

Council Questions - 27 November 2013

Section 1 - Questions to Cabinet Members

Question 1: from Councillor D Pearce to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

In reference to the SATs irregularities, could Councillor Orhan answer the following questions, regarding Eversley Primary School?

1. Who has been interviewed in the course of her investigations?
2. What forensic examinations have been undertaken of the computer that is supposed to have registered the children on time?
3. What steps are being taken to find out where and how copies of the official Level 6 SATs papers were obtained?

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

The Governors of Eversley Primary School carried out their own thorough investigation of the SATs issue and reported the outcome to the Director of Schools & Children's Services and to the parents of the school, before putting the report on the school's website. The report covered all issues in Councillor Pearce's question and is available at <http://www.eversley.enfield.sch.uk/>

The investigation proved conclusively that the school acted entirely in the interests of the children. Not a single complaint against the school, from parents, children, Local Authority officers or any other individual, was received.

Eversley Primary is an outstanding school, with exemplary policies, practices and procedures, which has been victimised by the local press and Councillors from the Opposition Party, whose sole motive seems to be self-aggrandisement. It ill becomes Opposition Members to wish to denigrate our schools, instead of trumpeting their wonderful achievements and service to our children.

Question 2: from Councillor Lemonides to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Would the Cabinet Member confirm that in the Civic Centre Car Park there are parking bays for the sole use of disabled people? Would the Cabinet Member also inform Council if he is aware of any Members using the disabled parking bays?

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

There are a number of parking bays that are clearly designated for use by registered disabled or people with temporary needs.

Officers are aware of unauthorised parking in these bays and those responsible have been contacted with a view to preventing further recurrences.

We will continue to monitor the situation carefully and speak with any Member or any

other person who uses these bays without authorisation. It is my understanding that a Member of the Opposition was photographed parked in these bays.

Question 3: from Councillor Kaye to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

On Free schools Labour's new Shadow Education spokesman, Tristram Hunt says, "We are not going back to the old days of the local authority running all the schools - they will not be in charge. We have to clear up this question which has dogged Labour education policy since we entered opposition and since Michael Gove began his reforms, as to what we'd do. We just want to say, 'You are setting up these schools, we are behind you'".

Does the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in Enfield fully support her party's spokesman on Education as regards the development of Free schools?

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

In Enfield we work, and will continue to work, in partnership and collaboration with our maintained schools – we do not “run” them. We delegate that to the Headteacher and Governing Bodies and, in our case, we do not recognise the “good old days” as described in the question. Councillor Kaye is well aware of the fact that we want to work, and do work, with all schools that educate Enfield children and young people. I see no difficulty in supporting the statement from our Party spokesman.

Question 4: from Councillor Brett to Councillor Goddard, Cabinet Member for Business and Regeneration

According to the Local Government Association study on the impact of all Welfare Reform, Enfield is in the top 10% of authorities for average loss at £2,019 a year. This leads to an overall impact of a loss of £97.6 million a year to the local economy. What impact does this have on local businesses?

Reply from Councillor Goddard:

It is not possible to fully analyse or quantify the economic impact on the Borough. However, there is enough understanding of what happens when there is a significant removal of any major source of wealth in an area whether through a loss of industry/jobs or in this case the amount of benefit that accrues to a local economy.

Notwithstanding the substantial impact on individuals, no concern is expressed by Government of the social economic impact on disadvantaged areas which is the result of current welfare reform/benefit reductions.

The impact in Enfield is in the most disadvantaged areas furthering the wealth inequality that already exists.

The reduction in disposable income which is often spent on local goods and services results in the decline of spend in local shops and businesses. The viability and

vitality of local shops is therefore put at risk.

In this current situation the benefit reduction reinforces a pattern of decline that is already apparent with Enfield's increasing levels of poverty. The most recent poverty profile shows that Enfield's relative position has worsened and places us in a group of the worst 6 (Greenwich, Havering, Waltham Forest, Brent & Ealing) for negative change. The notion that an individual is better off in work is being translated into reducing benefit below the minimum levels of income gained from any kind of work including casualised underemployment.

Besides the impact on local disposable income and businesses, it also places more stress on services and the quality of the local environment.

Given that a lot of benefit supports the working poor, it is essential that Enfield attempts to strategically and operationally compensate for this by seeking to attract and develop higher level jobs and to promote the London Living Wage which Enfield Council subscribes to, along with the Mayor.

Question 5: from Councillor Kaye to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Does the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People condemn or support the teachers' strike that took place a few weeks ago?

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

I understand the reasons teachers, those in the teaching profession and support workers, took a day of strike action. Many parents and children showed their support for this action on the day of the strike.

As I go around the Borough I talk to hundreds of parents and I am encouraged that many of them support the reasons that good and hardworking professionals made to take strike action.

I am aware that under current legislation strike action results in a deduction of pay and impacts on pensions in the future, so taking strike action is not a decision our teaching professionals take easily.

I am committed to all our schools and to Enfield's teaching professionals and trust fully their commitment to our children and young people in Enfield and to the education profession as a whole.

Question 6: from Councillor Simbodyal to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Should academies - some of which are reportedly failing - be subject to more scrutiny particularly by Ofsted?

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

I am passionate about ensuring that all Enfield's children and young people are given access to high quality educational provision so that they can maximise their potential and develop into effective and successful members of our community. This means that all Enfield schools should be held to account and be subject to the scrutiny mentioned in the question. My officers have developed a rigorous intervention and support programme that includes academies and free schools. Last year we met with those schools to hold them to account for pupil progress and achievement and will do the same this year. In terms of Ofsted we know that those schools are also subject to the same inspection process and any that are identified as failing will be subject to increased levels of scrutiny. As Lead Member I am confident that we will be liaising with Ofsted regarding this process.

