

## **COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS**

### **Question 1 from Councillor E Savva to Councillor Neville Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene**

"Can Councillor Neville inform the council how much was spent by the last Labour administration from the council's own capital resources on carriageway maintenance in Edmonton between 2000 and 2002."

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

"We do not have detailed figures for highway maintenance expenditure on different parts of the borough for the period requested. However, for the **whole** of the borough during the two financial years April 2000 to March 2002, a mere £1,392,000 of the Council's own Capital was allocated to highway maintenance."

### **Question 2 from Councillor Bond to Councillor Rye, Leader of the Council,**

"At the June Council Meeting, you said that you were to meet Lord Hanningford to discuss the closure of Post Offices and how the council can assist those Post Offices that wish to stay open. Can he inform the council of the outcome of those discussions and also what ideas he is now to put forward for the council to assist those parts of Enfield that are affected by the closure of Post Offices?"

#### **Reply from Councillor Rye:**

Councillor Bond is correct in saying in response to his supplementary question at the June council meeting, I indicated that we would contact Essex County Council to see if there was a possibility of providing some support for Post Offices within council premises. I had planned to see Lord Hanningford at the Local Government Conference in July along with other Conservative leaders, but unfortunately he did not attend this conference. Our officers are in discussion with Essex County Council about this issue. In addition we have made our own representations to the Post Office about post office closures in Enfield without success.

Post Office Counters emphasised to the council that the government had removed so much business from them that the whole network had been undermined. Without a large government subsidy many Post Offices were sadly now unviable.

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

"Would Councillor Neville comment on the article on page 5 of the Enfield Gazette of the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2008 which reported a call from a former Labour Councillor for the introduction of differential charges for the collection of domestic waste?"

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

“The introduction of charges for the collection of waste as proposed by the former Labour member would mean a significant increase in charges to families, not only living in the Southbury Ward, but also elsewhere in the borough. As set out in my report on the new wheeled bin service to Cabinet on 8 October, which stated that no charges would be introduced for the collection of waste, I can confirm again that as long the Conservatives retain control of Enfield Council such regressive Labour policies will not be implemented.”

**Question 4 from Councillor Giladi to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene,**

"Following the much publicised “deep clean” in Edmonton, as well as other hotspots of litter in the borough, (council press release 30 September 2008), what extra funding has the council allocated to the “deep cleaning programme?”

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

“I am pleased that the results from the deep clean programme in Edmonton have been recognized in particular by members opposite. This is a one-off programme being carried out in the current financial year to assess its impact. This approach is proposed to be adopted as part of the overall street cleansing service from 2009/2010 onwards and would be funded from efficiencies identified from within the current budget allocation for street scene of £4.13 million. This would form part of the service review outlined in the 'new wheeled bin service' report to Cabinet in October. This administration has regularly spent more money than Labour did in its 8 years on cleansing the streets throughout the borough.”

**Question 5 from Councillor Bond to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene,**

“Following the much publicised “deep clean” in Edmonton, as well as other hot spots of litter in the borough, (council press release 30 September 2008), besides Edmonton what are the other “hot spots” that will feature in this programme and when?”

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

“As indicated in my response to the last question, I am pleased that the results from the deep clean programme in Edmonton have been recognised. This administration has had an ongoing programme of cleansing improvements in the borough. I recognise that we cannot achieve perfection, but we are certainly not complacent and we seek to continuously improve. This is a one-off programme being carried out in the current financial year to assess its impact and it is being positively received. This approach, if adopted, will be rolled out to all town centres and shopping parades as part of the overall street cleansing service from 2009/2010. This would form part of the service review outlined in the 'new wheeled bin service' report adopted by Cabinet in October.”

**Question 6 from Councillor Stafford to Councillor Zinkin, Cabinet member for Customer Focus, Communications and Corporate Improvement**

"Following the Evening Standard article on 2 October 2008 that stated that Edmonton is nicknamed "Shank Town", what action have you taken to inform the Evening Standard that this is not an accurate description of Edmonton?"

