

# CABINET MINUTES

## 12 SEPTEMBER 2013

**Chairman:** \* Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar

**Councillors:** \* Nizam Ismail \* Asad Omar  
\* Krishna James \* William Stoodley  
\* Zarina Khalid

**Non Executive  
Non Voting  
Councillors:** \* Susan Hall \* Barry Macleod-Cullinane

<b>In attendance:</b>	James Bond	Minute 685
<b>(Councillors)</b>	Graham Henson	Minute 685
	David Perry	Minute 685
	Anthony Seymour	Minute 685

\* Denotes Member present

### Notes

**[Note 1:** In the absence of the Leader for agenda items 11 and 12 (Minutes 692 and 693 refer), the Deputy Leader, Councillor Asad Omar, assumed the Chair prior to concluding the business at 8.22 pm.]

**[Note 2:** The agenda was taken in the order set out in the papers for the meeting except that, at the invitation of the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety made an announcement in relation to the locking of park gates (Minute 682 refers) at the conclusion of agenda item 3, Minutes. It was customary for the minutes to show the formal business first, followed by any Recommendations to Council prior to the general decisions made by Cabinet.]

### **679. Apologies for Absence**

An apology for lateness was received on behalf of Councillor Hall, who had been delayed on her return journey from another meeting.

### **680. Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members.

### **681. Minutes**

A non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member mentioned that that items appeared to be in a different order to that taken at the meeting. He suggested that it would be useful to have a note on the order of the agenda so that Members could follow the minutes in chronological order.

The same Member referred to a number of statements made by the Corporate Director of Children and Families about issues and asked for clarification on her statements made at the meeting.

Cabinet agreed to defer the minutes until the next meeting to allow the clerk's notes to be checked.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2013 be deferred to the next Cabinet meeting.

### **682. Locking of Park Gates - Announcement by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety**

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety referred to the correspondence and petitions he had received in relation to the decision taken by Cabinet in February 2013 not to lock park gates in order to achieve a saving of £70,000.

The Portfolio Holder added that having discussed this matter with his colleagues, park and cemetery gates would continue to be locked. The decision taken in February 2013 would not be implemented and, as a Listening administration, the Council had considered the views of its residents who had not supported the proposal.

### **683. Petitions**

#### **(1) Petition against Harrow Council's Plans to abandon locking Harrow Recreation Ground and other parks at night**

Mick Sayer, a local resident, stated that following the announcement by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety that park gates would continue to be locked (Minutes 682 refers), the petition signed by 1,180 people which he had intended to present at Cabinet was now null and void. However, he owed it to the signatories to the petition to hand over the petition to the Council and he thanked all

those that had been involved in fighting against the proposal not to lock park gates.

**RESOLVED:** To note the comments of Mr Sayer.

(2) Problem with Rats in Hamilton Crescent - Petition

Carole Martin, Secretary to the Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association, presented a petition signed by 55 residents, with the following terms of reference:

“For some period of time residents have been reporting to Harrow Council that there is an ongoing problem with rats in Hamilton Crescent, which has still not been resolved. It is a waste of valuable Council resources when this has been allowed to continue for the time it has.

The Housing Department do not want to know and Environmental Health say even though this has been an ongoing problem the complaint has to start from scratch again with a phone call from the tenants.

We the undersigned are totally outraged at this response and demand that the rats in Hamilton Crescent are dealt with as a matter of urgency.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and Divisional Director of Housing Services and the Portfolio Holders for Environment and Community Safety and Housing for consideration.

(3) Alley Gates, 2 Lancaster Road - Petition

Councillor James Bond presented a petition signed by 11 people, with the following terms of reference:

“We the undersigned residents request the Council arrange for the installation of alley gates beside the property at 2 Lancaster Road and the property at the corner of this road fronting Imperial Drive as a matter of urgency.

We note that the Council and residents in other areas of Harrow have been proactive in taking these initiatives and would welcome such action in the area where we all live in order to restrict access to the alley behind residential homes in Imperial Drive by persons who have no legitimate need to go there.

The installation of alley gates will help curtail the following: the risk of burglary; the persistence of fly-tipping, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour.

The installation of alley gates will, in addition, help to achieve: a welcoming and safer environment for the residents whose back gardens border the alleyway; a more attractive neighbourhood that returns control of the alleyway to the residents concerned.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

(4) Cambridge Road Car Park – One Hour Free Parking – You can't afford to lose it - Petition

Councillor James Bond presented a petition signed by 3,352 people with the following terms of reference:

“We the undersigned object to Harrow Council’s intentions to withdraw the one hour free parking concession in the Cambridge Road car park.

We also object to the plans to withdraw the one hour free concession for on-street parking and replace it with 20 minutes-only free parking.”

**RESOLVED:** That

(1) the petition be referred to Council in accordance with the Council’s Petition Scheme, which required a petition containing more than 2000 signatures of people who live, work or study in the borough (the address in the borough at which they live, work or study must be provided), to be considered/debated by the full Council;

(2) the petition also be shared with the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety.

(5) Proposed Funeral Business at the corner of Bedford Road and Pinner Road

Councillor Bill Stephenson presented a petition signed by 43 people, with the following terms of reference:

“We are opposing the proposed funeral business at 184 Pinner Road, corner of Bedford Road and Pinner Road.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise, the Divisional Director of Planning and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

(6) Welbeck Road Petition – West Harrow Ward

Councillor Kareema Marikar presented a petition signed by 54 people, with the following terms of reference:

“We the undersigned are very unhappy about the state of Welbeck Road which is littered with potholes, cracks and poses a serious Health and Safety risk to residents.

We urge the Council to take urgent action and repair the road for its Tax Payers under its duty of care to residents.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

(7) Gates for the alley way between Eastcote Lane and Roxeth Green Avenue - Petition

Councillor Graham Henson presented a petition signed by 27 people, with the following terms of reference:

“We the undersigned are seriously concerned at the anti-social behaviour that takes place on a regular basis within the alleyway between Roxeth Green Avenue and Eastcote Lane. There are gangs of youths congregating in this area: drinking, smoking, drug taking, couples coupling, graffiti, significant increase in the number of break-ins and robberies, vandalism to property and rubbish being dumped that is also blocking access to the alley.

