

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS: 9 October 2013

Question 1: from Councillor Lavender to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

The U.K. Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has issued on 8th August a new Code of Practice on dealing with Subject Access Requests (Code).

All data controllers are advised to review the Code and ensure that their Subject Access Request policies and procedures reflect the guidance contained within it. As an added "incentive", the ICO has announced that it will be conducting a Subject Access Request "sweep" of web sites later this year.

What steps has the Council taken to comply with this Code of Practice, what guidance does it hope to issue to Councillors and what is the outcome into the investigation into the discovery of sensitive personal data concerning childcare services lying around the abandoned Southgate Town Hall building?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

The Council already has a Subject Access Policy and Procedure and this was approved by the ICO audit that was conducted in January 2103. The ICO Code of Practice offers further guidance on dealing with Subject Access Requests and will be incorporated in the Council's Subject Access Policy and Procedure if required when it is reviewed shortly. The Code of Practice will be used in the training of staff nominated in each Department who deals with Subject Access Requests.

The Council's Subject Access Policy and Procedure applies to councillors who respond to Subject Access Requests involving data that has been provided by the Council in the course of their business with the Council. The Council is considering making available an online Data Protection training for councillors, and this will incorporate training on Subject Access Requests. If comprehensive face-to-face training is required by some Members then this can also be arranged.

"The ICO concluded its investigation into the incident reported to the ICO involving disclosure of sensitive personal data to an unauthorised third party and concluded:-

The wider policies and procedures covering information governance are of a good standard.

It has not been possible for the Council, the independent auditors or ICO to conclude exactly what happened in relation to the removal of the files from the secure storage area.

After careful consideration of the facts of this case, it does not seem appropriate for the ICO to take any formal regulatory action."

It is also important to note that Southgate Town Hall was not abandoned.

Question 2: from Councillor Simon to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Can the Cabinet Member please outline the problems which have arisen at the Brimsdown Sports Ground and what action the Council is taking to deal with them?

Reply from Councillor Bond

The sports ground is leased to Goldsdown Sports Limited, who have been tenants for many years.

Work was started on site earlier this year, without prior consultation with the Council, either in its position as landlord, or as Planning Authority.

The work first came to our notice when officers visited the site in June to discuss other unrelated matters with the tenant. At that time we were assured that the work was to improve the pitches and would involve some additional soil which would increase the height around the edge of the pitches. Approval was given to the work on the condition that the main site level would remain unaltered, with bunds around the perimeter of the site constructed to a maximum of 2 metres. The tenants also agreed to make a retrospective planning application in respect of the work.

At a further inspection of the site on 5 August it became clear that the site levels of the majority of the site had been increased by importing of substantial volumes of spoil, and that bunds had been constructed substantially in excess of 2 metres in some places.

Following this inspection a temporary stop notice was served by the Council, as Planning Authority. A site survey was commissioned together with a contamination report. These have confirmed that:

- The site levels are significantly higher than had been approved by Officers.
- Some of the soil imported onto the site is contaminated – but does not present a risk to local residents.

The tenant was advised that the Council as landlord requires full reinstatement of the sports ground to its original condition and level. Solicitors acting for the tenant requested time in order to respond. No such response has been received, to date. The Council is considering legal proceedings against the tenant.

Question 3: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Can he tell the Council the number of days lost through staff absence due to sickness in each of the financial years 10/11, 11/12, 12/13 set out by department and pay scale?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

Please see the average number of days lost per employee by department. The reduction has been achieved through working closely with the trade unions. Please note that our reports do not detail this information by pay scale:

2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
CEX	8.5	CEX	3.7	CEX	4.1
ENV	9.1	ENV	7.2	ENV	8.7
FRCS	8.7	FRCS	7.8	FRCS	7.0
HHASC	11.2	HHASC	10.1	HHASC	11.6
RLC	4.5	RLC	5.3	RLC	4.2
SCS	8.4	SCS	10	SCS	8.2
TOTAL	8.82	TOTAL	8.61	TOTAL	8.43

Question 4: from Councillor Sitkin to Councillor Taylor, Leader of the Council

Could the Leader update on the mini Holland cycling project?

Reply from Councillor Taylor

The Mayor has set up an £100m 'mini-Holland' fund to allow 3 or 4 outer-London boroughs to transform conditions for cyclists. Of the 20 eligible outer London boroughs, Enfield was one of only eight that have been short-listed to go forward to the next round. If successful, our bid could result in an investment of around £25m that will provide wide ranging benefits for the borough, including better access to employment opportunities, less pollution and improved health.

I will be meeting Andrew Gilligan, the Mayor's Cycling Commissioner, on 7th October (together with Councillor Laban) to obtain feedback on our initial proposals. In the meantime we are working up our proposals and working with Dutch experts to develop our ideas. The deadline for our submission is the end

of November and we expect to hear whether we have been successful early next year.

Question 5: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Can he tell the Council the number of agency staff engaged for each of the three years 10/11, 11/12 and 12/13 across all departments and specified by department and individually by all pay levels? Can he set out the costs of such staff showing the pay costs if they had been employed directly? Also will he show the same information for the current year to date?

Can this also be expressed as an average daily cost for each department and in particular show how much of these totals is paid to agencies.

