

CABINET MINUTES

21 JULY 2011

Chairman: * Councillor Bill Stephenson

Councillors:

* Bob Currie	* Graham Henson
* Margaret Davine	* Thaya Idaikkadar
* Keith Ferry	* Phillip O'Dell
* Brian Gate	* David Perry
* Mitzi Green	

**In attendance:
(Councillors)**

Barry Macleod-Cullinane	Minute 241
Paul Osborn	Minute 241
Anthony Seymour	Minute 241
Stephen Wright	Minute 241 & 247

* Denotes Member present

237. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 9 – Procurement of Temporary Agency Worker Services

Councillor Keith Ferry declared a prejudicial interest in that both his wife and he worked in the recruitment industry and knew some of the people employed in three of the companies under consideration. He would leave the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 14 – School Expansion Programme

Councillor Christine Bednell declared a personal interest in that she was a governor of a primary school, that was being asked to accommodate a bulge class. She would remain in the room to listen to the debate on this matter.

Councillor Brian Gate declared a personal interest in that he was a governor of St John Church of England Primary School, which might be asked to

provide a bulge class. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Mitzi Green declared an interest in that she was a governor of Kenmore Park School, which accommodated a bulge class. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar declared an interest in that he was a governor of Welldon Park School. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane declared a personal interest in that his sister was a teacher at Hatch End High School. He would remain in the room to listen to the debate on this matter.

Councillor David Perry declared an interest in that he was a governor of Marlborough Primary School. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Tony Seymour declared an interest in that he as a governor of Pinner Park School. He would remain in the room to listen to the debate on this matter.

Councillor Navin Shah declared an interest in that he was on a governing body. He would remain in the room to listen to the debate on this matter.

Agenda Items 17 and 21 – Second Phase Property Disposal Programme 2011/12

Prior to the consideration of these items, Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane declared a personal interest in that two of the properties listed in the reports were situated in the Ward he represented. He would remain in the room to listen to the debate on this matter.

238. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2011 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

239. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that the following petitions had been received and that they were referred to the Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel, and the Corporate Director Community and Environment, for consideration:

1. Overcrowded Parking in Stanley Road, Sherwood Avenue, Eastcote Avenue and Roxeth Green Avenue

Councillor Graham Henson presented a petition signed by 32 residents with the following terms:

“We, the undersigned, demand that, as a matter of urgency, Harrow Council address the overcrowded parking in Stanley Road, Sherwood Avenue, Eastcote Avenue and Roxeth Green Avenue.

Since the construction of Barratt’s – The Arc situated at the end of Stanley Road was completed at the beginning of March 2009, and with new residents having moved into the large development, the volume of traffic has increased alarmingly, parking has become a nightmare and drivers are also regularly travelling at excessive speeds along Stanley Road and neighbouring residential roads.

When the application was agreed we were informed by Harrow Council that the parking controls in Stanley Road and surrounding area would be reviewed and residents fully consulted using the £30,000 Section 106 funding from this large scale development.

Therefore, we the undersigned demand that Harrow Council, using Section 106 money, urgently undertake an investigation to establish a solution to the increased traffic, excessive speeding and overcrowded parking on this and neighbouring narrow residential roads with the aim of also having permit restricted parking between 18:00 and 19:00 for this area.”

2. Resurfacing of Orchard Grove

Councillor Navin Shah presented a petition signed by 129 residents of Orchard Grove with the following terms:

“We, the undersigned residents of the Borough of Harrow, wish to voice concern about the deteriorating condition of the road surface in Orchard Grove. As Council taxpayers, we feel it is unacceptable that the road in Orchard Grove is in such poor condition.

All road users and pedestrians are affected by the intolerable road surface which is pot-holed, dangerous and not been resurfaced since at least about 1975. We, the undersigned, as Harrow Council to resurface the road as a matter of urgency.”

3. Petition in support of Parking Provision in Pinner Road – Ref: Review of Parking/Public Consultation, July 2011

Mr Bhavin Thanki, an owner of a local business, presented a petition, signed by 266 residents, with the following terms:

“We, the undersigned businesses/traders and customers who use the shopping facilities on Pinner Road call on the Council to note our support to the following aspects of the above consultation for County Roads, Pinner Road and Neptune Road:

1. Car parking on Pinner Road: There are serious problems of car parking for the shoppers and we welcome introduction of pay

and display car parking bays outside shops as shown on Plan C. We would urge to maximise this provision;

2. Loading/Unloading: We call upon the Council to make this provision to ensure that they meet the requirements of businesses/traders.

We have suffered for far too long from the lack of car parking facilities. In expressing our support, we also urge the Council to expedite the process and deliver the parking provision before any further damage is done to the survival and vitality of this shopping parade which is now under most serious threat from other major retail outlets in the immediate proximity of Pinner Road."

240. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that the following public questions had been received:

1.

Questioner: Matthew Lloyd

Asked of: Councillor Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges

Question: "Does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that we should support all teachers in Harrow, whether they are striking or not striking, as they struggle during this time of budget cuts?"

Answer: Thank you for your question and I agree with you entirely. Our teachers work extremely hard in all of our schools in the best interests of young people and their education. I have expressed that support to the Head Teachers of the schools I visited and have also expressed in statements to the Press.

