaired two major conferences/meetings in November - the BAME conference and the social capital conference, which attracted more than 40 different voluntary organisations from all parts of the Borough. Councillor Headley had plenty of opportunity to attend and contribute at those meetings. I will ensure that any future meetings of that nature will be brought to her attention. I do not see the role of the full Council to monitor the daily diaries of individual Cabinet Members and his or her movements. I see the overarching

role of the full Council is to debate relevant issues which affect the people of Enfield and approve or disprove the Council's future plans.”

Question 3 from Councillor Simbodyal to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment, Street Scene and Parks

"In the recent Scrutiny Panel Report, "Update of the Climate Change Action Plan" 16/09/2010, you suggested that the Climate Change Project Board was under review. Can you update us on the outcome of that review?"

Reply from Councillor Bond:

"The Climate Change Project Board is an advisory body, which is not part of the formal constitution of the Council. It does, however, make recommendations to the Authority on climate change measures, monitoring the Council's own carbon footprint and coordinating actions to reduce emissions by reviewing energy use, fleet provision, procurement, staff travel, and implementing energy efficiency initiatives across these areas.

The original Board had a large membership of senior Council officers but generally was attended by a consistent smaller number of officers from across the Council. Under my chairmanship, supported by the Director of Environment and his Department, the Board now has a much smaller and more focused membership, meeting every six weeks.

In addition to the Board, the original six working groups remain but now each has a nominated responsible leader, being the most senior member of that working group, to drive forward and deliver the various projects and actions of their area of the Action Plan. The leader of each group attends and feeds back to the Climate Change Project Board highlighting key successes and risks.

The sub groups are:

- Buildings (including schools)
- Planning and Housing
- Transport
- Procurement & Contracts
- Waste and Recycling
- Community Leadership

A further proposal for the Board currently being explored is the use of Covalent, the Council's performance management system. The action plan is currently being uploaded into the system and set up with "traffic lights" that allow Board Members including me to directly access information and easily monitor which actions are on target or at risk. It also streamlines reporting processes and reduces duplication.”

Question 4 from Councillor Lavender to Councillor Taylor Leader of the Council

"In response to Councillor Taylor's request that I write to the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, I wrote to him on 3rd November in the form attached as Appendix 1 to this question and I attach the response received. Has Councillor Taylor received a response to his own letter?"

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

"I wrote to both the Chancellor and Secretary of State on the issue of grant damping. Like you my letter to Eric Pickles was passed on to his Junior Minister.

I have to report that the Government has ignored your pleas and my comments in equal measure. Not only has the Government failed to reduce the consequences of damping but Enfield suffers a massive loss of £15 million for the year 2011/12 making Enfield the largest loser in London. By contrast Wandsworth is the largest gainer having received £44 million in protection through the floor process.

I will continue to make the case for Enfield, not only in terms of this year, but 2012/13 which also has a likely damping effect of £8 million."

Question 5 from Councillor Sitkin to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment, Street Scene and Parks

"What impact has the recent 'Comprehensive Spending Review' had on the 'Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme' and what is Enfield's current position?"

Reply Councillor Bond:

"The Spending Review has changed the emphasis from a risk of +/- £50,000 in April 2011 to a pressure of more than £½ million of what is essentially a "Carbon Tax" in April/June 2012 based on a cost of £12 per tonne of emissions produced by all corporate buildings and schools.

Prior to the 'Spending Review' Enfield was on target to be in the top 15% of the 3,000 participants in the CRC scheme and would likely have achieved a high position in the league table and received a positive recycling payment of up to £50,000.

The league table will still be produced in October 2011 but, with no recycling payment, the significance will be reputational only.

Enfield has achieved this by working towards and achieving the coveted '**Carbon Trust Standard**' and investing in raising awareness to all staff. The Carbon Trust Standard is a great way of showing that we are on the front foot when it comes to carbon management best practices, and gives us an opportunity to communicate our environmental credentials with integrity to those that matter. It is a testament to the work that the Council's employees have put in to reducing the Council's carbon intensity so far.

The Carbon Trust Standard is awarded to organisations that measure, manage and reduce their carbon footprint. Preparation by Council Officers for the standard included:

- Updating the Council's external website and Enfield Eye
- Planning internal and external communications (e.g. Staff Matters, Watch This Space, Our Enfield etc).
- Initiating the on-line staff awareness training module – in September 2010 we launched the Council's first energy awareness training for employees which has so far been completed by over 1700 staff and managers. It is designed to encourage employees to save energy and hence reduce the overall energy consumption and cost.
- Establishing soundness of energy data, audit trails, energy survey files, policies, documents, minutes and actions etc

In November the external assessor carried out a detailed audit on the above areas for all corporate assets (excluding schools) and concluded with site visits to Civic Centre, Charles Babbage House, Millfield Centre, various depots and the recently opened Central Library.

The benefits of achieving the Standard are:

- Contributes to the early action metric which leads to improved performance in the league table in the first phase of the CRC
- Will help to demonstrate the Council's commitment to carbon reduction
- Improved management of environmental risk
- Long term energy and carbon savings
- An environmentally aware workforce – estimated to equate to 5%+ saving in energy
- Enhanced reputation among staff and stakeholder

Enfield has also invested in a Smart Meter programme (130+ meters installed to date) that enables us to measure, monitor and manage the corporate portfolio and schools energy consumption. This will allow us to focus on the key areas of reduction that will become paramount in the next few years of the scheme."

Question 6 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Taylor, Leader of the Council

“Could the Leader of the Council indicate whether he intends to submit the consultation document on Enfield's Spending Review for a Plain English award? On a more serious note, can he tell Council who in the administration vetted and approved the document for clarity and whether on reflection he believes that it provides sufficient clarity for ordinary Members of the public to deliver a meaningful response?”

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

“I am sorry that Councillor Neville has struggled with the Budget Consultation process. I must however inform him that the response to our consultation process exceed those managed under the administration he served.”

Question 7 from Councillor Levy to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment, Street Scene and Parks

"In light of the changes to the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme essentially becoming a “carbon tax” and the ongoing national and global commitments to reduce CO₂ emissions, what is the Council doing to reduce its carbon footprint?"