Reply from Councillor Stafford

Due to the fact that there is a higher turnover of agency workers throughout the year, providing information on the headcount would not give an accurate reflection of the usage of agency workers over the full year. A much better indication can be gained by the total spend which is as follows:

The totals paid to agencies (who are then responsible for paying the agency worker) in 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 are shown below:

2010-2011			
Department	Spend	Average Spend	Daily
Chief Executive's Service	£364,030.12	£997.34	
Environment	£1,427,849.82	£3,911.92	
Finance & Corporate Resources Department	£3,334,534.21	£9,135.71	
Health, Housing & Adult Social Care Dept	£4,348,799.12	£11,914.52	
Regeneration, leisure and Culture	£3,308,306.25	£9,063.85	
Schools & Childrens services Department	£2,981,163.40	£8,167.57	
Grand Total	£15,764,682.93	£43,190.91	

2011-2012			
Department	Spend	Average Spend	Daily
Chief Executive's Service	£82,363.76	£225.65	
Environment	£2,353,405.95	£6,447.69	
Finance, Resources and Customer Services	£2,827,386.97	£7,746.27	
Health, Housing & Adult Social Care Dept	£4,786,133.00	£13,112.69	
Regeneration, Leisure and Culture	£469,328.55	£1,285.83	
Schools & Childrens services Department	£1,875,398.11	£5,138.08	
Grand Total	£12,394,016.35	£33,956.21	

2012-2013			
Department	Spend	Average Spend	Daily
Chief Executive's Service	£166,442.34	£456.01	
Environment	£3,423,849.55	£9,380.41	
Finance, Resources and Customer Services	£3,306,019.31	£9,057.59	
Health, Housing & Adult Social Care Dept	£4,787,330.86	£13,115.97	
Regeneration, Leisure and Culture	£349,527.37	£957.61	
Schools & Children's services Department	£1,996,835.88	£5,470.78	
Grand Total	£14,030,005.31	£38,438.37	

2013 to date

Providing information mid-year will not give an accurate reflection of the average year spend as it will not take into account seasonal variations.

It is not possible to provide meaningful data comparing the cost of staff employed directly to those engaged through an agency for the following reasons. First, the provisions of the Agency Workers regulations only require employers to pay the equivalent employer pay rates to agency staff after 13 weeks. Second, it is not possible to predict what the employer's pension contributions would be if the agency worker worked directly, as the worker can choose to either join or opt out of the pension scheme. Lastly, some agency

workers are engaged in positions where there is no comparable position within the Council.

Question 6: from Councillor Uzoanya to Councillor Oykenner, Cabinet Member for Housing

Could the Cabinet Member give details on the impact of the bedroom tax?

Reply from Councillor Oykenner

Between April and the end of August, the number of Enfield Homes customers affected by the bedroom tax fell by 12% to 766. The majority (611) are under occupying by 1 bedroom and the balance (155) by two bedrooms. The average Housing benefit reduction is £17.31 per week.

Of those under occupying by 1 bedroom, 44% paid all the rent due, with the remaining 341 in arrears by an average of £385 (noting that some of these arrears pre date the impact of the bedroom tax)

55% of those under occupying by two bedrooms paid all the rent due with 70 customers in arrears by an average of £533.

Those under occupying and in arrears represent just under 10% of all Enfield Homes rent arrears.

139 households affected by the bedroom tax have rent accounts in debit by £0.01 or more as at 22nd September 2013 who prior to April were not in arrears.

Potentially reflecting the wide communication campaign in advance of the bedroom tax implementation, overall rent collection has improved by just under 1% since the same period in 2012/13.

11 households who were affected by the bedroom tax have moved to smaller accommodation and are no longer impacted

My concern is that this tax is disrupting people's lives, causing some to move away from their roots and the homes they have established over a number of years and with other benefit changes could be a ticking time-bomb. Obviously some people will have found employment, but I fear many will accept that they have to move. What is most serious is that people are being penalised through this tax because there are simply not enough smaller homes for them to move to. It is a national problem, only solved when we build more affordable housing. However I warmly welcome Labour's intention to abolish this tax.

Question 7: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

The previous administration took a policy decision to employ agency staff for those functions that were financed by short term government grants, which

were subject to the risk of non-renewal. As a consequence of this foresight the present administration was able to limit redundancy costs when such grants were in fact not renewed.

However, in the light of changes to legislation regarding conditions for agency/temporary workers, could he please tell the Council what now are the advantages of employing agency staff?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

The engagement of agency workers enables the Council to cover short term vacancies, absences and in specialist areas where there is no internal capacity. The engagement provides flexibility and supports the Council's strategy of minimising the number of compulsory redundancies. However we are committed to permanent employment for staff.

Question 8: from Councillor Lemonides to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Can the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property advise the Council on how successful Enfield is at Council Tax Collection?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

Enfield Council, in partnership with Experian, has been shortlisted for a prestigious award (given by the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation – IRRV). The Council piloted Experian's new Debt Prioritisation Service to target high value Council tax arrears cases. Enfield provided 2,500 arrears cases to Experian to match to a variety of data sources. The results provided a range of information which allowed a small taskforce to work through each case and select the appropriate enforcement option.

To evaluate the success of the scheme the Council compared several key Council tax indicators for 2011/12 and 2012/13. The results showed an overall reduction in arrears of over £1.5m, and increase in charging orders of £1.1m, resulting in a saving of £450k in bad debt provision. In addition, Enfield's arrears collection as shown in the Governance QRC return for 2012/13 was £5,983k, the 4th highest in England and the highest in London by some £1.7m.

Enfield's overall collection rate remains the joint 9th highest in London, above many wealthier boroughs.

Question 9: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Can he tell the Council separately for Council housing and all other assets how much debt is owed by the Council and the cost of servicing at such debt

expressed in sterling terms (a) total per annum and (b) as a proportion of Band D Council tax.

Reply from Councillor Stafford

The Council's total debt at 31st August 2013 was £294.2m.

	£'000
General Fund	165,517
Housing Revenue Account	128,687
Total Debt	294,204

The annual cost of the debt is £26.27m of which £19.522m is met from the General Fund. Based on the Council's gross 2013/14 Estimated General Fund Expenditure of £975m the cost of financing equates to 2.0% of the Council Tax charge or £22.02 of Band D (£1,100.34 LBE charge 2013/14).

Question 10 from Councillor Constantinides to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People

When Labour wins the next general election, can the Cabinet Member advise what are the plans for child care in Enfield?

