

CABINET

THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2013

**PUBLIC AND COUNCILLOR
QUESTIONS ACCEPTED**

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CABINET – 12 SEPTEMBER 2013

PUBLIC QUESTIONS (ITEM 5)

Under Rule 16 of the Executive Procedure Rules, members of the public may question the Executive and Portfolio Holders at meetings. There is a time limit of 15 minutes for the asking and answering of public questions.

1.

Questioner: Simon Brown

Asked of: Councillor Asad Omar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: “Has the Portfolio Holder calculated the additional cost to the Council of the consequences of leaving the gates of Harrow Recreation Ground unlocked at night, due to increased vandalism, repair to park equipment and environment, and increased cost to the Metropolitan Police and Council in dealing with additional anti-social behaviour. Would the Portfolio Holder advise this cost, and if it has not yet been calculated, would he not agree that it will be far in excess of the small savings he is anticipating from not locking the gates? This is in addition to the unquantifiable cost of increased disturbance and loss of amenity and security of local residents and park users.”

2.

Questioner: Ushma Rathod

Asked of: Councillor Asad Omar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: “A news article in the Daily Mail has recently reported that a travelling community have set up homes in a park, in Sussex, as the Council decided to keep the gates unlocked, meaning powers to evict no longer applies. This has left the local residents to fear for their safety and children not being able to play in the park as it’s unsafe. How will you, as the Portfolio Holder of the Environment and Community Safety, ensure that the residents surrounding the parks, in Harrow, are kept safe and protect their homes from being unlawfully accessed and or vandalised?”

3.

Questioner: Eranga Gunawardena

Asked of: Councillor Asad Omar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: “What level of public opinion or consultation have you done to ensure the decisions you are making re not lock the park gates or not cutting the grass in certain parks are accurate?”

AGENDA PART I

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS (ITEM 6)

Fifteen minutes will be allowed for Members of the Council to ask a Portfolio Holder a question on any matter in relation to which the Executive has powers or duties.

1.

Questioner: Councillor James Bond

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: “It is stated in Harrow Council's Corporate Plan for 2013-15 that it is the authority's intention to introduce a 'Harrow Card' which will be available to all who live and work in the borough to promote local shopping and the use of Council facilities as a way of supporting local business.

Can the Leader please tell me what progress has been made towards the launch of a 'Harrow Card' and when it is anticipated that such a scheme will be up and running?”

2.

Questioner: Councillor David Perry

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: “In February, full Council set the Council challenging headline budget savings for this financial year, please could you indicate the progress to date on these in-year savings targets?”

3.

Questioner: Councillor David Perry

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: "Magic Car Wash based in Wealdstone, through their operations, have again and again ignored this Council, their lease arrangements and treated the surrounding neighbours in Canning Road with little respect. Therefore as Leader of the Council please could you intervene in this on-going issue, and will you ensure the necessary enforcement action is taken without delay?"

4.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: "In January 2012 a motion was adopted at Full Council that raised concerns about the expansion of RAF Northolt for commercial flights, which had been highlighted within the Guardian Newspaper.

Council instructed the Chief Executive to enlist the support of Harrow's three MPs, the Brent and Harrow GLA member and other neighbouring local authorities, MPs and GLA members to oppose this catastrophic proposal.

On the 5th September 2013, in a response to a question from Gareth Thomas MP, Harrow West, it was stated that "*The Ministry of Defence (MOD) intends to increase commercial aviation flights at RAF Northolt within the **current airspace capacity of 40 commercial movements per day**, with a cap of 12,000 commercial movements per year. These civilian commercial movements will be strictly in accordance with extant arrangements. Representatives from RAF Northolt met with the Leader of London borough of Hillingdon, local councillors, and residents' associations to discuss the proposal. No other public consultation took place*"

Quite clearly the coalition Government is expanding RAF Northolt by stealth.

Will the Leader explain:-

1. What discussions has he, or Cabinet members, had concerning the increased use of RAF Northolt for commercial use
2. What response has he, or cabinet members, made to the announcement on increased flights
3. What discussions have Harrow Council Officers had concerning the increased use of RAF Northolt for commercial use
4. What response has Council officers made to the

announcement on increased flights

5. What representations has the Leader, Cabinet Members or Council Officers made, and to whom, concerning increased flights

6. What engagement or consultation will be taking place with Harrow MPs, Harrow Councillors, Residents Associations or residents concerning increased flights into Northolt airport?

7. What meetings have taken place with RAF Northolt Community Consultative Group, on which Harrow Councillors used to be a part of.

In responding to the points above I would like to know detail around:-

a) The flight landing/take off windows for commercial planes

b) The size of the aircraft

c) Results of impact assessments on local communities

d) What has been reported on behalf of Harrow Residents at London Councils or 2M - both of which are considering how to expand airport capacity in London?"

5.

Questioner: Councillor Tony Seymour

Asked of: Councillor Asad Omar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: "What was the revenue received by the Council from on street parking in the Pinner Road and Station Road North Harrow for the last three financial years?"

6.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: "In view of the recent statements that North Harrow Post Office may close; what representation has the Portfolio Holder made regarding:

i) the future of Post Office Services in North Harrow,

ii) the future of access to Post Offices in the London Borough of Harrow (LBH),

iii) what work/transactions are the LBH looking at putting through Post Offices,

iv) what work/transactions are the LBH looking at taking away from Post Offices?"

7.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Councillor Asad Omar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: "How many street signs in the Borough are awaiting replacement?"

8.

Questioner: Councillor Sachin Shah

Asked of: Councillor William Stoodley, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration

Question: "What instructions have you given your officers in relation to taking enforcement action against the unauthorised building and floodlights at the Barnet FC ground - The Hive?"