Question 7: from Councillor Kaye to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Does the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People care that parents in Enfield were inconvenienced during the one-day teachers' strike last month? For many working parents it was a costly exercise as they had to pay for supervision of their children.

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

Of course I care if parents were inconvenienced during the one day teachers' strike last month and we do appreciate the additional expense this may have caused some families for additional child care.

Councillors may be interested to know that in Enfield approximately 1400 teachers took industrial action. This represents just under half of our teaching workforce. It is approximately the same number of staff as for the previous strike. However, for the last strike there were 51 primary schools closed and 11 partially open but this time 36 were closed with 21 remaining partially open. The time of year could have affected this, but also the possibility of further strikes and the need to maintain education for the children over the longer term.

For secondary schools, more were closed due to the time of year and lack of flexibility (the last strike was in June when there were less pupils in the schools).

For Special schools 3 remained open or partially open.

Looking at the list of those schools closed and those which remained partially open, I would suggest that where schools believed that it was possible to stay open then they did so. This is despite having, in some cases, only two classes in, which shows the Heads' commitment to retain as many 'services as normal'.

Where schools were closed, I believe that the majority remained open for support staff and many used the day productively for staff development and improvements of the school environment, which many have found invaluable.

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

Could you identify the total number of resident households affected by the benefit cap?

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

As at 12 November 2013 there were 988 households being capped.

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

Can he tell the Council how much revenue is collected by the Council from business ratepayers and of that sum how much is passed on to Central Government?

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

The estimated net yield for business rates in 2013/14 is £106,274,502. This is shared on a 50:30:20 split as shown below:

Amount of National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) to be paid to central government - £53,137,251

Amount to be retained by Enfield under the rates retention scheme - £31,882,351

Amount to be passed to Greater London Authority - £21,254,900

Question 10 from Councillor Cazimoglu to Councillor Taylor, Leader of the Council

Could you update the Council on the result of Enfield's legal challenge on downgrading of A&E at Chase Farm?

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

Enfield Council has a long history of questioning the health reconfigurations planned for the borough. It is not intended to repeat the chronology of representations made; suffice to say support for the Clinical Strategy and specifically the impacts upon maternity services and A&E have never been accepted. Further promises to improve primary care as a compensatory move have not been fulfilled. To defend residents the Council sought a Judicial Review.

On 13th November 2013, following a two day hearing at the High Court on 5th and 6th November 2013, judgment in the Council's claim for Judicial Review of the decision to close the A&E department at Chase Farm hospital, was handed down. Whilst the Court refused permission for Judicial Review and dismissed the Council's claim the Judge, Mr Justice Bean confirmed that, *"Enfield has fought the good fight to save the A&E department at Chase Farm from closure for several years, and I appreciate that the Council genuinely believes that it would be in the interests of those they represent for the department to remain open. But in legal terms that fight has reached the end of the road."*

Following the judgement of the Court, the possibility of lodging an appeal against the decision was considered alongside advice from officers and leading Counsel. Any appeal against the decision would have to be filed with the Court of Appeal within a strict timeframe of 7 days following the judgement. It should be noted that an appeal would be against the decision refusing permission for Judicial Review, and if successful, a hearing of our claim for judicial review would follow.

The likelihood of the Court of Appeal considering an appeal and hearing the claim before the 9 December 2013 - the date when the closure is scheduled to take effect – is virtually nil. This means that the Council might well be obliged to seek injunctive relief to keep the A&E open pending any appeal and provide an undertaking in damages which the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Barnet and Chase Farm (B&CF) Hospital Trust have indicated would be in the region of £1.1m per month for B&CF Trust and £1.85m per month for North Middlesex University Hospital (NMUH).

There is a risk that the Court of Appeal would not grant an injunction in any event given:-

- (i) the Judge's conclusion that he would have refused relief because of the risk to safety in keeping the A&E open, and
- (ii) the Defendant's proposition that they would implement an emergency closure of the A&E in the meantime because of safety concerns.

Counsel further advised that, *“While we remain of the view that as a matter of law there is a strong argument, the combination of the circumstances outlined above means that the chances of upsetting the decision below are now in practice so remote that to pursue the challenge further would be fruitless. In sum, the practical realities have now overtaken the legal principles.”*

After considering the implications, including the likelihood of any such challenge being successful; the extent of the beneficial outcome(s) that could be secured if the case is won; reputational risk and the direct and indirect cost of such a challenge, Cabinet agreed that it could not justify lodging an appeal. The Opposition leader Councillor Michael Lavender and Councillor Anne Marie Pearce attended Cabinet and agreed that an appeal should not be progressed and that alternative options should be considered in continuing to monitor and review the proposed implementation plans.

The Council remains committed to securing the planned and necessary primary care improvements set out in the Council's claim, which the NHS is bound to deliver notwithstanding the Court's decision. The Council will utilise its health scrutiny powers, set out in the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, to monitor implementation of these planned improvements and help secure delivery thereof.