Reply from Councillor Orhan

Colleagues will be aware of the excellent childcare available for families in Enfield – both provided through the local authority run Children's Centres and schools and through a wide and diverse range of private providers such as private nurseries and childminders.

These give parents access to good quality childcare which enables parents to work or study and gives children access to early years education, helping prepare them to start school and building a good foundation for future learning.

Enfield has recognised the importance of delivering good quality childcare both for the educational development of children and to support parents and therefore prioritised spending in this area. However, current funding reductions are already impacting on this area and further future Coalition reductions would mean we would be unable to sustain the current level of service.

In a time of significantly reducing resources I am proud to say that we have:

- Maintained 23 Children's Centres

- Refocused support to our most deprived and vulnerable families
- Supported the development of an additional 545 Ofsted registered childcare places for under 5s and
- Successfully launched our Terrific Twos programme which is currently providing nearly 700 new, free childcare places for deprived 2 year olds.

Unlike other local authorities we have maintained a support team and network for childcare providers to ensure the quality of the provision. Through the excellent support and training provided through our Early Years and CACEY Teams the quality of childcare in Enfield has been improving:

- Two thirds (67%) of all Ofsted registered settings in Enfield are now either Good or Outstanding, this improvement has been particularly marked in areas of greatest need
- The number of early years settings which have been judged by Ofsted to be Good or Outstanding has increased. Just over half of Enfield's childminders have now been graded as 'Outstanding' or 'Good'.
- Satisfaction rates from parents have improved. Nearly all who were using childcare reported being 'very happy' with their current arrangements

However, we know that childcare, especially good quality childcare, is not cheap – nor should it necessarily be - but the importance of this early provision cannot be underestimated.

The current provision of 15 hours of free early years education for three and four year olds gives parents a good starting point but there are still significant costs for parents. Figures published by the Daycare Trust show that childcare costs are rising at more than 6%, double the rate of inflation (2.7%).

At the same time HMRC figures reveal that Welfare Benefit changes are costing low income families more than £500 a year in support for childcare costs and nationally 44,000 fewer families are receiving support.

For many families, particularly those with several children, the high costs of childcare mean that it is uneconomic or impractical to work.

I was therefore delighted by the announcement by Ed Balls this week that, under a Labour Government this will increase to 25 hours for working families. Coupled with the previous Labour proposals that schools will remain open longer, enabling parents to work longer hours if they wish, these policies will increase parents' choices and give them real help in managing their family lives and reducing their costs. More Enfield parents, if they choose, will be able to take on part time or full time work or study without having to worry about how they will pay for childcare.

The Council's Child and Family Poverty Strategy – Towards Prosperity identifies that increasing employment and raising income are key factors to moving children and their families out of the poverty which affects too many of our citizens. This policy provides a great opportunity to make a step change in the fight against poverty. It will give many families a real opportunity to increase their employability and their income, improve their life chances and their lives.

Question 11: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Could he confirm to the Council that:

1. He is aware of the judgement of the High Court of the recent case of *Attfield v: London Borough of Barnet* concerning parking charges.
2. This judgement is not to be appealed because Barnet have been advised by legal counsel that they have less than 40% chance of overturning it on appeal.
3. The effect of the judgement is to confirm that local authorities are not allowed to increase parking charges so as to produce a higher surplus to be applied for the various statutory purposes including concessionary fares and highway maintenance.

Reply from Councillor Stafford

1. Yes. I am aware.
2. As I understand it Barnet are not appealing.
3. The judgement confirmed that any surplus raised from parking charges must be used in accordance with Section 55 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("the Act"). Section 55 of the Act makes provisions for the money raised through orders made under section 45 and 46 of the Act to be entered into a ring-fenced account (Parking Places Reserve Account). At the end of each financial year any deficit in this account should be collected from the general fund and subject to being carried forward into the next financial year, any surplus can be applied for any of the purposes outlined in section 55(4) of the Act. These purposes include:
 - a. The making good of the general fund of any amount charged to that fund in the 4 years immediately preceding the financial year in question,
 - b. Meeting all or any part of the cost of provision and maintenance by the local authority of off-street parking accommodation
 - c. The making to other local authorities, or other person contributions towards the cost of the provision and maintenance by them, in the area of the local authority or elsewhere of off-street parking accommodation, whether in the open or under cover

- d. If it appears that further off-street parking is unnecessary or undesirable, meeting costs incurred in the provision or operation of, or of facilities for public passenger transport services and for the purposes of a highway/road improvement project, the maintenance of roads maintained at the public expenses, the purposes of environmental improvement in the local authority's area
- e. Meeting all or part of the costs of anything which facilitates the implementation of the London transport strategy

I am entirely content with this judgement and satisfied that our charging policy remains valid, as I always have been.

Question 12 from Councillor Cranfield to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

With Enfield's major planning applications currently running at over 60% can the Cabinet Member for Environment please update us on which Councils are being named as likely to fall into special measures?

Reply from Councillor Bond

No final announcement has been made on which Councils are to be placed in "special measures". Based on latest figures, those falling below the 30% threshold and failing to meet the criteria are: Halton, Barnet; North East Derbyshire; Tandridge; Cherwell; Lambeth; Fylde; Daventry; Horsham, and Blaby. A further four Councils, Adur; Hammersmith and Fulham; Lewisham and Worthing, face automatic designation because they have data missing for all seven quarters or the performance period.

Question 13 from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

In the light of the High Court judgement in Attfield v: Barnet referred to in question number 11 above, and in the light of both the report to the Cabinet in July 2010 which led to the approval of significant increases in charges for residents permits and on street charges, and his recorded comments to the Bush Hill Park, Palmers Green and Winchmore Hill Area Forum on 1st December 2010

"Councillor Stafford confirmed parking charges were being raised to gain additional revenue. If there was massive opposition to the proposal it would be reviewed, but savings had to be made and if this proposal was dropped the savings would need to be found elsewhere",

Given the circumstances and reasons for Enfield's increase are identical to Barnet's will he now confirm (as Barnet have done), that all resident permit

holders will be refunded the increased charges unlawfully imposed by the administration?