I think you will agree with me that we never cease to be amazed by the creativity, purpose and dedication of our teaching staff to the people in their care and it is more important now to acknowledge that during the extra pressures we are placing on them due to the public expenditure squeeze. As Portfolio Holder, with the assistance of all of our excellent officers in the Council authority, I will continue to urge the government to value our teachers as we have done for many years under all political administrations in the past and this will continue under this administration.

Supplemental Question: So in support for teachers does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that we should do everything we can to protect them against the cruel, callous and divisive

attack on the profession through academies and pension reforms, therefore aiming for not the Big Society but a united society amongst teachers in Harrow?

Supplemental Answer: Those schools that have converted to academies have done so in a democratic manner and therefore I think that we have agreed as an administration to support academies as they are actually starting on 1 August. As far as the callous cuts, I have always believed that we should fund public services properly and they should be accountable to members of the public. The teaching staff and our schools, which I think are excellent, will continually be supported by myself.

2.

Questioner: Raksha Pandya

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: "We congratulate Harrow Council on being awarded the best performing Council in the country this year by the MJ Awards.

We welcome the Harrow Cabinet's intention that "the Council is aiming to be amongst the best performers in London" on mental health personalisation as stated at the Cabinet meeting on June 22nd 2011.

How much money is the Leader committing from the Transformation and Priority Initiatives Fund this year, as mental health has been confirmed a priority initiative and is in need of transformation, to make sure the Council achieves this aim for mental health personalisation?"

Answer: Thank you for your question and congratulations and in front of us you see the actual Award. This achievement was very much a team effort, involving staff, the voluntary and community sectors, and local residents.

My colleague, Councillor Margaret Davine, and I are extremely committed to supporting Mental Health Services. We are setting up a Transformation and Priority Initiatives Fund and deciding on the criteria for bidding to that fund. Once this is done we set out the criteria and bids to the fund, which will be judged according to those laid out criteria and regular reports

back to Cabinet. We will be looking for Invest to Save projects and, when we set the next budget, we will be looking to put as much help as we can in mental health. From the Local Area Agreement we have had some help with projects involving helping people who have mental health problems to get back to work. We are doing everything we can but, as you know, there are a fair amount of cuts so we do have some difficulty but we will keep trying.

Supplemental Question: I have evidence here from the Care Quality Commission website that in the Care Quality Commission Community Based Care patient Survey 2010, this is from the reference CQC website, “overall CNWL NHS Foundation Trust scored as one of the worst performing trusts in the country on the care they have provided to patients in the past twelve months”. The reference is the Patients’ Survey Report 2010. In addition, CNWL scored the lowest across all its own service areas on day to day living support, a council responsibility related to personalisation.

If the Council cannot now increase investment in the infrastructure for personal budgets for people with mental health problems, how does the Leader justify removing £2.1m from the Adults Social Care budget for other purposes?

Supplemental Answer: We have not removed £2.1m from the Social Care budget.

I certainly am not qualified to answer this supplemental question. I know that Councillor Margaret Davine, at the last meeting, did say that some of the quotes from the CQC need careful interpretation.

Is that something you can answer now Margaret or do you want to give a written answer?

Cllr Margaret Davine:
(Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing)

I believe that this quote is from a different part of the overall survey, so I will look at that and write to the questioner.

3.

Questioner: Mark Gillham, Chief Executive of MIND in Harrow

Asked of: Councillor David Perry, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: "Mind in Harrow supports the proposed transition of the Council's Voluntary and Community Grants to a commissioned process, as long as the needs and aspirations of Harrow residents experiencing mental health problems and especially new arrival refugees are included and heard from these disadvantaged communities themselves in accordance with best practice. JSNA Refresh 2010 states "5. People with mental health needs Main needs: To develop equality of access for black and minority ethnic communities and culturally appropriate services, transition protocols, advocacy, holistic and social models of care.

How has the Portfolio Holder with officers designed the new commissioning process to ensure these needs are taken into account and when will these needs assessments take place?"

Answer: Thank you for your question. I welcome your support for the new Commissioning process. As you know we are still considering how the new arrangements should work in consultation with the Voluntary Sector. For users with mental health problems we are committed to understanding their needs through a combination of user feedback, the JSNA which you have already referred to and regular review of user needs. This should help us to build a picture of needs along with our regular dialogue with the Voluntary Sector.

Supplemental Question: Related to my question about refugee needs, will the Portfolio Holder support the Voluntary Sector proposal led by MIND, CAB and Age Concern, to the Outer London Fund which is imminent this month, which could offer new resources to refugee and new arrival communities, which I am sure you will agree, are so urgently needed?

Supplemental Answer: As I previously said Mr Gillham, we are consulting at the minute, in developing those plans going forward but, all of the points which you have raised will be taken on board and I am sure we can discuss that going forward.

4.

Questioner: Neil Smith

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: "At a consultation event on 28th June 2011 with mental health service users and carers, attended by two council officers as part of the formal Council consultation process, 60 Harrow residents provided evidence that the loss of a Discretionary Freedom Pass would mean that they would "not be able to travel to work placements", "won't be able to access education/ or voluntary work" and for a carer "If the discretionary pass of the person I care is withdrawn, it will have huge impact on my work".

Is the Leader aware of the serious impact that the loss of the Discretionary Freedom Pass will have on mental health service users capacity to make steps towards employment or for carers to retain employment?"