Relevant scrutiny functions include Regulation 21 which enables local authority health scrutiny to review and scrutinise *“any matter relating to the planning, provision*

and operation of the health service” in their area and covers all NHS and public health services commissioned by NHS England and Clinical Commissioning Groups; making reports and recommendations to NHS bodies and imposing duties on NHS bodies to respond (Regulation 22); considering any proposal for a substantial development of the health service and possible referral to the Secretary of State (Regulation 23); imposing duties on NHS bodies to provide scrutiny with information about health services in its area (Regulation 26) and requiring persons to comply with requests to attend Scrutiny and answer questions (Regulation 27).

The Health Scrutiny and Wellbeing Panel can hold other health bodies, which the Council has a role in, accountable for their functions. The panel will consider utilising the complementary powers of the local Healthwatch’s ‘enter and view’ and scrutiny’s call in and referral powers, whilst also ensuring that the Health and Wellbeing Board is effective and that its work is improving outcomes. The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel should also ensure that Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS England and local authorities work together to translate identified needs and strategic priorities into services.

The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel will monitor both the acute and primary care provisions including improvements to GP access, premises and services. The Panel will also review and scrutinise maternity provisions following the new pathways from primary care through to delivery at Barnet and North Middlesex Hospitals.

In addition it will be important to liaise with Barnet and Haringey and to monitor developments. While we are bitterly disappointed, there should be no let-up in our goal to get the best health services possible for our residents.

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

Can he tell the Council how many business ratepayers in the borough qualify for Small Business Rate Relief and how many are in receipt of such relief and at what cost respectively to Central Government and the Council?

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

All occupied business rates account with a rateable value under £25,500 automatically get their bill calculated using the lower multiplier (the small business rate multiplier) following a change made by the current Government which came into effect in April 2012. The difference is 0.009 lower than the normal multiplier, so someone with a rateable value of £25,499 is £229.50 better off.

This lower multiplier is given to around 4,815 properties.

An extra discount can be awarded to properties with a rateable value (RV) from £1 to £12,000 but has to be claimed by the ratepayer. There are about 3,200 properties with an RV below £12,000, but many businesses do not qualify as these properties are occupied by supermarkets, or are advertising rights, masts, atms, Council property or are already getting charity relief.

We give the extra discount awarded to 1,933 accounts with a rateable value of between £1 and £12,000.

This discount costs £3,564,326.13. The cost of small business rate relief is shared between the Government, GLA and the Council based on the 50:20:30 ratio. Therefore any new small business rate relief granted will cost the Council 30% of the total allowed.

Question 12: from Councillor Sitkin to Councillor Taylor, Leader of the Council

Could you update the Council on the Mini-Holland bid?

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

After successfully making a shortlist of 8, from the 18 outer London Boroughs that applied, we are now working on our detailed bid for Mini-Holland funding. We are determined to transform cycling in Enfield for the benefit of all those that live, work or visit the Borough. To that end we held a well-attended Mini-Holland information event on the 5 November 2013. Key stakeholders from across the Borough attended the meeting including representatives from Enfield Business and Retailers Association, train operators, Transport for London, schools and cycle groups. We received many useful comments on how to improve our bid and these are being worked into our scheme designs as we speak. One of the strengths of our bid is the cross party support it has achieved and I would like to thank Councillor Laban for her support and for her contribution to the information event.

Question 13: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Please could the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People inform the Council which other schools in the borough are receiving redeployed staff from the delayed Edmonton County School Primary Phase?

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

As far as I am aware no teacher has been redeployed as a result of any delay to an expansion scheme. I think Councillor Laban may be referring to work that has been organised between Edmonton County and other local primary schools to support the opening of the new primary school in January 2014. This work is providing opportunities for the sharing of skills and resources and is strengthening partnership working between primary and secondary phases that has developed over a number of years. Councillors will be aware that this is an exciting development for Edmonton County and they are determined that it will be a success for the new all age school.