Will he also confirm that on street charges will be reduced to a level that reflects an inflation only increase of the charges prevailing in May 2010?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

1. The reasons for Enfield's increase are set out in the Portfolio Report: Review of Permit Charges and Introduction of New Permit Types published on 18 March 2011. The Council's intention in increasing charges was not to raise revenue to defray the cost of other transport expenditure and is therefore not identical to the Barnet decision. The Barnet judgement makes no comment on what an appropriate level of charge might be, or the approach to categorisation of vehicles for charging purposes. What the Barnet judgement does recognise is that it may be prudent to make a surplus but it must not be the aim of the authority to make a surplus to defray other expenditure.

In addition there is an express recognition that any surplus can be applied in accordance with the s.55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

2. Enfield parking charges are entirely lawful, and it is both misleading and incorrect to suggest they are not.
3. No refund therefore needs to be provided to residents.
4. No. We set parking charges in line with the law.

Question 14 from Councillor Sitkin to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment inform the Council on why Barnet's Residential Parking Permit System failed a recent legal challenge? Can he also confirm the basis for Enfield's Permit System?

Reply from Councillor Bond

What failed in the Barnet decision was not the permit system but the basis of the charge. The court determined that the intention behind increasing the charges was to generate additional income which would be transferred from the SPA to the General Fund. The intention therefore, being to defray the expenditure on other road transport expenditure and reduce the need to raise income from other sources. It was this purpose which was not authorised under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Question 15: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Would Councillor Bond confirm that:

1. He has read or been made aware of the detail of the High Court judgement in the case of Attfield v: Barnet?
2. He is aware of the guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government about town centre parking and the need, which we have consistently impressed upon the Labour administration, to make town centre parking much less costly in order to generate trade in our high streets?
3. What action does he propose to take on these matters?

Reply from Councillor Bond

I am fully aware of the High Court Judgement and current Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance, which states:

Local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. They should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres. Parking enforcement should be proportionate.

In accordance with this guidance, we have already taken steps to improve the quality of our car parks and plan a further major investment to boost trade by, for example, introducing a new Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) payment system in Palace Gardens. Our tariff structure has been devised to ensure a good turnover of spaces and to meet wider traffic management objectives. In addition, our approach to enforcement is in line with best practice elsewhere.

I have also read with interest the recent report published by the Association of Town and City Management and others entitled: Re-Think! Parking on the High Street. If Councillor Neville reads the report carefully, he will realise that there isn't a simple relationship between parking charges and town centre vitality.

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

What is the Cabinet Member for Environment's opinion of Eric Pickles' recent suggestion that we allow unlimited parking on double yellow lines?

Reply from Councillor Bond

This seems to be another example of the Secretary of State being out of touch with reality and even his own colleagues in Government were quick to distance

themselves from his comments. Double yellow lines are there for a reason: to help maintain traffic flow and to keep our roads safe.

Question 17: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People

Could the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People confirm how many pupils currently attending Enfield schools do not have English as a first language, and tell the Council the additional cost of teaching English to those pupils and what is the impact of this additional requirement on schools ability to teach the general curriculum?

Reply from Councillor Orhan

The most recent figures from the Census in May 2013 indicate that 46% of pupils in Enfield have English as an Additional Language (EAL).

All schools have a responsibility to ensure that they address the needs of their own pupils and they decide how to use the funding they receive via the Dedicated Schools Grant in order to raise achievement of all pupils. This is never seen as an additional cost and this is not separately identified in terms of spend. However schools receive funding that recognises factors such as mobility and EAL. Therefore schools with higher percentages of EAL pupils will receive higher funding.

This Council values the richness of our community and believes that diversity contributes to excellence, this is often reflected in the performance and progress of many of our ethnic groups.

All teachers receive initial training on the teaching of pupils in a multi ethnic classroom and how to deliver the national curriculum. In Enfield we have an excellent record of narrowing achievement gaps between groups of children, especially those with EAL. Over time we have developed a range of expertise and support that is recognised nationally. Schools use the Dedicated Schools Grant to access this support. In addition to this the Council offers an extensive training programme which includes support for pupils with EAL. This is offered to schools as a traded service, the vast majority of our schools buyback into this service.

Question 18 from Councillor Robinson to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment update the Council on recent steps taken by this Council to improve the viability of Enfield Town?

Reply from Councillor Bond

The Council is using its full range of powers and influences to improve the viability of Enfield Town and there are clear signs of economic recovery, with

new developments underway and new retailers moving in. Residential development such as the Bellway scheme and mixed use development along Silver Street are nearing completion. The corner site opposite the Dugdale Centre at 33 London Road has recently benefitted from a consent for a new hotel and Morrisons have moved in to the former HMV unit in the heart of the town, which has strengthened the retail offer. Meanwhile we are also working with local developers Fairviews to bring forward a residential scheme for part of the former Cecil Road car park, including an improved access to Town Park beyond.

There are also encouraging signs in the reuse of redundant units and buildings in the town – for example the empty Wenlock House office block in Eaton Road is currently being converted to flats and some of the empty properties above shops in the town are also being converted to residential use. The Council's planning policies strongly support the vitality of the town, requiring large convenience stores, comparison shopping, major leisure and office uses to be located here. These policies have been strengthened by the new Development Management planning policies published for consultation in the summer which will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination later in the year.

Some of the actions we have taken to improve the viability of Enfield Town include:

- Introducing three hours free parking on Sundays;
- From mid-November, introducing an easy to use Automatic Number Plate Recognition payment system in Palace Gardens
- Also from mid-November, amending the current tariff structure in all car parks so that people are encouraged to stay longer in the town centre for no extra cost;
- Improving the street-scene in the Town, including new canopies for the market stalls;
- Developing plans to improve cycle routes to the Town Centre.