We therefore request that the Council urgently install an alley gate at the entrance next to No. 2 Roxeth Green Avenue.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

(8) Kings Road – Petition for a Security Gate

Councillor Krishna Suresh presented a petition signed by 10 people, with the following terms of reference:

“For the reasons of safety and in order to prevent burglary, anti-social behaviour, drugs, sex and fly tipping.

We as signed below would like alley gate to be fitted, 29 off Warden Avenue where the alley way for both Kings Road and Warden Avenue users as stated below:

Kings Road between No 287 and 303 and Warden Avenue No 29.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

(9) Cambridge Road, North Harrow - Petition

Councillor Janet Mote presented a petition signed by 68 people, with the following terms of reference:

“We the undersigned call on Harrow Council to resume closing Bisley House Car Park from 7.30 pm to 7.30 am, as we are concerned that keeping it open throughout the night is encouraging members from the nearby gym to park overnight.

Additionally, there have been reports of anti-social behaviour; ranging from noise, drinking, smoking and swearing to football being played and sexual conduct.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

(10) The Green on Richmond Gardens - Petition

Ross Barlow, representing Harrow Weald Liberal Democrats, submitted a petition signed by 38 residents with the following terms of reference:

“I call upon Harrow Council to reduce the size of the Green on Richmond Gardens so that cars can safely pass without damaging the Green or other motorists. We also call upon the Council to restore the Green to its former appearance and remove the large concrete blocks bordering it.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

(11) Weeds on the corner of Kelvin Crescent and Elms Road - Petition

Ross Barlow, representing Harrow Weald Liberal Democrats, submitted a petition signed by 43 residents with the following terms of reference:

“I call upon Harrow Borough Council to clear the overgrown weeds on the corner of Kelvin Crescent and Elms Road.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

(12) Resurfacing - Stamford Close – Petition

Ross Barlow, representing Harrow Weald Liberal Democrats submitted a petition signed by 15 residents with the following terms of reference:

“I call upon Harrow Borough Council to completely resurface Stamford Close.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

(13) Resurfacing – Boxtree Road – Petition

Ross Barlow, representing Harrow Weald Liberal Democrats, submitted a petition signed by 66 residents with the following terms of reference:

“I call upon Harrow Borough Council to completely resurface Boxtree Road.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

(14) Fly tipping Hot Spots – Weighton Raod and High Road - Petition

Ross Barlow, representing Harrow Weald Liberal Democrats submitted a petition signed by 79 residents with the following terms of reference:

“I call upon Harrow Council to get the CCTV care to prioritise monitoring fly tipping hot spots such as the corner of College Hill Road and Kenton Lane.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

(15) Fly tipping Hot Spots – College Hill Road and Kenton Lane - Petition

Ross Barlow, representing Harrow Weald Liberal Democrats, submitted a petition signed by 145 residents with the following terms of reference:

“I call upon Harrow Council to get the CCTV care to prioritise monitoring fly tipping hot spots such as the corner of Weighton Road and the High Road.”

**RESOLVED:** That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety for consideration.

## 684. Public Questions

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

1.

**Questioner:** Simon Brown

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

**Question submitted:** “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.”

**The Leader:** In view of the statement made by the Portfolio Holder (Minute 682 refers), would you want to move to a supplementary question?

**Supplemental Question:** I would like to congratulate the Portfolio Holder on listening to the residents and users of Harrow Recreation Ground and the other parks and cemeteries in the borough, even if it is at the last minute and made a decision that 99% of people thought was a sensible decision to make.

Could I ask if he has now included this item or will be including this item in next year's budget. Will the parks be kept locked after the financial year ends and into the next year?

**Supplemental Answer:**  
**Cllr Omar** What I would say is, at this moment in time and we are responsible for the budget up to next February. What happens in the next budget, is up to the administration in power. I cannot promise anything but what I can say is, if we are still in power, then we promise to look into it.



2.

**Questioner:** Ushma Rathod

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

**Question submitted:** “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?”

**Ushma Rathod:** In view of the statement made by the Portfolio Holder (Minute 682 refers), I will not be asking my question or a supplementary.

3.

**Questioner:** Eranga Gunawardena

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

**Question Submitted:** “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?”

**Eranga Gunawardena:** Thank you for making a decision to continue to lock the gates at night (Minute 682 refers). I will go straight into the supplementary question which is to do with the grass in the parks.

**Supplemental Question:** If we have the same pressure of getting public petitions, public meetings and letters similar to those for park gates, will you consider reversing the decision to not cut the grass and continue to cut the grass?

**Supplemental Answer:**  
**Cllr Omar:** As I said before, we are a Listening Council and we are listening to residents. We are not just talking, the previous administration did “Let’s Talk” but we do listen. If we get a similar situation, we will look into it.

## 685. Councillor Questions

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

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?"

**Answer:** The rationale for a 'Harrow Card' was to promote local shopping. It was to be one of the tools to support Harrow businesses. The budget setting process assumed the Harrow Card would be self-financing. A Feasibility Study was commissioned to support the implementation of the Harrow Card. The Study did not provide sufficient evidence to guarantee that the Harrow Card would be self-financing. The Study highlighted that there was risk involved in assuming that sales/renewals of the Harrow Card would be sufficient to meet the cost.

However, it is always prudent to review performance and determine whether the same tools are necessary to achieve our objectives. I am happy to say that our initiatives to promote local shopping have been successful and the average vacancy rates across Harrow town and district centres are down from 6.51% in June 2012 to 4.98% in June 2013.

Therefore, it is deemed wise to continue to focus on activities that are successfully supporting local businesses without recourse to an immediate implementation of the potentially costly Harrow Card.

**Supplemental Question:** First of all, I would like to congratulate the Council on what I read in the Harrow Observer. It is a friend and a

supporter and working with small businesses. However, that makes me think that three years have elapsed since the Harrow Card was first thought of and I know these things cannot happen instantly, although I do think three years is a too long.