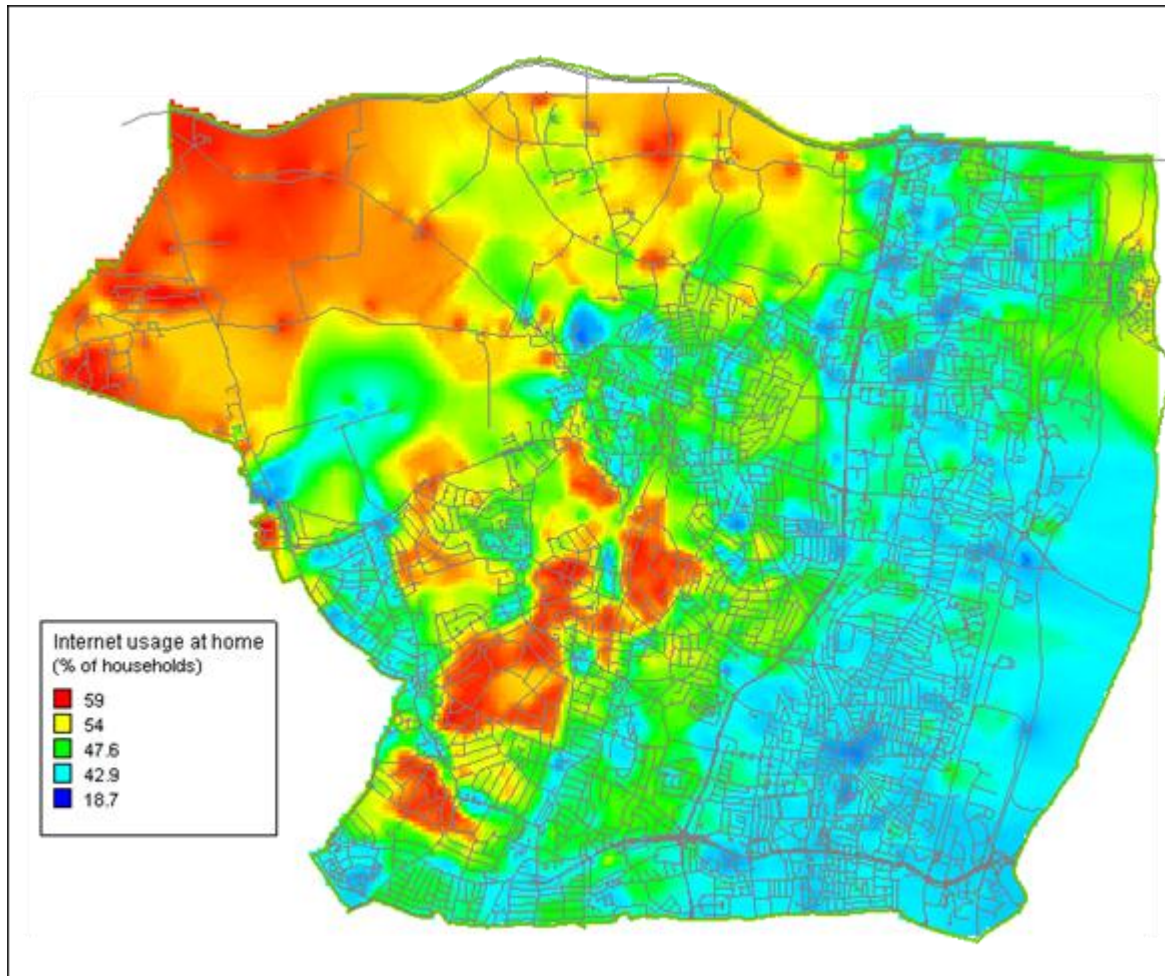
Question 14: from Councillor Ekechi to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Can you calculate how many people on benefits are not computer enabled to complete personal applications online under Universal Credit?

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

We do not hold information on the internet access of benefit claimants; however the following information pulls together information about internet access across the borough.

This map shows internet access at homes across the borough (Please note a colour version of the plan is available as part of the agenda pack published on the Democracy page of the Council's website. A hard copy will also be tabled for all members with the amendment sheet at the Council meeting):



Experian have also produced data on access to the internet at home, community facilities and work. As can be seen below, 74.5 have access to the internet in some form, 4% above the national average:

	Enfield	National
Less than 2MB broadband	9.1	8.8
2MB broadband	24.5	24.8
4MB broadband	23.7	24.1
8MB broadband	28.6	30.8
More than 8MB broadband	14.1	11.6
Home	60.0	65.9
Internet café	4.7	2.8
Library	8.1	6.1
School, college, university	6.6	5.3
Work	20.6	19.9
Non users	25.9	29.5

Enfield Homes' annual tenant survey provides further information on internet access for Council tenants. Six out of ten (60%) general needs tenants state they have access to the internet via computers, laptops or tablets, while 14% state they have access to the internet via mobile phones. A third (33%) of general needs tenants do not have access to the internet.

When analysing the results by demographics it shows:

- General needs tenants aged between 35 and 44 (80%) are most likely to have access to the internet via a computer / laptop / tablet, while general needs tenants aged between 16 and 34 (29%) are most likely to have access to the internet via a mobile phone. As would be expected general needs tenants aged over 65 (68%) are least likely to have access to the internet
- General needs tenants who live in a house (68%), or maisonette (68%), are more likely to have access to the internet via a computer / laptop / tablet than tenants who live in a low rise flat (54%), or high rise flat (57%).

	Yes – via a computer	Yes – via mobile phone only	No
Age group	64%	29%	19%
16-34	80%	15%	15%
35-44	73%	12%	23%
45-54	54%	8%	40%
55-64	28%	7%	68%
65+			
Property type	54%	15%	38%
Flat - low rise	57%	21%	32%
Flat - high rise	68%	11%	28%
House	68%	14%	26%
Maisonette			

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

Can he tell the Council on what basis the significant increase in on-street parking charges in our town centres imposed by the Labour administration in 2011 has not undermined the vitality of those centres?

Response from Councillor Bond:

The vitality of Enfield's shopping centres do not rely wholly on the use of vehicles. In some areas for example the Angel Edmonton and Edmonton Green and Enfield Town Centre, the vast majority of customers visit by foot or by bus. The vast majority of shoppers visit our town centres for the quality and variety of our businesses. Whilst there was an increase in 2011, it was introduced to assist with our management of traffic congestion in these centres. It is worth pointing out that this has been the one and only increase in parking charges during this administration and we have also introduced free three hour parking on Sundays to maintain the vitality of our centres.

Question 16: from Councillor Constantinides to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Would you let the Council know when Universal Credit will be introduced in Enfield?

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

The Government have not announced the timescales for Universal Credit. An announcement on their revised business plan for Universal Credit is expected by the end of the year. Reports suggest that the introduction has been bedevilled by poor decision making and is likely to cost the taxpayer a very significant sum as a result.

Question 17: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

In his reply to my Question Number 3 at the October meeting, he presented the total of days lost through sickness in each of the years 2010/11, 11/12, 12/13. Although the table shows a minimal decrease in the average number of days lost per employee over these three years, will he please tell the Council what is the cost of the current average i.e. 8.43 days per employee, taking account of all costs including costs of covering such absence with agency staff?

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

The actual known recorded cost for sick pay for 2012/13 was £345,138.13. As stated in the previous answer to the Council question, a significant amount of sickness absence is covered within existing resources.