Answer: Thank you for your question. I am aware of the public meeting, and a reason why we are consulting widely. We want to know all the potential impacts on the current and future service users, collate the views to allow the administration to evaluate any options for change in the future. The consultation ends in the middle of August.

In the consultation currently taking place, proposals for changes in the eligibility for the Discretionary Freedom Passes specifically allow for the retention of the concession for residents who are affected by mental illness. The Council is committed to ensuring that those most in need and specifically those receiving Care Programme Approaches (CPA) and known to our Mental Health Teams do not lose this concession.

However, it is worth clarifying that both the existing criteria used and the proposed eligibility criteria for the Discretionary Freedom Pass make it clear that they are used for the purpose of the holder to get to and from a mental health hospital or clinic to receive treatment and or medication and not for supporting or subsidising the travel costs of someone getting to or from work.

That is just a caveat, but if you look at the criteria which are laid out, which we are consulting on, which

we will take on board, there is a broad, general principle of how we will deal with eligibility criteria for people with mental health problems which we have been discussing with MIND, HAD and Mencap and there is still a decision to be made on that.

Supplemental Question: What is the Council's forecast increased cost per year to be incurred across all Council Directorate budgets if half or more of the Discretionary Freedom Passes for people with mental health problems are terminated by the end of the year and their mental health begins to deteriorate as a result?

Supplemental Answer: I cannot answer that directly and that is also a pre-supposition that this will happen. We are still at the consultation stage, but I will give you a written answer on that.

5.

Questioner: Bharti Vyas

Asked of: Councillor Margaret Davine, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

Question: "In the Council's pre consultation document ("Working together to save money" page 8), it states that charging for day care would result in a "£200k savings assuming attendance for 2 days at a charge of £30.75 per day."

What is the Council's estimate for how many people with mental health problems will be required to make a contribution to their social care and on average how much will they be charged for day care per annum if they were allocated a personal budget equivalent to 2 days week day care, as in the pre-consultation example?"

Answer: The information that you have quoted from the pre-consultation document relates to all client groups and not just mental health service users and the main point is that we are conducting a very wide and inclusive consultation that does not end until mid August.

As part of the consultation all potential impacts are being identified and worked on in the sub-groups that are looking at EQAs, including those which will specifically affect mental health service users and Mark Gilham, Chief Executive of MIND in Harrow, attends these. This information is currently being collated and it will be presented to the consultation

steering group, which you are part of, and elected Members to enable informed recommendations and decisions to be made but that is a long way off now and we do not have these figures calculated in that way. What you saw in the pre-consultation document was really just an estimate to give people an idea.

Supplemental Question: This contribution in the pre consultation example amounts of approximately £3,000 per year per person, £30 per day and multiplied 2 days per week and 52 weeks. People with mental health problems currently receive far less than this amount already as a personal budget allocated in our experience. What evidence does the Council have to demonstrate that introduction of a contribution of policy and personalisation will not make it impossible for mental health service users to afford day care and little community support that they cannot hope to recover?

Supplemental Answer: I could not absolutely catch everything you said, but what I would say is that we are not at a position yet to start thinking how much contribution different people will make. We will be working as we get the outcomes of the consultation very carefully. I do not intend that anyone will be expected to pay for care at a rate they cannot afford. We will be revising personal budgets and looking at the rates so that we make sure that everything is done fairly. We do not want to exclude anyone from the actual services they need. So that is the work that we will do when we get all the outcomes in and I know you will help us with that.

6.

Questioner: Jayshree Shah

Asked of: Councillor Margaret Davine, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

Question: “The Draft Fairer Contributions Policy 2011/12 document was not consulted on during the pre-consultation period and includes significant more policy detail.

So that mental health service users have access to this document and the best possible chance to give feedback during the formal consultation period, has this consultation document been made available at mental health day centres and clinics?”

Answer: You are correct that the Draft Fairer Contributions Policy was not included in the pre-consultation activity. The pre-consultation period was specifically designed to identify saving options for Adult Social Care. All participants were invited to suggest possible ideas for saving money as well as discussing several possible areas, including contributions.

Following a report from the preliminary consultation and agreement from the steering group to go to full consultation, four areas and their documentation had been produced and widely distributed, which includes the Draft Fairer Contributions Policy. Distribution has included mental health care day centres and clinics and information has also been sent to all known mental health carers. Specific consultation events have been organised to ensure that the views of mental health service users and their carers are appropriately represented in the final feedback documentation.

I would be very surprised if they are not already there and if they are not, please let us know immediately.

Supplemental Question: Does the Portfolio Holder believe that this is sufficient to enable mental health service users to fully engage in the consultation process for the Draft Fairer Contributions Policy by mid-August?

Supplemental Answer: I do not think the document on its own would be, but certainly the sort of events that are being arranged especially for mental health users will help considerably and we have offered, as you know, to come and talk to anybody or any small group that would like to know more about the detail of it. I know it is quite difficult but I know MIND are helping us a lot with making that happen, so I hope that we are making it available to people in a way that they can take in and respond on.

241. Councillor Questions

RESOLVED: To note the following Councillor Questions had been received:

1.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: Do you have full confidence that the leadership team with you in Cabinet is making decisions in the best interests of Harrow residents?

