

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS: 19 September 2012

1.1 Questions to Cabinet Members

Question 1 from Councillor Waterhouse to Councillor Bond Cabinet Member for Environment

In determining the administration's policy towards Sunday parking charges, did the Cabinet Member take into consideration the study referred to by Councillor Sitkin during the Full Council debate on 4 July 2012, and can he confirm which study this was?

Reply from Councillor Bond:

Councillor Sitkin's personal research did not have direct influence on Administration's policy. As I have not discussed this research with Councillor Sitkin I'm unable to name the author or the title of the research.

Question 2 from Councillor Sitkin to Councillor Taylor, Leader of the Council

"What impact do you believe that the Government reshuffle will have on Enfield Council?

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

I would like to be positive but I can't be positive.

The overriding need is for a change in economic policy by the Government but that is not flagged by the reshuffle. Our residents need jobs and growing incomes but the failed economic policy will not deliver that.

The Council tax benefit subsidy changes are being consulted upon in Enfield; its Minister was dropped in the reshuffle. The welfare benefit changes which many consider deeply flawed are now apparently considered failing by the Prime Minister who tried to reshuffle the Secretary of State - but he wouldn't move.

The Prime Minister did remove the Secretary of State for Health who, of course, decided to remove Chase Farm A and E. We will see if his replacement might reverse that decision.

Overall however, despite the deckchairs being shuffled we remain aboard the Titanic, and increasingly consigned to steerage.

Question 3 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Bond Cabinet Member for Environment

Will Councillor Bond please confirm how many front line environment staffing positions have been cut since

May 2010?

Reply from Councillor Bond

6.5 Full Time Employees (FTE) front line environment staffing positions have been cut since May 2010.

Question 4 from Councillor Brett to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

The local MP arranged a demonstration at the last Council meeting which approximately 15 members of the public attended. This was supported by Conservative Councillors and to assist, extra security and overflow was organised. How much did that all cost the Council taxpayer?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

The total costs for the provision of the additional security and overflow room at the Council meeting on 4 July 2012 was £907.00. This was broken down as follows £625.00 (video & PA link to conference room); £132.00 for 2 additional security guards and £150.00 for 2 additional porters.

Question 5 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Bond Cabinet Member for Environment

Will he publish by way of answer to this question his response to the Government's consultation on the future of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Scheme?

Reply from Councillor Bond

The Council is a member of the London Energy Partnership and contributed to its response to the Government's consultation on behalf of 30 London Local Authorities, including the City of London Corporation, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, the London Fire Brigade, and 4 Regional Local Authorities. A copy of the London Energy Partnership's response will be sent to Councillor Neville and also be made available in the Members Library and both Group Offices.

Question 6 from Councillor Sitkin to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

What is the Council doing to deliver its commitment on sustainability?

Reply from Councillor Bond

The Council's Sustainability Service has developed the Enfield 2020 Sustainability Programme and Action Plan. The Programme has a '2020 Vision' to:

1. Significantly improve the sustainability of the Borough of Enfield and Enfield Council by 2020
2. Deliver significant economic, environmental and social benefits for all of Enfield's stakeholders

The Enfield 2020 Action Plan contains 50 strategic sustainability projects focussed on 8 themes:

1. Save Energy
2. Enable Urban Regeneration
3. Grow London's Low Carbon Economy
4. Improve Local and Global Environment
5. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
6. Improve Public Health and Wellbeing
7. Community Leadership
8. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Enfield 2020 also provides the mechanism to develop and deliver further strategic sustainability projects in Enfield over the next 8 years. It will be on public consultation in autumn 2012.

Question 7 from Councillor East to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance & Property

Which studies have been conducted into the possible disposal or sale of council-owned property in the Green Belt, including buildings, land and rights?

Further, please can the Cabinet Member give assurances that the council will not sell off any of the green spaces in the borough for private residential development or social housing?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

This administration has not commissioned specific studies into the possible disposal or sale of council-owned property in the Green Belt, including buildings, land and rights.

As part of the management of council-owned property in the Green Belt, the majority of which is undertaken under a contract with Knight Frank, opportunities may arise to generate additional income in collaboration with tenants which may result in granting additional rights

In terms of future commitments to the Green Belt, I await with interest the Government's ever changing planning policies, with which I will ensure the Council fully complies, once we know what they are. Rest assured, this Administration is fully committed to preserving the unique character of Enfield.

