



**FULL COUNCIL, Wednesday 11 July 2018**

## **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

### **Members' Allowances Scheme**

1) **To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Damian White)**  
**From Councillor Ray Morgon**

Under the Local Authorities (Members) Regulation 2003, it states that before a scheme is amended, the authority shall have due regard to the recommendations made by an independent remuneration panel, in this case, the well-respected London Councils. Given that the panel places in band two the Leader of the Opposition and the Chair of the Scrutiny Board, would the Leader of the Council explain how he has complied with the regulations in arriving at the conclusion that the workload and responsibilities of the Chair of the Scrutiny Board at Havering Council is twice that of the Leader of the Opposition, particularly given the fact that the Leader of the Opposition leads all opposition members (not just his own group) and unlike any other Council in London opposition members outnumber those in the Administration?

#### **Answer**

The Council must have regard to, not comply with, as is suggested by Cllr Morgon, the recommendations made in relation to the member allowances scheme by an independent remuneration panel, a copy of which was appended to the report presented before Full Council on 23 May. As the Independent Panel report points out, each Council has to be mindful of its own individual circumstances when agreeing its scheme and this was explained in the report before Members.

### **New Zealand Way**

2) **To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Damian White)**  
**From Councillor Natasha Summers**

To honour an election promise to Keep Havering Special will the Administration now self-register the high value green space off New Zealand Way, Rainham, as a Village Green?

#### **Answer**

As the Member is aware the Council successfully defended its position in respect of the land in question and we are currently assessing all possible options including developing out the site for much needed housing in the borough whilst ensuring that we maintain the unique character of the Borough.

## **Delays in Enforcement Proceedings**

3) **To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Joshua Chapman)**  
**From Councillor Keith Darvill**

There are currently Planning Enforcement cases in the Borough subject to Appeal which are being delayed due to the lack of appointment of a Planning Inspector by the Planning Inspectorate which are creating uncertainty and worry for all those concerned. What representations are being made to the Secretary of State complaining about the failure of the Planning Inspectorate to allocate Planning Inspectors to process appeals promptly?

### **Answer**

Officers wrote to the Planning Inspectorate last year expressing concern with the length of time taken to start appeals against enforcement notices leading to additional stress for residents affected. Officers also regularly contact the planning inspectorate with regard to individual notices, requesting that they be processed through the system quicker.

The response we received from the planning inspectorate is that the delays are widespread across all local authorities and due to a large backlog of appeals, compounded by incomplete information being provided with appeals. The planning inspectorate stated that they are working hard to address this, including recruitment of extra staff, but there has been no noticeable improvement to date.

I would be more than happy to liaise with the Secretary of State via our Members of Parliament so that he is aware of our concerns.

## **Parking Account**

4) **To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Osman Dervish)**  
**From Councillor Clarence Barrett**

The 2016/17 Parking Account shows total income of £4.7million against expenditure of £4.2 million, giving a surplus of £573,000. What was this surplus spent on and where?

### **Answer**

Surplus generated from the parking account is required by law to be reinvested on parking and highways related expenditure.

In 2016/17, the allocation of the surplus included the purchase and development of a map based traffic management order product, Buchanan Order management as well as contributing to maintenance and repairs to the highway.

## **Funding for Special School Places**

**5) To the Cabinet Member for Education, Children & Families (Councillor Robert Benham)  
From Councillor Darren Wise**

I was pleased to read recently that Havering has been granted £598,000 by the government to create more special school places in Havering and to help build new specialist facilities to support children with complex needs, such as sensory rooms and playgrounds with specialist equipment. Would the Cabinet Member elaborate and provide more information on the schools that will receive this money?

### **Answer**

The Local Authority has been allocated a total sum of £3.1m from the DfE to invest in capital infrastructure over the next three years to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. The following projects have been identified, and further details, including the names of the early years providers and/or schools, will be published once agreed;

- Mead School – increasing the capacity of their Additionally Resourced Provision for communication and interaction needs. The budget for this has been increased to £600,000.
- Additionally Resourced Provisions –. We are looking for two new Primary ARPs and two new Secondary ARPs to deliver either communication and interaction needs or social, emotional and mental health needs by 2021. Local authorities are required to update their plan in March 2021 to demonstrate how this funding was used.
- Small capital grants – £250,000 is being allocated for small Capital Grants Programmes for Early years providers, schools and post-16 providers.

