

## CABINET – 13 JULY 2017

### AGENDA PART I

#### COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS (ITEM 5)

*Fifteen minutes will be allowed for Members of the Council to ask a Portfolio Holder a question on any matter in relation to which the Executive has powers or duties.*

1.

**Questioner:** Councillor James Bond

**Asked of:** Councillor Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools

**Question:** “Harrow has always prided itself on its excellent schools - indeed many families moved here for the school provision. With this in mind, most parents are looking for small primary schools that are within walking distance of their homes, with an excellent reputation and green outside space. The expansion programme, whilst understood to be necessary, has generally been unpopular with parents. Could you please confirm that you are prioritising providing the type of schools that Harrow families want for their children, rather than simply looking at the numbers of school places?”

2.

**Questioner:** Councillor Richard Almond

**Asked of:** Councillor Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools

**Question:** “What are your thoughts on the projected overspending on Children’s Placements and Accommodation?”

3.

**Questioner:** Councillor Richard Almond

**Asked of:** Councillor Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools

**Question:** “How can a senior member of the Council’s staff be seconded to another Council for 8 months without any “definitive audit trail” apparently existing?”

4.

**Questioner:** Councillor Richard Almond

**Asked of:** Councillor Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools

**Question:** “Would you please reconcile your written response to the supplemental to Q4 at the April 2017 Cabinet, the paragraph on EIS Transformation at page 223 of June’s Cabinet papers and item PC 13 at page 418 of tonight’s papers?”

5.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “What steps is your administration taking to deal with the overspend pressures resulting from vacant posts within the Children and Young People’s Service Frontline Teams?”

6.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “Why is there a “super numerate team manager” in the roster?”

7.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “What is the cost of the “super numerate team manager”?”

8.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "How many social workers are being hired from India?"

9.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "When will the social workers, hired from India, arrive?"

10.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "What is the cost saving to the council of hiring from India as opposed to UK or EU recruitment?"

11.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "Has the council assisted with visa arrangements for those social workers being hired from India?"

12.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "Are future hires from India planned?"

13.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "Is the council recruiting from other countries? If yes, from which ones and for what roles/services?"

14.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "What reporting of the cost of handover periods across your administration are you requiring?"

15.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "If handovers are not "cost neutral", where will the costs be reported and how will they be contained and/or met?"

16.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "Is the funding bid to purchase the Home Office's premium service being funded from internal council funds or is it external money?"

17.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "How much is the cost of the premium service?"

18.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "How much internal funding is being identified?"

19.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "Will the projected saving to your administration be more than the funds being spent to purchase the premium service? And, if yes, by how much?"

20.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "Can you explain why the cost of closing the accounts of the school expansion programme continues to rise?"

21.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "Has your administration appropriately funded / resourced the departments involved in managing the school expansion programme?"

22.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “The HRA was already projecting using reserves during 2017-18; is this projected overspend in addition to that projected use of reserves?”

23.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “What measures are you, as Leader, putting in place to control this additional HRA overspend?”

24.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “What measures have you, as Leader, requested to avoid drawing down HRA reserves in 2017-18?”

25.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “What steps, as Leader, have you or are you taking to reverse interest payments to DCLG on the Right to Buy receipts?”

26.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “Can you explain why your administration has allowed these payments to occur?”

27.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “If the Resources Directorate can find the planned £57k savings that has failed to be realised (as a result of bringing the communications service back in-house) from within existing budgets and without adverse impact on service delivery does the Leader think that the Resources Directorate is perhaps over-resourced?”

28.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “Is the Leader comfortable with the delay in realising the planned commissioning saving of £187K and why has his administration allowed it to happen?”

29.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “At what point did it become apparent to his administration that Project Phoenix would supersede the projected savings around the Sancroft contract?”

30.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “Was that before or after the 2017-18 budget was passed?”

31.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “We fully support the work of the Gold emergency response and recovery for Grenfell tower but we are concerned that whilst the Chief Executive and other officers are away from Harrow, services and governance will be negatively impacted due to a lack of resources. How will you, as Leader, ensure the Chief Executive and other officers’ jobs are carried out correctly as well as maintaining correct governance and service-provision despite officers’ time being taken up elsewhere?”

32.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “An urgent portfolio holder decision regarding Grenfell tower was published on 28<sup>th</sup> June. How do you, as Leader, view Harrow to be financially capable of assisting when the Council’s contingency budget is already due to be over-spent on the works for Pinner Wood School?”

33.

**Questioner:** Councillor Richard Almond

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

**Question:** “What regard do you have for the Council’s scrutiny function?”

34.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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



**Question:** “The *2017/2018 Revenue Monitoring as at 31 May* Cabinet report says on page 393 that for Children’s Services ‘as at Period 2 the headline pressure for the directorate is £4.357m which reduces to a net forecast overspend for the directorate of £4.109m after the assumed draw down from reserves totalling(£248k).’ Do you, as Leader, think that mitigating against the Council’s overspends through draw downs from reserves is a sensible way to manage public finances, or do you regret not forming a sound budget?”

35.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “It is reported that a panel was being convened in June to review the spend associated with no recourse to public funds; what day did it actually meet?”

36.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “How were the findings of this review panel of no recourse to public funds communicated to you and the rest of your administration?”

37.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “What were the panel’s recommendations, if any, and how does your administration plan to implement them?”

38.

**Questioner:** Councillor Richard Almond

**Asked of:** Councillor Simon Brown, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Older People

**Question:** "What new trends have emerged in Adult Services since the budget was set in February?"

39.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "The *2017/2018 Revenue Monitoring as at 31 May* Cabinet report shows on page 395, a £3.322m overspend on Children's Placements and Accommodation. It notes one reason for this is "a sharp increase in the numbers in Semi Independent which is reflective of the changing age profile of the current cohort." As the Council should be aware of basic information such as the cohort's age, why was this not adequately mitigated against?"

40.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** "The *2017/2018 Revenue Monitoring as at 31 May* Cabinet report shows on page 397, a £103k overspend on departmental legal fees. It also notes that care proceedings have increased by 46% between 2015/16 and 2016/17. What monitoring and budget provision is there for this trend?"

41.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “6k is a lot of money for many residents and is roughly equivalent to four band D Council Tax payments.

Every little helps when the Council is faced with a tough budget in need of good financial management. Do you, as Leader think that describing a 6k overspend on page 398 of The *2017/2018 Revenue Monitoring as at 31 May* Cabinet report as simply ‘*Other small overspends*’ without details is negligent and insulting to public funds?”

42.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

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

**Question:** “Do you think that councillors should be able to rely on reports signed off by senior officers?”