Question 8 from Councillor Levy to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Is the Council aiming to save money through better energy management?

Reply from Councillor Bond

The Council has recently developed the Enfield 2020 Sustainability Programme and Action Plan, which will be on public consultation in autumn 2012. The programme contains 8 themes, one of which is to 'Save Energy.'

Of the 50 strategic sustainability projects in the Enfield 2020 Action Plan, 17 projects are focussed on saving energy in buildings and vehicles. These projects include a number of large-scale 'Invest to Save' projects across Enfield's buildings portfolio, expansion of the Greenways network and installation of a further 6 electric vehicle recharging points in Enfield.

The overriding focus of the 'Save Energy' theme is to use better energy management to save money.

Question 9 from Councillor D. Pearce to Councillor Georgiou, Deputy Leader

Earlier this year Councillor Georgiou stated that the Council make every effort to collect outstanding debts and non payments of Council Tax, rental arrears, housing benefit over payments and business rates. He also said the council would look at new methods and technologies to improve collections?

Can he now update us on progress made in collection of revenue and what ideas the Council are now implementing?

Reply from Councillor Georgiou

The Council is committed to collecting debt and continues to make improvements.

The overall collection level for council tax remains 98%, the 9th highest in London. In year collection continues to improve with quarter 1 performance at 29.58%, up from 29.37% for the same period last year. Housing benefit overpayment collection has increased in quarter 1 from the same period last year from 69.88% up to 78.76%. Over £12m of historical sundry debt and £1m of historical social care has been cleared in the first quarter of the year.

Further improvements are planned or already underway, including:

- Analysis of income streams, converting invoice production to payment in advance before service delivery to avoid debt occurring in the first place.
- Encourage increased take up of Direct Debits and other electronic payment methods
- Maximise the securing of debt against property and converting charging orders into force of sale orders
- Exploring prompt payment discounts
- Exploring the ability to charge interest for late payment

- Cross departmental working - improving income streams and agreeing debt reduction schemes around the Council
- Extending the use of money claim on line to obtain County Court claims
- Greater use of current strategies such as peaceable reentry, in relation to commercial debt, in order to re let premises to tenants who pay
- A pilot scheme with Experian is already underway to reduce council tax arrears by matching high value arrears cases to credit agency records to enable more effective, targeted recovery. Experian are presenting the scheme to their users in October as an example of good practice and it is likely to feature in a Government seminar to tackle public sector debt in November.
- The Council is also working on introducing automated texting to customers who are late paying their council tax instalments as an alternative to issuing paper reminders, e-billing and on line access to council tax accounts.

Question 10 from Councillor Levy to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

In a recent article in a local paper, the Leader of the Opposition suggested that dependent upon the result of our Welfare Benefit Consultation, pensioners could see cuts in their benefits. Is this really a possibility?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

This is completely untrue. We are committed to protecting pensioners from the benefit changes brought in by the Government even though the abolition of Council Tax Benefit may cost the Council £5.1m a year. We are currently consulting on a proposed scheme which would affect working age claimants only. The consultation has been sent out in Our Enfield magazine, published on the Council's website as well as sent to members of the Citizens Panel, directly to a random sample of 1000 homes and to local voluntary organisations/interest groups. We would urge everyone to participate in the consultation which ends on 18 October.

Question 11 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Charalmbous, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture, Youth & Localism

It was wonderful to see the support for the Olympic torch relay and in particular Jack Otter's section of the relay which I am sure all members of the council would applaud. Could the Cabinet Member tell the council how torch bearers for the Olympic Relay in Enfield were chosen?

Reply from Councillor Charalambous

I would share Councillor Neville's view that it was wonderful to see Jack Otter proudly representing Enfield in the torch relay.

The London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, (LOCOG) pulled together 3 different ways of selecting Torch Relay Runners,

They delegated a 3rd of the relay runners to be selected by Coca Cola, another 3rd were to be selected by Lloyds Bank and the final 3rd were selected by themselves.

LOCOG determined that every other runner should be a young person.