Answer: I am going to follow the theme that you have been saying because this has been a very successful year for this administration.

We have frozen Council Tax, managed to deliver an underspend of £1.1m despite devastating in-year government cuts and budgetary failures by the previous administration. We have successfully dealt with a totally dilapidated IT system, launched an innovative programme of new projects which are defending and enhancing frontline services whilst making savings. The Council has won the MJ award, and thank you for your earlier congratulations, for Best Achieving Council over this last year. Our net residents' satisfaction has shot up by a staggering 15% over the last year. This has been achieved with the involvement of all 34 Labour Councillors and 10 Cabinet Members working together with staff, partners and local residents.

This record, I believe, stands for itself. An excellent team making difficult decisions in the best interests of Harrow residents to their evident satisfaction.

Supplemental Question: If you do have full confidence in your Cabinet team, did you follow the advice of your Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing whom this side holds in high esteem for her great knowledge and dedication to her Portfolio area when it came to deciding on how to use the £2.1m received under the S.256 Agreement and regarding our Council amendments, especially when, in answer to a member of the public, you said that you were not qualified to comment on this area of activity, so did you overrule your Portfolio Holder?

Supplemental Answer: The success of our team is evident in the residents' satisfaction.

2.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor Margaret Davine, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

Question: Why do you feel you were unable to support your administration when it came to our amendments to ensure that the £2.1 million of PCT funding was spent on Harrow's most vulnerable residents, instead of being paid into the Transformation and Priority Initiatives Fund?

Answer: In all political parties there are from time to time genuine disagreements and sometimes they are very sincerely held by the people that find themselves in that position. This was one such an occasion.

Supplemental Question: Do you think it was accurate of the Leader of the Council at Overview and Scrutiny last night to say that the recommendation from Cabinet to Council was passed without dissent?

Cllr Davine: I was not at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee last night, so I do not know what exactly was said. I have argued against the decision and would be surprised if everybody in this room did not realise that. Otherwise I would not have been in a position to abstain, and I refer to my earlier answer because that is the situation I feel I have been in.

3.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: Will you commit now to exempting the Adult Services budget in the event that your administration makes any in-year budget cuts?

Answer: We do not envisage at this stage that we would need to make any in-year budget cuts unless of course, central government introduces some more in-year cuts as it did last year.

We will continue to monitor our financial position and take appropriate action as necessary and it would not be sensible to rule anything in or anything out at this stage. I am sure you would agree that is a sensible way to look at it.

Supplemental Question: If you think there is a possibility that you might need to make in-year budget cuts, would it not have been sensible to put the £2.1m you were given specifically for Adult Social Care in a contingency fund that could

be used for that purpose?

Supplemental Answer: We already have a contingency fund for Adult Social Care. We put £1m in the PCT money in case there was difficulty between medical and social care. In relation to the consultation and whether or not we will make the savings there, we certainly do not want to pre-empt this. We do have a contingency already and that was the social care money which was used precisely for that purpose and that is what it is for.

4.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor David Perry, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: Will you rule out the privatisation of our parks and library services?

Answer: We are currently conducting the consultation "Let's Talk" with our residents on what they think about parks, libraries and other cultural services and how they would like to use them. We believe that we need to hear from our residents about how we should spend Council budgets on services in order to deliver what they need.

We are also interested in hearing what our residents think about who they think are best to provide those services. We have a commitment to ensure that we deliver cultural services which enhance the quality of life in the borough as cost effectively as possible.

Supplemental Question: Have you read your manifesto which states three times that you will not privatise the superb library service? Can I ask which is more meaningless, your manifesto or the consultation document which puts the option of privatisation on the table?

Supplemental Answer: As we often say, we are a listening Council and the options which we are highlighting and outlining to the public in our cultural consultation going out on our library services is that we want to hear what people say. We have put all options in there, so we want to hear on all options. We are open to all ideas and we will see what results come back, so let us not pre-empt them yet.

5.

Questioner: Councillor Stephen Wright

Asked of: Councillor David Perry, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: Regarding the installation of the automated machines in Harrow's libraries, can you please confirm:

- (a) The target date when all of Harrow's libraries will have the new technology fully installed and operating?
- (b) The revenue and capital costs of the new technology equipment when fully installed?
- (c) The installation costs of new technology equipment?
- (d) The redundancy costs of the 34 staff positions that were abolished?

Answer: Self service is already fully operational in seven of our eleven libraries. All libraries will be 'live' by the end of September 2011. The library service has been completely restructured since April 2011 and the staff are now working in their new roles.

The implementation costs are contained in full in the Full Business case presented to Council in October 2010. Final accounts have not yet been received but, to date, we understand that all costs are contained within the original cost envelope and savings are being delivered as projected.

The project is being delivered on time and to budget and will save the Council a net £2.6 million in the first five years of implementation.

Supplemental Question: To date how much money has been saved by the installation of the new technology? When do you think real savings will begin to be realised?

Supplemental Answer: As I said, we have not fully come to its conclusion of the roll-out of the service so we have not got the final accounts. However, once we do have a final account I am fully prepared to provide you with a copy in report form.

6.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Graham Henson, Portfolio Holder for

Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services

Question: Regarding the report on Agency Worker Service; will you guarantee that you view the savings it contains as achievable?

