

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Note: Questions 1 to 14 were answered at the meeting. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.6(a); the remainder were treated as if put for written answer

1 REVIEW OF VILLAGE GREEN LEGISLATION

To the Cabinet Member for Individuals (Councillor Steven Kelly)

By Councillor Barbara Matthews

The legislation around applying for village green status is currently under review and subject to consultation (14th October 2011). Would the Cabinet Member please set out the initial position of the Council and would he also agree that a cross-party response be submitted

Answer:

The primary objectives of the consultation are to:-

- a) strike a better balance between protecting high quality green space, valued by local communities, and enabling legitimate development to occur where it is most appropriate; and
- b) ensure that when land is registered as a green, because of the exceptional protection afforded to new greens, the land concerned really does deserve the level of protection it will get.

The DEFRA Consultation on Village Greens ends on 17th October 2011. An Executive Decision of the appropriate Cabinet member/s will be required to authorise a response to this consultation.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member expressed concern that there was trivialising of the concept of "village greens", using the legislation as a means of frustrating development rather than protecting genuine village greens. Nonetheless, account would be taken of any written suggestions as to what should be in the Council's response to DEFRA when any decision was taken.

2 GUYSFIELD DRIVE HOSTEL

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor Michael Deon Burton

Following the decision of Weston Homes to abandon their monstrous plans for Dovers Corner, will the Administration also withdraw their plans for a monster sized Hostel in Guysfield Drive

Answer:

It is unhelpful to liken the large-scale, new build Dovers Corner scheme to the proposal to internally remodel the former Will Perrin Court sheltered scheme in Guysfield Drive to provide temporary hostel accommodation. They are totally different propositions.

The Will Perrin Court proposal does not include any change to the size of the existing building on Guysfield Drive; there are no proposals to extend the building. Instead, the proposal would see internal reconfiguration to provide small, self-contained units of accommodation which would be occupied by households for around three months. The proposal would also include improvements

to the landscaping and security of the building's grounds and car parks, which are likely to also be of benefit to the building's neighbours.

The Administration has no plans to withdraw the proposal for Will Perrin Court. The issues raised by residents and stakeholders, such as the Police, during the planning application consultation period will be taken into account by the Regulatory Services Committee.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that residents had had opportunity to make representations about the development proposal, both through the planning process and by way of a special "Ask the Cabinet" session, held in the locality.

3 FUTURE OF COMMUNITY HALLS

To the Cabinet Member for Value (Councillor Roger Ramsey)

By Councillor Denis Breading

Will he make a statement about the future of the Council's Community Halls?

Answer:

The review of community halls, as referred to in the Cabinet papers on the Council's Financial Strategy at their meeting on 13 July 2011, is due to be reported to the Cabinet meeting on 19 October 2011. I am unable to make a statement about the Council's Community Halls until this report on the review has been considered by Cabinet.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member advised that, in view of the potential disposal, staff had stopped taking bookings for dates beyond that proposed for the disposal, should it be authorised in order to avoid causing disappointment to those seeking to make a booking.

4 ROMFORD LEISURE CENTRE PROPOSALS

To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Michael White)

By Councillor Gillian Ford (in the absence of Councillor Clarence Barrett)

In the Summer issue of the Gidea Park, Heath Park and Ardleigh Green Newsletter produced by the 'Conservative Action Team', the lead article states that RA councillors have criticised the new Leisure centre planned for Romford and are politically opposed to it. Would the Leader provide substantive evidence to back up this claim or retract the statement?

Answer:

The article draws attention to the fact that the RA Group and their friends in the Labour Party decided to requisition this decision. That was true – I have the minutes in front of me, and it was a close vote, 5:4 – but I do believe that if the Members had not seen sense and supported this Administration's to move forward with its very ambitious programme for delivering a new leisure centre in Romford, then we could have seen it come off the rails. They could have made hay with that as well but we have said we are sticking to our guns in light of the opposition from the other Groups so that we continue to try to deliver a new leisure centre for the people of Romford.

In response to a supplementary question, the Leader expressed bafflement at the continued opposition from other Groups to the new development and the continued attack on Romford.