The Council commissions EBRA to provide support to the town centre retailers and businesses including in Enfield Town. We are currently working with the Enfield Business and Traders Association (EBTA), EBRA and local estate agents to produce marketing material promoting the shops and businesses in Enfield Town. Following recent representations from EBTA the Council recently removed the large planter in front of The George Pub which has produced more space for pedestrians and has improved the street scene.

Finally a programme of festive events has been developed to increase footfall and vitality in the run up to Christmas.

Question 19: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Since May 2010 how much has been spent on consultancy fees in connection with the Leaner programme and how many existing and occupied posts have been deleted as a result of this consultancy work?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

Since May 2010 approximately £1.5 million has been spent on consultancy fees in connection with Leaner. The changes as part of the Leaner programme enable managers to implement savings and delete posts. These changes include designing new service delivery models and processes and putting in place better ICT solutions. Since April 2011 over 200 posts have been deleted and individuals redeployed wherever possible. All of the changes depended on the many changes and services provided by the Leaner programme, which has made a major and sustainable contribution to ensuring Enfield's finances remain strong.

Question 20: from Councillor Ibrahim to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment give a general update on parks in the borough?

Reply from Councillor Bond

Our Parks continue to be the jewel in the Crown of the Borough. Residents satisfaction in Parks is running at an all-time high with 88% satisfaction with our parks and green spaces. We have retained our 8 Green Flag Parks and have invested in excess of £400K of new equipment into our parks Grounds Maintenance service including new mowers and tractors. In addition a sum in excess of £300K of Residents Priority Fund has also been allocated to parks into areas such as Green Gyms and Children's Play equipment.

Going forward we are currently looking to invest in a £1.7M Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant into Forty Hall. Following a recent HLF inspection following up on HLF grant money invested into Town and Pymmes Park, Enfield was given extremely positive feedback on the way it has maintained that original investment. In the last year we have also successfully achieved a £50K award of Fields in Trust for 5 of our parks and have further applications underway for £200K with Sport England for Whitewebbs Golf Course. The results for these are due in the next 4 to 6 weeks but initial conversations with funding bodies are extremely positive.

We have a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy which now forms the basis for any park investment or improvement based upon a distinct set of criteria and need for any one park and the introduction of a Bio-Diversity officer has meant that

our habitat and wildlife is also at the centre of the decision making process for parks improvements.

We have increased to 24 Friends of Parks groups and 21 of those have signed the Partnership Agreement with the Council which maps a Gold, Silver and Bronze level of commitment that is expected from both parties re issues such as volunteering. We are also working with 3 groups who have responded to Expression of Interests to operate certain facilities (such as an old disused toilet block) and thus relieving the Council of the asset and the associated 'burden' as well as introducing a new service into the park such as a café.

Question 21: from Councillor Headley to Councillor Oykenner, Cabinet Member for Housing

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing please detail what provisions the Council has for travelling communities as Haselbury Park was recently the home of a travelling community?

Reply from Councillor Oykenner

There are no designated Traveller Pitches in Enfield.

If an unauthorised encampment is on privately owned land, Enfield Council will provide advice to the owner about their options available in dealing with it.

The Council is developing an Unauthorised Encampment Policy which will set out the Council's approach to addressing individuals who occupy Council owned land with the intention of residing on that land. This is on the Key Decision List for Cabinet in March 2014.

Should a travelling community arrive in the borough then the Council will carry out enquiries to establish the facts. It is important to establish whether or not the land occupied is private or public land and whether or not the encampment is lawful or not. When addressing unlawful encampments on Council owned land, the Council will visit the site to establish the facts including past and future movements, anticipated length of stay, reasons for current stay, state of the encampment, risk of damage and rubbish implications. Health and welfare enquiries will also be undertaken including an assessment of health and medical needs, educational needs and housing needs so that information about local services and how to access them can be given. All of this information will be used to inform a decision about how to proceed with the site.

The Council's Housing Enforcement Team and Community Safety Team will work with the Police and other agencies to address the needs of travelling communities and ensure the safety of the site.

Question 22: from Councillor Savva to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment give the Council an update on North London Waste Authority (NLWA) procurement?

Reply from Councillor Bond

The Labour dominated NLWA has decided to withdraw from the procurement process originally agreed in 2008. In 2008 the Conservative Group sat on the NLWA. The now Labour dominated NLWA have done this because they believe the strategy agreed in 2008 was not good value for money for local taxpayers.

Question 23: from Councillor Headley to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Can the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property tell us how much funding Enfield Voluntary Action has had since 2011 and what proportion of its total funding is for salaries, rent, essential services?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

I thank the elected Member for bring to wider attention the work of Enfield Voluntary Action, our local Council for Voluntary Services that provides much needed support to Enfield's wide range of community organisations. The amount of funding the Council has provided to Enfield Voluntary Action in the financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13 has totalled £479,296 out of an average running cost for the organisation of £758,000 for the same period. This vital support service is based largely on the activities of paid staff supported by volunteers operating from Community House. The funding made available, which is consistent with that by the previous administration, has meant that over 400 local organisations have been supported directly each year to access funding opportunities, of which over 100 local groups are currently members of EVA. Many local organisations receive vital advice and support to organise themselves to be more robust and sustainable and this underpins our efforts within the Council to engage positively with the local VCS and wider community groups including a network of supplementary schools across the borough.

This funding commitment also includes support to the Enfield Volunteers Centre coordinated by EVA at Community House that provides a vital focal point for volunteering opportunities in the borough. Volunteer Centre Enfield has registered 5892 local people interested in volunteering for the first time in past two years and connected them to volunteering activity in the borough, helping to build community resilience and exceeding its agreed targets in the process.