Answer: The contract, which has been jointly procured with Hammersmith & Fulham, enables us to make further efficiencies without impacting on delivery of services. The projected savings built in to the MTFs are deliberately conservative, as they are predicated on a number of factors which are variable or at this time unquantified, for example, the impact of the Agency Worker Regulations which come in later this year. These are set out in the Risk Management section of the report. I am therefore confident that the savings can be achieved.

7.

Questioner: Councillor Tony Seymour

Asked of: Councillor Keith Ferry, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise

Question: What is the latest position on the dispute relating to the old Safeway site in North Harrow?

Answer: Firstly, I need to make clear that the Council is not a party to any dispute that may currently be on-going.

This administration would like to see the Pinner Road frontage of this development brought into appropriate and active use as soon as possible.

I understand that the parties with a contractual interest in the site are Megabowl and Genesis Homes.

The Council has made clear to both parties its very strong desire to see the development of this facility completed as a matter of priority. Officers were advised on Tuesday 19 July that Genesis and Megabowl are still in discussion and hope to reach a settlement shortly.

Supplemental Question: When will the people of North Harrow get a supermarket which they so richly deserve and which is regarded as vital to the regeneration of the North Harrow shopping centre?

Supplemental Answer: I hope as soon as possible but the answer to your supplementary is the same as the answer to your primary question.

We have to wait for the outcome of the dispute between Genesis and Megabowl. The date of Tuesday 19 July is significant in that Genesis had a Board meeting that day. We do not know the outcome of that Board meeting but officers gave me the impression that Genesis had reached a conclusion with Megabowl and that the Board would have to consider that. I would hope within the next couple of months.

8.

Questioner: Councillor Tony Seymour

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: What programmes of road and pavement maintenance (if any) are planned for the next three years in Headstone North?

Answer: Currently programmed works for years 2011 and 2012 is the Pinner Park Avenue carriageway. Other roads in Headstone North Ward likely to be considered for inclusion in programmes over the next three years are probably Chantry Place footway, Melbourne Avenue carriageway, Randon Close carriageway, Manor Way carriageway and Holmdene Avenue carriageway.

Supplemental Question: I wish to highlight the special circumstances relating to Capel Gardens, Pinner, in my ward, in which the Chief Executive has recently received a letter from the residents and an informal petition. This road is in dire need of repair and replacement. It is a cul-de-sac, one of the steepest in the borough with 78 properties and 2 blocks of flats and also used by parents of the nearby St John Fisher School to drop their children off. Can this road be included in your current programme due to the very special circumstances?

Supplemental Answer: I think you inferred that there had already been a petition submitted to the Council. There is a methodology for the Department to deal with that petition, so you will hear the outcome from that petition.

The following questions were not reached in the time limit of 15 minutes. It was noted that written responses would be provided. The written responses provided are reproduced below:

9.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: Can you please clarify the process for allocating £100,000 received from TfL's Local Transport Fund scheme to four projects in Harrow, as stated in the report from June's meeting of TARSAP?

Answer: In each financial year the programme of local transport schemes is prepared in advance of the June TARSAP meeting by officers following confirmation of funding by TfL.

A review of current local issues of interest to Members, public and other key stakeholders is then undertaken by the team of Traffic officers and any links with the Mayoral transport objectives and Harrow's own LIP objectives established.

Potential schemes are then evaluated taking into account a wide range of factors including cost, delivery time scales, impact and likely public support. Generally, only the more minor schemes that can be delivered within the financial year and that are not already included in the main LIP programme are usually considered suitable. The suggested programme of schemes is then discussed with the Portfolio Holder to verify their suitability and the agreed schemes submitted in a report to TARSAP for consideration and wider debate. TARSAP will recommend the proposed programme, including any revisions required by the Panel, to the Portfolio Holder for approval.

Once approved by the Portfolio Holder the individual schemes are confirmed to TfL and officers will commence the delivery of the programme. For the 2011/12 programme TARSAP considered four schemes at their meeting on 23 June and recommended approval to the Portfolio Holder.

10.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: At the Cabinet Meeting of June 22nd 2011, you described the Council as having a "dysfunctional Housing Revenue Account" when your own out-turn report presented to Cabinet in June 2010 showed a £698k improvement in its position; why the discrepancy in your description in the course of a year?

Answer: I described the HRA as dysfunctional under the former administration because year after year income was less than expenditure and the HRA reserves were rapidly being frittered away; leasehold charges were continually wrongly charged and other charges were not being collected; tenant and leaseholders satisfaction was plummeting; TLCF meetings were not working. Need I go on? Slither and slide. Totally dysfunctional.

Over this last year we have swept this aside with a new broom through our Housing Ambition Plan under the leadership of Councillor Bob Currie and the Housing support team working together with our excellent staff in Housing and as well as working with tenants and leaseholders. TLCF has now been reformed; leaseholders' charges have at last been sorted out; income collected from tenants and potentially from leaseholders has substantially improved. For example, we reorganised the way we collect current tenants rent and improved the proportion of rent collected to 98.36%, from lower to upper quartile performance all in one year. We also reduced the percentage of tenants with more than 7 weeks rent arrears to 5.2% and this is now also in the upper quartile of performance. We reduced overall current tenants' rent arrears from £796k to £496k in one year. We also improved the leasehold collection process to reduce the total arrears from £241k to £122k. Yes it was dysfunctional but no longer.