LOCOG for the final 3rd pulled together teams of officers who would select runners based on criteria that LOCOG themselves dictated. The officer groups were based on the Boroughs that were being past through on that particular day. Enfield was therefore part of the Harrow, Brent and Haringey Group for Day 68 of the Relay. LOCOG had advertised the opportunity to run and individuals were nominated or nominated themselves. Officers were asked to select individuals without knowing which Borough they lived in or their names. Effectively officers were asked to select individuals based on LOCOG criteria without knowing addresses and names. LOCOG took some decisions out of the hands of the selection panels to ensure a high profile for the relay, selecting celebrities and people representing good causes.

Question 12 from Councillor Ekechi to Councillor Goddard, Cabinet Member for Business and Regeneration

What are the Government plans for protection of the Green Belt?

Reply from Councillor Goddard

The problem I have and I think many others have regarding the intentions of the Government on planning is that the rules keep being changed and are becoming contradictory. We are told that localism is the way forward yet are being told what to do. We are told at one time the green belt is sacrosanct then later that planning is a free for all in order to stimulate economic growth. None of this relates to the needs of an area and is certainly inconsistent with the desire by the Government for Local Plans (LDF / Core strategy as was)to be the guiding framework.

When the Government has really decided what helps growth and what the planning framework really is I will share my thoughts with Council.

Question 13 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Can he confirm that it is his intention to terminate or not renew the present contract with the company responsible for investigating and enforcing fraudulent use of the "blue badge" parking permit and if so can he confirm that he will put a time limit on performance of that contract by in house staff which will be closely monitored and will he commit the council to externalising again in the event that the excellent performance of the present contractor is not matched by in house resources?

Reply from Councillor Bond

The existing service is delivered through a partnership of Council Staff, the Police and an external contractor. The work carried out by the external contractor will be delivered by the Council's Environmental Crime Officers, working in partnership with the Police and the Council's Blue Badge team. Performance will be monitored carefully to ensure that the Council continues to have a zero tolerance approach to blue badge fraud and that those responsible are dealt with effectively by the Courts. I will review the arrangements in Spring 2013.

Question 14 from Councillor Stafford to Councillor Charalambous, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Youth and Localism

In light of the stunning success of both Olympic and Paralympic games, and of the medals won by athletes with a local connection to Enfield, can the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Youth and Localism tell me whether the Council has always been supportive of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games.

Reply from Councillor Charalambous

It will come as a great shock to Councillor Stafford to discover that on 13 April 2005 at Full Council and previously at Cabinet on 9 February 2005 that the then ruling Conservative administration voted against supporting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is fortunate that the actions of Enfield's out of touch Conservative administration of that time was ignored as had their folly succeeded then the people of Great Britain and Enfield would have been denied the most amazing event and celebrations that this country has seen in generations over the last few weeks.

Question 15 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Can he tell the council how much has been spent in advertising public notices which are required by law respectively in:

- The Enfield Advertiser
- The Enfield Independent

for the years 2010-11 and 2011-12 and 2012- to the latest point information is available?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

2010-11

Enfield Advertiser	£47,029
Enfield Independent	£14,051

2011-12

Enfield Advertiser	£49,260
Enfield Independent	£14,051

2012 to Aug 12
Enfield Advertiser £21,747
Enfield Independent £8,675"

Question 16 from Councillor Levy to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

What is the Council's position in the UK's Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Performance League Table?

Reply from Councillor Bond

In October 2011 the Environment Agency published the UK's first CRC League table to provide organisations with a reputational incentive to reduce their carbon footprints. Using the baseline energy and carbon performance of public and private sector organisations, Enfield Council came 732nd out of 2,103 UK organisations. The Council also came 11th out of 33 London Boroughs, which is a fairer comparison based on similar buildings, services and operations.

Between 2010/11 and 2011/12, the Council achieved a 7.9% reduction (2,501 tonnes) in its CRC payments, reducing its carbon footprint from 31,763 tonnes to 29,262 tonnes. This resulted in a £30,011 saving in the Council's carbon tax payment under the CRC Scheme, from the Council's theoretical baseline payment of £381,156 to £351,145.

The next CRC performance league table will be published in October 2012. The Council's league table position will depend on how the Council's 7.9% reduction in its energy consumption and carbon emissions compares against the other organisations in the league table.

Question 17 from Councillor Waterhouse to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

In the full council debate on Sunday parking charges on 4 July, Councillor Sitkin referred to a piece of research he had found on the internet that had informed his thinking and therefore the way he voted. Could Councillor Bond (a) confirm the author and title of this research and (b) how important this piece of research was in influencing the administration's policy making on this matter?