## **Flag Flying Policy**

**6) To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Damian White)  
From Councillor Reg Whitney**

Would the Leader of the Council confirm when the flying of the Union Jack outside the Town Hall was last discussed and voted upon in the Council chamber?

### **Answer**

Flag flying at the Town Hall (which provides for the flying of the Union flag) has been an established practice for many years. The last time flag flying was debated at Full Council in August 2003 was in respect of the cross of St George. The prevailing legal view is that it is not a Council function, rather it is an executive matter and any discretion sits with the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader. And I am pleased to confirm that whilst we have a Conservative administration here in Havering, both the Cross of St George and the Union Jack will always proudly be flown from Havering Town Hall.

## **Arrival Screens at Bus Stops**

**7) To the Cabinet Member for Environment( Councillor Osman Dervish)  
From Councillor Tony Durdin**

TfL will install time of arrival screens at bus stops with 50,000 boarders per year, but will not fund them and neither will the Council. The Rainham Tesco bus stop (F) serves 4 bus routes, both ways, and far exceeds 50,000 boarders per year. At such a busy stop, just like a train station, there should be a time of arrival screen, rather than expect everyone to have access to a mobile phone.

Please can the Cabinet Member for Environment make representations to TfL to review their policy and install and fund time of arrival screens, even if by raising the threshold above 50,000 boarders per year or agree the Council itself should fund from the highway budget these screens at very busy stops to show our commitment to public transport

### **Answer**

Countdown signs cost around £8k each. It is understood that as a result of TfL's Central Government revenue grant being phased out, TfL are no longer delivering any countdown signs at new locations.

In recent years the Administration in Havering has been made aware of a number of similar requests for Countdown signs at bus stops across the borough. Officers will continue to put pressure on Transport for London for their Countdown implementation policy to be reviewed.

Given that Countdown signage is part of TfL's bus infrastructure, as such it should be fully funded directly by Transport for London. There is no highways budget available to the Council to deliver such signage.

## **Private Sector Leasing Tenants**

**8) To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Joshua Chapman)  
From Councillor Tele Lawal**

Will the Cabinet Lead for Housing make a statement about the Councils decision to review the circumstances of a group of Private Sector Leasing Tenants currently in Temporary Accommodation?

### **Answer**

The Council is reviewing the housing circumstances of a number of residents who were placed in private sector leased temporary accommodation to ensure that the Council can determine the duty that is owed in line with homelessness legislation. This is because historically, not all residents who were placed in such accommodation went through a formal assessment of their housing need and so a

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review is now being undertaken to understand that need. In most cases, officers are determining that there is an ongoing duty to assist these residents with accommodation and we will continue to provide residents with the necessary support required throughout this process

### **Empty Properties, Clayfield Close Lexington Way, Cranham**

#### **9) To the Cabinet Member for Housing, (Councillor Joshua Chapman)**

##### **From Councillor Gillian Ford**

12 new Council properties were completed in Clayfield Close, Cranham, some six months ago yet still lie empty. Given the urgent need for such accommodation, would the Cabinet Member explain this unacceptable delay, when will the properties be occupied and the net cost to both the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund in lost income?

##### **Answer**

The scheme to which Cllr Ford refers comprises of 10 shared ownership houses and two affordable rent flats.

Of the two affordable rent properties, one flat was occupied shortly after completion and the other flat is currently vacant. This is because it has been held for adaptations for a resident who is a wheelchair user. The resident needs full wheelchair access, wet room and a space to store a scooter and we are working closely with Ark, the contractor who built the scheme, to agree and complete the adaptations as soon as possible without affecting the warranty.

Unfortunately, due to technical lease issues, there were delays with sales being finalised so marketing of the shared ownership houses could not commence until mid-February 2018.

Of the 10 shared ownership properties, there are nine sales proceeding through the conveyancing process at the moment. The sale of the remaining property recently fell through and is being re-marketed.

### **Council Procedure**

#### **10) To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Damian White)**

##### **From Councillor Martin Goode**

At Council meetings we generally have a long question and answer session with supplementary questions. In order to help reduce the length of the meetings, could the responses from cabinet members be handed out on a paper prior to the meeting start or the answer provided on screen so that the supplementary questions can be provided more quickly.