Next year we expect the HRA account to be in the black for the first time in many years.

Looking ahead we anticipate that the Government's reform of the HRA – long overdue - will lead to an even healthier HRA.

Another very successful year I think you will agree.

11.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: You told me at Cabinet in October last year that your system of trialling Portfolio Holder assistants in secret was 'working very well'. Do you intend to continue using this system in the future, and if so/if not please explain why that is the case?

Answer: I have responded to this question a number of times and I have never said anything about 'secret'. As I have explained the procedure of trialling Portfolio Holder Assistants a year ago was a very sensible one to take for a new Administration with seven Cabinet members who had never served in a Cabinet and twelve totally new councillors. I have to say it has also been an outstanding success. As I have explained over and over again there is no need for such a procedure in the current situation.

242. Forward Plan 1 July 2011 - 31 October 2011

The Leader of the Council informed Cabinet that the item on 'Future of Cultural Services in Harrow' had been deferred.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 July to 31 October 2011.

243. Progress on Scrutiny Projects

RESOLVED: To receive and note the current progress of scrutiny reports.

RESOLVED ITEMS

244. Annual Health and Safety Report 2010/11

Cabinet received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, which summarised the Council's Health and Safety performance from April 2010 to March 2011. The report provided an update of activities undertaken and information on outcome measures, such as training undertaken, audits carried out and accident records.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services referred to the challenges that had faced the Council during 2010/11 and how these had been addressed. As a result, Health and Safety was being reviewed across the organisation and there had been an investment across all Directorates and schools.

Cabinet was informed that a Corporate Health and Safety Advisory Service had been set up and an online accident reporting system established. A self-audit tool would be introduced to improve the monitoring of performance in Health and Safety. Awareness of issues was important, and the issues raised at the Employees' Consultative Forum regarding comprehensive trend analysis, including comparative data, analysis and key trends would be taken on board.

In conclusion, the Portfolio Holder stated that the roll-out of the audit tool, the timetable set out in the Improvement Plan would help the service to progress in the right direction.

RESOLVED: That the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Performance be noted.

Reason for Decision: To provide assurance and visibility of health and safety performance.

245. Key Decision: Procurement of Temporary Agency Worker Services

Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, together with a confidential appendix, which sought agreement to enter into a "call-off" contract for the supply of agency workers.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services reported that the proposal would lead to greater efficiencies and highlighted some of the key aspects, as follows:

- the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham had awarded the contract to Pertemps Recruitment Partnership Limited at their Cabinet meeting on 18 July, subject to the expiry of the call-in period;
- there would be a reduction in total cost for the provision of all aspects of agency worker provision;
- the provider would support the Council in its commitment to work in the local community and businesses in economic regeneration activities;
- the proposal would deliver savings and that these had been incorporated in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The utilisation of agency workers and delivery of savings would be monitored.

The Portfolio Holder moved an amendment to the recommendations, details of which are set out in resolution 2 below.

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts commended officers on the proposal which would help make significant savings.

The Leader of the Council was confident that other London boroughs would also utilise the contract arrangements thereby realising savings. He stated that the Council was discussing the provision of shared services with neighbouring boroughs.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) a “call-off” contract for the supply of temporary Agency worker services, under the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Framework for Agency Worker Services Agreement, be awarded;
- (2) the “call-off” contract commence on 1 October 2011 for a period of 4 years on the basis of Option 1B – standard service with fixed pence mark up;
- (3) officers arrange contract mobilisation meetings with the successful tenderer to ensure a smooth implementation.

Reason for Decision: To provide a cost effective supply of temporary agency workers for the Council.

246. Strategic Performance Report (Q4)

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services introduced a report, which summarised Council and service performance against key measures and drew attention to areas requiring action. He added that the Council had performed well against the financial challenges which were severe.

The Leader of the Council stated that the most recent accolade received had been the prestigious MJ Award, given to the Council, as recognition for being the Best Achieving Council for 2011. The Panel of distinguished judges had commended the maturity of both the political and managerial leaders, and complimented Harrow for delivering a “sustained and embedded change using a modern approach to doing business but never losing sight of its priorities, namely its residents”. Moreover, the overall satisfaction rate amongst residents was 63%, which was a rise of 15% when compared to previous years. The Council’s priority ‘Untied and Involved Communities’ had shown an increase of 20%, as more residents felt that the Council was taking account of their views. Overall, the levels of engagement had increased, and the results of the 2011 staff survey had also been positive. However, the Council would continue to face a difficult future but it would not lose sight of its responsibilities.

