



**FULL COUNCIL, Wednesday 25 November**

**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

**1) To the Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Ramsey**

**From Cllr Ray Morgon**

Would the Leader of the Council confirm what specific discussions have taken place with NELSA and others in devolving more powers to Havering?

**Response:**

Havering Council is a member of NELSA and also of Local London. Both of these groups have been established to explore opportunities for joint working and devolution.

NELSA was re-launched during the early summer of 2015, but has been fairly quiet. Local London comprises of the following eight London Boroughs:

1. Havering
2. Newham
3. Barking and Dagenham
4. Enfield
5. Waltham Forest
6. Tower Hamlets
7. Redbridge
8. Greenwich

We have had broad discussions concerning the following six themes:

1. 1 Community Safety (Havering leads on this)
2. 2 Employment
3. 3 Education and Skills
4. 4 Business Growth
5. 5 Health and Social Care
6. 6 Housing

London Councils presented a devolution paper to the Treasury which was broadly supported by members of Local London. However, nothing specific has been requested of the Treasury.

Every Leader wants to obtain the very best for their Borough and residents. To date, no work committing Havering to anything has been undertaken. Should this situation change, I will of course ensure that matters are raised at Cabinet and Full Council for debate and decision.

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In response to a supplementary question, The Leader of the Council reported that London Borough of Bexley were keen to join oneSource and that he should shortly be discussing final details with the leaders of both Bexley and Newham. The introduction of Bexley into oneSource was likely to bring savings in a number of areas and the Leader hoped to make a formal announcement on this matter by the time of the next Council meeting.

**2) To the Cabinet Member for Culture, Councillor Melvin Wallace**

**From Cllr Stephanie Nunn**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm the current book fund for this year, and confirm how the council decides what books to purchase and how?

**Response:**

The spend on library books from the base budget will be £363,800 for 2015/16. In addition, £160k from an earmarked reserve will be spent on library books in 2015/16.

Books are purchased from a designated Library Supplier who is provided with a specification unique to Havering, detailing the book purchase (stock) requirements. This specification, which takes into consideration the specific needs of the communities in which the 10 branches are based, is drawn up using information about the borrowing of the existing book stock (using the Library Service's evidence based stock management system) and taking account of Library staff knowledge and experience.

The ordering process ensures that popular and bestselling fiction and non-fiction titles are ordered pre-publication, so that they are available for loan as soon as possible.

In addition the Library service will purchase:

- any titles for stock requested by customers within a given criteria that are not already in stock;
- additional copies of titles for which there is high demand;
- copies of titles on subjects for which there is an unforeseen demand
- replacements for missing, tatty and out of date stock.

The supplier delivers stock "shelf ready" to each branch, so it is supplied with necessary servicing and labelling, and ready to go straight on the shelves, on display or on loan.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member agreed to supply a written response giving details of how old library books are disposed of.

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**3) To the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Robert Benham**

**From Cllr Reg Whitney**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm what parking enforcement activities take place at the weekend?

**Response:**

On Saturday a full team is deployed to enforce all paid for parking, resident parking, (where it operates on a Saturday), waiting and loading restrictions, and 'at any time' parking prohibitions, such as pavement parking, dropped kerb and any time waiting.

On Sundays, a smaller team carries out enforcement for 'at any time' waiting or loading restrictions, pavement parking, parking across vehicle crossings, when notified by residents, and 'any time waiting' restrictions.

In addition, we have increased our operational enforcement hours from 7pm to 10pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturdays.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member explained that there were approximately 18 traffic wardens on duty at any one time. A review of parking enforcement was currently being conducted and Groups were free to propose budget amendments to employ more traffic wardens if they wished.

**4) To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services, Councillor Wendy Brice-Thompson**

**From Cllr John Wood**

To ensure that only genuine users are able to use Blue Badges, would the Cabinet Member confirm what steps the council is taking to ensure that misuse of blue badges is not taking place in Havering?

**Response:**

Blue badges are there to help vulnerable people in our community and therefore misuse of them is unacceptable, and luckily, this form of crime in Havering is relatively low, with nine reported thefts to police from September last year until this August.

However, we want to reduce any form of theft or misuse and that is why our enforcement officers will confiscate badges they believe to be fake or out of date, or if they believe the person using it is not the genuine user.

We have also previously held exercises with the police in the Market Place targeting misuse of blue badges.

We are looking at what else we can do, and how we can continue to work in partnership with the local police, however, we must bear in mind that the low rate of this crime in

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Havering does not make it a local police priority.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member agreed to provide further details on the matter.

**5) To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Damian White**

**From Cllr June Alexander**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm if he agrees that charging council tenants for mobile CCTV that all non-council tenants benefits from is unfair.

**Response:**

We are governed by the terms and conditions of our lease agreements. As such, we've contacted our solicitors for advice on the levying of CCTV charges.