Has this Council thought of crossing the border and speaking to our neighbours in Hillingdon who have an excellent "Hillingdon First" Card that does all the things that the Harrow Card should do for our residents, from parking to library books, you name it. It is a very good scheme. Will you look towards Hillingdon and at least look at their project and make it work for Harrow?

**Supplemental Answer:** As part of the process, we have spoken to Hillingdon. I have also spoken to one or two banks and the telephone companies. Nobody has come forward so far.

I think the best way to go forward is to try and get a sponsor to administer the card and they may get some promotion in return and we may get a value for it.

The Council is facing challenging times. I do not think it is wise to spend a lot of money that belongs to the tax payers on the Harrow Card. This is a difficult decision but it has to be made.

As you would have heard before, there are other issues such as not locking park gates, cutting grass and taxi cards. I am not sure it is wise to spend half a million pounds on a Harrow Card without any guarantee that it is going to increase income. That is my difficulty.

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?"

**Answer:** As at Quarter 1, the Council is forecasting an overspend of £2.2m, as you rightly point out, which equates to variance of 1% against the Council's total General Fund budget of £181m. This forecast overspend assumes

that all of the contingency budgets will be spent. Those contingency budgets (totalling £3.2m) will be monitored as we progress throughout the year.

At Council on 29 February, Members approved savings of £22.8m for 2013/14. These savings are monitored in detail and are rated by officers on a RED / AMBER / GREEN scale for deliverability. At present £5.5m of the 2013/14 savings are rated as RED. Those savings are detailed in the appendix to the Cabinet report. Officers are working to deliver all of the savings and the status of the savings is reviewed on a monthly basis and, by Cabinet, on a quarterly basis.

**Supplemental Question:** You mentioned in your first line an overspend or a projected overspend of £2.2m so my supplementary question regarding the current savings targets involved your personal decision to use your power in deliberate overspend in your office and ignoring the staffing protocols which all political groups must adhere to?

Given the fact that as the Leader of the Council you are asking all Council departments to make savings and reductions at this time and your Group clearly are not, but overspending. What response would you give to the hard working, loyal and committed staff, both junior and senior, at this Council and the people of Harrow, who may think that your Group's actions is one rule for one and another rule for you and that your actions are hypocrisy at the highest level?

**Supplemental Answer:** I fundamentally disagree with you David.

The problem with the political group budgets is the way they are set. They did not expect a situation like this before. For example if one of the Independents gets elected, would you give £3,500 to the Councillor and say "run the Leader's office"? How is it possible? So it is a different scenario and the Leader needs proper support and the resolution to run the Council efficiently. So there will be overspends, some other departments as well, then we claw it back.

Now I have asked the Legal officer to look into the future and come up with a plan to fund the political groups in the future, depending on various scenarios. This is a very unusual scenario.

None of the staffing protocols were broken. All I was looking for a research assistant to help me and then I was approached by the Council, saying that somebody may be available, we want you to take it on. I said okay.

That saved redundancy or difficult decisions to make. So I do not think this has ever been done. We are doing it properly and five Cabinet Members and the Leader cannot run an office on someone on barely on a London Living Wage. It is impossible. You may not agree but that is the reality of life.

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?”

***This question was not asked at the meeting. The following written response was sent, as requested by Councillor Perry at the meeting.***

**Written Answer:** Over the last 2 years or so Council officers have liaised extensively with local residents, the HA3 Residents' Association and Ward Councillors and held numerous briefing meetings.

Following the latest information received from the Chairman of the HA3 Residents' Association, the Council has written to the tenant to require that he stops washing rugs at the premises in contravention of the lease terms. This letter has been followed up with a further letter and an inspection.

The Council could potentially instigate proceedings to end the lease by forfeiture, however, where the breach does not relate to non-payment of rent, there is no automatic right to forfeit. Where the breaches are relatively minor as in this case the Court will often give tenants the benefit of doubt and award relief from forfeiture.

In the circumstances it is not currently considered appropriate to use the Council's scarce financial resources in pursuing an action through the Courts

which is unlikely to succeed. Officers will continue to monitor the position and make regular inspections to ensure the premises are being used for the permitted use. The situation will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Therefore, from the evidence obtained over the last week, it has been agreed that a planning breach of Condition notice would not be expedient nor sustainable at this time.

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 5 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?

**Answer:**

The Council Motion letter that was sent by the Chief Executive to Harrow's three MPs, the Brent and Harrow GLA member and other neighbouring local authorities, MPs and GLA members.

Despite our approach, ministers have not formally consulted with this Council.

Ministers have directed that the existing self-imposed ceiling of 7,000 commercial movements per year is to be increased to 12,000, which is within the existing NATS limits of 40 commercial movements per day. The increase is to be achieved gradually over the next 3 years.

The increase is to be achieved within existing operating parameters and there is therefore no proposal to extend the existing opening hours and the daily number of commercial movements will remain within the existing 40 movements per day permitted under NATS

guidelines.

Commercial movements will continue to be restricted to quieter aircraft with capacity for no more than 30 passengers. The airfield will remain closed to commercial traffic overnight, Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings.

Ministers have written to local Members of Parliament to inform them of the proposal to increase the number of commercial movements. This follows consultation with DfT, CAA and NATS. RAF Northolt is now beginning a process of discussing the proposal with local Councillors and Residents' Groups. It appears that this consultation did not include Harrow and therefore we do not have the details you have requested.

We will continue to work with our MPs and GLA members to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the residents of Harrow.

**Supplemental Question:** This Government that talks about openness and transparency consulted with the MP from Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, who is noted did not respond, said there were no objections but has failed to consult with the borough of Harrow where the flight path goes over and also the limits they talk about on the 12,000 is linked in with the Heathrow Airport Plan and is limited because of Heathrow Airport.

Will you as the Leader of the Council ensure that the Council officers write to the relevant Minister, raising the concerns and clearly spelling out their annoyance that they did not consult with the borough of Harrow or the residents of Harrow?

**Supplemental Answer:** I entirely agree with you Graham but then our MPs have a greater responsibility of government. You are happy to work with anybody to get the information you want.

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?"