Reply from Councillor Bond:

“Much effort and upfront investment is needed if we truly want to make a significant reduction in our carbon footprint. A most noteworthy progression is the imminent creation of a new “Climate Change/Sustainability” Team. This administration included within its manifesto the aim of “*Reduced carbon footprint - A Labour Council will audit and monitor Enfield's carbon footprint and take action to reduce the Council's impact upon the environment*” and it is with this and the national commitment in mind that we are refocusing our limited existing resources and investing further resources to deliver this aim. I have successfully secured a sum of money and officers are working to design, recruit and implement the much needed team which will comprise of existing posts and officers within the Council and recruit a new manager who has the experience and technical ability to drive forward our challenging climate change agenda.

We expect this team to access available external UK funds such as Green Investment Bank and other European funding. Essentially they will become largely self financed and able to deliver essential projects whilst reducing the burden on limited Council funds.

In the meantime, we have continued with the delivery of the projects contained within the Carbon Management Plan (CMP). The CMP realises the Council's carbon and financial savings over a five year period through its vision of Reducing Costs, Reducing Energy and Reducing Carbon. The Plan also sets the Council a 25% carbon reduction target from 2008/09 baseline levels by March 2014.

A successful application for Salix Finance Ltd match funding was made in 2010 for £300k; Enfield Council has identified £300k of funds in order to match-fund Salix contributions to invest in energy saving projects and technologies over a two year period.

A total of 16 energy saving projects were identified for the initial tranche of Salix funding (June to September 2010). These amounted to £147k and will deliver cost savings of £31,310 and approximately 200 tonnes of CO₂ per year.

All energy saving projects have to comply with the following set of criteria laid down by Salix:

- Technical payback of less than 5 years
- Lifetime cost of CO₂ less than £100/tonne
- Project must be additional

The projects in Tranche 1 were identified as a result of findings from 20 energy surveys that have been undertaken in corporate properties since 2007. They include draft proofing, lighting upgrades and lighting occupancy controls, heating controls, cavity wall & pipe-work insulation, voltage optimisation, variable speed drives at a number of corporate properties.

The Salix Finance Ltd match funding requires continual and careful management and will be paid in accordance with the funding profile set out below. The funding will be available to be drawn down to match fund tranches over the two year period.

- Tranche 1; June 2010 to September 2010 – Salix to contribute £70k (total £140k)
- Tranche 2; October 2010 to March 2011 – Salix to contribute £100k (total £200k)
- Tranche 3; April 2011 to September 2011 – Salix to contribute £100k (total £200k)
- Tranche 4; October 2011 to March 2012 – Salix to contribute £30k (total £60k)

The Council is currently identifying and quantifying new energy saving projects for Tranche 2 (by March 2011). These will likely include pipe, pump and valve insulation, window insulation seals, passive infra-red lighting controls, heating zone controls, ceiling insulation, voltage optimisation and radiator reflective panels at a number of corporate properties.

More projects will be required in turn for Tranches 3 and 4 to the appropriate deadline.

The “recycling fund” will allow savings generated by early projects to be invested in later projects which will add to the overall investment fund beyond the initial two years. Additional and alternative external funding will need to be secured as Salix funding is selective on technology type.

The CMP itself continues to be developed following its initial issue and the first revision reflects amendments and developments for the period April to September 2010 inclusive. It will be updated every six months to measure progress against the target. The CMP also includes projects that are not funded by Salix (e.g. transport related).

Following the first revision of the Plan in October 2010, the Council would now expect to achieve 78.3% of its 25% reduction target within the planned period (was initially an estimated projection of 71%). This is equivalent to approximately 19.7% of the baseline emissions (was initially 18%).

This is calculated to deliver potential cost savings of £5.5m over the 5-year period and a cumulative carbon reduction of 35,082 tCO₂. The cost of these projects is projected to be approximately £2.5m over the 5-year period.”

Question 8 from Councillor East to Councillor Anwar Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Capacity Building in the Third Sector

“What grants into the Third Sector have been made since his appointment and to which organisations? In addition, which third sector organisations has Councillor Anwar met with since the last full Council meeting and what meetings are scheduled for the next two months.”

Reply from Councillor Anwar:

“The Council is in its 2nd year of commissioning the organisations that were listed in the 31st October 2007 Cabinet report- these groups are funded until 31st March 2012, hence no additional grants have been made to the Third Sector.

In relation to my meetings since the last full Council on 10th November 2 major events have taken place which were the BAME Conference and the Social Capital Conference which I chaired. Both events were very well attended with organisations coming from all over the Borough. I was away on holiday for most of December and have no further visits planned at present. However, I am open and willing to meet any voluntary organisations in the borough on request.”

Question 9 from Councillor Simbodyal to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment, Street Scene and Parks

"What is the Council going to do now that the Local Development Framework Core Strategy has been inspected and adopted, with specific regard to sustainability, energy use and carbon reduction?"

Reply from Councillor Bond:

"The Core Strategy is based on an extensive local evidence base on key issues, constraints and opportunities facing the borough. The Inspector's Report received in September confirmed the Plan's soundness subject to a few minor changes. On 10th November, 2010 the Council adopted its Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy which provides direction for the future development of the borough over the next 15 to 20 years and holds considerable weight in all planning decisions in-line with the UK's plan-led planning system.

As part of the preparation of the LDF, the Council are now producing a Development Management Document (DMD) to provide detailed criteria or standard based policies by which planning applications will be determined. It will be a key vehicle in delivering the vision and objectives for Enfield as set out in the Core Strategy. The DMD will contain policies covering a wide range of topics including housing, community services, the economy and town centres, sustainability and tackling climate change, environmental protection, green infrastructure (including the green belt and parks) and design and heritage. It is anticipated that the draft DMD will be published for consultation in Spring 2011 with the final version adopted in Winter 2012 following an independent examination in public.

The key objectives of the sustainability and tackling climate change section will focus around:

- Promoting higher standards in relation to sustainable design
- Promoting sustainable use and disposal of resources
- Promoting the use of renewable and low carbon technologies
- Mitigating against the causes and adapt to the consequences of climate change
- Promoting consideration of sustainability within the initial design stage
- Making the borough more attractive, well designed and a sustainable place

All development will need to be designed in accordance with the energy hierarchy and in line with Core Policy 20 of the Core Strategy.