Question 18: from Councillor Ibrahim to Councillor Oykenner, Cabinet Member for Housing

The Prime Minister has downgraded housing by replacing in his reshuffle a Minister of State with a Parliamentary Under-Secretary. Does this betray the Government's lack of concern about housing and does this reduce the ability of Enfield Council to deliver good quality accommodation?

Reply from Councillor Oykener:

This appointment certainly could be viewed as a downgrade, especially as the Government is facing a housing emergency. Taking their eye off the ball – if this is the consequence of this decision – will only exacerbate an existing crisis.

With homelessness rising in London and the financial pressures building for both Conservative and Labour Councils, now is the time to make sure that developing increased housing supply is a top Government priority.

Although the Government's Help to Buy scheme offers the potential to get the housing market moving again, it could also create a housing price bubble that threatens a housing market that is already fragile and unpredictable.

The issues facing housing development are complex and challenging, and leave many entering a new housing association home with challenging rent levels. This is the result of the withdrawal of grant which prohibits social landlords from charging rents at affordable levels. This then places an on-going burden on the housing benefit bill, which the Government is pledging to reduce.

These are just two examples of many issues facing the housing sector and I am worried that this lack of a coherent strategy at the most senior Government level makes the risk of not finding credible solutions to the housing crisis facing London and the country increase still further.

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

In his reply to Question Number 5 at the last meeting, Councillor Stafford avoided giving comparative figures for the costs of employment agency workers against those for directly employed staff, on the grounds that the law only requires employers to pay agency workers the equivalent rate to a permanent employee after 13 weeks employment and because he could not predict employers pension contributions. Leaving aside employers pension contributions, can he now give the council the comparative costs of employing the number of agency workers that we do (including interim senior post holders) with those of the permanent posts that the agency workers are covering. For this purpose the 13-week rule should not impede giving an answer.

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

As stated previously it is not possible to provide a meaningful comparison of the costs of engaging an agency worker with the direct employment costs as in many cases there is not a direct comparator where the Council is engaging the worker to undertake specialised, time limited, project work. The Council has a clear policy that

agency workers are only engaged where there is a short term or time limited need or there is no internal capacity within the Council. It is also an imperfect market comparison as factors such as the payment of London Living Wage, pension contributions, employer on costs and the 13 week rule serve to distort any direct comparison.

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

Could Councillor Bond consider working with Foodcycle, a UK wide voluntary organisation and part of OXFAM that prevents surplus food from shops restaurants and other outlets going to waste by collecting and redistributing it?

Reply from Councillor Bond:

Foodcycle is a worthy charity, however Enfield's waste and recycling services are able to provide collection services but are not equipped to collect food for re-use. We will contact the Charity and enquire as to what their requirements are and see if there is an opportunity of a joint working arrangement.

Question 21: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Orhan (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)

In her reply to Question Number 17 at the last meeting she stated that 46% of pupils in Enfield "have English as an additional language" (EAL). The figure was apparently taken from the census. Can she clarify whether this relates to Census Day in 2011 or is it an updated figure. Her reply seems to suggest that the council does not know the number of EAL pupils and therefore has no idea of the additional cost of teaching English to them, nor of the impact on the ability to teach the general curriculum. Does she understand that this is not about "valuing the richness of our community?" but about the cost of providing this additional service?

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

The percentage was taken from the 2013 census and is therefore the most recent figure. The Council is well aware of the number of EAL pupils as an overall percentage but also how this is then broken down in to the individual schools across Enfield. As stated previously the numbers of EAL pupils is factored into individual schools' budgets so that they can identify the additional resources they receive and then account for how they are spent on the pupils within their schools. They have a responsibility to ensure that all groups or individual pupils make at least good progress and Ofsted will hold them to account for that progress.

In Enfield we continue to challenge our schools for the progress pupils make and also have been able to maintain a high level of support for schools in raising the attainment of our EAL pupils

Question 22: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

In his reply to Question Number 19 at the last Council Councillor Stafford said that “since April 2011 over 200 posts have been deleted and individuals redeployed wherever possible”. Could he please state how many post holders have been made redundant as a result of Leaner since that date?

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

The Leaner programme provides an opportunity for Directors and managers to challenge existing structures and ways of working with a view to improving service delivery. This process has enabled the Council to achieve the budget savings required whilst reaching record levels of resident satisfaction. It is not possible to assess how many of the identified redundant posts have been directly attributable to the Leaner programme.

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

Could Councillor Stafford confirm the amount of the Discretionary Housing Fund that has been allocated by the Government to the London Borough of Enfield for transitional relief to tenants on Housing Benefit and how much has been spent to date?

Reply from Councillor Stafford:

The Council was allocated £3.24m in Discretionary Housing Payments funding in 2013/14. So far the Council has spent and committed £2.23m.

Question 24: from Councillor Smith to Councillor Orhan, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

In view of the widely held view in the Southgate Green area that parents seeking a place at Walker Primary school are renting residential property temporarily in the catchment area in order to obtain a place, will Councillor Orhan set out what steps the Council is taking to end this abuse of the system?

Reply from Councillor Orhan:

We take the matter of fraudulent addresses very seriously. Current legislation does not allow us to set a minimum residency period however we will always consider the use of whatever powers are available to identify where there has been a deliberate intent to defraud or mislead the Council in relation to school allocations.

There are established address verification checks that take place during the school application process. In addition to these, further checks are made if there are concerns raised in relation to an applicant’s address.