**Answer:** Income for the area of North Harrow, West Harrow and Pinner Road is as follows:

2010 - £14,842  
2011 - £15,519  
2012 - £18,921 (and this new pay and display bays in the County Roads increased income over previous years. That is why it is £18,000 rather than £15,000 or £14,000).

The above income data amalgamates figures for Station Road and Pinner Road, North Harrow with data for other nearby roads. Now data for individual road sections is not recorded and would rely in a manual trawl of income sheets for the three years in question. However, an estimate has been made based on figures for the last half year and annualised income for Station Road and Pinner Road, North Harrow is approximately £9,000 to £10,000.

There have been no substantial changes in these roads in the last three years and it is anticipated that the income levels will have remained relatively constant around this figure.

Members will be aware that these particular roads currently provide free parking for one hour. This has been in place since the redevelopment of the Safeway site. Hence the income only reflects vehicles wishing to park for a period in excess of one hour.

**Supplemental Question:** That is not terribly helpful because it is all grouped together but the one trend is that the revenue is increasing.

In light of your proposal to abolish the one hour free parking on streets in North Harrow, your reasonable expectation that by doing so will increase revenue and the recent statement made by Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, that parking charges are not a tax or a "cash cow" to plug a hole in the Council's budget, will you reassure local businesses and residents that you will reconsider the proposal to abolish the one hour free parking in North Harrow?

**Supplemental Answer:** You know as I do that one hour free parking was introduced in 2004 when the Safeway site went and what business traders and residents said they would like one hour free parking to help out the businesses. Now businesses have gone, we have a gym on the site. If you recall, going back to 2007/8, when you were in

administration you wanted to introduce charges in North Harrow car park but again the traders were opposed to that. The agreement reached was not to put up any charges if we get a supermarket or similar.

We have got a gym which is working fine and the footfall has gone up. So that is why we would like to be consistent with all other car parks in the borough. We do not want to discriminate against others.

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

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, the future of access to Post Offices in the London Borough of Harrow (LBH),
- (ii) what work/transactions are the LBH looking at putting through Post Offices,
- (iii) what work/transactions are the LBH looking at taking away from Post Offices?

**Answer:** Officers met with the Post Office's Senior Stakeholder Manager in July to discuss Network Transformation. The Post Office has no plans to close the North Harrow Post Office or reduce access to any Post Office in Harrow.

The Post Office has a modernisation agenda for its branches. The Operator of the Post Office in North Harrow may change. If the current Operator does leave, the Council has offered to assist the Post Office in finding a new operator.

The Council has promoted the Post Office's Enterprise Community Fund to involve the Post Office in local communities. This was promoted to businesses and community groups and interest has been shown by a number of organisations. The closing date for

community groups and businesses wishing to engage with this initiative is 18 October.

The Council will explore the Post Offices offices as one mechanism for residents to use for Personal Payments.

The use of cash giro payments ceased in April 2013.

The Council is not looking at taking away further work / transactions from the Post Office in 2013/14 or 2014/15.

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?"

**Answer:** Harrow has 14,020 street signs (not including street name plates) of which 2,134 are illuminated.

Currently, the Capital Programme allocates for a programme of replacements. Replacement is only being done on a reactive basis.

We do however have a programme of de-illuminating signs to reduce our energy consumption. Through last year's programme we have de-illuminated 514 signs.

Based upon age profile it is estimated that 1,200 signs need replacement, however until specific funds are available to replace these we continue to replace on a reactive basis.

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?"

**Answer:** Officers have already met with the owner/operator of the Hive to discuss means of resolving the current breaches of planning regulations, including the unauthorised West

Stand and stadium floodlights.

In respect of the floodlights and the unauthorised West Stand which formed the basis of the Planning Committee's recent reasons for refusal of planning permission, officers from Planning and Legal Services are in the process of preparing an enforcement notice. This is expected to be served on the property shortly. The enforcement notice will require the removal of both structures within a specified time period.

Officers have also written separately, under environmental protection legislation, about the use of the floodlights and the nuisance that these have the potential to cause. Further assessment of the floodlights' impact as part of a process of determining whether the lights represent a statutory nuisance is planned to take place during planned events. Evidence collected will help officers to form a view on the case for serving an abatement notice on the floodlights under this legislation.

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?"

**Answer:** In line with the Council's agreed policy, an EQIA was undertaken in respect of the Parking Charges review to accompany the consultation on the review. This was reported to Cabinet in October 2011, where it was resolved to agree the new structural format for parking and permit charges based on the parking and permit charges consultation.

The EQIA concluded that there were "No adverse impact on any equality groups has been identified. However the revised Parking Management and Enforcement Plan will offer benefits to those requesting the provision of disabled parking spaces." A copy of the EQIA can be provided on request.

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 though 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?"

**Answer:** The report on the Cabinet agenda details forecast performance against budget as at quarter 1.

As at Quarter 1, the Council is forecasting an overspend of £2.2m, which equates to variance of 1% against the Council's total General Fund budget of £181m. This forecast overspend assumes that all of the contingency budgets will be spent. These contingency budgets (totalling £3.2m) will be monitored as we progress through the year.

At Council on 29 February, Members approved savings of £22.8m for 2013/14. These savings are monitored in detail and are rated by officers on a RED / AMBER / GREEN scale for deliverability. At present £5.5m of the 2013/14 savings are rated as RED. These savings are detailed in the appendix to the Cabinet report. Officers are working to deliver all of the savings and the status of the savings are reviewed on a monthly basis and by Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

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?

**Answer:** As Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Projects within the previous administration, I was consulted on the proposals to vary the lease terms to permit professional football to be played at the Hive. My involvement extended to a site visit to The Hive and to Underhill, to review the facilities and to witness a professional football match, and to meetings with the Corporate Director and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration to discuss the terms under which the lease with the operator might be varied, prior to the meeting of Cabinet in July 2012.

As Portfolio Holder I have also been updated regularly on potential breaches of the lease at The Hive.

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?"

**Answer:** The Housing Act has two categories of licence available for HMOs: the mandatory scheme for licensing larger HMOs and the optional, additional local scheme for licensing smaller HMOs. Harrow operates both these schemes and, to date, has licensed a total of **531** HMOs, 189 under the mandatory scheme and 342 under the local scheme.