9.

Questioner: Councillor James Bond

Asked of: Councillor Asad Omar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: "Can the Portfolio Holder please inform us of the results obtained following the undertaking of the Equalities Impact Assessment survey, and how they have been interpreted in order to justify the changes being proposed to parking arrangements in the North Harrow District Centre?"

10.

Questioner: Councillor Sachin Shah

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: "The report on the agenda today, shows that because of your inability to get polices either through your own group, or in relation to PRISM, past Councillor Hall, you have massively overspent your budget. What will you be doing to bring this budget back in to balance?"

11.

Questioner: Councillor Sachin Shah

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: "At the Planning meeting held on 1st August 2013 you declared a non-pecuniary interest in that you had been involved in the Hive in your capacity as Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts. Given you have previously declined to answer my questions on the issue because you have not been involved, please can you set out the areas that you have been involved with, which led you to make this declaration?"

12.

Questioner: Councillor Phillip O'Dell

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: "Please could the Leader of the Council provide an update on the Homes in Multi Occupation Registration Scheme?"

13.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Phillips

Asked of: Councillor Zarina Khalid, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families

Question: SNT3

"Bearing in mind the significant increase in the birth rate in Harrow that is putting enormous pressure on our education system. What is the extra cost that is expected in the pro rata increase in the requirement for Special Needs Transport?"

14.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Phillips

Asked of: Councillor Zarina Khalid, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families

Question: SNT3

“Where the service is to be outsourced, it is noted that the majority of the management structure is retained in house in order to manage the contracts and to define and manage the routes to be let. Why is this when it would appear logical that outsourcing the most expensive part of the organisation, the definition of the routes and their management, would surely mean that contractors can define optimal routes that accommodate their own existing workload would surely generate a greater saving for them and consequently a much lower bid to us?”

15.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Phillips

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: SNT3

“In recommendation 2 of the report it is noted that a major part of this contract could be let under delegated powers to the Corporate Director of Children and Families. This is a major delegation that covers not just a major outsourcing contract but also the jobs of many of the council’s staff. Why are the Cabinet abrogating this level of responsibility for such a major decision?”

16.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Phillips

Asked of: Councillor Zarina Khalid, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families

Question: SNT3

“In section 6.1 the report notes that the vulnerable young people that use this transport will be supervised and driven by staff that “would tend to be employed on a strict ‘hours for pay’ basis” (probably a zero hours contract) “less generous sickness benefits and different pension provisions. It is normally the case that drivers are self-employed...”. What instance of lateness, non-show or poor driver behaviour will be acceptable under this arrangement and what penalties are to be levelled at contractors who deliver the poor service that will be a consequence of driving the contract into such a paucity of employment practices?”

17.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Phillips

Asked of: Councillor Zarina Khalid, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families

Question: SNT3

“In section 6.5 of the report it states that the management team will need to be increased because of the increased workload managing this contract. Could the Portfolio Holder advise us as to how much the management team will be increased.”

18.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Phillips

Asked of: Councillor Zarina Khalid, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families

Question: SNT3

“In section 6.4 you state that by tendering a few routes you will be able to ensure that the leased vehicles will reach their optimal price. How are you going to measure this and manage the balance of routes let with vehicles released for sale?”

19.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Phillips

Asked of: Councillor Zarina Khalid, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families

Question: “In section 6.6 you state that a 2nd framework contract will have to be let. Could you explain the reason why the first framework contract is deficient as normally framework contracts by their nature allow for the increase in the number of contractors within the framework?”

20.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: "What training, and on what dates, has taken place by each Cabinet Member to ensure that decisions reached by Cabinet are in accordance with their PSED."

21.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Councillor Krishna James, Portfolio Holder Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

Question: "What engagement has taken place with service users concerning the development of "My Community ePurse" and what strategy has the Portfolio Holder developed to deal with any concerns that have been raised by users."

22.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Councillor Krishna James, Portfolio Holder Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

Question: "With the increased incidents of domestic violence, and the many that go unreported, what policies and strategies has the Portfolio Holder developed to support and encourage victims to report this crime."

23.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Councillor Nizam Ismail, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services and Housing

Question: "How will affordable housing opportunities be prioritised and how will he ensure that they will be delivered on time?"

24.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Councillor Zarina Khalid, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families

Question: "With the Council facing significant financial challenges to its budget, having to reduce costs by £75 million so far and recent announcements that further savings of £60 million will need to

be made over the next few years, will the Portfolio Holder explain what strategies she has put in place to meet the increased budget pressure due to a rising number of child protection plans and new children looked after.”

25.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Councillor Nizam Ismail, Portfolio Holder Community and Cultural Services and Housing

Question: “In this financial year, by month, how many Council tenants have been evicted, how many Council tenants have been threatened with eviction (up to an including court action) due to non payment of rent, how many are being prosecuted for non payment of rent and how many have reached a repayment schedule with the Council.”

26.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: “Recently within the local newspapers it was reported that the Council was surveying residents to ascertain demand for a Council owned bullion storage centre in either the town centre or on the civic site. How much has been spent so far on this proposal, what are the financial estimates for delivering such a project, what are the cost implications to the residents of Harrow?”

27.

Questioner: Councillor Janet Mote

Asked of: Councillor Asad Omar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: “Though the decision has now been reversed, can you confirm why dog waste bins were removed from parks three months before the original contract was due to end, and can you confirm whether all removed bins have now been put back?”

28.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications, Finance, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, Property and Major Contracts

Question: "What plans are in place to ensure that the agreed budgets are met over the 2 financial years 2013/14 and 2014/15 in regard to Council Committee structures and the Mayoralty?"