**Reply from Councillor Zinkin:**

"This term was first used by the Daily Mail and Evening Standard earlier in the year at the time of the tragic murders of young people in the area. When challenged by the council's press office, the journalist claimed that it came from young people themselves. We do not condone the use of this term.

Throughout this year we have been trying to promote the improvements taking place in Edmonton and the many positive aspects of life. We have also promoted the wide range of work taking place with young people to divert them away from crime and violence.

The press release that resulted in the coverage on 2 October was again promoting the work the council is doing to improve the quality of life in Edmonton. Apart from using the term 'shank town', the coverage was very positive about the deep clean and that 'Edmonton is on the up'. The story was also covered in the two local newspapers who we are encouraging to play their part in improving the perception of Edmonton and the wider borough. Most recently they were invited on a tour of the borough to understand more about our place-shaping plans.

We will continue to promote the many positive stories of Edmonton and are working with the Edmonton Partnership Initiative and representatives of the local area to develop a specific communications plan to promote a positive message for Edmonton."

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

"Will Councillor Vince please comment on how we celebrate the achievements of looked after children and young people who the council have a corporate responsibility for?"

**Reply from Councillor Vince:**

"Every year we hold two achievement days; one for 13-18 year olds and the other for 7-11 year olds.

There are appropriate age-related activities for the children and young people in the morning, followed by an award ceremony at which I present them with awards that recognise their achievements across a wide range of activities.

The children are supported by carers, social workers and other professionals. There is a family feeling about the events with everyone applauding the children's achievements.

For the last few years at the 13-18 year olds event, there has been a keenly contested football match between staff and young people in care. The result of this year's match is still being hotly debated even though there was an independent referee.

For the last three years, children's social care and cultural services have jointly run an animation project during the summer holidays. Groups of looked after children produce animated films which they use to express their wishes and feelings. We show the completed films to a specially invited audience at Millfield Theatre. We were pleased that the mayor was able to attend this year's event in October.

For the last two years, I have organised a tea party in the mayor's parlour to celebrate the educational achievement of looked after young people. This event is well attended by young people and this year some of the university students we are supporting came and expressed their appreciation for all the support that social workers and Enfield Council have provided for them.

Last week I held another tea party to thank all those young people involved in the animation project.

In addition, Local Area Agreement (LAA) funding during the past two years has allowed us to reward particular individual achievements and in some cases to provide incentives for young people to help them start on the process of obtaining qualifications.

The aim of all these activities is to try to improve the self-esteem of children and young people who have experienced loss or abuse before coming into care and to let them know that they are capable of achieving more than they think they can.

I am sure you will all join me in thanking all those staff involved with supporting these children and young people as their work can go unappreciated.

**Question 8 from Councillor George Savva to Councillor Edward Smith, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services**

"Will the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services give an assurance that the new residential home at the current site of Elizabeth House will consist of a minimum of 80 units?"

**Reply from Councillor Smith:**

"The Cabinet Report of the 5th March 2008 identified the Elizabeth House and Pitfield Way site as the best option for a dual registered care home. Noting that detailed work had not been completed it was recommended that a minimum 80 bed dual registered facility for older people could be seen on a combined Elizabeth House and Pitfield Way site.

Work continues to look at the options and feasibility of the site. Work to date indicates that it will not be feasible to economically combine the Elizabeth House and Pitfield Way sites which are currently separated by a road. Therefore

proposals are being developed on the basis of the Elizabeth House site only for a new care home. A further report on this scheme is due to be brought back to Cabinet detailing the product of the work undertaken by Property Services as well as details of the appraisal of the capital and revenue implications. The proposals will also be discussed at the Adult Social Services Scrutiny Panel before going to Cabinet.

