

CABINET

THURSDAY 10 DECEMBER 2015

**PUBLIC AND COUNCILLOR
QUESTIONS ACCEPTED**

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS (ITEM 4)

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: Ruth Catty

Asked of: Councillor Sachin Shah, Portfolio Holder Finance and Major Contracts

Question: Funding of breastfeeding support services from the Public Health budget

“Harrow Council’s website proudly reports the UNICEF reaccreditation of Harrow Community Health Services’ Baby Friendly Community status in August this year, saying that Harrow is now one of the best boroughs in London for mothers to access breastfeeding help.

Harrow is the only borough in NW London to have achieved this status.

UNICEF have highlighted Harrow as an example of best practice, saying “Harrow Community Services and Northwick Park Hospital are examples of where joint investment in support services for women has translated into higher breastfeeding rates and reduced illness in babies”.

The breastfeeding support available includes drop-in groups every weekday run by a network of trained volunteer peer supporters, who also provide online, telephone, and one-to-one support outside of the groups. Hundreds of hours of expert support are given to mothers by these volunteers, with corresponding significant improvements in health outcomes for both mothers and babies.

As one of the best evidence-based interventions to reduce health inequalities, can the Cabinet please confirm that the funding to continue supporting this high value-for-money service is protected for the period of this Medium Term Financial Strategy that it is considering today?”

2.

Questioner: Raksha Pandya, Mind in Harrow

Asked of: Councillor Varsha Parmar, Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Equality and Wellbeing

Question: “How did you decide to propose to end the following Physical Activity programmes: Exercise on Referral – Leisure Centre, Aspire Exercise & Sherwood Clinic, Mental Health Personal Trainers and Health Trainers Cardiac Exercise on Referral?”

3.

Questioner: Shambhu Gupta

Asked of: Councillor Varsha Parmar, Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Equality and Wellbeing

Question: “Will there be increased pressure on the family GP and the local hospitals after the health visitor service is cut?”

4.

Questioner: Clare Castell, NCT Antenatal Teacher

Asked of: Councillor Varsha Parmar, Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Equality and Wellbeing

Question: Proposed cuts to the Child Health Budget

“Increasing breastfeeding rates modestly could cut **childhood obesity** dramatically. UNICEF estimate a saving of £4 billion nationally (UNICEF 2012).
Prevention is more cost effective than interventions after it has occurred.

Can Harrow Council ensure that the funding for Breastfeeding in Harrow will continue?”

5.

Questioner: Kate White

Asked of: Councillor Varsha Parmar, Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Equality and Wellbeing

Question: “As commissioning responsibility for health visiting services were only transferred to the Council in October, it is clear that the

Council will not have had sufficient time to consult with relevant stakeholders, consider options for mitigation, consult with service users, and assess how this cut would impact on the local community in comparison to possible cuts in other areas. It is out of keeping with international acknowledgement (see e.g. Michael Marmot and the WHO) of the need to invest in people from the youngest age possible, and the clear economic and social benefits of doing so.

How can the Council justify making this decision when it has clearly not had the opportunity to fully think this through, particularly when it is so out of keeping with local, national and international strategy?"

6.

Questioner: Helen Fairfax

Asked of: Councillor Varsha Parmar, Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Equality and Wellbeing

Question: "Harrow has the highest number of people at risk suffering from diabetes type 2 in the UK (Steer, K 2015). Exclusive breastfeeding can reduce the conversion rate from pregnancy - induced diabetes to Type 2 by 60% (Gunderson E. 2015) Can you reassure Harrow residents that there will continue to be on demand support for women to exclusively breastfeed their babies longer than the first six weeks post partum."

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AGENDA PART I

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS (ITEM 5)

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 Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Keith Ferry, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Business, Planning and Regeneration

Question: “How will your Regeneration strategy increase the Council’s income from Business Rates?”

2.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Graham Henson, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Crime and Community Safety

Question: “Could you provide from your business plan the estimated take-up rates for both the full and part-year garden waste collections?”

3.

Questioner: Councillor Richard Almond

Asked of: Councillor David Perry, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships and Corporate Leadership

Question: “In your report to the full Council meeting on 3rd December, you said that the Council is “making millions” without giving any details. How many millions and from where?”

4.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Sue Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Community, Culture and Resident Engagement

Question: “Can you confirm whether the ‘Library Strategy Phase 2’ saving in the draft budget will involve the closure of any more of Harrow’s libraries?”

5.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Anne Whitehead, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Older People

Question: “Councils are now entitled to raise council tax by a further 2% to fund social care provision. Do you have any plans to introduce such a proposal between now and the publication of the final budget in February?”

6.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Sachin Shah, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Major Contracts

Question: “Can you provide details of how many accountants are employed by the Council’s Finance Department?”

7.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Glen Hearnden, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: “How does the current position of the Housing Revenue Account’s finances affect your ability to build more council houses?”

8.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Glen Hearnden, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: “When do you expect the finalisation of the Garage Strategy Review?”

9.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Glen Hearnden, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: “When are the proposed dwellings for private sale expected to come to market so as to provide funds to help finance the building of new affordable rent and shared ownership homes in Harrow?”

10.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Anne Whitehead, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Older People

Question: “Are you confident the sizeable commercial ambitions regarding My Community ePurse, as set out in the draft budget, are achievable?”

11.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Varsha Parmar, Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Equality and Wellbeing

Question: “The ‘review’ of health visits in the draft budget appears to remove the entirety of the funding for this provision. Can you confirm if funding or provision will be made-up elsewhere, or will this ‘review’ effectively stop this service?”

12.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Simon Brown, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Young People

Question: “Can you explain what impact the cut proposed in the draft budget to the special needs service will have on service delivery, given at £1.1m it’s approaching half the total funding?”

13.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Sachin Shah, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Major Contracts

Question: “Do you anticipate using any of the general reserves during the 2016-17 financial year?”

14.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Sachin Shah, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Major Contracts

Question: “Do you plan to make any more in-year (2015-16) cuts to departmental budgets?”