Reply from Councillor Bond

I refer you to my response to Question one.

Question 18 from Councillor Lavender to Councillor Oyken, Cabinet Member for Housing

Would the Cabinet member for Housing please explain the council's strategy in relation to leaseholders (i) in estates undergoing or planned to undergo regeneration (such as Alma Road, Coverack Close and Shepcot House) and

(ii) generally.

Response from Councillor Oyken

- (i) Housing recognises that leaseholders living on estates undergoing or planned to undergo regeneration have made a personal and financial investment in the community. Our proposal to Leaseholders will offer choices to remain in the community or to realise their investment and move away from the area. A Leaseholder information booklet, which officers are currently finalising, will outline the process of negotiations and explain the statutory compensation which is payable to leaseholders and non-resident leaseholders affected by our estate regeneration projects. This includes an offer of market value plus an additional 10% of market value for Resident Leaseholders and an additional 7.5% for Non-Resident leaseholders. A dedicated officer has been identified as the contact for leaseholders during the buy back process and a Frequently Asked Questions fact sheet will be available to assist with the process.
- (ii) Generally, the Council's strategy is to continue to provide improving services and to carry out works that are necessary to ensure the comfort and safety of residents, to charge fairly and accurately for these works and to fulfil the Council's obligations as a landlord.

Question 19 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Hamilton, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing and Public Health

Has the Cabinet Member seen the guidance issued by the senior presiding judge for England and Wales, the Rt Hon Lord Justice Goldring, about the role of magistrates in relation to political matters concerning the police. Would she agree that in the light of that guidance she would be in some difficulty in future in leading or participating in a debate on police numbers such as that which she led on the motion in her name at the last council and in those circumstances would she be more comfortable persuading the Leader to split that role removing the Community Safety element from it?

Or alternatively she may prefer to resign from the bench?

Reply from Councillor Hamilton

I have seen the guidance to magistrates in relation to standing for election as Police and Crime Commissioners and to the Police and Crime Panels which will scrutinise the Commissioners' function. The restrictions within the guidance (which were considerably tempered by the senior presiding judge within days of issue) relate to a specific political post and have no application my role within the Council. I am fully aware of my responsibilities both as a magistrate and a Councillor. A copy of the guidance has been provided in the Members Library and for both Group Offices.

Question 20 from Councillor Lavender to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Significant reductions in the amount of carbon dioxide have helped Enfield Council save more than £30,000 tax in the last year.

New rules introduced in April 2012 and designed to cut carbon emissions means Enfield Council has to pay £12 for every tonne of carbon dioxide it produced between April 2011 and March 2012.

Following an energy efficiency drive in its buildings, Enfield Council delivered 40 projects which helped reduce its carbon footprint from 31,763 to 29,259 tonnes between 2010/11 and 2011/12, and saved the Council just over £30,000.

Among the projects completed in council buildings were draught proofing, voltage optimisation, insulation, lighting upgrades and boiler management controls.

Enfield Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Cllr Chris Bond, said: "We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint and protecting the environment while simultaneously saving tax payers money.

"The money we have saved from these projects can be re-invested in new initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint further."

Could Councillor Bond please tell us how much it cost the council to deliver these projects?

Reply from Councillor Bond

40 energy saving projects have either been delivered or committed in the last two years. This has made a significant contribution to enable the Council to avoid approximately £30K of carbon tax liability. These projects have also enabled the Council to reduce its energy consumption resulting in further financial savings of £95K. These have been delivered through the Salix Recycling Fund at a cost of £432,176, which includes the Council project management costs and have a project pay back of just 4.5 years.

Question 21 from Councillor Chamberlain to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance & Property

According to the lead article in the most recent Enfield Society's newsletter, Salisbury House is currently the subject of a review and potential hirers and users of it are being discouraged. Meetings have also taken place with users of the house. Will Councillor Stafford confirm the nature of the review, who is undertaking it, at what cost and when and if there is to be any upfront and open public consultation on the future use of this much valued building.

Reply from Councillor Stafford

The Regeneration Team has commissioned the Paul Drury Partnership to

prepare a Conservation Management Plan to identify the House's special interest, significance of the heritage assets and the requirements for its future management, repair and alteration, at a cost of £20,000. Part of the commission included Colliers producing an Options Report to consider and table alternative viable future uses for the building in order to deliver a use that secures its future and maximises public benefit from the site.