The identification and licensing of HMOs remains a key work area for the Private Sector Housing team in Community Safety. So far this financial year, a total of **25** new properties have been identified and licensed as HMOs.

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?

**Answer:** The service is already experiencing an increased demand for special needs transport services to schools. The starting number of children in September 2012 was approximately 480 and this increased during the year to approximately 520. In September 2013 the number is already in the region of 525 and this is expected to increase to around 570 by the end of the year. Therefore it is reasonable to assume continuing increase in the birth rate will lead to an increased need for special transport services. Due to the increase there will be a need for growth in the financial year 2014-15 that it is difficult to estimate at this stage until the needs of individual children and the overall cohort requiring special transport services is analysed and understood more clearly.

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?

**Answer:** It is proposed that the routing and scheduling of all routes remain in-house using the software introduced as part of SNT 1. The management team have vast experience of ensuring routes are optimised as much as possible, taking into account the special requirements of individual pupils. The team know and understand the needs of all the pupils transported which is not something that would be easily transferred to external providers. We will obviously review this on a yearly basis. When the outsourcing has bedded down we will consider other ways to manage this.

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?

**Answer:** This is a delegation that is allowed under the constitution and it is appropriate for the corporate director to manage the service and staffing implications of a decision required to ensure operational effectiveness of a service within their remit (subject to the receipt of advice as appropriate).

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?

**Answer:** Under the existing framework used currently for taxi style routes there is already a process to default any contractors who do not meet the standards laid out in the contract. All instances of failure are pursued with individual contractors and persistent failures will lead to removal from the route. Most contractors embrace the regularity of contract work and therefore ensure that any price bid for a route are economically viable to both them and their drivers. Monitoring of the contractors in the current framework is already part of the management team’s role and this will become more extensive if and when more routes are outsourced.

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.

**Answer:** The wording does not actually say that the management team will need to be increased. It is proposed the management team will actually reduce and a saving of £70k is included in the figures provided. What is does say is that the team would spend a greater proportion of their time managing the external contractors to ensure compliance with the contract.

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?

**Answer:** It is proposed that the Special Needs Transport Service Manager will work with colleagues in procurement and legal services alongside Fraikin Ltd who provide the vehicles under lease to ensure the best possible price is achieved for all vehicles that need to be returned. Making sure sufficient vehicles are kept to cover the remaining routes will be part of the service manager's role going forward.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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?

**Answer:** Currently there are 16 contractors or providers on the existing framework and at the moment Harrow only use the framework to utilise taxi style routes with fewer individual passengers on each route. This framework is also currently used by Barnet Council to provide transport assistances for many of their routes, including minibus style routes. It is envisaged that the existing companies on this framework may not have the capacity to take on all the minibus style routes that Harrow will be requesting going forward. The reason for requesting approval to let a possible second framework is to try and encourage community transport providers and charitable organisations to join and therefore give a wider variety of providers.

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.

**Answer:** All Cabinet decisions are made with due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and Cabinet Members with voting rights have attended equalities training as follows:

Councillor Idaikkadar attended Equality and Diversity training on 1 June 2011 and training on Equality Impact Assessment on 5 March 2013 and on 5 September 2013.

Councillor Ismail attended Equality and Diversity training on 9 December 2010 and training on Equality Impact Assessment on 5 September 2013.

Councillor James attended Equality and Diversity training on 23 June 2010 and training on Equality Impact Assessment on 5 September 2013.

Councillor Khalid attended Equality and Diversity training on 23 June 2010 and training on Equality Impact Assessment on 5 September 2013.

Councillor Omar attended Equality Impact Assessment training on 5 September 2013.

Councillor Stoodley attended Equality and Diversity training on 9 December 2010.

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.

**Answer:** My Community ePurse has been a direct development based on the feedback from service users over the last four years of Personalisation in adult social care. The system has been designed to overcome the challenges of enabling accessibility and real choice for most service users we support. This will dramatically improve accessibility of personal budgets and lead to greater choice of services and activities for service users.

During the final development and implementation phases of MCEP we have had a number of feedback sessions with services users and providers. Adult services have carried out a full pilot of the solution with 50 service users and their families over the last nine months to ensure a robust final solution is implemented. This pilot has been an example of one of the most collaborative projects across the Council with more than ten departments involved. The Adults services Local Account Group has also looked at the solution in detail and provided very valuable input into the final stages.

Since taking over as Portfolio Holder, I have taken a strong interest in the project and I am committed to working together with service users and their families to plan and develop MCEP for the Harrow Community. Any issues raised by users are directly fed into the project lead at regular update sessions and dealt within the framework for the overall project governance.

22.

**Questioner:** Councillor Graham Henson

**Asked of:** Councillor Krishna James, Portfolio Holder Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing  
*[Response provided by Councillor Asad Omar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety]*

**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.

**Answer:** National research suggests that domestic violence everywhere is under reported and there is no reason to think that Harrow is an exception to that national picture – either better or worse. The Council, the Police, the Health Services and Voluntary and Community Organisations working in this field tend to concentrate on the victims at most risk of serious harm and less

attention has been paid to earlier intervention and prevention which could be accessed with earlier reporting.

While reports to the Police of Domestic Violence in Harrow rose by 8.5% in the first quarter of 2013/14 compared with the same period in the previous year, and despite the fact that Domestic Violence represents a higher proportion of crime in Harrow than in any other London Borough, we need to place these figures in perspective.

In Harrow in the calendar year 2012, the number of domestic violence reports to the Police was the 27<sup>th</sup> highest in London and the rate of reporting in Harrow per 10,000 population was also the 27<sup>th</sup> highest in London.

It is tempting to see the increased number of reports in the first quarter of this year as evidence of increased reporting but, in the absence of new publicity encouraging earlier and more frequent reporting, this would be hard to justify.

It is also the case that the definition of domestic violence changed with effect from March 2013 to include cases where the victim is aged between 16 and 18 which previously would have been regarded as safeguarding issues. In Harrow, as well as normal population growth, this change brought an additional 6,343 young people within the scope of Domestic Violence reporting.