Finally, it is important to also note that Enfield Voluntary Action has continued its long tradition of adding value to our agreements with them by being highly active in bringing in additional funding to the borough to deliver support to local

people. In the past two years we estimate that this has been in the region of £500,000 in terms of enabling local organisations to access external funding and also in successful bidding by EVA to run grants programmes in Enfield. The importance of capturing these complimentary funding streams cannot be overstated and have benefited Enfield hugely, providing further evidence of the strategic importance of the role EVA provides to help us continue to support and build a dynamic third sector and strong communities in the borough.

I am sure she will agree with me that this offers excellent value for money and that the current administration has been correct in continuing to support EVA at a level that is consistent with the approach adopted by our predecessors.

Question 24: from Councillor Murphy to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment update the Council on recent work by our Trading Standards Team?

Reply from Councillor Bond

Our Trading Standards have recently won the London Regional and National Stop Loan Shark award. The award by the England Illegal Money Lending Team was awarded in recognition of the tremendous work the team have been doing bringing together partners to raise awareness of the issue and help people affected by illegal money lenders find the help and support they need.

The team continue to investigate rogue traders who prey on our residents. In 2012/2013 Trading Standards estimate they saved residents £79,300 following direct interventions where rogue traders were involved. In a recent case as a result of direct intervention by our Trading Standards, £23,000 was returned to a 81 year old gentleman in Ponders End after he had been conned by a rogue trader who told him his home needed urgent repair work. This is now part of a wider investigation. Trading Standards continue to tackle fraud.

The team continue to ensure that products placed on the market are safe. Our Trading Standards led a London wide project to assess levels of compliance of cheap upholstered furniture. Across London there was a 67% failure rate of those items purchased. In Enfield of the test purchases made 100% failed. All are subject to formal proceedings. To date one prosecution resulted in a £3K fine and full costs were awarded. The team are currently undertaking a project in relation to skin lightening creams. Many of the products contain mercury and hydroquinone which are banned substances and should not be available in cosmetic products sold over the counter.

We continue to support legitimate businesses by targeting those individuals/traders who operate in the informal economy by selling counterfeit goods. Raids have been undertaken across and Borough for the seizure of counterfeit goods. This has included branded trainers; beauty products and

various accessories (handbags; jewellery), all of which are under investigation. On Friday 27th September we start a Crown Court prosecution for an individual who is charged with several offences under the Trade Marks Act for the supply of various counterfeit branded products.

Other Cases:

More than £40,000 of counterfeit clothing seized by Trading Standards Team has been given to homeless charities. Tarek Namouz was sentenced at Wood Green Crown Court on Wednesday 24 July for selling fake Dior, Playboy, Chanel, Dolce and Gabbana, Gucci, Armani and Versace products from a shop in Edmonton Green on 6 August last year.

Namouz was ordered to do 150 hour unpaid work, given a 30 month prison sentence, suspended for two years and ordered to pay £1,000 costs

On 16 August 2013 Mr Stuart Scott was found guilty at Tottenham Magistrates Court for possession for supply pornographic non-classified DVDS and infringing copies of DVDS at Kingsmead Car Boot in July 2012. Mr Scott pleaded guilty at Tottenham Mags and was sentenced to 60 hours unpaid work under a community order lasting 6 months.

Trading Standards successfully prosecuted Mr Khaleed Aziz who pleaded guilty to 9 rolled up charges in relation to counterfeit goods, sampled from 1176 items found on his seized van. He was also charged with perverting the course of justice as he had removed the evidence from the lock up. Mr Aziz received a 3 month suspended sentence for perverting and 100 hours community service for the TM offences.

Following successful conviction Trading Standards are utilising powers under the Proceeds of Crime Act to seek confiscation and compensation from the financial gains made by such illegal activities.

Since April 2012

Total Confiscation Orders Granted	= 9
Total Benefit Value (Value of Criminality)	= £1,938,000.00
Total Amount to be Paid (Based on Available Assets)	= £716,388.00
Incentivisation Payments Received	= £24,000.00
Incentivisation Pending (Pending Appeals & Enforcement)	= £125,000.00
Compensation paid to Victims	= £55,000.00

Cases of Interest

- £264K confiscation against importer of counterfeit products. Appeal pending.
- £50K confiscation against car clocker. Compensation paid to victims.
- £100K confiscation against illegal money lender
- Rogue trader case where £20K recovered for victim as result of restraint order.
- £52.5K confiscation from breaches of planning offences relating to restaurant business.

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

Would the Cabinet Member for Environment explain what actions his department will be taking to make sure that that it is clearly stated at Palace Gardens Car Park that Blue Badge holders will not be entitled to free parking when the new payment system is implemented?

Reply from Councilor Bond

As the Conservative Group failed to support Enfield Town traders by introducing 'pay on foot' facilities this Labour run Council will be investing £130,000 to right this wrong.

Palace Gardens Multi-Storey Car Park will now have an entire floor dedicated to Blue Badge Holders to park for free on the lowest car park level when the new payment system is implemented. This will be more convenient and accessible to disabled motorists as at present Blue Badge bays are located across all floors in the car park.

Question 26: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

The Palace Gardens Car Park allows direct access via the lifts into the Palace Gardens Shopping Centre for blue badge holders. Does the Cabinet Member for the Environment agree that the potential removal of free parking for Blue Badge Holders in Palace Gardens Car Park provides a barrier to them visiting Enfield Town?

Reply from Councilor Bond

Please refer to the response in Question 25 above.

Question 27: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Please could the Cabinet Member for the Environment explain how the proposed removal of free parking for Blue Badge Holders in Palace Gardens Car Park adheres to the Council priority of building stronger communities?

Reply from Councillor Bond

Please refer to the response in Question 25 above.

Question 28: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

When reaching the decision to implement a new parking payment system in Palace Gardens Car Park that would result in the loss of free parking for Blue Badge Holders did you consult with Enfield Disability Action?

Reply from Councillor Bond

Please refer to the response in Question 25 above.