Our published policy states that the address used in an application for admission must be the child’s ordinary place of residence. The Council will not accept short term addresses that appear to have been obtained to achieve proximity and so priority of admission to a school. If this is the case, the Council will investigate this

further and involve Enfield's Counter Fraud Team where appropriate with a view to civil or criminal proceedings being taken against them under the Fraud Act 2006 or any other relevant enactment.

The Council is continually reviewing our arrangements to ensure that places are offered to children who genuinely meet the admission criteria for schools and work is currently being undertaken with other LA's to identify a pan London response to the issue of fraudulent admission applications.

Question 25: from Councillor Smith to Councillor Oyken, Cabinet Member for Housing

The Coalition Government has recently published draft guidance for the private rented housing sector.

The draft guidance aims to clarify how the law applies to the lettings market, identifying trading practices that could breach legislation, such as not giving sufficient information to tenants about what fees they will have to pay, or making misleading statements about a property.

The draft guidance sets out the Office of Fair Trading's views about how the legislation might apply at each step of the lettings process: from when lettings professionals first advertise their services, to the interactions they have with tenants prior to moving into a property, through to when a tenancy agreement comes to an end. These are matters of great importance to private tenants.

- a. What is the Cabinet member's view about this Guidance and is it supported by the Labour Party?
- b. Has the Labour Party responded to the consultation advocating any manner in which the guidance can be improved?
- c. What steps will be put in place by the Local Authority in its capacity as trading standards authority and housing authority to ensure that private landlords in Enfield are aware of this guidance?

Reply from Councillor Oyken:

- a. The private rented sector has grown substantially over the past 10 years in Enfield, almost doubling in size to nearly 28,000 homes at the last census and still growing. This reflects the trend across the Country, with more people living in the private rented sector than in social housing.

The private rented sector plays an important part in meeting the housing needs of local people. The Council has acknowledged the benefit of a good quality private rented sector, and has a history of working successfully with good landlords and letting agents, using the current light touch approach to regulation using the current mandatory powers and the voluntary accreditation scheme.

However, both recent research and tenant feedback about the quality of both the tenancy management of this sector and the quality of the properties that are

being let, give me a cause for concern as recent research has highlighted a correlation between anti-social behaviour in Enfield and areas where privately rented properties are present.

It is in this particular context, that I welcome this additional guidance which draws together and sets out very clearly the responsibilities for lettings professionals.

The draft document appears clear and unambiguous and should leave no letting professional in any doubt about the legal framework that they are operating their business within, the minimum standards that should be adhered to and their responsibilities towards their tenants.

Once the final guidance is published by the Government, it will be a useful document for local lettings professionals alongside the Council's ambition to drive up standards in the private rented sector.

- b. The Council does intend to reply to the consultation which ends on 10 December 2013.
- c. Once the guidance is agreed, the Council will ensure synergy between the content of the Council's voluntary accreditation schemes, and any current or future regulation of this sector.

In addition the Council will be pleased to develop a communication plan at the appropriate time, to ensure that lettings professionals are aware of the final guidance.

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

On Monday 28 October many residents woke up to find trees on their driveways, in gardens, blocking roads etc because of the storm and needed assistance from the Environment Department. Please could the Cabinet Member explain why it took several hours for the contact information to be placed on the home page of the Enfield Council website?

Reply from Councillor Bond:

Whilst there was a delay in getting a specific message out on the web-site, most residents used the 1000 number to report an incident without any difficulty. The Council's arboriculture officers and our contractors worked hard for a number of days to ensure that hazards were quickly addressed and that our roads and footways were cleared for use by our residents. I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff, including many volunteers who came in on their day off to assist, for their excellent response to this exceptional storm.

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

A recent decision regarding a 20mph around the Carterhatch School area stated that a consultation was carried out and the results were that 9 people responded out of a possible 188. This result shows that consultation was poor. The response rate was only 5%.

- a. What is his department doing to improve consultation with the community in relation to a scheme like this?
- b. Given the poor response is the department certain that all residents received the consultation documents?

Reply from Councillor Bond:

I don't agree that the consultation was poor. Posters were put up at various locations within the zone to advertise the consultation. Well written consultation leaflets were hand delivered by our own staff and were also made available on the Council's Website. In addition, posters were erected half way through the consultation period reminding residents to complete and return their questionnaires.

Generally speaking we find that people are more likely to respond to consultations where they have strong views about the proposed measures. In my view, the reason for the low response to the scheme in Carterhatch Lane is simply due to the fact that it only consists of road markings and flashing vehicle activated signs. We have used exactly the same consultation technique for other schemes and have generated a response rate of over 30%, which is relatively high for this type of exercise.

However, we are always looking at ways to improve our approach to consultation and are developing a Consultation Charter to make it clear to residents exactly how we will consult, how the information will be used and how we will feedback the results.

If Councillor Laban has any ideas to improve consultation I would be happy to consider them.

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

Residents have contacted me about the relatively new fountain in Ponders End Park. The residents remarked that they have rarely seen the fountain working since its installation last year.

Please could you confirm:

- a. How many times the fountain has been operational since its installation?
- b. For how long recently it has not been been switched on?

Reply from Councillor Bond:

The issue of the fountain has been raised by ward Councillors who themselves helped to get it installed and are keen to see it fully functioning. They have been informed of the issues I identify below -

- a. How many times the fountain has been operational since its installation? - The fountain is switched on each April and shut down each October.
- b. For how long recently it has not been switched on? - The fountain stopped working in July 2013 due to damage to cables in underground ducts caused by rodents. Pest control officers have attended and contractors engaged to repair cables and undertake preventative works. This has taken time to address due to the nature and extent of damage but the seasonal shut down is now in place enabling completion of works so that the fountain will be operational for the new season in spring next year.