- Step 1: Use good design to minimise the development's energy needs
- Step 2: Make the most use efficient energy, heating and cooling systems
- Step 3: Make use of renewable energy sources

The Council is also producing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on S106 for the LDF to establish a transparent, fair and consistent process for negotiating S106 agreements. Within the SPD, guidance on how the Council may secure the requirements set out in the Sustainability and Tackling Climate Change section will be detailed – for example financial contributions will be ring-fenced within a Carbon Fund where funds would be used to fund energy projects identified (within the Council’s Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development Study), or those within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The SPD will be published for consultation early 2011 and will be linked to the Council’s Infrastructure Delivery Plan. “

Councillor Question 10 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment Street Scene and Parks

“Could he tell us whether he has met with the MD of David Webster Lighting Ltd to discuss the progress of the street lighting PFI?”

Reply from Councillor Bond:

“Yes”

Question 11 from Councillor Robinson to Councillor Anwar, Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Capacity Building in the Third Sector

"You have been very active with 2 major events in November - the BAME Conference and the Social Capital Conference. These were very important initiatives on community cohesion. Given the supposed interest by Opposition Members in the Third Sector and cohesion, how many Opposition Members attended these events?"

Reply from Councillor Anwar:

“It would appear from records held by officers that no Opposition Members attended either event. “

Question 12 from Councillor Kaye to Councillor Orhan Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services

“Does she support the proposed Woodpecker Free School in Enfield?”

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

“As a matter of principle I do not support the coalition Government's policy of establishing free schools: the framework of schools introduced by the former Labour Government provided more appropriately for the development of a diverse community of excellent local schools.

I do however recognise that the coalition Government is now calling the shots and that one of the most pressing challenges that we are now facing is the provision of additional primary school places to meet the forecast increase in demand. The proposed Woodpecker Hall Primary Academy can provide some of those places in an area of the borough where need is pressing. If this new school can deliver the ambition of its sponsor to provide excellent education to local children and reduce the pressure on our capital budgets then we will be content to work with the new school for the benefit of local children and families."

Question 13 from Councillor Levy to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

"How many young people will suffer from the withdrawal of Educational Maintenance Allowances?"

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

"We can estimate, based on 2009/10 figures, that approximately 4,200 young people will be affected. These are latest statistics available as we do not hold these figures centrally. We receive the data from the Provider Gateway."

Question 14 from Councillor Headley to Councillor Anwar Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Capacity Building in the Third Sector

"Does he support the cuts of £300,000 to the third / voluntary sector proposed by the Labour administration in its budget papers and if he does support it, how can he justify it?"

Reply from Councillor Anwar:

"All consideration of the actions of the Council need to be in the context of the draconian budget reductions of the Tory-led Government. In the current financial climate, we have looked at all aspects of the Council's budget to identify possible savings and considered their impact on the local community. The Council is still seeking views and final decisions are yet to be taken, at Cabinet on 9 February and Cabinet on 2 March, but I will ensure that the total funding for the Third Sector provided directly through the Enfield grants process does not fall in cash terms."

Question 15 from Councillor Keazor to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

"Can we confirm what capital is being made available by the Government for school building?"

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

“The following capital grants for school buildings in 2011/12 were recently announced:

Devolved formula grant	£968k (this grant which has been cut by 70% from £3,268k in 2010/11 will be allocated to all schools on a formulaic basis)
Basic need	£5,561k (to provide additional school accommodation to meet the increased demand for school places compared with £11,326k in 2010/11)
Maintenance	£4.663k (community and foundation schools and Sure Start children's centres)
Maintenance	£1.606k (voluntary-aided schools)

Additionally the following allocations have been announced:

Oasis Academy Hadley	£20,600k (reduced from £26,800k)
Aylward Academy	£10,921k
Nightingale Academy	£6,445k

Other capital funding streams have ceased including funding for modernising primary schools (£7,435k) and school kitchens (£1,722k). The cancellation of the Building Schools for the Future programme cut funding by more than £100 million: the allocation for Aylward and Nightingale Academies still leaves the Council with a loss of more than £80 million.”

Question 16 from Councillor Joannides to Councillor McGowan Cabinet Member for Older People, Health and Adult Social Care

“Does he support the Labour administration’s budget proposal to close the Rose Taylor Day Care Centre at weekends? If he does support this proposal, how can he possibly justify this?”

Reply from Councillor McGowan

“The impact of the cuts of the Tory-led Government are serious and the responsibility for cuts rests with the Government. The Rose Taylor centre provides day care provision seven days a week. The proposal is to no longer provide day care at this centre on Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays. At present attendance on these days is very low. Currently there are only 5 service users attending the centre on Saturday and 8 on Sunday (Compared to between 28 - 38 per day on weekdays). This weekend service provision is therefore not the most effective way of using the Council’s resources whilst there are other ways in which the service can be provided and still meet the needs of the service users.

Reardon Court day services have sufficient spaces to accommodate those service users currently attending the Rose Taylor centre at weekends. Service users and their carers will be consulted and given the option of transferring to

an alternative weekend/bank holiday day service. We will ensure that staff continue to support all service users who move to Reardon Court and make them feel welcome to the new service. Existing permanent staff hours can be re-allocated across all the centres and we will be able to save on agency staff and running costs for these days.

Consistent with Social Care Personalisation Programme we will ensure that individuals who wish to make alternative choices for day opportunities and support are enabled to do this through a personal budget and appropriate support and advise to make such arrangements.”

Question 17 from Councillor Cole to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

"How many children have taken up the school uniform initiative?"

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

“I have reviewed our successful applications and we have paid grants for 155 reception children and 172 grants for year 7 children therefore 327 children have already benefitted. We are currently processing a further 282 applications.”

Question 18 from Councillor Rye to Councillor Orhan Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

“Does she support the Labour administration's budget proposal to cut the staffing for disabled children at the Cheviots Centre in my ward and if she does, how can she justify this?”

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

“Following the Tory-led Government's decision to reduce expenditure in local Government services by 28%, I have worked closely with Council officers to identify a range of efficiency savings which minimise the impact on the residents of Enfield.

In the current financial climate, we have looked at all aspects of the Council's budget to identify possible savings, and considered their impact on the local community. We are still seeking views and final decisions are yet to be taken at Cabinet on 9th February and Council on 9th March.

This challenge is compounded by the absence of any protection for services to vulnerable children, including those with disabilities. Notwithstanding that, locally, we are demonstrating our commitment to local disabled children by maintaining the current staffing levels at the Cheviots Centre. We will, however, be making some efficiency savings by more cost effective use of the transport and sessional staff budgets. I await the outcome of the Government's review of SEN services and hope that this review identifies the need for additional investment in this critical area of local Government work."