5 COST OF CARBON TAXES

To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Michael White)

By Councillor David Durant

What is the estimated cost to Havering Council of carbon taxes and does the Council Leader agree that these taxes undermine the economic recovery?

Answer:

The Council made provision of £450k to fund the cost of these allowances as part of its 2011-12 budget. This is clearly set out in the budget report to Cabinet in February.

At current consumption patterns the value of the credits that the Council would need to purchase would be approximately £380k, 53% of which is the result of energy consumption within schools.

It is unlikely that this will have any direct impact on Havering in the current financial year. As such, there is also therefore unlikely to be any marked impact on the economic recovery at the present time.

6 NEIGHBOURHOOD RESPONSIBILITY

To the Cabinet Member for Community Empowerment (Councillor Robert Benham)

By Councillor Denis O'Flynn

When will the analysis of the scheme piloted on the Briar Road Estate (and referred to in the Leader's Statement to Council on 25 May 2011) be published and consideration be given to using it as a model of how the Council can involve communities more in the management of their neighbourhoods?

Answer:

The Active and Safer Communities scheme being piloted on the Briar Road Estate has the Briar Residents Action Group at its heart and is working closely in partnership with service providers including the Council's StreetCare, Community Safety and Housing teams, Homes In Havering and the Police. The partnership includes regular meetings with the BRAG Committee, estate inspections, well attended monthly public meetings (open to all residents and local groups) and a Strategic Operational Group to co-ordinate services. The first fruits of this new partnership with the local community are:

- a general improvement in estate cleanliness and appearance through the efforts of both residents and service providers;
- a new 'Clean N Green' Neighbourhood Agreement to be presented to residents at a BRAG public meeting by the Head of StreetCare on 28th September.

The development of the model is still in its early stages and will be presented to Council in due course.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the present was a pilot scheme. Consideration would be given in due course, when the results were known, to extending it to other areas.

7 PLANNING APPLICATIONS: MISSED DEADLINES

To the Chairman of the Regulatory Services Committee (Councillor Barry Oddy)

By Councillor Gillian Ford

Over the last three years, would the Chairman set out how many planning applications have missed the decision deadline resulting in the applicant appealing directly to the Planning Inspectorate?

Answer:

Since September 2008, there have been five applications where the applicant has appealed to the Planning Inspectorate on the grounds of non-determination. Of these, three were applications for planning permission and two were applications for Certificates of Lawfulness.

8 COSTS OF STANDARDS ENQUIRY

To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety (Councillor Geoff Starns) (answered by Councillor Michael White in the absence of Councillor Starns)

By Councillor Mark Logan

At the Full Council meeting in March, I requested details of the full Barrister costs in relation to the Mark Gadd Standards Board investigation. Councillor Starns said he would send me this information, but has not done so. Therefore, I repeat my request for this information.

Answer:

Now that the Council has received the final invoice from the barrister's chambers, I can confirm that the total cost to the Council for the barristers involved was £9,052.

9 GOAL FOR LEARNING

To the Cabinet Member for Children & Learning (Councillor Paul Rochford)

By Councillor Pat Murray

When will he be announcing initiatives to achieve the 'aspirational goal for learning' of "wanting our older residents to have access to first class opportunities to continue their education or learn new skills" referred to in the Leaders Statement to Council on 25 May 2011?

Answer:

At the start of the year, as part of the Learning Transformation programme, Havering Adult College commissioned a review of the current provision for Informal Adult and Community Learning within the Borough. The review included provision made by Havering Adult College, Health & Sports, Libraries, Fairkytes and the Europa Centre. The draft report found that there is a broad range of high quality provision currently on offer and whilst there is some duplication of courses across providers, this is limited and appears presently to be largely justified by the demand.

The report includes a number of recommendations including;

- That a group of officers is convened with a senior representative from each of the providers by the Heads of Service of Learning and Achievement and Culture and Leisure to consider how they could best work together to ensure high quality provision is maintained
- As a priority, this group should produce plans and arrangements for responding quickly and effectively to pressures for change which may arise in the next few months due to external factors, such as significant losses of revenue.
- A strategy is developed for the provision of informal adult and community learning and its development in Havering over the next three years with an action plan for the next year.
- An electronically based information exchange system between members of the group is established to enable quick and efficient exchange of significant information in a rapidly changing situation and to support bids for external funding.