Portfolio Holders echoed the sentiments expressed by the Leader of the Council and outlined the notable achievements and challenges in each of their Portfolios. Of particular note were:

- that financial management had been improved showing an underspend of £1.1m;
- the reserves held by the Council had increased;
- the position of the Capital Programme had improved;
- the 'Let's Talk' engagement campaign had assisted in shaping a new vision and priorities for the Council;
- the recycling rate was excellent and residents ought to be applauded for their participation in this regard;
- street cleaning had been vastly improved;
- the Council had recruited over 1,200 Neighbourhood Champions and ought to applaud the good community spirit in Harrow;
- personal budgets had helped to improve outcomes for users;
- the reablement service would help people live more independently;
- Harrow had been accepted as one of the pilot authorities for the setting up of the Health & Wellbeing Board which would be to its benefit;
- the Council was working positively with the appropriate bodies in light of the issues of closure relating to the care home operator, Southern Cross, in order to minimise any disruption to any displacements;
- rent arrears continued to fall;
- Help2Let agency to match residents with those on housing waiting lists with private landlords was innovative and beneficial. The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services congratulated staff for this piece of work;
- the Children's Services had performed well with the pioneering adoption service being recognised as the best in the country. School exclusion rates had been reduced, work to ensure that schools were supported in their move towards becoming academies had been recognised, the Harrow Schools' Improvement Partnership (HSIP) was a unique response to government cuts to help schools improve and which other boroughs had taken an interest in; these being amongst the many achievements in the Directorate and schools against significant pressures;
- the Place Shaping Directorate was looking to regenerate areas through the Major Development Panel, the Harrow & Wealdstone Intensification area would deliver on new homes, jobs and help enhance the local environment, the Xcite project had supported people into work.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services added that progress on the Better Deal for Residents Programme had been significant, various projects had been delivered on time such as the Customer Call Centre, Libraries, Radio Frequency IDentification (RFID), and generally the feedback from staff and residents had been positive. Sickness amongst staff had been reduced and the cost saving in this area should not be underestimated. However, the Council would not be complacent and recognised the need to build on the success achieved to date.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and Portfolio Holders continue working with officers to achieve improvement against identified key challenges.

Reason for Decision: To note performance against key measures and to identify and assign corrective action where necessary.

247. Response to the Standing Scrutiny Review of the Better Deal for Residents Programme - Interim Report, Project Management

Cabinet received a report responding to the recommendations of the Better Deal for Residents Programme Standing Scrutiny Review and provided an update of progress for delivering improved project management practice at the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services welcomed the response report together with the Better Deal for Residents Programme Standing Scrutiny Review report. He assured Members of the current administration's commitment to the work carried out by the scrutiny.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Review Group welcomed the response report to the recommendations made and urged that these be taken forward in their entirety.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the two reports and invited scrutiny to carry out a further review when the responses to its recommendations were implemented. In concluding, he thanked the Members and scrutiny staff for their work in this regard.

RESOLVED: That the responses to the recommendations of the Better Deal for Residents Programme Standing Scrutiny Review be approved.

Reason for Decision: To embed improved and robust project and programme management practice at the Council.

248. Motion Referred to Executive - London Grants

RESOLVED: That the motion be received and approved.

Reason for Decision: To continue to pursue best value grant provision, as appropriate.

249. Key Decision: Integrated Planning 2012/13 to 2016/17

Cabinet received a joint report of the Interim Director of Finance and Assistant Chief Executive setting out a framework for the development of a new Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2012/13 to 2015/16.

The Assistant Chief Executive stated that the report set out the national context within which the Council's planning process would sit this year, the national finance picture around local government, the Council's planning framework and its strategy for closing funding gaps.

The report set out a number of key changes in the external environment within which the Council would operate, such as average grant reductions for local government of 7.25% per annum, the Localism Bill which had the central purpose of devolving more power to citizens and would abolish the housing subsidy system thereby introducing self-financing, the Welfare Reform Bill which was likely to create the legislative framework for merging various means tested benefits into a new universal credit, the Munro Review had recommended changes around child protection and the Dilnot Commission which was expected to make recommendation on an affordable and sustainable funding system for care.

The Assistant Chief Executive set the scene for local government in the context of the national finance picture, the most notable being the reduction in the grant received, a review of how local authorities would be funded and the funding gaps in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Moreover, the impact of the review of resources and capitalisation were unknown factors. The key driver for Harrow's planning framework was the Council's Vision "Working Together: Our Harrow, Our Community" and its Priorities. There would be further tough choices to be made and these would be tested in November and December through the Council's Let's Talk initiative.

Going forward, the Council would be reviewing the branding of its Transformation Programme. It would also be developing the principles of what it would look like in three years' time and the change that would be required to get there. The Council would be engaging with and involving residents more than ever before, and looking at ways to empower staff further. In taking these matters further, officers would be submitting additional reports to future meetings of Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the timetable for the planning process at Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
- (2) the strategy for closing future funding gaps set out at Appendix 2 to the report be approved;
- (3) the approach to consultation be approved.

Reason for Decision: To promote effective medium to long term planning.

250. Key Decision: School Expansion Programme

The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges introduced a report setting out a proposal for a school expansion programme, as part of the overall School Place Planning Strategy 2010/13, to meet the projected increased demand for school places in Harrow. He added that the whole of London was in the same situation, thereby placing a duty on local authorities to provide sufficient school places for its area in line with its statutory responsibilities. Cabinet was informed that the framework would help gauge demand and plan ahead.

The Portfolio Holder paid tribute to the work carried out by the former Portfolio Holder and the current Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in this area, including the support provided to schools by the Council.

Cabinet was informed that the projected demands on school places were based on demographic and other data, such as migration and proposed housing developments. Cross-working across Directorates would help ensure that pressures were highlighted at an early stage, such as approvals given for housing and areas earmarked for regeneration. Planning in terms of the school expansion programme would have to be developed on existing information but in the context of external development like free schools and academies and the emerging national capital strategy.