Question 19 from Councillor Ibrahim to Councillor McGowan Cabinet Member for Older People, Health and Adult Social Care

"Can the Cabinet Member clarify the position regarding Elizabeth House?"

Reply from Councillor McGowan

"The re-provision of Elizabeth House as a Dual Registered Care Home is progressing and the background work has now been finalised to seek formal tenders from providers. The formal procurement process will start at the end of January 2011 with the placing of an advert in relevant national publications. The expectation is that a new care home provider of a facility providing some 70 beds on the site will be appointed over this summer and a new care home delivered in late 2013.

The former Elizabeth House care home is soon to be demolished and a hoarding has been erected around the perimeter of the site. A formal tender for the demolition of the existing building has now been undertaken and a formal decision on choice of provider will be made in the next few weeks to enable a contract to be issued and work commenced.

I can also advise that the Adult Social Services Scrutiny Panel Working Group continues to look at the development of re-provision on this site."

Question 20 from Councillor Kaye to Councillor Orhan Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

"Does she support the proposed reduction in SEN school transport proposed in the Labour administration's budget papers and if she does how can she justify this?"

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

"The Tory-led Government has undermined the services of the Council with its unacceptable reduction in funding.

In the current financial climate, we have looked at all aspects of the Council's budget to identify possible savings, and considered their impact on the local community. We are still seeking views and final decisions are yet to be taken at Cabinet on 9th February and Council on 9th March.

However, I can confirm the proposed reduction in the school transport budget should not present a reduced service in relation to numbers of disabled children being supported in safe travel to school and college. It represents an appropriate review of efficiency along with practical solutions that will enable greater independence for students that will be of value for them and their families as they progress into adult life. This includes systematic review of routes and contracts for the greatest possible efficiencies, along with funded and supported travel training to enable students to progress to independent travel to serve them for life."

Question 21 from Councillor Cole to Councillor Goddard, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Improving Localities

"Can Councillor Goddard please tell me what is happening with 284 Green Lanes, Palmers Green, N13 5TU, the site earmarked by the former Conservative administration for the relocation of Palmers Green library?"

Reply from Councillor Goddard:

"The site has been taken over by Waitrose which will bring significant benefits to Palmers Green and the retail provision in the area. We understand that it will open on January 27th. This is a very satisfactory outcome that maintains the library in its original location boosts the retail offer and results in no continuing financial loss to the Council. By way of background a new 25 year lease of 284 Green lanes was entered into in October 2009 for the purposes of conversion and refurbishment for a new library.

A decision was subsequently taken in 2010 to abandon this proposal. Officers then proceeded to enter into negotiations with the Waitrose Partnership who had previously expressed an interest in the location for a convenience food store. Following agreement on Heads of Terms, officers concluded the transaction wherein the Waitrose Partnership now take full responsibility for the property for the residue of the lease term and in addition paid the Council a lease premium. The Council therefore has no ongoing liability in respect of this asset."

Question 22 from Councillor Kaye to Councillor Orhan Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

"Does she support the proposal of the Labour administration to discontinue support from the Council's own core funding to support after school clubs?"

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

“In the current financial climate and as a result of Government cuts, we have looked at all aspects of the Council’s budget to identify possible savings, and considered their impact on the local community. We are still seeking views and final decisions are yet to be taken at Cabinet on 9th February and Council on 9th March.

I value the work of after school clubs and am very disappointed that the cuts imposed by the Tory-led Government mean that we have to contemplate this reduction.”

Question 23 from Councillor Lavender to Councillor Taylor Leader of the Council

“Can he inform the Council when the legal agreement was reached with the developers for Edmonton Green shopping centre and can he confirm that an appropriate Schedule for Dilapidations was included in this agreement? “

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

“The lease to St Modwen is dated 6 May 1999. The term runs from 25 March 1999. A schedule of dilapidation was not attached to the lease.

Question 24 from Councillor Laban to Councillor Charalambous Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture, Leisure, Sports and the Olympics

“I note that Albany Leisure Centre has had its signs removed. I would assume that their removal is in anticipation of their replacement by the incoming operator. However, one would have thought that there would have been greater coordination regarding the removal of the signs and their replacement. This facility has appeared derelict and closed to residents and gives the appearance of a lack of care and investment in the east of the Borough by the present administration. Will the Cabinet Member contact the incoming operator and ensure that the new signs are erected as soon as possible?”

Reply from Councillor Charalambous:

“The signs at Albany Leisure Centre have been removed by the new contractor as the old signs had the previous operator’s logo on them. This is one of the Leisure Sites that the Council is making significant investment into over the next 12 months and as part of this investment new signage and a press campaign will be created to inform residents and customers of the upgraded facility. Officers have talked to Fusion Lifestyle our new leisure operator and they have reassured us that temporary signage will be put in place as soon as possible to ensure the site is visible and promoted to customers.”

Question 25 from Councillor Laban to Councillor Taylor, Leader of the Council

“The Council owned sites of Elizabeth House and Pitfield Way in the east of the borough are currently boarded up. Please can the Council confirm what plans there are for these sites and how long these high street facing sites are likely to remain boarded up. Their current appearance gives the impression to the public of a lack of investment in the east of the borough by the present administration.”

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

“As part of the redevelopment on this site, plans are underway to demolish the existing vacant building in the early part of this year in order to begin construction of a new dual registered care home service. It has been necessary to secure the site with hoarding as the vacant building has been vandalised and broken into.

The adjacent site [1-3 Pitfield Way] - the former Council offices site and car lot has been boarded up and Cabinet on 15th December confirmed that a disposal of this site may proceed. Officers are exploring how to best market the site to compliment the proposed care home facility intended for neighbouring land and to enhance the overall local amenity. It is considered that the disposal should be linked with the care home design arrangements so the disposal may not complete until late 2011.”

Question 26 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Bond Cabinet Member for Environment, Street Scene and Parks

“The previous administration undertook a programme for the creation of a series of pocket parks in the east of the Borough such as Forest Road and Florence Hayes Open Space. Before the election the Labour opposition, as it then was, supported these proposals; they quite happily posed for pictures next to Florence Hayes Open Space claiming all the credit for it, for example. The programme envisaged the creation of pocket parks at Painters Lane in Enfield Lock ward and on the Holmesdale tunnel in Turkey Street ward. Since May, when the Labour Party got elected to these wards, nothing seems to have happened with respect to these sites. Can the Cabinet Member for Environment Street Scene and Parks please confirm the status of these projects? A lack of certainty about their future will give the appearance of a lack of care and investment in the east of the Borough by the present administration.”