These recommendations are currently being discussed amongst senior LA officers before being taken forward.

In terms of the national context, in August 2011, the Government launched a consultation New Challenges, New Chances, which represents the next phase of the Government's plans to implement radical reform of adult learning and skills provision in England. The consultation covers a range of measures, but includes a refocusing of Government support for informal adult and community learning to ensure it supports relevant Government policy objectives, such as building the Big Society and engages and motivates people from disadvantaged groups to learn and progress, including to skills-focused learning and employment.

Following the consultation, the Government will publish details of key implementation milestones in the skills investment statement for 2012/13, this is planned for publication autumn 2011 and will have to be taken into account when developing the strategy recommended above.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that further reports on the issues would follow in due course.

10 ALLEGED BLACKLISTING OF INDIVIDUALS

To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Michael White)

By Councillor Ray Morgon

On 16 July 2011, the Daily Mail ran a story stating that thousands of people involved in disagreements with council staff had their personal details stored on secret blacklists. Would the Leader of the Council confirm that no such lists exist in Havering?

Answer:

The article in the Daily Mail seems to be referring to general "watch lists" or "registers of potentially violent people" (both descriptions are taken from the story). We don't have any such lists in Havering.

11 CCTV COVERAGE FOR RAINHAM VILLAGE

To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety (Councillor Geoff Starns) (answered by Councillor Michael White in the absence of Councillor Starns)

By Councillor Jeffrey Tucker

If CCTV in our High Streets is beneficial then coverage should be extended to all parts of Havering. Rainham has been excluded due to cost, but this matter can now be remedied because the GLA has allocated special funding to improve Rainham and Hornchurch High Streets. Will some of this funding now be spent on providing CCTV coverage in Rainham Village? If not, why not?

Answer:

The Council has successfully secured £220K from the Outer London Fund Round 1. The funding will be used to support and promote local businesses and community activities in Rainham through an agreed programme of works including:-

- A shop local campaign to promote local shops through publicity and promotional materials and a "Love your High Street" programme in the run up to Christmas which will offer shopkeepers advice and support to create distinctive window displays.
- Support for the RAVE Christmas Fair and new Christmas lighting.
- A programme of events promoting Rainham and its heritage including a proposal to decorate shop shutters with historic Rainham scenes.
- The creation of an arts and heritage trail through Rainham Village, and a small programme of public realm improvements.

These activities will begin in the run up to Christmas through to March 2012.

The funding allocated is specifically for those projects I've just mentioned and is not available for general use on other projects such as CCTV in Rainham. There was no specific provision in Round 1 for CCTV.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member expressed hope that it would be possible on due course to introduce CCTV in Rainham but no timescale could be given and it was dependent on the funding being available.

12 COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS

To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety (Councillor Geoff Starns) (answered by Councillor Michael White in the absence of Councillor Starns)

By Councillor Paul McGeary

In the Leaders Statement to Council on 25 May 2011 he stated that your project "will consider how we can do more to put our customers-council taxpayers and their families at the heart of our decision making" what new initiatives/proposals are proposed to achieve these aims?

Answer:

The Council has taken important steps to increase local people's influence over our decision-making within Havering. For instance, we recently carried out the largest household survey we have ever done, the Your Council Your Say survey, in which we received over 11,000 responses. Residents told us what their top five priorities were, and what they most wanted to see improved in their local area. Over 3,000 of these people gave us their contact details and asked to be kept informed about how they could get more involved in their local area.

The Council's new Corporate Strategy has been based on what residents told us was most important to them. It includes, for example, further measures to improve community safety through neighbourhood agreements, keeping the streets clean, increasing personal budgets to give vulnerable people more choice over their daily lives, and making it much more easy to contact the Council.

One of the workstreams within the Council Effectiveness project is to improve how we use customer insight information, which involves gathering all the intelligence that we have about our customers, and using this to target services at those with the greatest needs, and to communicate better with residents according to how they prefer to be contacted by the Council.

We are also looking at how new ways of engagement, such as social media, can be used to involve local people in decision-making.