Every effort will be made to maximise the use of the Elizabeth House site and increase the number of beds which can be provided, whilst complying fully with the Commissioning for Social Care Inspection minimum spatial requirements for high quality care home provision. Given the characteristics and size of the site it is likely that the number of beds that can be provided on this site will be about 70, although it is not possible to confirm this until design work including consultation with planning has been undertaken. We are also looking at a range of possible complementary uses of the adjacent Pitfield Way site.

I am sure that Councillor Savva and other members on the Scrutiny Panel will continue to make a very valuable contribution to the development of a new purpose built, high quality, dual registered care facility in the east of the borough.”

**Question 9 from Councillor Jukes to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene:**

“Would Councillor Neville comment on new planning controls on footway crossovers, recently introduced?”

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

“I welcome changes introduced recently to better control the development of footway crossovers. From 1 October 2008, the ‘permitted development rights’ that allow householders to convert their front garden into hard standing without planning permission have changed.

In future planning permission will be required for all new driveways or parking areas that are constructed without using permeable surfaces, unless the rainwater is otherwise able to soak naturally into the ground. Residents will need to consider their choice of materials and their sub-base, gradients and whether they can incorporate borders and flowerbeds into their design. However, they must not allow rainwater from their property to discharge on to the public highway. The new rules also apply where existing hard standings are being replaced.

Planning permission will be required for all other forms of construction of crossover.

I support these changes because uncontrolled methods of construction can contribute to flooding and pollution of watercourses.

I take the opportunity to remind Council that residents must have a properly constructed footway crossover to allow vehicular access across the pavement to their property. This is in order to prevent damage to the pavement and to utility apparatus beneath the pavement.

Officers from Highway Services and Development Control have discussed the implications of the changes in planning legislation on the management of footway crossings. An advisory note to residents informing them of the changes and where to obtain more information has been included in the application pack for footway crossings. We do already require that residents do not discharge their rain water runoff onto the public highway and Highway Officers already check this as part of the current application process.”

**Question 10 from Councillor Cole to Councillor Laban, Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety**

"Given that the council is upgrading street lighting across the borough and that Councillor Laban is aware that the lighting on many estates is below an acceptable standard, what steps is he taking to bring lighting on council estates up to the same standard as street lighting. Will he agree to instruct that the council carries out an inspection of lighting on all council estates and ensures that resources are available for a planned improvement programme across the borough."

**Reply from Councillor Laban:**

“Enfield Council and our partner organisation, Enfield Homes, fully understand residents' concerns regarding potential community safety issues caused by poor estate lighting and we take these responsibilities very seriously.

The lighting of our estates consists both of column lighting (generally maintained by the council's Highways Section) and light fittings mounted on the common areas of the blocks (generally maintained by Enfield Homes). Over the years many of the estates have benefitted from lighting improvements carried out as part of other major improvement works and we endeavour to maintain the estate lighting through both the responsive maintenance service and planned maintenance programmes.

Enfield Homes has recently had meetings with the authority's Highways Section to review the issue of column estate lighting and the extent of the lighting upgrades currently being carried out by the Highways section under the Private Finance Initiative scheme. On completion of this work we will be able to ascertain and detail any improvement works required to estate column lighting which is currently maintained by Enfield Homes, establish an improvement programme and fully evaluate costs.

Finally, the bid for Decent Homes Funding includes an element for environmental improvements across the stock, with lighting forming a part of this package and although there are no immediate plans to upgrade estate lighting generally, this will be considered as part of our future plans.”

**Question 11 from Councillor E Savva to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene:**

“Would the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene comment on the ISO 14001 Accreditation for the Environment and Management System recently awarded to Street Scene and Waste Services?”

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

“I am very pleased to report that Street Scene and Waste Services have been accredited by BSI as compliant with the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System. The scope of this certification covers street cleansing, refuse and recycling and is the first council division to achieve this status under the revised standard. Street Scene and Waste Services provide a range of critical services to the public of this borough and by working to this recognised worldwide standard the council is demonstrating that we take our environmental responsibilities seriously. ISO 14001 is not just a one-off paper standard or exercise but is an evolving Environmental Management System that will be continually updated and improved as a result of regular audits and reviews. Each year, our Quality Manual, documents and environmental systems will be reviewed by an external assessor to check that we are complying with the ISO 14001 Standard and are keeping our records up-to-date.