Reply from Councillor Bond:

“Since Councillor Neville's Group lost the last election, he clearly has continued to avoid visiting the eastern part of the borough. Progress continues apace with these projects. Work has commenced on site at Painters Lane. Holmesdale Tunnel work commences this Spring/Summer. Phases one and

two of the Turkey Street Gateway are complete. The final improvements will be completed this year. Since May the Council has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to all parts of the borough, something the previous Conservative administration failed to do.”

**Question 27 from Councillor Henry Lamprecht to Councillor Taylor
Leader of the Council**

“When in opposition the Labour opposition complained that the previous Conservative administration took no action in respect of and was the cause of health, wealth and life expectancy inequalities in the east and west of the Borough. Would the Leader of the Council please state in detail what actions the present Labour administration has taken since May to deal with these matters, which were not already being undertaken by the previous Conservative administration and when such actions were approved and implemented. Can he please confirm what effect, if any, any of these actions has or is likely to have?”

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

“I thank you for your question and for highlighting the very challenging health inequalities including differentials in life expectancy we face in our borough. The new administration has a strong commitment to tackling health inequalities and in its first year has created the planning conditions to tackle health inequalities and mitigate the impacts of central Government imposed budget reductions on health inequalities. In particular we have:

- Established a Cabinet Health Sub Committee, which will shortly be receiving it’s first report on the development of the next Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Enfield, details on wider Public Health priorities and crucially details of planning for the transition of public health to the Council.
- Been working closely with the NHS to ensure that they have a strong focus on East of Enfield and health improvement programmes in the East of the borough.
- Are closely following developments of the NHS in North Central London to ensure that they maintain their focus on Enfield and that operating cost reductions do not adversely impact on our residents.
- Strengthened partnership working in the east of the borough, particularly by the establishment of the North East Enfield Partnership Board [chaired by Councillor Goddard] and by holding a Health and Wellbeing Fair in Ponders End in the summer.
- In respect of Health Inequalities we face some real challenges as far as life expectancy, cardiovascular disease and cancer are concerned in Enfield. These have been prioritised through our Improving Health and

Wellbeing Strategy and the ongoing activities which are expected to impact on mortality figures include the Physical Activity Strategy, Food Strategy, the newly formed Tobacco Control Alliance and the Stop Smoking Service.

- Established the Enfield Residents Priority Fund (Ward based budgets). The key element here is the ward allocations which will favour the wards with the higher level of health and wellbeing issues in the east. As part of this we are developing a menu of potentially health improving interventions which wards may purchase to tackle health inequalities.

In respect of a number of key performance measures this year we are on target for delivering against our smoking prevalence target, number of drug users in effective treatment and number of alcohol related harm admissions to hospital, and take up and coverage for cervical screening have improved and Enfield is now the best performing PCT in NCL. In respect of Chlamydia screening although not achieving the yearly target there has been a slight increase in performance from quarter 1 to quarter 2 and a sexual health self assessment is currently being undertaken by the Public Health Department and a detailed action plan will be drawn up.

Finally I can advise that the NHS Health checks programme is aimed at detecting undiagnosed vascular disease in people aged between 40 and 74. To date NHS Enfield has give a health check to 1344 people and found 66 people at high risk of developing disease and 165 at moderate risk of who 34 have been put on medication. 6 cases of undiagnosed diabetes have been detected and 66 people either given advice and support on stopping smoking or been referred to the free Enfield Stop Smoking Service.

I recognise that the Council cannot do this alone and want to pay tribute to the health service professionals and especially the many voluntary sector organisations involved in this work.

It is deeply regrettable that the Government withdrew the performance reward grant their efforts had secured, removing much needed resources from further investment in this area. Perhaps Councillor Lamprecht might wish to write to the Secretary of State condemning him for this given this new, and rather unexpected, concern for the East of the borough.”

Question 28 from Councillor Hall to Councillor Stafford Cabinet Member for Finance, Facilities and Human Resources

“Will the Cabinet Member please confirm whether any formal approaches have been made to or received by any neighbouring authority to combine and reduce overheads in the provision of any services. Can he please confirm in each case (i) the name of the authority, (ii) the date of the approach, (iii) the services the subject matter of the enquiry and (iv) the response.”

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

“We discuss regularly with many authorities the scope for sharing services, whether they are neighbours or not. We also discuss the scope for sharing services through Capital Ambition, via political networks and through the North London Strategic Alliance. When the time is right, we will announce specific proposals.”

Question 29 from Councillor D Pearce to Councillor Bond Cabinet Member for Environment, Street Scene and Parks

“Can the Cabinet Member for Environment Street Scene and Parks please confirm whether the present budget proposals envisage any reduction in the resources available to Trading Standards officers to investigate the sale of counterfeit goods?”

Reply from Councillor Bond:

“No”

Question 30 - Withdrawn

Question 31 from Councillor Joannides to Councillor McGowan Cabinet Member for Older People and Adult Social Services

“Further to my question at the previous full Council meeting, is Councillor McGowan now in a position to say when he expects to have in place an independent chairman for the Adult Safeguarding Board?”

Reply from Councillor McGowan:

“I thank Councillor Joannides for his question, which was covered at Full Council in November as a result of a question from Councillor Vince.

I can confirm that an external review of safeguarding adults arrangements in Enfield, commented that a particular strength of our Safeguarding Adults Board was that it was “chaired at the right level of seniority, and has leadership which drives change and is respected by partners.”

The need to consider an independent chair for the Safeguarding Adults Board was strengthened with the Government response to the review of *No Secrets*, in which it was announced that Adult Safeguarding Board’s will be placed on a statutory footing, similar to Children’s Safeguarding Boards. However at this stage there is no formal requirement for an independent chair of Adult Safeguarding Boards as there is with Children’s Safeguarding Boards.

The last meeting of the Adults Safeguarding Board has endorsed the intention to recruit an Independent Chair during 2011/12. Work is underway to achieve this.

In the meantime as Councillor Joannides will be aware, in addition to my ongoing personal interest in assuring the quality of Safeguarding work, the Adult Social Services Scrutiny Panel has reviewed the Safeguarding Adults Annual Report.”

Question 32 from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond Cabinet Member for Environment, Street Scene and Parks

“What steps will Councillor Bond take to ensure all future consultations on Controlled Parking Zones will include an explanation of what CPZs are?”