However, the number of cases referred to the Council for child safeguarding reasons that include an element of domestic abuse is increasing which provides opportunities for early intervention including recommending attendance at perpetrator programmes to address offending behaviour.

Children's and Families Directorate has recently created a specialist post just to focus on Domestic Violence and young people and a vulnerable Young People Panel to pick up cases of sexual exploitation, Domestic Violence, and gang related abuse of young women or girls to ensure they are offered the right support package.

The best prevention comes from educating young people about what constitutes a healthy relationship and a project to do this has recently won funding from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and is expected to begin working soon.

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?

**Answer:** Delivery of new affordable housing is a key priority of this Administration. On 20 June 2013, Cabinet approved the first phase of an Affordable Housing Programme to build new affordable homes on vacant and/or underutilised land within the Council's existing HRA estate. This is being progressed and the tender process is underway to appoint a Development Management Service to progress the programme on the prioritised sites to enable building to commence in 2014. Other opportunities identified in the Cabinet report on 20 June such as the potential for estate regeneration are also being progressed. A detailed project plan is in place and progress is monitored and reported regularly, including to Improvement Board.

In addition to this new programme, in which the Council is taking charge of delivering new affordable housing on its own land, we also continue to negotiate with private developers through the planning application process for a percentage of housing on private residential developments to be provided as affordable housing. Delivery of these homes is monitored monthly against annual targets and reported regularly, including to Improvement Board.

As Portfolio Holder, I receive regular briefings on this very important issue and am kept apprised of progress against the project timetable.

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.

**Answer:** The strategic approach to the increasing budgetary pressures within our continued rising number of child protection plans and new looked after children is to keep accurate and thorough sight within our revenue budget monitoring with stronger emphasis on these areas; whereby this expenditure will be scrutinised and using comparable data as part of benchmarking. Using the Ofsted inspection as a measurable comparable to address the outcomes and using other comparable neighbouring local authorities as an additional source to support this cohort.

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 and 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.

**Answer:** We have evicted two tenants in this financial year. One in April and one in May.

In benchmarking terms we are upper quartile in relation to this indicator.

In relation to threatened with eviction up to and including court action we have served 295 Notice Seeking Possessions between April and the end of August 2013. In April it was 55, in May it was 72, in June it was 44, in July it was 56, and in August it was 68.

In terms of court action and actual court hearings we have instigated possession proceedings and have had court hearings in respect of 59 households between April and August 2013.

In April there were 9, in May there were 12, in June there were 11, in July there were 20, and in August there were 7.

We have made 138 arrangements with tenants in

respect of rent arrears between April and August 2013. A monthly breakdown is not available at this time due to an IT problem.

Our main priority is to support and advise tenants with rent arrears so that they can remain in their homes; the fact that we have evicted only 2 tenants this year, whilst regrettable, shows that our preventative approach is successful.

As Portfolio Holder I receive regular updates on the performance of the income management team.

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 estimate for delivering such a project, what are the cost implications to the residents of Harrow?”

**Answer:** Following restrictions to the opening and use of safety deposit box services in London, some residents have asked me to consider setting up a facility to safely store their gold.

“We have therefore carried out an initial scoping project and survey to assess whether there is a public appetite for this and to explore the services currently available to our residents.”

This work has cost the council £3,900 in total. The next step will be to carry out a feasibility study to see where the service might be set up and whether the overall set up costs would be worth us doing. To be clear, the Council will not undertake this project if it was to cost taxpayers any money and if this project were to go ahead the Council would look to recoup the spend so far.



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?"

**Answer:** The waste removal contractor originally required 6 months notice to terminate services. However, Council officers negotiated an early termination period which did not include any financial penalties. Bin removal was scheduled to dovetail into the contract termination.

Some bins were removed and these have all been replaced.

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?"

**Answer:** Agreed plans are in place to meet targets for 2013/14 and officers will work with Mayor and Group Offices to deliver on 2014/15 budget.

#### **686. Key Decision Schedule - September to November 2013**

Following questions by a non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member, it was noted that the following items set out in the Key Decision Schedule (KDS) for the month of September had been deferred: Harrow School SPD, Major Works Procurement and Youth Justice Plan. The same Member questioned the delays on these items, which would impact on the Council's ability to achieve a balanced budget.

The relevant Portfolio Holders reported as follows:

- Harrow School SPD had been deferred to October Cabinet and that this would allow for an extended six week consultation period, as requested by the non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member;
- Youth Justice Plan would initially be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 September 2013 and thereafter to Cabinet. The delay in bringing the Plan to fruition had been as a result of the challenges in such policy areas;
- Parking Review, 20 minute free parking initiative, would be reported to Cabinet on November 2013 and early indications showed that the figures were in line with budget assumptions.

**RESOLVED:** To note the contents of the Key Decision Schedule for September 2013.

#### **687. Progress on Scrutiny Projects**

**RESOLVED:** To receive and note the progress of scrutiny projects.

### **RECOMMENDED ITEMS**

#### **688. Community Safety Plan**

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety introduced the report, which set out key community safety priorities in response to both the Strategic Assessment of crime in Harrow and the ambitions for the police set by the Mayor's Office for policing and crime. He added that the Plan which included measures to protect residents had been set for a period of three years.