In response to a supplementary question, the Leader stressed that consultation with the community informed decision making but did not direct it. The community needed to be aware of how well the Council was performing, and the aim was to get the community to help set the targets the Council should aim to achieve.

13 POSSIBLE DISPOSAL OF COUNCIL-OWNED SHOPS

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor Ray Morgon

Given the proposed changes to the Housing Revenue Account and the need for the council to raise money and cut its costs, would the Cabinet Member confirm if there are any plans to dispose of council owned shops in the borough?

Answer:

Shops held within the Housing Revenue Account, HRA, are well-managed and typically in good demand, thus they contribute income to the Council's HRA rather than act as a cost. For example, the shops in Farnham Road and Hilldene Avenue in Harold Hill provide a thriving hub for the area with recent improvements to the car parking as part of the Harold Hill Ambitions programme adding to their accessibility.

The parade of shops on the Briar Road estate are, however, less popular. This parade has seven shops, but three are empty, and it is difficult to attract new tenants. Thus, as part of the regeneration of the estate, the Council has identified the shops as a specific redevelopment opportunity within the brief to potential redevelopment partners. These works would see the current shops and associated flats demolished, with a new 'village square' being developed to include shops, housing and potentially other community uses, such as a GP's surgery.

The ownership arrangements for the proposed new shops on the Briar Road estate will be considered in more detail once a redevelopment partner has been selected.

HRA shops are generally within multi-storey buildings with residential, separately-let, accommodation above. Freehold sale of shops would involve selling the freehold of a block in which secure tenancies exist, which for practical purposes is not possible. A long leasehold disposal of shops would cause management issues over maintenance and responsibilities that are best avoided.

The housing self-financing legislation brings about a fundamental change to the way in which the HRA is financed. However, these changes do not necessarily imply the need for cuts. A report is being prepared for Cabinet which will provide further details of the proposals.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member affirmed that, as the Council had shops in its property portfolio, producing useful income, it was bound to manage them properly.

14 IN-HOUSE MANAGEMENT OF COUNCIL HOUSING: COSTS AND SAVINGS

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor Jeffrey Tucker

As an estimate what are the anticipated costs and savings from bringing the management of council housing back in-house?

Answer:

The estimated savings from bringing the management of council housing back in house are between £300,000 and £500,000.

15 **COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT**

To the Cabinet Member for Culture, Towns & Communities (Councillor Andrew Curtin)

By Councillor Keith Darvill

In the Leader's Statement to Council on 25 May 2011 he stated that the Community Action Project is "aimed squarely at achieving as much as we can through our partnerships with the voluntary and community sector and our efforts to encourage local residents to have a real stake in the future of their Borough" what new initiatives can he announce and is he yet in a position to see just how much an appetite there is in Havering for the Big Society?

Answer:

I have dwelt upon the matter which Councillor Darvill raises in both of the Champions reports which I submitted tonight.

A number of changes are occurring to effect the Government's stated aim of shifting power from the centre to local communities and charitable organisations at the moment, including investigation of new and alternative ways of ensuring ongoing revenue funding for organisations in the third sector. We are very interested in these ideas, and are working with relevant national and local organisations to see whether they may offer a positive way of expanding the number of local charities in the borough, and in that sense make society in Havering "bigger", as well as protecting the charitable infrastructure that we already have. We are also working with relevant local charitable organisations to see whether further income generation opportunities exist for them which would enable them to intensify and extend their work for people in Havering. It is worth noting that Havering Council has not significantly reduced the level of support it is giving to charitable and third sector organisations in Havering despite the current financial stringency. This does seem to mark us out from other boroughs.

At the level of smaller, but equally important, voluntary and charitable endeavour in Havering, which does not require ongoing funding to employ staff for example, we are keen to hear from all in the sector of things which the Council could stop doing or requiring of them, which would help to make volunteering more pleasurable and less onerous for local people.

New initiatives in response to both of these areas of policy will be announced through Cabinet reports or Executive decisions when reasonable ways of making progress on them are developed in partnership with the community and local charitable organisations.