Reply from Councillor Bond:

“Thought we dealt with this at the last Council meeting. Officers will include an explanation of CPZs in future consultations.”

Question 33 from Councillor Maynard to Councillor Stafford Cabinet Member for Finance, Facilities and Human Resources

“At the last full Council meeting, Councillor Stafford said “the Council is in the process of evaluating options for a new Asset Management System”. When does he expect this process to be finished?”

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

“Options for the proposed Asset Management System are still being evaluated. A preferred supplier has been selected and it is planned that the Council will sign a contract within the next 3 months.”

Question 34 from Councillor Prescott, to Councillor Doug Taylor Leader of the Council

“One of the many initiatives in respect of Palmers Green, which the previous Conservative administration initiated and the GLA supported, was the proposal to rebuild and refurbish Broomfield House so that it can be used principally for housing whilst securing public access.

The Conservative opposition recognises that the view of the previous Labour administration was that the number of units of accommodation which were provided did not necessarily present the best value for money. It was the Conservative administration’s view that given the proposal not only secured some units of accommodation but also finally restored the listed building and given the Council’s expenditure would be match funded by the GLA that the proposals presented good value for money to the Council and to the residents of Palmers Green in particular.

Councillors were invited to a preview exhibition detailing proposals for the restoration of Broomfield House. The main public exhibition was held at Broomfield School on Thursday 20th January and Saturday 22nd January.

Will the Leader of the Council confirm that the Labour administration is fully signed up to supporting this initiative?"

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

"My administration has been fully supportive of the continued work by officers to finally find a satisfactory solution for Broomfield House. I'm pleased to clarify that the offer from the GLA is for £5.97m which does not require any match funding from the Council. This represents value for money for the Council. We have already received £500k to facilitate design work and we are on target to have ready a planning permission and listed building consent application by the end of March. Of course we will only make those applications if the GLA and the Mayor fulfil their promise to grant us the balance of the funding. The exhibition on the 20 and 22 January will show how the House, Stable and yard are proposed to be restored and converted to homes for older people. The House will also contain a new cafe and community facilities that will put it at the heart of the Park and the local community. Over 9,000 local residents and groups have been invited to the exhibition and adverts have been run in the local press. Public interest is high and I look forward to seeing the public's response to the proposals. Enfield's heritage is a source of pride for everyone across the Borough and I hope we will all work positively with community groups and local residents to finally resolve this long-standing problem.

Indeed, due to its rapidly deteriorating condition this may be our last chance to save the building. We are ready to play our part in its restoration. We just need the GLA and the Mayor of London to hold to their promise and in April send us the full amount of the grant."

Question 35 from Councillor Lamprecht to Councillor Stafford Cabinet Member for Finance, Facilities and Human Resources

"Will Councillor Stafford confirm the ongoing revenue costs of maintaining Southgate Town Hall and also its budgeted capital receipt and the lost interest per month upon that capital receipt?"

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

"The ongoing revenue costs of maintaining Southgate Town Hall during 2010/11 are estimated as facilities management costs of £243,490 and repair and maintenance costs of £55,250.

There is no budgeted capital receipt for the property as options regarding the future use are being considered and the amount of capital receipt will vary according to use."

Question 36 from Councillor Barker to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment Street Scene and Parks

“With the Government's Big Society initiative coming into play where we are encouraged to help our neighbours and neighbourhood, would the Cabinet Member for Environment please give a definitive statement on the situation for Members of the public who clear the snow and ice from the pavements outside their dwelling - and the legal position should someone slip on that cleared footpath, as there appears to be conflicting advice between our website and the instructions from TfL to Skanska?”

Reply from Councillor Bond:

“The Council's advice is clearly stated on the Council's website and reflects national guidance.”

Question 37 from Councillor Prescott to Councillor Stafford Cabinet Member for Finance, Facilities and Human Resources

“With reference to the Labour manifesto pledge regarding business rates hardship relief, please provide details of all support approved and/or actually given to date: amounts, names of recipients, dates of approval, conditions attached, and ward within which the recipient operates.”

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

“No rate relief has been granted yet for this financial year.”

Question 38 from Councillor Prescott to Councillor Stafford Cabinet Member for Finance, Facilities and Human Resources

“With reference to the Labour manifesto pledge regarding business rates hardship relief, what are the measurable objectives and timescales against which this programme will be judge successful (or not).”

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

“Details of the pilot business rate relief scheme were included in the Cabinet report of the 13th October 2010. The success of the scheme will be judged by reference to levels of void property in the area, business turnover and scheme take up. Rate relief will initially be allowed for one year. The award will then be reviewed to ensure that circumstances have not changed.”

Question 39 from Councillor Prescott to Councillor Anwar Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Capacity Building in the Third Sector

“With reference to the Labour manifesto pledge regarding support for third sector organisations, please provide details of his Capacity Fund: how organisations can apply for support, how much each organisation is

individually able to apply for, what the eligibility criteria are, what conditions are to be attached to any support given, whether support is provided in the form of a repayable loan or a non-repayable grant, and whether there are any restrictions on wards within which applicant organisations must operate.”

Reply from Councillor Anwar:

“It is my intention to establish a new strategic approach to voluntary and community sector support, which will be underpinned by a commitment to fairness, growth and sustainability and strong communities. This will provide a framework within which future support decisions will be made. This framework will be developed and consulted on during 2011 and completed in time to inform future funding decisions.”

Question 40 from Councillor Prescott to Councillor Anwar Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Capacity Building in the Third Sector

“With reference to the Labour manifesto pledge regarding support for third sector organisations, what are the measurable objectives and timescales against which this programme will be judge successful (or not).”

Reply from Councillor Anwar:

“May I direct Councillor Prescott to the answer previously given under Question 39.”

Question 41 from Councillor Prescott to Councillor McGowan Cabinet Member for Older People, Health and Adult Social Care

“I have tried without success to obtain details of how the data the Cabinet Member quoted in his response to Council on 10th November relates to his vision for the future of adult social services in Enfield. Could I ask the Cabinet Member to share his personal vision for the future of adult social services in Enfield. In doing so, I would expect him to detail a modest set of measurable objectives and timescales against which his tenure as Cabinet Member for adult social services will be judged successful (or not).”

Reply from Councillor McGowan

“As Councillor Prescott knows he has been sent the nationally published articles from which I sourced the data in my response to Council on 10 November.