A first draft of the report was received at the end of July with the Options Report and a report from Rodney Melville & Partners on access and accessibility, condition of the building fabric and repair costs, together with a 10 year maintenance plan. All of these are to be reviewed and Christine White is the lead officer.

A consultation event was held on 12 June 2012, facilitated by Lorraine Cox and attended mainly by existing users, to advise them of the above. The main points from the meeting have been noted.

Question 22 from Councillor East to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for the Finance & Property

Since the Labour administration came to power in May 2010, what research has been carried out into the possible sale of land currently designated as green spaces (including, but not limited to parks, golf courses, agricultural land, green belt land and farms) in the borough and what were the conclusions of those pieces of research?

What plans does the council have to sell such land?

What plans are being developed for the future sale of such land?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

The Council commissioned a strategic review of golf provision report by GVA Humberts Leisure. The report in July 2011 included research in to golf club usage to contribute to the review of options for Whitewebbs Golf Course which resulted in Parks investing in its continued operation.

The Council has no plans to sell land other than that identified in the published reports to Cabinet on property disposals, none of which are designated as green spaces.

The Council keeps under review opportunities to generate capital from land to contribute to the Medium Term Capital Funding plan.

Question 23 from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

When the Labour party was previously in power between 1994 and 2002, the then administration had a policy of having an under-resourced planning enforcement capacity and this led to established use rights being granted for

commercial dumping in the green belt at Crews Hill. Given the lack of serious enforcement on the dreadful state of the former petrol station at Brimsdown Avenue, has the Cabinet Member for the Environment re-adopted that previous policy?

Reply from Councillor Bond

The Planning Enforcement Team remains a strong and proactive unit dealing with a significant number of unauthorised development. The team's role was recently enhanced to improve consistency in dealing with unlawful use of land and property by combining it's functions with pollution control and licensing enforcement to create a larger and more effective unit.

Question 24 from Councillor Laban to Councillor Charalambous, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Youth & Localism

Please could the Cabinet Member inform the chamber how much money has been spent on Ordnance Road library since May 2010?

Reply from Councillor Charalambous

Ordnance Road Expenditure 2007/2008 – 2011/2012

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	
Capital :						
Paving works	13,716.81					13,716.81
1st Floor Conversion			31,058.61	1,167.34		32,225.95
	13,716.81	0.00	31,058.61	1,167.34	0.00	45,942.76

The planned first floor conversion was a proposal to create room for a Children’s Area Partnership Integrated Support Team. The feasibility study showed the estimated costs for the work to be £227,660 which was well beyond the monies available in the then Capital Programme for library refurbishment.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	
Revenue :						
Premises	55,583.41	59,065.39	24,192.84	45,874.39	49,844.13	234,560.16
Supplies & Services	9,127.49	8,035.63	6,100.63	3,660.00	4,750.16	31,673.91
Repairs & Maintenance	18,661.09	25,868.24	10,453.02	17,684.07	19,740.55	92,406.97
	83,371.99	92,969.26	40,746.49	67,218.46	74,334.84	358,641.04

These figures represent the normal running costs for Ordnance Road Library and are similar to libraries of comparable size and opening hours.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	
WNF Project :						
E-Learning Centre	0	0	0	41,973.10	30,259.75	72,232.85

Question 25 from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Please could the Cabinet Member for Environment update the chamber on the planning enforcement action his department has taken on the former Brimsdown Ave Petrol Station site?

Reply from Councillor Bond

The Council are working with the owners to remove the illegal tenants from this land and remove any perceived fire or public health risks to residents.

The Council are also working closely with the owners and their legal advisors to ensure that action is taken.

If no progress is made by the owner, we will serve a Planning Enforcement Notice requiring the unauthorised occupation of the site to cease and all vehicles, plant and waste to be removed.

I should also stress that the old fuel tanks on this site were decommissioned when the petrol station closed and pose no fire risk to nearby residents.

Question 26 from Councillor Laban to Councillor Hamilton, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing & Public Health

Please could the Cabinet Member outline what action her department is taking to ensure that the people in Stonycroft Avenue are not facing a massive public health and fire risk by living next door to the former Brimsdown Petrol Station?

Reply from Councillor Hamilton

I refer you to the response provided for Question 25.