The evidence that we have from consultation with residents suggests that there is already extensive voluntary activity and community action taking place in Havering. For example, in the last Place Survey in 2010, 39% of residents said that they regularly gave unpaid help to local groups, clubs or voluntary organisations - one of the highest rates of voluntary activity in London. I think that there is, as there has always been, a healthy appetite on the part of Havering residents to support local charities and do good in the local community, and the Administration will continue to respond with interest to new ideas as to how this can best be organised, whether they originate from the local community or national government."

16 **MEMBERS' RESIDENCES**

To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Michael White)

By Councillor Clarence Barrett

Would the Leader please confirm that the principal residence of all Conservative members is within the boundary of the borough?

Answer:

The rules are that you either have to reside, own property or work in Havering at the time of the election. To my knowledge all Councillors meet those criteria. If Cllr. Barrett knows differently then I would ask him to put forward that information.

17 FUTURE OF NAPIER HOUSE AND NEW PLYMOUTH HOUSE TOWER BLOCKS

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor Michael Deon Burton

What are the Council's plans regarding the tower blocks, New Plymouth House and Napier House, located in Dunedin Road in South Hornchurch Ward?

- 1 Are they to be renovated or demolished?
- 2 Please provide a clear and specific time period for my residents as to when one or the other will occur

Answer:

The Council fully appreciates that New Plymouth and Napier Houses are in very poor condition, far below the standard tenants should expect.

As a result, I as Lead Member for Housing instructed Housing Officers to establish the costs of two options – full refurbishment and renovation, and the decanting of residents with a view to demolishing the blocks.

Renovation of the blocks would have a significant cost to the HRA capital programme, while decanting and demolition may not yield a large enough receipt to cover the costs of relocating the tenants and buying out the leaseholders, thus leaving a residual cost for the Council. Therefore, officers and myself are scrutinising the figures extremely closely in order to determine the best approach.

There is no agreed plan at present, but I anticipate being able to discuss proposals with the residents of New Plymouth and Napier Houses and their representatives before the end of this financial year, thus giving greater certainty to residents from 2012/13 onwards.

18 GOAL OF TOWN & COMMUNITIES

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor Keith Darvill

In the Leader's Statement to Council on 25 May 2011 he stated "We will encourage local people to play a more active part in shaping the places where they live" and "we will make it easier for individuals and community groups to meet their own needs locally" what initiatives are being considered to achieve these goals?

Answer:

There are a number of initiatives already under way that encourage local residents to play an active part in shaping their neighbourhoods. For instance:

- residents of Orchard Village, formerly the Mardyke Estate, in Rainham continue to be actively engaged in shaping the regeneration of their estate through a Residents Committee, a Neighbourhood Board and a Community Stakeholders Forum. An effective partnership has been formed made up of the residents, Old Ford Housing Association, the Mardyke Youth and Community Association, Newton's School, the local nursery, the Police and the Council. The result is high quality new homes, improvements to local community

facilities, a safer neighbourhood and a positive feeling of hope amongst residents that they can and are influencing their future.

- residents of the Briar Road estate in Harold Hill, including local community groups, have been actively involved in putting together a ten point Briar Improvements Action Plan with the Council and Homes in Havering. This has taken place through public meetings, a residents' survey, round table workshops and individual one to one meetings. The fruits of this work have seen the completion of the improvements to the Betty Strathern Centre, managed by the Briar Community Association, new roofs, windows and kitchens for tenants through the Decent Homes programme, improvements for some owners via the London Rebuilding Society, and a general improvement in estate cleanliness through the work with the Briar Residents Action Group.

The Council is also making great strides in enabling more vulnerable people to use personal budgets to meet their own needs how they see fit - giving them more control and choice over their own lives.

We also work with voluntary sector partners such as HAVCO and Age Concern to encourage more local people to get involved in volunteering and making a difference to their local communities.

19 **SUB-LETTING OF COUNCIL PROPERTIES**

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor L Kelly)

By Councillor Linda Van den Hende

What steps are being taken to tackle the sub-letting of council owned properties?

Answer:

The Council takes a robust approach to tackling the sub-letting and fraudulent use of its properties. Homes in Havering have traditionally led on this activity. In August this year, however, the Council established a Tenancy Fraud Investigation Team funded by a grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government. The funding is available for the next two years. This Team of two investigators has strengthened the previous approach, with the Council's team now carrying out the investigative work and Homes in Havering taking the necessary legal action to gain possession.