My personal vision for the future adult social services in Enfield is consistent with the former Labour Government’s “Putting People First Concordat”, as Councillor Prescott will know his own party nationally has endorsed that personalisation is the future for social care.

Clearly this cross party consensus on how to ensure that some of the most vulnerable Members of our community receive the care and support they need is helpful. I am sure all in this chamber will share that commitment and like me be loathe to see any attempts to play party politics with their lives.

Therefore my vision centres around:-

Giving people as much choice and control over their lives as possible,
Raising awareness of Adult Abuse, improving prevention and responding to abuse
Supporting the estimated 29,000 Carers in Enfield
Improving the premises from which services are offered to the most vulnerable
Making sure that we can use resources effectively and continue to be able to respond to the ever increasing demographic demands placed on this service.

So at the end of my tenure you will see more people on personal budgets, independent verification of improved adult safeguarding practice, more carers receiving assessments and support, and more premises improvements like those Members of both parties so rightly supported at the Formont Centre opening recently.

Delivering this in the current financial climate will of course be challenging and will continue to require the skill and commitment of the many talented and dedicated staff throughout the department and the continued support of many partners

I very much hope that cross party consensus on the priorities for adult social care continues and that the current national review of the long term funding for social care leads to central Government ensuring that the resources needed to support the most vulnerable members of Enfield’s community are made available in future years.

The Government has claimed that it has provided more money for adult social care as part of this years budget, but all the evidence, including the sources I quoted at last Council, agree that this does not adequately meet the growing demand. This administration has evidenced its commitment by ensuring that

additional resources beyond the level from central Government have been included in our budget proposals.”

Question 42 from Councillor Maynard to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services

“The total number of schools with Academy status now stands at 407. This is over a two fold increase from the 203 that were begun under the previous Labour Government and means that nearly one in ten state secondaries are now Academies. Parental choice and higher standards in education are becoming a reality thanks to the work of the coalition Government. Will the Council congratulate the Secretary of State for Education on this achievement and recognise its importance for the children of Enfield?”

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

“I think we need to remember that the Academies Act passed by the new coalition Government amended existing legislation and changed the reasons and the criteria for schools to apply to be academies, initially only allowing outstanding schools to transfer. It also appeared to offer considerable financial inducements to do so.

As members will be aware in Enfield there are currently 6 academies, 4 of which were established or converted under legislation passed by the previous Government. The majority of academies opened under the Labour Government were schools where it was felt they needed a new direction and to work under a different sponsor to address particular issues and raise standards. It is certainly encouraging to see that through external sponsorship, considerable additional investment including Building Schools for the Future funding, and a range of support from local authorities and others there has been great improvement in the performance of many of these academies.

The vast majority of the schools that have recently transferred already have high standards, part of the outstanding judgement. Therefore current performance cannot be attributed to the very recent change in status. They have transferred with the same staff, the same governing body and in the case of Enfield are working with the LA to apply the same admissions code as applied to all schools. As you will know only two of Enfield’s outstanding schools have so far applied to transfer and I am aware that they did undertake to consult with existing parents.

I think it is too early to assess any impact that the recent change has had or is likely to have in terms of affecting parental choice and on raising standards. I am also very concerned that the White Paper does not address how our schools will raise achievement and reduce inequalities in provision and outcomes, particularly for underachieving groups. It is clear that cuts to central services will impact directly on our schools that are doing really well to raise standards for all children and that diverting much needed funds to already

outstanding schools to become academies will have a direct impact on our ability to narrow the achievement gaps.”

Question 43 from Councillor Maynard to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services

“According to the OECD’s 2009 PISA report, British schoolchildren are now ranked 16th in the world for science, 25th for reading and 28th for maths. That compares with a 2000 PISA ranking of 4th for science, 7th for reading and 8th for maths. Will the Council recognise that the previous Labour Government tragically failed our children and that the coalition’s Government’s education reforms are desperately needed?”

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

“As Lead Member for Education and Children’s Services in Enfield I am absolutely committed to working with our schools to continue the progress that has been made over recent years to raise standards and achievement for all our children and young people. The Council has been very pleased with the 2010 end of year results as reinforced by the very recent publication of the key stage 4 figures. For example

- In Enfield 55.3% of pupils had a minimum of 5A*-C grades including English and mathematics at GCSE, an improvement of 4.9 percentage points from 2009, compared to a national figure of 53.4%.
- 95.2% of Enfield’s young people achieve 5 or more GCSEs, above the national average of 92.8%.

I am naturally concerned by the impression that the data published by the PISA report gives but am also aware that there needs to be more context given to the bare figures.

The 2009 report includes the data for more countries than in 2000 and reflects the considerable progress that they have made from a much lower baseline than the UK.

When looking at a subject level Councillor Maynard will note the UK performance is in line with the Organisation for Economic Co operation and Development (OECD) average for English and maths whilst significantly above it in science.

Over the period of the Labour Government there was real growth in Education spending (see the grid)

Growth in United Kingdom Education Spending	
Period	Average annual growth (%)
Labour	
2007 CSR: April 2008 to March 2011	+3.4
Plans to date: April 1997 to March 2008	+4.3
Labour 1: April 1997 to March 2001	+2.8
Labour 2: April 2001 to March 2005	+6.1
Labour 3 (to date): April 2005 to March 2008	+3.8
Conservatives	
April 1979 to March 1997	+1.4

Source: CfBT Education Trust report - Level Playing Field? The implications of school funding, June 2008

The Spending Review October 2010 provided for a 0.7% increase in cash terms for education in England. The Office for Budget Responsibility predicts the GDP Deflator for 2011/12 to be 2.5%, and so this implies a real-terms reduction in spending of 1.8%.

The above figures relate to total education spending. The Spending Review announced a real terms increase in schools spending of 0.1% pa in real terms, which includes the Pupil Premium.

And I can see the impact of that growth in Enfield. Our schools are improving as are the outcomes for children. This is in direct contrast to the likely real-terms reduction in spending of 1.8% as a result of the spending review. The impact of the present Government's cuts to education services and the almost total reduction in grant funding to support and challenge schools and to ensure that all children get their entitlement to high quality educational provision will put the progress we have made in Enfield at risk.

I am not complacent about the need to make further progress and am confident that our schools will continue the drive for improvement."

Question 44 from Councillor Prescott to Councillor Goddard Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Improving Localities

"With reference to the Work Programme that is to replace all previous and existing employment programmes, and is due to be launched by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) later this year, please provide details of the Council's involvement in this new programme.

