

COUNCIL

THURSDAY 1 DECEMBER 2016

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS WRITTEN RESPONSES

Contact: Alison Atherton, Senior Professional - Democratic Services
Tel: 020 8424 1266 E-mail: alison.atherton@harrow.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING

-

1 DECEMBER 2016

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for the asking of written questions by Members of Council or a Member of the Executive or the Chair of any Committee.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Sachin Shah (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships and Devolution)

Question 5:

“You’ve claimed you want to work closer with the voluntary sector in Harrow, how do you envisage doing this?”

Answer:

We have a strong relationship with the VCS. I see them as a critical friend, as any friend, we don’t always agree, but we respect each other.

The problems of funding are well-known and none of our making. If your Tory Government would stop cutting the council’s funding by so much money, then we would have more money to help the VCS.

One of the key things the VCS asked for was clarity of funding. That is why the December Cabinet meeting will discuss proposal to fund a generalist advice service and a new tapered fund, giving a three-year view of the landscape.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING -

1 DECEMBER 2016

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for the asking of written questions by Members of Council or a Member of the Executive or the Chair of any Committee.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Sachin Shah (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships and Devolution)

Question 6:

“What are you doing to help the poorest people in Harrow?”

Answer:

Harrow remains committed to supporting the vulnerable and has in place a council tax support scheme which awards over £13m annually to around 13,000 of our most financially vulnerable households.

The Labour administration has ensured that additional money would be spent for statutory services for the poorest and most vulnerable people, including protecting children and caring for the elderly. We have invested a further £100,000 to improve our customer service, making sure that those affected by issues such as delays to their benefits can get help even if they do not have access to the internet.

Our regeneration programme will bring a large number of benefits for the poorest in Harrow as well. The Heart of Harrow Area Action Plan includes a £1.75bn investment programme, with new affordable homes, new homes, 3000 new jobs and a new library being built. We are building the first council homes for the first time in 30 years, we are building a better Harrow.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING -

1 DECEMBER 2016

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for the asking of written questions by Members of Council or a Member of the Executive or the Chair of any Committee.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Sachin Shah (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships and Devolution)

Question 7:

“Why do you keep pushing short-term solutions for Harrow’s long term problems when this will inevitably leave the problems unsolved and cost residents more? “

Answer:

I don’t believe we are. In 2012, the Labour administration set Harrow’s first ever two-year budget and last year we set the first ever three-year budget. They were both about long term decision making. December’s cabinet will be discussing a three year plans for the VCS.

The administration’s most long term plan is our regeneration programme, It’s a plan not for the next few years, but for the next generation.

This is in comparison to the short term thinking in your eight months as leader. We came in, to find no planning for the huge budget gap in the budget. In fact, your short term thinking as leader made the budget gap go up, rather than down. The Labour administration will never take such reckless actions.

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for the asking of written questions by Members of Council or a Member of the Executive or the Chair of any Committee.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

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

Question 8:

“At a public meeting at Harrow Arts Centre regarding its future, it was noted that the Council is to shortly reveal a course of action regarding the future of the arts centre and the money invested in it. When will we hear this? “

Answer:

Additional significant capital funding of £2.5 million is now potentially available to Cultura London from the John Lyons Charity. This together with an increase in the length of leases between the Council and Cultura London to meet the needs of potential funders will now enable the transfer of arts and heritage services to the Cultura London charitable trust. This transfer of services is recommended in the Cabinet Report ‘Future Delivery of Arts and Heritage Services: Update and approval of lease length’ to be considered at the Cabinet Meeting on the 8th December 2016.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING -

1 DECEMBER 2016

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for the asking of written questions by Members of Council of a Member of the Executive or the Chair of any Committee.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Kiran Ramchandani (Portfolio Holder for Performance, Corporate Resources and Customer Service)

Question 9:

“How many days did it take to arrange the Chief Officers' Employment Panel meeting of 8th December?”

Answer:

A request for a meeting to be set up was received by Democratic Services on 23rd November and they confirmed the date and time of the meeting on 25th November.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING -

1 DECEMBER 2016

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for the asking of written questions by Members of Council or a Member of the Executive or the Chair of any Committee.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Sachin Shah (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships and Devolution)

Question 10:

“Are you happy with the conclusions of the LGA Peer Review?”

Answer:

Yes. I'm glad it has shown that we are a good council and we could be a great council. It is good to read that, an independent outside team which included a Conservative councillor, has looked at what we do and how we do it. They believe we are doing a good job, and this Labour administration will continue to build on that success.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING

-

1 DECEMBER 2016

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for the asking of written questions by Members of Council or a Member of the Executive or the Chair of any Committee.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

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

Question 11:

“What is the current estimated total capital receipt for the 2016-2017 property disposal programme?”

Answer:

If you are referring to the ‘Property Disposal Programme 2016/17’ report that went to November 2016 Cabinet. This report detailed a number of properties that are surplus to the Council’s requirements which were agreed for disposal. For commercial reasons the estimated sale value of the properties was included in part two (exempt) therefore it is not possible to publically state a value at this stage. The properties are proposed for disposal at auction in December.

The capital receipts generated will be applied under DCLG’s capital receipt flexibility policy. The required reporting arrangements for this, DCLG recommend each authority disclose the projects that will be funded or part funded through capital receipts to full Council. This requirement can be satisfied as part of the annual budget setting process. Therefore in accordance with the reporting requirements, the optimum use of capital receipts, that fall within this flexibility, is referred to in the draft budget to December Cabinet and will be reported as part of the final budget to February Cabinet and Council.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING -

1 DECEMBER 2016

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for the asking of written questions by Members of Council or a Member of the Executive or the Chair of any Committee.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Sachin Shah (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships and Devolution)

Question 12:

“Do you think that it was appropriate for the Chair of the Planning Committee, speaking with his regeneration "hat" on, to seemingly apply pressure to a member of his party that external grant funding (including from the GLA) was apparently at stake during a committee meeting as they were deliberating on a major planning application?”

Answer:

I don't accept that he was applying pressure. If we look at the planning committee, it's the Tory members who should consider their conduct. Your group votes on block every time. Maybe this is something the standards board should look at.

The Labour members of the committee come into the room with an open mind and make decisions based on the facts put to them at the committee.

Cllr Ferry in his capacity as the Chair of the Planning Committee, summed up the planning matters.

The GLA loan and grant funding which supports the affordable housing offer through the proposal is both a factual point as well as a material planning consideration. It was correct and proper to remind the Committee of all the material planning considerations that should be weighed and balanced before making their decision.