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

Friends of the Parks Groups really care about their parks. The groups carry out many tasks like litter picking and planting voluntarily.

- a. When there is a planning application for development or another project either in a park or nearby will the Cabinet Member ensure that the Parks Groups are consulted as a stakeholder group?
- b. Will the Cabinet Member for Environment work with his Cabinet colleagues so that all departments consult with the Friends of the Parks Groups if they have a project in or nearby a park?

Reply from Councillor Bond:

Where there is a project of any kind in a park and if there is a Friends Group we will of course communicate and consult with them.

It is because of our close working relationship with the Friends Groups that we have managed to maintain and increase the number of Green Flags in the borough, unlike when you were in control you lost Flags and did not have the number of Friends Groups that we have now.

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

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment confirm that a diktat has been sent to members of staff in his department that equipment such as green gyms or children's play grounds should not be installed due to the potential problem of not being able to maintain them?

Reply from Councillor Bond:

I am not a Conservative and therefore do not issue diktats to staff. Parks have been fortunate to be the beneficiaries of Enfield Residents' Priority Funding and other grant funds in recent years; however, it is recognised that any addition to the infrastructure has to be supported with longer term revenue support. We are fully

aware of this and officers are currently reviewing the impact of additional equipment in parks and considering the best way to maintain these going forward.

Question 31: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

Please could the Cabinet Member for Environment update the chamber on the future of the tennis courts and Skate Park on the A10 Great Cambridge Road?

Reply from Councillor Bond:

A decision has not been made.

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

Please could the Cabinet Member for Environment inform the chamber of any activities his department has carried out in relation to the outcome of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Deephams Sewage Works?

Reply from Councillor Bond:

Officers from Development Management are in regular contact with representatives from Thames Water and, acknowledging the concerns within the community which were expressed at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting, continue to press for the redevelopment of Deephams Sewage Treatment Works to maximise the benefits to local residents in terms of odour mitigation. Further detailed discussions are due once Thames Water have announced their preferred development partner.

Question 33: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member for Environment

At the recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on the odour of Deephams Sewage Works a resident who has lived in the area for a number of years stated that more often than not the bad odour is caused by the North London Waste Authority (NLWA), Eco Park. As one of Enfield's representatives on the NLWA please could he explain whether this is the case or not?

Reply from Councillor Bond:

We have a petition of approx. 2,500 complaints about the odour from Deephams Sewage Works. In the last two years we have not had a single complaint about the odour from the NLWA.

Question 34: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Bond (Cabinet Member for Environment)

At a recent consultation meeting regarding the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Forty Hall grounds project residents commented that the proposals would create "Enfield's

first theme park". Please could the Cabinet Member explain what his department is doing to reassure Enfield's residents that this is not the objective of the project?

Reply from Councillor Bond

This is a listed landscape and all works are agreed with English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). A theme park is not proposed.

The Forty Hall Estate is made up of many different elements, the Hall, the Café, the Banqueting Suite, Capel Manor Farm and the Parkland. The HLF bids to reinstate both the Hall and Parkland aim to improve the standard of the facilities for residents, customers and partners. In some cases reinstating previous features and in others sympathetically improving the facilities. There are a number of statutory checks that are in place to ensure the entire estate is developed sympathetically in line with its status in historical and current terms. These include English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund Monitoring, the Council's Planning framework, Heritage Officers and consultation sessions with residents. The many different partners will work together to ensure residents are kept up to date on the work in the grounds, utilising a number of different methods including information boards, briefing sessions, press releases and where appropriate guided tours. These methods proved very useful with the Hall development.

Question 35: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Charalambous, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Youth and Localism

Yoga is a peaceful exercise. Please could the Cabinet Member therefore explain why at Southgate Leisure Centre yoga is taking place in a room underneath the free weight area that causes a huge amount of noise, how his department is working with Fusion to resolve this situation and how long this situation is likely to continue?

Reply from Councillor Charalambous:

The yoga sessions that take place under the free weights area is an overspill from the main class due to customers and residents demand for this activity and the success of the class programmes at Southgate. However it should be noted that both the Council and its partners Fusion are unhappy with the noise in the room below the free weights area at Southgate Leisure Centre. Fusion and the Council are looking into a solution to reduce the noise in this room and to deal with the overspill of the yoga classes by reprogramming these sessions. We are also looking at solutions for the relocation of the free weights area, however these discussion are at an early stage. We hope to have these solutions in place before April 2014.

Question 36: from Councillor Laban to Councillor Charalambous, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Youth and Localism

Please could the Cabinet Member inform the chamber of how many times this year that Forty Hall has been hired for private events?

Reply from Councillor Charalambous:

Forty Hall has been hired for private event between January 2013 and the present on 22 occasions, one of these was an event which was called off at a very late stage, so whilst the event didn't take place, the party was charged. In December there are a further 5 private hires confirmed. In looking forward we have 2 confirmed wedding bookings in the summer of 2014 with a further 3 provisional bookings. This is a developing area of business for the Hall but we have to be mindful of the Heritage Lottery Fund requirements for on-going free public access to the Hall. There is a fine balance to be kept between public access and private events.