The Team has two investigators who are working alongside colleagues that investigate Housing Benefit Fraud. They carry out investigations into sub-letting and tenants not using properties as their main or principal home as well as a variety of other housing related offences. They use a variety of methods to identify and deal with the cases such as advertising the issue in tenant newsletters, intelligence gathering, pro-active data matching, tenancy audits, visits and interviews.

Over the last four years, around 5,700 tenancy audits have been carried out. The latest figures show that in 2010/11 possession of eight fraudulently used council properties was gained. The Tenancy Fraud Investigation Team currently has 32 properties under investigation; these include council owned and housing associations properties in the borough.

20 **PLANNING APPLICANTS' FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO POLITICAL PARTIES**

To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety (Councillor Geoff Starns) (answered by Councillor Michael White in the absence of Councillor Starns)

By Councillor David Durant

If a planning application is submitted by someone who has made a donation or loan to a political party, should members of that political party on the Regulatory Services Committee declare an interest?

Answer:

The requirement to declare a prejudicial interest is set out in Part 2 of the Members' Code of Conduct which the Councillor has ready access to.

If somebody was offering to make a payment to a political party or withdraw a payment if a particular decision was made or action taken by the Council then the members of that party would have to declare an interest. However, a donation made without conditions does not create declarable interest for members of that party under the terms of the Code.

21 ATTENDANCE AT CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

To the Cabinet Member for Children & Learning (Councillor Paul Rochford)

By Councillor Ray Morgon

Would the Cabinet Member advise why this Council does not allow a Member to attend a child protection conference when requested to do so by a parent who lives in the Member's ward even in just an observational capacity?

Answer:

There is no blanket policy prohibiting this within the Council. There are a number of potential difficulties involved in it not least any potential conflict of interest and the confidential nature of much of the information shared at such case conferences which are held by agencies other than the Council.

This issue was discussed at the recent training for members on safeguarding and the expert advice from that training session was that this was not an appropriate exercise of the member role. Members are encouraged to assure themselves of the effectiveness of the Safeguarding children arrangements within the Council through the Overview and Scrutiny process.

As a consequence of the complexities involved, and the advice given at the member training event, the service is currently consulting with legal services colleagues on whether a clearer policy position would be helpful.

22 ADVERTISING ON LAMP POSTS

To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Tebutt)

By Councillor Linda Hawthorn

In respect of the advertising banners attached to lamp posts in Upminster, would the Cabinet Member please state how much income has been generated to date, by which advertisers and if the income target is projected to be met this financial year?

Answer:

The income target for advertising is a total sum and not split into individual categories (e.g. roundabouts, hoardings, lamp columns etc.), nor is this broken down geographically.

The Council has a contract with a company that manages the letting process. As such we do not maintain details of the actual advertisers using the facility or where they are specifically placed.

Income actually received for the first 6 months in respect of all lamp column advertising is £418.

A full assessment of the financial position is in the process of being undertaken and will be reflected in the revenue budget monitor reports, which are available through the intranet and the members' area of the website.

23 **BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS**

To the Cabinet Member for Value (Councillor Roger Ramsey)

By Councillor Clarence Barrett

Would the Cabinet Member explain why, with nearly half the 2011/12 financial year gone, no budget monitoring report has been considered by Cabinet or published anywhere in the public domain?

Answer:

I have addressed a similar question at previous Council meetings, the approach taken by the Council is to place budget monitoring reports into the Members area of the intranet, and subsequently onto the Council's website.

Cabinet members will be aware that a number of reports to Cabinet meetings include a summary of the position in the current year, and often the monitoring report itself. This information is key in enabling Cabinet to reach informed decisions on the Council's budget.

There is a time lag between the end of each monitoring period and the finalisation of the associated report. This year, 2011-12, there have been the added complications of the launch of the Council's new website, and the implementation of the new Oracle systems.

These have delayed the process of producing the revenue monitoring reports and their subsequent publication. However, I am pleased to advise Council that both the period 3 and 4 reports are now available in the Members area on the Council's website.