

9.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Glen Hearnden, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: “What is the total cost for each of the last two years of all maintenance and repairs work in short let Council properties?”

Written Response: Total spend on repairs and maintenance for Council stock let on non- secure tenancies over the last 2 years is £ 24532.52 for a total of 177 repairs raised across 56 properties. This breaks down as:

2013-2014	3135.03	4 properties registering repairs
	17 jobs in total	
2014-2015	14827.69	26 properties registering repairs
	75 jobs in total	
2015 to date	6569.80	26 properties registering repairs
	51 jobs in total.	

There may be some additional expenditure undertaken recently that has not yet been invoiced/paid, so this cannot be included in the figures.

10.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Glen Hearnden, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: “Since May 2010, how many new council properties have been built in each municipal year – with a breakdown between those built by the council and those built by housing associations?”

Written Response: No new residential Council properties have been built since 2010. A pipeline of new build council properties is being progressed. The number of housing association properties built since 2010 is dealt with in the answer to question 11.

11.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Glen Hearnden, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: "Could you provide list of designated affordable homes that were started and completed each year, since May 2010?"

Written Response: 1238 affordable homes were started since May 2010 and 1248 affordable homes were completed. The full list of schemes that were started and completed by year is attached.

12.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Glen Hearnden, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: "Is the limit of "up to 100 properties" in the Property Purchase Initiative report enough, given the increase from 70 families in summer 2013 to 176 now and the alarmist tone of the report, specifically its forecast of dire consequences from the government's long-overdue welfare reforms?"

Written Response: The purchase of properties is only one initiative being pursued to increase the amount of temporary accommodation available to the council. The purchase of up to 100 properties is considered prudent and achievable but the target can be reviewed once the programme is up and running. The report states the facts with regard to the increase in the number of families in Bed and Breakfast and for which a key cause is welfare reform including limits to the Local Housing Allowance caps. This is anticipated to continue following the recent Budget announcements.

13.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Glen Hearnden, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: "If the crisis is now, why is the spend profile configured to only 25% in the current financial year, providing roughly 25 properties, meeting just a quarter of the increase in families that has already happened?"

Written Response: The projected spend profile is based on prudent assumptions around the lead in time for setting up the Property Purchase Initiative taking into account the experience of neighbouring local authorities who have taken forward similar initiatives, as well as the need to try to avoid distortion of the local property market for

the type of properties being sought. We will of course endeavour to purchase properties as quickly as we are able depending on availability of suitable property etc. If we are able to purchase properties more quickly than projected it will not be a problem with regard to the financial model as the council will be able to borrow the money required when it is needed once the capital budget has been approved by full Council in September 2015.

14.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Glen Hearnden, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: “Do you believe that it is a moral use of taxpayers' money for the council seeking to acquire properties "at a premium", helping force up local house prices and make even more properties unaffordable for more people?”

Written Response: Approval has been requested for some flexibility around negotiating a reasonable price as any other purchaser, including investment landlords, would have to secure property in a competitive market. The types of property that are being sought under this proposal are typically those also popular with buy-to-let landlords, and it is in all probability more likely to be this type of purchaser that would otherwise be removing these properties from the market if the Council did not do so. The reason for the increase in house prices and unaffordability of homes for sale is a result of the national and regional lack of new supply in the housing market over which the council has only limited control. The council is doing all it can through initiatives such as the Housing Zone to use the councils land assets and partnerships with private landowners and developers to increase the supply of housing in Harrow thereby contributing to meeting the severe shortage of housing, including affordable housing which exists locally and in the wider London area.