The Portfolio Holder was pleased that the Secretary of State for Education had acknowledged the need for financial help to be given to local authorities to allow them to provide extra school places in order to meet the pressures due to demographic changes. He assured Cabinet that an overarching equality impact assessment would be undertaken together with individual ones.

The Leader of the Council drew attention to the report from the Education Consultative Forum meeting held on 27 June, which was noted.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) as part of the overall School Place Planning Strategy 2010/13, a school expansion programme be implemented to meet the increased demand for school places;
- (2) the detailed decision-making within the school expansion programme be delegated to the Corporate Director Children's Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges, and a report on the capital investment requirements be submitted to Cabinet for further approval in due course;
- (3) the policy position about Free Schools and Academies in Harrow be noted.

Reason for Decision: To ensure there are sufficient school places to fulfil the local authority's statutory responsibilities.

251. Key Decision: Mollison Way, Queensbury - Streets for People Scheme

Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director Community and Environment, setting out the Mollison Way, streets for people scheme, funded by the Transport for London (TfL). The outcome of the recent consultation exercise was included in the report, which sought approval to implement the scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety reported that Mollison Way was situated in Edgware Ward with high density residences that were suited to this type of proposal. In terms of its history, Mollison Way and the surrounding roads were constructed on the former Stag Lane Aerodrome following its closure in 1934. Funding for the scheme had been secured until 2012.

The Portfolio Holder added that extensive local engagement had taken place during May and June, and that the main focus of the scheme was to create an area where pedestrians and cyclists had precedence over motorists and an environment that was safe and inviting. The scheme would offer considerable safety benefits to children from Stag Lane schools, which had supported the current scheme design.

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, speaking in her capacity as an Edgware Ward Councillor, expressed her support for the scheme which would benefit a deprived area. She was pleased that additional money for the planting of trees had also been identified for this area, as this would help enhance the proposed scheme.

The scheme was also applauded by the Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the results of the public consultation exercise and the recommendation from the Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Committee meeting held on 23 June 2011 be noted;
- (2) the scheme be implemented and associated statutory consultation be undertaken;
- (3) the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety be authorised to consider objections to the scheme arising from the statutory consultation process and to make any necessary amendments to the scheme.

Reason for Decision: To make significant local improvements to the area and contribute to achieving the Council's Corporate Priorities. To improve the quality of life for the local community and significantly improve the highway environment and public realm.

252. Key Decision: Harrow Green Grid

Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director Place Shaping, which sought approval for the use of the Harrow Green Grid for the purpose of supporting the co-ordinated management of green infrastructure across the borough.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise reported that 39 responses had been received to the consultation exercised which had been targeted and that these had been encouraging. He added that finance for all projects within the Green Grid for 2011/12 had been identified.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the proposal, which would help enhance the Green Belt areas of Harrow.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the use of the Harrow Green Grid for the purpose of supporting the co-ordinated management of green infrastructure across the borough be approved;
- (2) the proposed programme of works for 2011/2012, set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be noted.

Reason for Decision: To realise the opportunities of a borough-wide Green Grid and to support its continued development to enable the more effective delivery of a green infrastructure across the borough.

253. Key Decision: Second Phase Property Disposal Programme 2011/12

Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director Place Shaping, together with a confidential appendix, which sets out proposals for the disposal of properties in the borough considered to be surplus to requirements.

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts introduced the report and identified the four sites that were earmarked for sale. He added that the disposal of the Honey Pot Lane Clinic and Belmont Health Centres sites was supported by the Primary Care Trust (PCT). The Enterprise House site was occupied by Harrow In Business (HIB), as part of a Section 106 Agreement with Berkley Homes and once new premises were available for HIB, a 12 weeks' notice would be given to vacate Enterprise House. In regard to 1 Sudbury Hill, the tenants would be looked after by Housing Services.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the land and properties detailed in the report and at Appendix 1 be declared as surplus;
- (2) the financial implications and projected sale prices detailed in Appendix 1 be noted;

- (3) the Corporate Director Place Shaping, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts, be authorised to take all action necessary, including capital expenditure on 429/433 Pinner Road, to dispose of the Council's interest in the land and properties detailed in the report for the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained.

Reason for Decision: To generate significant capital receipts for the Council, provide revenue savings and reduce back log maintenance, thereby fulfilling the objectives of the Place Shaping and Property Transformation Work Stream.

254. Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED: That, in accordance with Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items for the reasons set out below:

<u>Agenda Item No</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
20/21.	Procurement of Temporary Agency Worker Services/ Second Phase Property Disposal Programme 2011/12 - Appendices	Information under paragraph 3, relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

255. Key Decision: Procurement of Temporary Agency Worker Services

Cabinet received a confidential appendix to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive setting out the 'Award of a Framework Agreement for Agency Worker Services'.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Reason for Decision: To allow the appendix to be considered in conjunction with the main report at item 9.

256. Key Decision: Second Phase Property Disposal Programme 2011/12

Cabinet received a confidential appendix to the report of the Corporate Director Place Shaping setting out options and recommendation in relation to 1 Sudbury Hill, implications and indicative sale prices of all the properties earmarked for sale.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted on the basis that it was considered in conjunction with item 17.

Reason for Decision: To allow the appendix to be considered in conjunction with the main report at item 17.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.08 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chairman