In response to various questions from a non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety, the Chief Executive and an officer responded as follows:

- burglary was key issue and as part of the campaign titled 'autumn nights', advice would be provided to residents on how to take precautions, such as locking doors and windows, keeping valuables safe, and how the use of electronic devices could help keep their homes safe against burglars. A sum of £8,000 had been received to help advertise the project which would be implemented soon to coincide with the early evenings from October 2013 to February 2014;
- that the borough's position from second to seventh in terms of overall crime in London, whilst disturbing, would be addressed by the Borough Commander through improved co-ordination of information and interventions across the seven key crime areas;
- with regard to domestic violence, Harrow was ranked 27<sup>th</sup> in London. Long term preventative work was being explored with MOPAC (The

Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime), and the Children and Families Directorate had already introduced a vulnerable Young People Panel and early intervention measures;

- it was intended to place on record, that contrary to reports, the number of police officers on Harrow's streets was actually going to increase. The perception of crime and fear of crime continued to be an issue;
- despite the spending reductions, the number of Police Officers on Harrow's streets would increase over the next three years compared with 2011 numbers by an additional 46 Police Officers within the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and an additional 30 within other teams. There would be an overall increase the establishment from 416 to 492. This would help increase confidence in the Police and their morale;
- publicity for SmartWater would be renewed to ensure a higher take up than in the past. The number of Neighbourhood Champions had remained static and the project would be re-invigorated through a conference with a key note speaker being invited to address the meeting. The Portfolio Holder expected that Councillor Susan Hall, who had introduced and championed its cause, would be the Council's key note speaker;
- benchmarks had been incorporated in the Plan, as requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted that the target figure relating to anti-social behaviour was -5%.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:** (to Council)

That the Community Safety Plan 2013-2017 be adopted.

**Reason for Recommendation:** To comply with Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:** None.

**Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted:** None.

*[Call-in does not apply to this recommendation as the decision is reserved to Council.]*

## **RESOLVED ITEMS**

### **689. Concessionary Travel - Changes to the Taxicard Scheme - Reference from the Call-in Sub-Committee meeting held on 5 August 2013**

A non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member asked what actions had been taken in regard to the Statement made by the Chairman of the Call-in

Sub-Committee that the changes not be implemented until the Scheme users had been made aware of alternative arrangements with other transport providers, particularly in respect of transport for doctor and hospital appointments.

The Portfolio Holder for Adults Social Care, Health and Wellbeing replied that, within her wider remit, she was seeking meeting(s) with the hospital Chief Executive(s) to address aspects of this issue.

The Leader of the Council agreed to provide the Member with a written response on the actions taken in response to the Statement.

**RESOLVED:** That the Statement, by the Call-in Sub-Committee Chairman, as set out in the reference report, be noted and that a response be provided on the actions taken.

**Reason for Decision:** To identify actions taken.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:** None.

**Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted:** None.

#### **690. Special Needs Transport 3**

Cabinet received a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Families, which set out the results of the consultations with staff, service users and trade unions on the proposed changes to the Special Needs Transport Service. The intention was to let a new framework contract for transport provision.

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families introduced the report and informed Cabinet of the consultation process undertaken following the referral back by the Call-In Sub-Committee of the initial decision taken by Cabinet in April 2013. As a listening administration they had worked closely with the Unions and staff with a view to reviewing the original proposals and she thanked the Unions for their contributions to the process, including their draft proposals. The Portfolio Holder outlined the saving that would be achieved and referred to the further possible outsourcing.

The Divisional Director of Special Needs Service referred to the comments of the Portfolio Holder and the amended proposals following consultations. He too outlined the need for further outsourcing should this become necessary if the required savings were not achieved.

A non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member referred to the lamentable consultation and asked why the initial consultation had been poor. He questioned whether the outsourcing would be on a rolling basis. In response, the Divisional Director stated that the outsourcing would take place over a couple of years but the detail needed to be defined. He added that the framework under which the outsourcing would operate would be published, subject to the rules of procurement. It would also be guided by how the families chose to use the services.

The same non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member asked why partial outsourcing had not previously been considered, as it generally helped retain expertise. He also asked if the final outcome had changed since the consultations. The Member was of the view that it would have been helpful if opportunity costs had been included in the report together with how the concerns of staff had been addressed in relation to their transfer under TUPE. He asked if the process would create resilience in the supply chain and whether it would be advisable to do this now. He also expressed concern about the impact of the proposals on the vulnerable.

The Divisional Director and the Corporate Director of Children and Families replied that, on reflection, the initial consultation had been rushed and the report considered in April 2013 ought to have been postponed to a future Cabinet meeting. The fundamental difference between the two reports was an agreed way forward on a partial outsourcing, which had involved work with the Unions and schools. This was underpinned by the need to ensure flexibility to meet future needs. Together with the Portfolio Holder, the Corporate Director, informed Cabinet that safeguarding of children was an important issue and priority and that, in Harrow, 'quality' checks had been instigated. The safe transport of children was imperative and a quality service needed to be in place in order to meet the standards set. In relation to staffing issues, extensive discussions had taken place and a variety of different concerns had been discussed with staff. The arrangements under TUPE would apply but other avenues were being explored.

The Divisional Director added that partial outsourcing would lead to a change in the nature of work which would become more focused on monitoring external providers but it was not expected that work would increase. The business case outlined the savings to be achieved. With any change programme, officers worked initially with estimated figures and, if savings were not achieved, a decision on outsourcing the transport arrangements in relation to Shaftesbury School would need to be considered.

The Corporate Director informed Cabinet that the existing high quality service was valued by the users but her Directorate had to identify savings. Work with a number of key providers was underway.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the provision of special needs transport services, to include all routes to and out of borough schools and colleges and in-borough mainstream schools and colleges, be further outsourced;
- (2) in the event these measures do not achieve the necessary savings as set out in the report, the Corporate Director of Children and Families, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, be authorised to make a decision to fully or partially outsource the transport arrangements for one of the special schools, most probably Shaftesbury High School;
- (3) the letting of a second transport provider framework contract to allow new providers to assist in the outsourcing referred to above be agreed.

**Reason for Decision:** The Council had set a two year balanced budget that addressed the loss in government grants and safeguarded essential front-line services. Harrow Council has listened to the views of service users, staff, stakeholders and Trade Unions in altering plans from a full to a partial outsourcing. The Trade Union, Unison, has produced an alternative proposal that officers have analysed and discussed in detail which has in part enabled a recommendation to be made to Cabinet.

If the service was to be externalised to a larger extent, a second framework would be needed to provide resilience in the supply chain, sustainable growth in small suppliers and the inclusion of more local and community based organisations in future transport provision.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:** As set out in the report.

**Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted:** None.

#### **691. Strategic Performance Report - Quarter 1**

Cabinet received a report of the Corporate Director of Resources, which summarised Council and service performance for Quarter 1 against key measures and drew attention to areas requiring action.