Question 37: from Councillor Rye to Councillor Hamilton, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing & Public Health

Would the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing & Public Health now place on record that she welcomes the increase in police numbers allocated to Enfield under the new policing model, in particular the increase of 124 Police Officers by 2015 (and present staged increase 59)?

Reply from Councillor Hamilton:

As the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing & Public Health, I have lobbied long and hard for the numbers to be increased, including meeting with the Police Commissioner. The previous administration noted that the resource allocation formula used for many years left Enfield under-strength; however, it was not until very recently that we have seen any improvement.

I believe that the neighbourhood policing officers are required to carry out more functions such as primary investigations, which may have the potential to take them off the streets and we will need to keep a close watch on this as the Local Policing Model (LPM) is established. We have taken a sensible local approach to allocating the officers that we have had into the areas of most need. As the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) become more prescriptive about what happens locally, our police officers must remain posted into areas where they are most needed and not merely shared out across the borough without consideration of the greatest need.

I am concerned that many experienced officers have left the MPS and large numbers locally are probationary constables who will need time to gain experience.

My real concern is whether the LPM is insufficiently flexible to allow the local Borough Commander to work in partnership with us to the same degree that has won international recognition for Enfield.

This may put at risk areas of work such as management of offenders in the community as prisons are closed and the contracts for Probationary services are outsourced to private security firms.

The Council will continue to support and work with the Police and other partners involved in community safety to make our Borough even safer.

Question 38: from Councillor Rye to Councillor Charlambous, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Youth and Localism

Would the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People update the Council on Enfield Council's implementation of the Government's Troubled Families Initiative, launched in April 2012 and explain why there was a change in Lead Officer for this initiative and what the success rate was in turning around troubled families in the first 6 months of this programme and in the period to June 2013?

Reply from Councillor Charalambous:

In common with the overwhelming majority of local authorities, the first 6 months of the Troubled Families, or as it is called locally, the 'Change and Challenge' programme, focussed on the accurate identification of local families that would benefit most from this scheme. This was a monumental task, bringing together data from Council services such as, youth offending services, community safety and children's social care services as well as information held by the police, the Health services, Schools and Job Centre Plus.

This comprehensive data analysis laid the foundations for timely and intensive family interventions from a wide range of agencies and I am delighted to report that at June 2013, 136 local families made the significant changes to their lives to satisfy the government's payment by results scheme. Of these:

- 32 families now have at least one adult in employment
- 18 families have at least one adult on a 'back to work' programme and
- 86 families have significantly improved the attendance of their children at school and reduced anti-social and criminal behaviour.

The change in the lead officer for this important programme, came about following the merger of a range of services, including the Change and Challenge programme, to form a new Youth and Family Support Service for the borough. This service now provides a cohesive range of preventative services that provide help to families at an earlier stage to prevent the escalation of family difficulties. This process resulted in a reduction in management posts, to protect front line services to vulnerable families and young people, as a result of continued government reductions to local authority budgets.

Section 2 - Questions to Scrutiny and Other Committee Chairs

Question 39: from Councillor Neville to Councillor Simon, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Can he tell the Council how many items have been called in for scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by opposition members from May 2010 to the present?

Reply from Councillor Simon:

There were 35 called-in decisions between May 2010 to date, all by Opposition Members; by way of comparison there were 26 called-in decisions between May 2006 and end of April 2010. The jump of 50% in the monthly rate of call-ins has led

to additional pressure on existing staff resource and finance and several call-ins turned out to have no substance when the Overview & Scrutiny Committee met.”

Question 40: from Councillor Levy to Councillor Rye (Chair of Crime & Safety & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Panel)

The Government publicity stunt (now banned) vans telling illegal immigrants to go home has been described by Theresa May as ‘not been a good idea’, by Vince Cable as ‘stupid and offensive’, by UKIP as ‘disturbing and reminiscent of a fascist dictatorship’, by Yvette Cooper as ‘ a divisive gimmick’ and ‘reminiscent of the 1970’s National Front’, but it was publically defended by the MP for Enfield North (as reported in a North London newspaper on 07/08/13).

Were the vans a sensible idea, as suggested by the local MP or do you agree with the Home Secretary’s view?

Reply from Councillor Rye:

I congratulate Councillor Levy on asking such a blatantly political question. He will be unsurprised to learn that I rarely agree with Mr. Cable, Ms. Cooper or an anonymous spokesperson for UKIP. I am however, certain that the Conservative led Government has the support of the majority of the Country in requiring illegal immigrants to return to their country of origin and note that both the Home Secretary Theresa May and Nick De Bois MP for Enfield North support this view.

Question 41: from Councillor Brett to Councillor Constantinides, Chair of Planning Committee

Would Councillor Levy join me in expressing dismay, at the recent announcement in the local government information press, that the Coalition’s Planning Minister, Nick Boles had assured Ladbroke’s that the Coalition’s planning changes would not make it easier for councils to block permission for new betting shops?

Reply from Councillor Constantinides

It is disappointing to hear of the reported comments of Nick Boles to Ladbrokes on this subject. Real concerns remain within local communities about the proliferation of Betting Shops in many of the Borough’s town and local centres. However it is worth noting that the number of betting shops in the borough has fallen since 2007, albeit by a very small number.

It had been hoped that there would be a positive response to request for legislation to be amended to afford local Council’s more control over such proposals as in many cases, planning permission is not required. However, this has been recognised in Policy 33 of the emerging Development Management Document, which seeks to manage the impact of betting shops and states that proposals for new betting shops will only be permitted if specific criteria are met.