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

The Town Show is an excellent opportunity for resident/client engagement. Please could the Cabinet Member for Environment explain why the Environment Department the most client facing department within the Council was not represented at the Town Show when less public facing ones were?

Reply from Councillor Bond

The Environment Department recognises the excellent opportunity the Town Show presents to engage with our customers. For this reason, on each day, four representatives from the Environment Department were promoting channel shift at the Town Show. Representatives had tablet devices to demonstrate the Council's web pages (and, in particular, functions relating to Environment), in addition to corporate leaflets promoting the Council's website. Representatives, wearing green t-shirts displaying the Council's website and the slogan "I do it online, do you?", were proactively approaching customers across the site to encourage customers to use the website's full functionality whilst on the move.

The Environment Department also had a stand to promote cycling, where 500 customers participated in the "make a smoothie" cycle challenge and ran a "try cycling experience" in the tennis courts, in which over 1000 customers participated.

Question 30: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Given the fact that a Council contractor messed up a recent driveway crossover programme, could the Cabinet Member for Environment inform the chamber what his department has done to make sure that the mistakes made will never occur anywhere else in the borough?

Reply from Councillor Bond

I assume that the work that Councillor Laban is referring to is the scheme at Carnarvon Avenue which was primarily a carriageway re-surfacing scheme. As part of the carriageway work, it was necessary to raise the kerbs, which in turn prevented many residents from driving across the grass verges as they had done prior to the scheme in order to park their cars in their front gardens - which of course is illegal and causes unsightly damage and expense to this Council. This problem was made worse by the narrow road which is heavily parked up.

As soon as Officers became aware of this problem, residents were invited to have their crossovers widened at a discounted cost that is normally only given when the Council undertakes footway renewal work. (The construction of a vehicular crossover not only involves lowering the kerb but also strengthening the footway in that location.)

For several years, the Council has adopted a process of writing to residents several months in advance of a footway renewal scheme to offer them an opportunity to apply for a crossover or to extend an existing crossover at a discounted rate. In future, where it is necessary to adjust the kerbs as part of a carriageway resurfacing scheme, the effects on residents' vehicular access will also be assessed and residents will be invited to apply to have their crossovers widened in accordance with the process for a footway scheme. The Council will no longer extend crossovers in concrete, but instead, will use asphalt to ensure that the crossover appears as a whole new crossover. Blocks will continue to be used on crossover ramps within paving slab areas.

Question 31: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Charalambous, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Youth and Localism

Please could the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture inform the chamber whether or not there was an increase in the visitor numbers to the Town Show this year?

Reply from Councillor Charalambous

The numbers of people who attended the Autumn Show Town Show this year was 13,861. As a comparator the table below illustrates the attendance for the last few years.

Attendance	2011	2012	2013
Total attendance	12,453	12,649	13,861

We are delighted that an extra 1200 people enjoyed the Autumn Show this year even with the unsettled weather.

Thanks should go to those that organised the show this year, infrastructure was delivered by Continental Drifts with programming and creative input from the Enfield Festivals Group, a partnership of many creative, musical and 3rd sector organisation who are based in Enfield.

Question 32: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

The six out of the seven member boroughs of the North London Waste Authority are Labour controlled. Does the Cabinet Member for Environment not agree that it is a Labour dominated Authority?

Reply from Councillor Bond

Since 2010 the NLWA has been a Labour dominated Authority. I do however note that the recently aborted procurement strategy was set in 2008 when the Conservatives ran the Council and sat on the NLWA. The Labour dominated Authority's decision to not pursue the procurement may have saved North London £900 million over 30 years.

Question 33: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Goddard, Cabinet Member for Business and Regeneration

Please could the Cabinet Member for Regeneration inform the chamber why it took two years for his department to conduct feasibility studies for the GLA supported Market Gardening Projects?

Reply from Councillor Goddard

The Marketing Gardening Grant agreement was signed in August 2013. It followed close collaboration with the GLA in the finalisations of the scope.

Following the initial concept put forward in a proposal to the Mayor's Regeneration Fund in November 2011, further research and feasibility work was commissioned between January and December 2012. There are many complex factors that need to be considered in reintroducing market gardening to the Borough, involving land studies, market assessments, best practice and the potential for technological innovation. In addition to external advice, the

Council established a partnership with Capel Manor College, which has enabled some early quick wins, which included development of a box scheme alongside bespoke agricultural training. As the project has developed in partnership, knowledge gained has enabled the scope of the project to be more precisely focused.

Question 34: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Goddard, Cabinet Member for Business and Regeneration

Please could the Cabinet Member for Regeneration explain how the market gardening project has changed since the original submission to the GLA in 2011?

Reply from Councillor Goddard

The original bid proposal submitted November 2011 included a significant employment outcome with the sole focus on potential for large scale growing opportunities.

The initial feasibility and research indicated that the original proposal submitted to the GLA in November of 2011 would not sufficiently address LBE's requirement in relation to job creation. The original concept was to create large scale operations, such as tomato growing with a focus on primeurs. Research undertaken suggested that we needed to take a more comprehensive and holistic approach, which would involve more people in growing, with a focus on a more diversified crop regime, and greater training and employment benefits, that achieves local labour supply and a greater range of jobs,

So, the revised project expanded to include:

- Large scale food production
 - This will maintain the original ambition of producing in Enfield on a significant scale, re-introducing commercial scale growing that once was a key industry in the borough.
- Community growing (Cooperative Growing)
 - This will involve a broad cross-section of the Enfield resident base in food growing. Outcomes include creating four new food growing projects set within the local community, providing training and community engagement, equipment, seeds and guidance for supplying locally grown food for themselves, local restaurants, markets and other routes into the market. This provides a means of increasing self-confidence, increasing skills in growing, life skills, and business as well providing a social network and way to contribute to the local economy.
- Centre of excellence
 - This addresses the need for developing new, innovative technologies for growing, which are energy efficient, highly productive and sustainable. There will be a series of small research studies to track the latest developments and establish

the most appropriate focus for a centre to train individuals and become a centre of growing excellence.