Question 27 from Councillor Laban to Councillor Taylor, Leader of the Council

Please could the Leader of the Council co-ordinate the environmental health, crime, housing, public health and community safety departments of the council

in order to form a multi-agency task force to rid eastern Enfield of the problems taking place at the former Brimsdown Avenue Petrol Station?

Reply from Councillor Taylor

Council Officers have arranged preparatory meetings to develop a comprehensive plan to deal with the encampment at Brimsdown, should the current owner be unsuccessful in taking action to remove those on site. Whilst this site is unsightly, the police have not reported incidents of crime and disorder and consequently the Council has considered it proportionate to allow the land owner to take legal action to remove the encampment.

Question 28 from Councillor Laban to Councillor Oyken, Cabinet Member for Housing

Please could the Cabinet member for Housing outline what his department is taking to remove the travellers from the former Brimsdown Avenue Petrol Station?

Reply from Councillor Oyken

This site is not in the ownership of the Council, therefore the Private Sector Housing Team will maintain liaison with the owner, agent, and Environmental Services Department, while the site owner undertakes legal action to regain possession from the illegal occupiers.

Full support advice and guidance will be offered to the site owner as legal action is taken.

Once legal action is taken to enable an eviction, the Private Sector Housing Team will provide expert support, to ensure that the illegal occupiers leave the site in a safe and proper manner.

Question 29 from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Please could the Cabinet member for Environment outline what enforcement action his department is taking to combat the fly tipping in and around the junction of Parsonage Lane and Chase Side?

Reply from Councillor Bond

Reports of fly tipping are investigated for evidence of its source by street scene staff, after which the waste is removed. Whilst several incidents have been investigated, no identification evidence has been found and consequently this area continues to be routinely monitored by street scene and enforcement staff.

Question 30 from Councillor Lavender to Councillor Goddard, Cabinet Member for Business and Regeneration

The Cabinet member for Business & Regeneration is no doubt familiar with Section 17 of the Local Government Act 1988 (exclusion of non-commercial considerations in the case of local and other public authority contracts). He is no doubt now aware of section 2 of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 passed in February by the coalition government, which now explicitly provides that Local Authorities may take into consideration non-commercial matters to the extent they consider it necessary or expedient to do so to enable or facilitate compliance with their duty to consider how what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area.

This Act presents local authorities such as Enfield with a golden opportunity to give consideration to non-commercial local regenerative and social considerations when awarding public sector contracts.

Would the Cabinet member for Business & Regeneration please provide evidence of what action has been taken and when by Enfield Council to avail itself of these powers and to alter any internal governance arrangements.

Reply from Councillor Goddard

I am grateful for the question as it enables me to inform Council of the progress that we have made in the last 12 months to establish a clear policy and strategy for procurement in line with the opportunities afforded by the legislation. The policy was adopted by Cabinet in December 2011 and Council in February 2012. The policy includes clear commitments on sustainability including delivering environmental and socio-economic factors through procurement. Officers are already required to seek quotes from local suppliers when procuring contracts under £50,000 and Corporate Procurement have developed a Community Benefit Toolkit which embeds initiatives around use of the local supply chain, apprentices and improving employment opportunities for local residents. This is being supported by training for staff responsible for procurement as well. The Public Contracts Regulations 2006 already allow for environmental, social and economic considerations in procurement but these have to be balanced against the overriding requirement to ensure that we do not discriminate against non local organisations. On the environmental considerations the Council successfully achieved Bronze standard in the Mayor of London's Green Procurement Code last year and are now aiming to achieve the Silver standard.

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires Authorities to consider how proposed contracts 'might improve economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the relevant area' and reinforces the provisions that have always been available to us under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006. The main difference is that we must consider these factors prior to tendering and the Act does not conflict with Procurement legislation in that such considerations must be relevant and proportionate to the contract and we must still ensure equal treatment and non discrimination of suppliers i.e. we cannot specify that 'local SMEs' within our tender documentation. Enfield manages this for all major

procurement in that officers are required to consider social considerations at the options appraisal stage before procurement activity is started.

This Council will use this procurement framework as the basis of increasing the use of local suppliers and opportunities for employment and training of local residents and therefore provide us with the possibility of strengthening local business and employment.

This Council will use this procurement framework as the basis of increasing local supply and therefore provide us with the possibility of strengthening local business and employment.”