Specifically, can he confirm that the Council is on the list of preferred bidders for a Work Programme prime contract from the DWP? If not, can he confirm which DWP prime contractors are expected to name Enfield Council as a sub-contract partner in their regional bids that are due for submission to the DWP before the mid-February deadline? If not, can he at least suggest what value Enfield Council can offer a Work Programme sub-contractor for the benefit of Enfield residents seeking sustainable employment?

Failing all of the above, can he please explain what Enfield Council is planning to do to reduce worklessness in the borough during the present term of administration? What are the measurable objectives and timescales against which his plans for reducing worklessness will be judged successful (or not)?"

Reply from Councillor Goddard:

The Council did not bid to become a Prime Contractor because it is very clear that the Government wishes to appoint large private sector organisations to undertake this role. It would be too risky and too costly to undertake such a role.

We are interested in exploring the scope for Enfield Jobsnet, the Council's job-brokerage service, to become a sub-contractor to the appointed prime Contractors for the West London "lot" in which Enfield has been placed and have submitted Expressions of Interest to those Prime contractors who have been short-listed. We note, however, that some of the larger Prime Contractors have recently announced their withdrawal from bidding for this area, an indication of the difficulties which they perceive in delivering the programmes at a reasonable profit, bearing in mind the notional payment levels which have been identified and the time-lags in securing the receipt of monies. We would need to have proper regard to the risk and reward considerations before deciding to engage in any delivery role.

Jobsnet is the offer that the Council can make, but I would remind you that this service is funded by the Working Neighbourhood Fund which the Government has cut and that the work programme arrangement will not meet all the needs of the Borough.

In addition all other funding streams to support employment and economic development were axed by the Government and programmes including the North London Pledge funded by the LDA finish this month as a result of cuts to the LDA. With no replacement and against the background of severe reductions to the overall budget, the Regeneration Department is currently reviewing how it can sustain a programme to tackle worklessness. There is a working group of the Scrutiny panel that will be producing an interim report at the end of the month and a report on reshaping job brokerage to meet the reduced funding available.

In the face of rising levels of Worklessness and Child Poverty in the borough we need to continue to pursue a multi-faceted approach to address both the demand and supply sides of the labour market. Whilst clearly there are a range of macro-economic factors affecting unemployment levels, which are totally beyond our control, we have an important role to play at the local level.

On the demand side, we need to increase the number of jobs in the borough whilst retaining the existing businesses and enable them to grow. In addition to strengthening our business support activities on our industrial estates and

in our and town centres, we intend to retrieve the lead role in promoting inward investment to the borough. We need to build on the strong relationships with our key strategic partner organisations to deliver this programme as effectively as possible.

We understand the importance of improving the transport connectivity to and from our employment areas to maximise the development potential of our major opportunity sites.

We recognise the skills gaps amongst our work force and will be working closely with our schools and Colleges to provide our young people with the necessary skills to compete for jobs.

We need to continue to address the worst pockets of deprivation in the borough and are drawing up initiatives to target specific interventions.

Finally the plans for measuring the situation must be set against a Government budget reduction that will increase unemployment whatever we do to mitigate it and that all resources to stimulate the demand side have also been axed.

In the light of all of this Regeneration is working up a substantial range of arrangements and strategies to stimulate the demand side against a backcloth of years of Council neglect.

If Councillor Prescott would like to attend the Scrutiny group on worklessness then he will get a full picture of the activity.

Question 4

Appendix 1 – Correspondence with Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP

Michael Lavender
3rd November 2010

The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP
House of Commons
Westminster
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr. Pickles,

Local Government Financing - Grant Damping – its effects on the London Borough of Enfield

The purpose of this letter is to lobby to you for a change to the present grant damping mechanism and secondly, if this is not possible, to draw to your attention its effect on the London Borough of Enfield.

As you are aware the Formula Grant assessment is derived from a sophisticated and complex needs assessment of each local authority area, some, myself included, would say this is an overly complex mechanism. However, having engaged a great deal of public expense in collecting the relevant data and then assessing this need, the decision was made by the previous Labour government to dampen the effects of any increase or decrease in the Formula Grant awarded on the grounds that step changes in grant would result in untoward consequences to those councils affected. Cynics would say this benefited certain Labour-run authorities. This decision seems to have undermined the need for the assessment and the attendant bureaucracy in the first place.

This decision serves to acknowledge a failure on the part of the previous Labour government to properly meet the needs of certain authorities. This is more acute in those areas which are suffering an economic decline.

The London Borough of Enfield, which changed political control from Conservative to Labour at the last election is one such area.

The London Borough of Enfield is a borough of two halves. The west, including the constituency of Enfield Southgate is relatively, if not exceptionally, affluent (13% of residents in my own ward are millionaires), yet the east of the borough, including the constituency of Edmonton contains wards and super output areas which are among the very worst in the country with very high levels of deprivation, reflected in high levels of unemployment, benefit dependency, gun and knife crime, teenage pregnancy and health inequalities.

Inevitably there is a blended Formula Grant assessment for the whole borough which fails to reflect the real costs of dealing with the acute problems in the east of the Borough. Enfield Council is nevertheless assessed through the local government funding formula as needing relatively large increases in its annual budget. However because this increase is well above the floor (i.e. the minimum increase all councils receive) it loses money to pay for those which are not assessed as needing a minimum increase.

For Enfield, it has lost roughly £5m per year over the last four years of the last Labour government. On a net budget of £245m (i.e. 2%) this represents a third as much as the current savings envisaged in the recent budget. Enfield Council has under the previous Labour government had to endure systemic under-funding. Nevertheless it was more than able, under a Conservative administration, to continue to deliver better services at less costs with over 1,000 fewer non-schools related staff and to increase its status from a one star to a four star authority.

The recent announcements regarding the rolling over of specific grants into the Formula Grant is welcome. This reduces government bureaucracy and re-establishes real choice for local councils. However as a consequence of the previous government's damping arrangements, the rolling over has an unintended consequence on authorities such as Enfield whose Formula Grant is damped. The greater the percentage of funding which falls under Formula Grant; the greater the effect of damping.

I am aware of the current consultation about possible changes to the local government funding formula. I understand that the Leader of the Council has written to the Chancellor and to yourself on this subject.

I should be grateful if you would take the above matters into account when formulating future policy regarding this issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Lavender', written in a cursive style.

Michael Lavender
Councillor and Conservative Leader of the Opposition, Enfield Council

Response received attached