##### **Answer**

In order to improve the efficiency of Full Council meetings I have asked officers to draft a report for consideration at a future meeting of the Council's Governance Committee. It is for Members to determine the rules in respect of the running of Council meetings and I would welcome input from all Groups.

## **Member Conduct**

### **11) To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Damian White)**

#### **From Councillor Ray Morgon**

Given the reports in the local media about the alleged conduct of one of his group and the negative impact that this has on Havering Council and all its members, would the Leader of the Council confirm if any of his group have been suspended from the Conservative Party by Conservative Central Office?

#### **Answer**

There have been no amendments to the Conservative Group membership on Council. I am not at liberty to discuss Conservative Party matters, which are separate from the business of the Council

## **Illegal Fly Tipping**

### **12) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Osman Dervish)**

#### **From Councillor Jan Sargent**

Please can you explain the political, legal and financial reasons why the Council is content to move criminal fly-tippers on rather than prosecute them for the harm they do to settled communities and what, if any, changes in the law are required to deal with this menace.

#### **Answer**

The Council has taken a robust stance with criminal fly tippers but has to act within the Law.

Our enforcement team investigate fly tips and takes appropriate action when evidence is found.

The Council has no responsibility for enforcement or clearance of fly tips on private land but does offer guidance and support to landowners.

The Council is part of a multi –agency conglomeration whose aim is to gather intelligence on large scale waste crime and take appropriate enforcement action whenever possible.

The Council is seeking a High Court Injunction aimed at preventing known and unknown individuals who break onto land and commit waste crime activities.

## **Harold Wood Polyclinic**

### **13) To the Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Care Services (Councillor Jason Frost)**

#### **From Councillor Paul McGeary**

What representations have the Council made to ensure the continued provision of walk in care facilities at the Harold Wood Polyclinic and has it responded formally to the CCGs public consultation paper on urgent care services entitled "Right care right place first time"?

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**Answer**

BHR CCGs are presenting the consultation to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 11th July and the JHOSC on 26th July. The Council will then decide how to contribute before the consultation closes on 21st August.

**Fly Tipping**

**14) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Osman Dervish )  
From Councillor Ron Ower**

In respect of the ongoing blight of Fly-Tipping which affects our borough, would the Cabinet Member please state how much has been spent on dealing with Fly Tipping in each of the last three years (2015/16, 2016/ and 2017/18) and how many prosecutions have been secured?

**Answer**

The Council spends nearly a £1million a year. This involves the investigation and clearance including the disposal of fly tipped waste. The figure contains all types of fly tipping – domestic, commercial and larger, scale industrial fly tipping

Over the past three years there has been an increase in the amount of fly tipping both locally and nationally, from single black sacks to abandoned lorry trailers filled with 30 plus tonnes of waste.

The Council's enforcement team has been pro-active in tackling fly tipping on public land and recently seized several vehicles engaged in waste crime that were eventually destroyed. Since 2015, the Council enforcement team have issued over 900 FPN fixed penalty notices and successfully pursued 5 prosecutions.

The Council isn't responsible for the clearance or investigation of waste on private land – but the enforcement officers do offer support and guidance to the landowners.

**Street Care Programme**

**15) To the Cabinet Member for the Environment (Councillor Osman Dervish )  
From Councillor Paul Middleton**

Given that grass cutting fell behind and the Borough was left with grass on verges over a foot high, the complaints about street cleaning have rapidly increased over the past few months, the Grounds Maintenance programme is well behind schedule and many areas have weeds/grass in kerbs a foot high, would the Cabinet Member for Environment explain how this meets the Conservative pledge of "Keeping Havering Special"

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**Answer**

The extremely wet weather in April made it difficult to maintain the grass cutting programme at the time. This was followed by a period of warm sunshine creating ideal growing conditions for grass. Even with the planned additional resources we were struggling to keep pace with the accelerated grass growth for a short period of time. Neighbouring local authorities are in a similar position. Further resources were allocated and I am pleased to confirm that the situation is now under control in respect of grass and weeds and the normal programme of maintenance has been resumed.