The Leader of the Council informed Cabinet that this was the first performance report of the financial year. The format of the report had changed to reflect the Corporate Plan and focused on outcomes for residents and service users. The Corporate Scorecard had been redesigned as follows: 66 old measures had been removed, 51 retained and 5 new ones added. Not all measures would be reported quarterly as some outcomes changed relatively slowly, such as health and educational attainment. The data on such items would be included when available. The Leader and the Corporate Director of Resources highlighted some key performance areas.

A non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member congratulated the Council on some of its achievements, such as the increase in the take up of personal budgets by at least 6%. She was pleased to learn of the review of thresholds and the resultant outcomes in relation to the protection of children. However, the Member remained concerned about the challenges within the Youth Offending team, which showed that it was improving, and enquired about the comparative data for monitoring purposes, including any evidence in any improvements.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families provided examples of some improvements, such as the carrying out of timely visits and an improvement in the assessment conducted. The Portfolio Holder referred to a report on the Youth Justice Plan which had been included on the 17 September 2013 Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda and she looked forward to the Committee's contributions that would help further improve the service.

The same non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member enquired about the actions being taken to address the poor performance in relation to NI195, street and environmental cleanliness, which was rated as High Red. She was of the view that the cuts imposed in the Environment and Enterprise Directorate, which had reduced sweepers in Harrow Town Centre and road cleaners in Harrow, had been unprecedented and damaging. Additionally, some of the key routes, such as Rayners Lane, were in a poor state of cleanliness and impacted adversely on all residents of Harrow and the situation was getting worse. She enquired if any independent monitoring was taking place. Additionally, it was disappointing that grass was left to grow with a view to creating meadows and enquired how complaints were monitored.

Another non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member referred to the dissatisfaction of residents living in the vicinity of Belmont Circle about the poor state of cleanliness. He highlighted the depth of feeling in this regard and the adverse impact on residents. He was of the view that kerb appeal was important to residents. The Member asked if there was a cause for concern in relation to the increase in the number of empty units in the Harrow Town Centre, whether the poor state of cleanliness was a contributing factor and questioned whether the smaller town centres were fit for purpose. He also asked about the resultant impact on business rates. The Member expressed concern about the IT Transformation which was behind schedule and considered this to be a legacy of the bad choices and decisions made by the previous administration, as money could have been used elsewhere such as in the improvement of the borough's Public Realm. Moreover, there had been a significant drop in the percentage of residents who felt that the Council kept them informed, particularly in relation to how consultations were undertaken, notifications given of various consultations and how planning applications were dealt with. Consultation with staff and Ward Councillors was also poor. He asked how the issue of engagement was being addressed, as failure to consult was endemic within the Council.

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety reported that the cuts in the Environment and Enterprise Directorate in relation to street and environmental cleanliness would be re-examined. Additionally, there was a need for key routes which were swept in the mornings only to be also swept during the day. He explained that re-instatement of any cuts imposed would take time to take effect and that his administration had had done well in a short space of time. He undertook to take up the issue of engagement.

The Corporate Director of Resources stated that that there were no statutory measures required in relation to the length of the grass. The concern over this issue was picked up through satisfaction surveys, including any patterns in complaints from residents. The Director of Finance and Assurance informed Cabinet that, currently, there was no shortfall in the business rates collected which was monitored on a monthly basis.

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

**Reason for Decision:** To enable Cabinet to be informed of performance against key measures and to identify and assign corrective action where necessary.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:** None.

**Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted:** None.

## **692. Revenue and Capital Monitoring for Quarter 1 as at 30 June 2013**

Cabinet received a report of the Director of Finance and Assurance, which set out the Council's revenue and capital monitoring position as at 30 June 2013, including the actions required to manage overspend. The Director of Finance and Assurance informed Cabinet that the report included a detailed breakdown of the financial position by Directorates together with the performance against a number of savings as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) agreed in February 2013.

A non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member commented that the previous administration had attached a great deal of blame to the government because of the cuts it had imposed on local government. However, the Council needed to appreciate that it was facing tough financial decisions and he was amazed to note the overspend and shortfall across various budgets / Directorates. He stressed that tough times required tough decisions in the management of public money; otherwise contemptible decisions such as the removal of dog bins and keeping park gates unlocked would arise thereby making Harrow an unattractive place to live in. He asked what measures were being taken to mitigate the overspend, including those where the decisions had been reversed.

The Chief Executive responded as follows:

- the Council was facing a future which would require significant amount of savings to be achieved and that the Council was not complacent in this regard;
- future savings would become more difficult to achieve and therefore self awareness and corrective actions had been put in place;
- he was confident that a balanced budget would be achieved at the end of the financial year and that he could not recall a time when this had not happened. Good financial management was at the core of the Council's business.

A non-voting non-Executive Member referred to the overspend on the PRISM project, which she categorised as poor decision-making. She congratulated the Chief Executive for curtailing the project, which had been damaging to staff who had devoted their careers to the Council. She noted that the overspend of £1m on this project was unavoidable.



The same Member referred to other poor decisions and overspends, such as the IT project and shared Legal Practice, including an overspend on staffing in the Procurement Service. She would have expected the Procurement Service to have come in on budget.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services and Housing gave prominence to those budgets that were underspent, such as the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme and the £150m which had been directed to the provision of affordable housing. He added that his administration was exploring measures that would keep Harrow clean and tidy.

A non-voting non-Executive Member expressed concern over the overspend in respect of the outsourcing of Harrow's library and leisure services and sought clarity on the driver behind an overspend of £380,000. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services and the Deputy Leader suggested that the rollover of the decision by the previous administration together with the eventual delay in the decision as a result of the changes in administration had contributed to the overspend.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the revenue and capital forecast outturn position at the end of June 2013 be noted;
- (2) the both the Revenue and Capital virements detailed in paragraphs 12, 15, 16, 17 and 24 of the report be approved.

**Reason for Decision:** To present the forecast financial position and actions required to be taken.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:** As set out in the report.

**Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted:** None.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 8.22 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR THAYA IDAIKKADAR  
Chairman