Question 31 from Councillor Chamberlain to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

I note that a considerable number of mature street trees are being removed from my ward, following an incident where a falling branch crushed a car. Can the Cabinet Member confirm that he will use contingency funding to put more resources into detailed and frequent tree surveys?

Reply from Councillor Bond

Current surveying frequencies are a proportionate use of public funds and neither additional surveys or resources are required.

Question 32 from Councillor Chamberlain to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Will Councillor Bond confirm the direction he has given officers regarding tree removal policy, as residents have expressed to me their concern that trees are being removed as a knee jerk reaction and while the officers I have spoken to seem, clear on that, I should like his reassurance that he has made it clear only to remove trees where there is a genuine safety issue.

Reply from Councillor Bond

If the Members opposite consider resident safety knee jerk I'm very happy that I'm on this side of the chamber. In relation to the removal of trees within your ward I can confirm that the trees have been removed due to the fact that the trees in question were all diseased and needed to be removed for safety reasons. The Council's Highway Tree strategy is very clear and that is trees are only programmed for removal if they are found to be dead, dying, diseased, dangerous, in decline, or have outgrown their locations.

Question 33 from Councillor Chamberlain to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Will the Cabinet Member explain why unlike other petitions, he chose not to issue a press release on the free parking petition which attracted over 7500 signatures. Is it that he would rather forget resident and local business

concerns on this issue?

Reply from Councillor Bond

I have not responded because I want to provide the feedback from work I have commissioned of officers, that is due to be fed back to a Member group that I have set up. It is my view that there was no point in producing a press release until this side have agreed changes that will support our town centres, local businesses and our residents.

Question 34 from Councillor Chamberlain to Councillor Georgiou, Deputy Leader

How many petitions have been followed by a Council news release in the last two years and what petitions did they cover?

Reply from Councillor Georgiou

The Council has issued statements or responses to the press following 11 petitions:

- Hoppers Road – speed limit
- Schools for Southgate
- Go Ape
- Trent Park Café
- Enfield Town CPZ
- Jubilee Park Benches
- Library Closures in Enfield
- Future of Enfield Swimming Clubs
- Ban Spitting in Enfield
- Hillyfields Greenway Route
- Sunday Parking Charges

Question 35 from Councillor Chamberlain to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Does the Cabinet Member think that the reason offered for refusing the option of bags for recycling - essentially that "wheelies are more efficient for recycling and the resident's small front garden has the space for them" - makes any sense in the context of a resident who has resolutely refused to use wheelie bins and is now reduced to privately disposing of her own waste, none of which is now recycled?

Reply from Councillor Bond

In principle, yes.

Question 36 from Councillor Chamberlain to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Please confirm, by ward if possible, how many hours on tree safety surveys were spent in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012?

Reply from Councillor Bond

We do not keep this information however we can say that the time allocated to each ward will be dependant on the volume of trees contained within a particular ward.

Highway trees are surveyed by the Council's highway arboricultural contractor staff as part of the agreed maintenance programme, a 3 yearly cycle for Lime and Plane trees with all others trees surveyed on a 4 yearly cycle. In addition approximately 80% of the time of the in-house team is spent on responding to residents and Members request to inspect Borough trees.

Question 37 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Goddard, Cabinet Member for Business & Regeneration

Does he recall a conversation with former councillor Bill Price concerning the former Aessica Pharmaceuticals site (now proposed Highways Depot) at a meeting that they were both attending at the CCTV Centre at the time the site was on the market?

Does he recall, heard by others in attendance, Mr Price drawing his attention to the site and suggesting that it would make a useful one for the council and does he further recall responding to that by saying that the council had no money for the site?

Reply from Councillor Goddard

I think you refer to a meeting about CCTV, held about 2 years ago. I recall, but not in any detail, Mr Price raised the future of the site. What is clear is that the landowner made no contact with the Council, and the property was not marketed publicly.

Question 38 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

With reference to the proposed new depot at Morson Road, when were you first approached by the officers about the proposed terms and what instruction did you give them if any with regard to seeking to acquire a freehold interest in that or any other site?

Reply from Councillor Bond

My steer to officers has been to safeguard critical services, such as refuse collection, by obtaining a new value for money depot. By securing the Morson Road depot we have resolved a major operational risk that you failed to address, risking a potential catastrophic service failure for residents. The District Valuer has confirmed that the Council has secured the site at market value.