Our Environmental Management System sets out our annual targets and objectives that allow us to control our impact on the environment (e.g. preventing pollution) and enable us to continually improve our performance. This is achieved through the effective management of waste and energy, control of emissions, management of materials and the control and influence on suppliers. Working to ISO 14001 will allow us to check that we are meeting our legal responsibilities and that we are reducing our potential for environmental incidents.”

**Question 12 from Councillor Bond to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene**

"Can the Cabinet Member give the council an assurance that the Shopmobility provision in Enfield is to remain open in the coming financial year? Can he also tell the council what plans he has to promote the provision of this facility in the run up to Christmas?"

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

“We have set up a working group to seek alternative ways of providing or funding the service. A number of options are being explored with regard to the future of Edmonton Shopmobility, including the possibility of sponsorship by retail companies including Asda. It is however by no means certain that such funding will be forthcoming.

Enfield Shopmobility is being absorbed within the services offered by the Reception Centre at the Civic Centre. Any budgetary implications are expected to be minimal now that the service has been set up, other than maintenance of equipment.

Posters for both centres have been distributed, information on the council and National Federation of Shopmobilities has been updated, various community groups have handed out leaflets and flyers and included adverts or notices in their respective newsletters. We hope to have an advert in the November edition of Our Enfield. New signage for both centres is being addressed.”

**Question 13 from Councillor E Savva to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene:**

“Would Councillor Neville comment on recent press reports that there are 53 brothels operating in the borough, and what action is he proposing to deal with this problem?”

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

“The Environmental Crime Unit and the police are working together in partnership to identify and deal with brothels in Enfield. They will use both civil and criminal powers to combat the problem.

It was noted that the report on 53 brothels was published in the Advertiser on which the back page of the paper had a number of advertisements which could be perceived as for that type of establishment. The Head of Community Safety will be writing a letter to the local Advertiser newspaper requesting their support by declining any advert that would promote this type of premises. Every premises regardless of whether it is a business or residential address that offers massage must have a Special Treatment Licence from the council and officers investigate any queries from the police about whether potential advertisers actually hold a licence and are therefore legitimate. Any premises that are identified as otherwise are passed on to the police.”

**Question 14 from Councillor Pipe to Councillor Neville, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene:**

“What additional action is Councillor Neville planning to take to improve the control of litter in shopping parades?”

**Reply from Councillor Neville:**

“At the Cabinet meeting in October new and improved service delivery options for the recycling, refuse and street cleansing services were approved.

A number of service improvements were proposed to improve standards of cleanliness, including from April 2009 enhanced cleansing programmes for town centres and main shopping parades. The new programmes involve earlier start and later finishing times for cleansing schedules delivering a more sustained presence in these prominent locations. Additionally we are developing an enforcement action programme to tackle street litter, and private land defaced by litter which includes statutory bodies such as Transport for London (London Underground), Network Rail, telephone, gas and electricity companies who fail to keep their land clear of litter.

Where litter can be clearly traced to certain types of business, such as 'food on the go' establishments, the council will serve Street Litter Control Notices on the occupiers requiring them to clear the footway and adjacent land within 100 metres of their premises. The types of business include food premises, betting shops and automated teller machines."

**Question 15 from Councillor Adams to Councillor Hurer, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Resources:**

"Would Councillor Hurer inform members of the overall cost to the council in respect of holding the Citizenship Ceremonies?"

**Reply from Councillor Hurer:**

"The council has a statutory responsibility to provide citizenship ceremonies. The council receives payment from the Home Office on a per applicant basis – this is estimated at £120K in the current year. The budgeted cost of the service in 2008/09 is £38K, which includes employee costs and running expenses."