Question 35: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

The interim planning performance speed of decisions, July 2001 to March 2013 statistics for Local Authorities were updated and published by DCLG on 16th September. The statistics show that between January and March 2013 the planning department had 11 major applications in the system but only managed to determine 3 within 13 weeks. Does the Cabinet Member for the Environment not agree that these statistics need to be improved?

Reply from Councillor Bond

Figures for the first quarter (Apr-Jun) show the number of "major" planning applications being determined within the 13 week period (excluding those covered by Planning Performance Agreements and extensions of time which do not count towards this indicator) is at 83.33%, exceeding the NI157 national performance indicator of 60% . With reference to performance between July 2011 and June 2013 which is a key criteria for "special" measures designation, this has risen to 43.55%

Question 36: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Please could the Cabinet Member for Environment inform the chamber how many residents have utilised the new household extension permitted development rights so far?

Reply from Councillor Bond

The Council has received a total of 93 prior approval applications.

Question 37: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

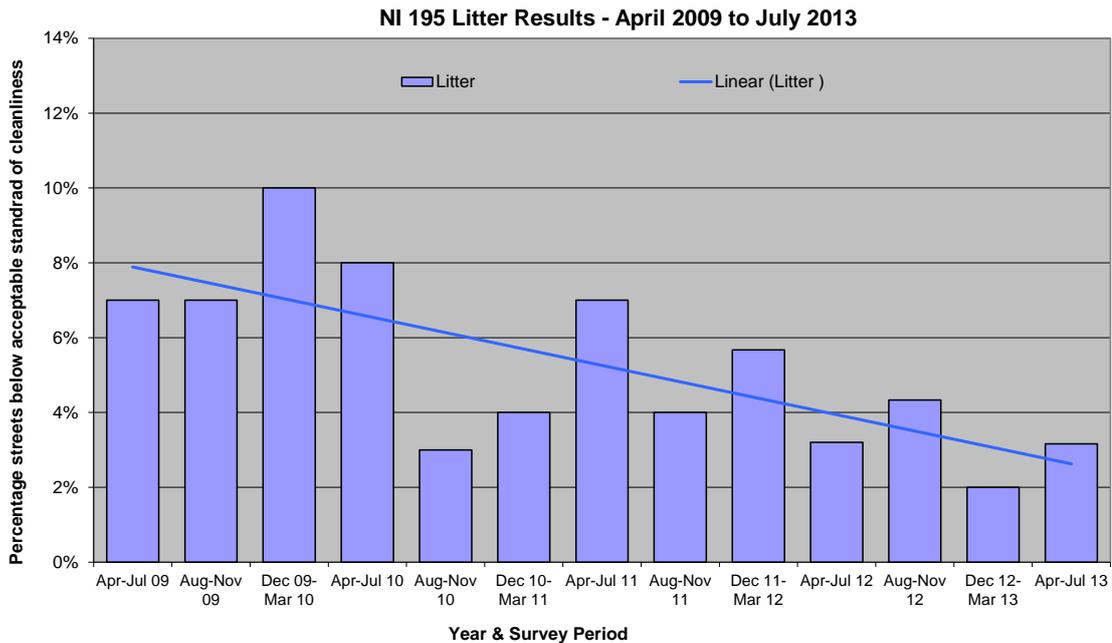
At the recent Sustainability and Living Environment Scrutiny Panel meeting panel members were informed that there are five roads in the borough that have an unacceptable level of litter and uncleanliness. Please could the Cabinet Member for the Environment inform the chamber which roads these are and the wards where they are located?

Reply from Councillor Bond

Street Cleansing is a priority for this administration. By April 2014 we will have invested £800k in modernising and increasing street cleansing mechanisation.

The latest additions will be seen on the streets of Southgate and Bowes next Spring.

The standard of street cleansing is measured in accordance with NI195. This extrapolates from survey data a percentage of streets that have unacceptable levels of litter. Lower figures are better. In 2012/13 the target figure was 5%. However the actual performance was 3.2%. The table below shows how standards have continuously improved in recent years.



Recent resident surveys also suggest that our efforts are paying dividends.

Question 38: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

In his answer to my question numbered 5 at the Council meeting of 17th July concerning the rate of Council tax collection, he said that the Council had met its “ambitious target of reducing historic debts (over three years old) by 25%”. Can he show the Council:

- a) The cash amount involved in that figure of 25%.
- b) How much cash was recovered.
- c) How much was written off.

Reply from Councillor Stafford

The overall Council tax arrears reduction target related to arrears as at the 31st March 2012. The Council achieved an arrears reduction of over 27% by the 31st March 2013 in respect of these debts by collecting £5,983k and writing off a

total of £3,713k. The arrears collection was the 4th highest in England and the highest in London. Over a third of the write off related to historic Council tax arrears over 9 years old.

Question 39: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

In answer to Q35 at the last Council concerning the cost of incremental pay increases within grades, Councillor Stafford confirmed the costs as in excess of £500k per annum or the equivalent of more than half a per cent on Council tax at Band D. He sought to justify this on the basis that there had been no NJC national pay award for the last three years.

Could he tell the Council:

- a) How many employees benefited from this sum
- b) Whether he still considers it fair that for many in the borough of Enfield who are contributing to these increases, there are no jobs at all, and for those that are in work, they too have also suffered from lower wages and indeed pay cuts as a result of the last Labour government's economic mismanagement and desire to spend far more money than the country was producing?

Reply from Councillor Stafford

- a) 656
- b) I do not accept that the last Labour Government's policies necessitated the current government's extreme austerity measures. There was a world economic disaster in 2008 and to try and blame this on the government of the UK is ridiculous. Almost as ridiculous as thinking the current government knew how to plan a recovery.