We have been advised that if the property or block is located on an estate that benefits from CCTV coverage, regardless of where the cameras are situated, we can ask for a contribution towards the cost of providing this service to the estate.

I appreciate that this can be a divisive charge for a small minority of tenants but wish to report that, from my engagement throughout the wider estate, the mobile CCTV unit is a much valued service and one that would be missed if it was discontinued.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member felt that mobile CCTV did have a significant deterrent value and had been requested by a lot of tenants. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide some statistics on the deterrent value of the service.

**6) To the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Robert Benham**

**From Cllr Barry Mugglestone**

Since the introduction of increased parking charges in April, would the Cabinet Member confirm the income received compared to each of the previous three financial years.

**Response**

Income from parking charges for 2012/13 was £1,076,829. For 2013/14, it was £1,222,856.97, while for 2014/15, it was £1,446,232.44. So far in the current year, we've received £1,078,943.78. It's important to remember that income raised from parking charges must be spent on improving the safety and condition of the highways.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the introduction of increased parking charges had been successful in terms of increasing revenue.

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**7) To the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Robert Benham**

**From Cllr Jody Ganly**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm what actions have been taken by Havering Council and other organisations on each of the rivers that run through Havering in the past 12 months.

**Response:**

I'm able to provide a list of works carried out across the borough's rivers over the last year to the councillor, which I'll pass on after this meeting. (Attached).

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member agreed to look into the response thus far from Thames Water to the problem of raw sewage discharging in part of Harrow Lodge Park.

**8) To the Cabinet Member for Housing Company Development and oneSource Management, Councillor Ron Ower**

**From Cllr Graham Williamson**

You will be aware of the concern over Havering's relatively high Mayoral housing target of 1,170 dwellings per year, which will have a negative impact on our existing infrastructure, amenity and services. Our target is well in excess of other similar outer-boroughs e.g. 363 for Sutton, 446 for Bexley and 599 for Hillingdon etc. Furthermore, If you remove such borough's Greenbelt land and weight the targets accordingly you will find that most of those boroughs should have targets actually in excess of ours.

These targets are the result of what the Council has identified to the GLA as potential sites for development in 2004, 2006, and 2013. Clearly Councillors, who were not part of this process, should now have oversight of these sites to understand whether officers have, unlike many similar boroughs, been over-zealous in identifying land for development and in particular whether the Green Belt Mardkye Farm has been submitted to the GLA as a potential development site.

I have requested to see the submitted list but have so far been denied access. Does the Cabinet Member agree that councillors need this information to perform their oversight and scrutiny duty and in the interests of transparency will he now authorise publication of this vital housing target information so it can be examined by Members and the Environment committee?

**Response:**

The Mayor's housing targets are the result of a strategic assessment of potential housing sites for development from 2015 to 2025. The focus of the GLA's London Plan

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was to identify additional land supply across the capital – taking into consideration a faster than estimated increase in population, as well as household growth.

Havering officers have worked closely with the GLA to ensure that identified sites included those that had planning permission or were allocated for development in the Council's existing planning documents and other brownfield sites. Mardyke Farm was not included in any recent or previous assessments.

Our annual housing target is 1,170, which is similar to our neighbours Barking and Dagenham (1,236) and Redbridge (1,123) – with Newham having a higher target of 1,994. The Mayor's housing targets vary across the London Boroughs due to the land availability and policy constraints within each borough, as well as other factors including the potential for growth and future development, such as London Riverside.

Havering' housing target has been derived in accordance with the Council's planning policies and has gone through an approval process by Members. The data used for the assessment is commercially sensitive – and, as such, has not been made publicly available.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member agreed to work with Councillor Williamson and other colleagues on issues relating to the Beam Reach development.

**9) To the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning, Councillor Meg Davis**

**From Cllr David Durant**

Despite promises to reduce immigration the Government are promoting a New Labour open door policy as part of their long term economic plan. At the same time they have banned councils from building new schools and this means existing schools need to be expanded to meet growing demand.

In the circumstances expansion of existing schools is unavoidable, but a zealous approach that ignores local opinion by creating East London super-size primary schools in Havering should be avoided as they will set a precedent for the whole borough.

Thus to help protect the suburban character of our borough, educational standards and local amenity will the Conservative Group rule out supporting the creation of 4<sup>th</sup> form entry super-size primary schools of 840+ pupils in Havering?

**Response:**

Just last week, it was agreed by cabinet that school expansion would be limited to a maximum of four forms of entry – and we already have good schools in the borough which have four forms of entry.

Cllr Durant is right to say we cannot build new schools – but it's important to also say we are legally bound to provide a school place for every local child who needs one.

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We are all aware of the pressure in this area, and what we are facing in the years to come, but not providing the places is simply not an option.

A four-form of entry school is certainly not super-sized, or uncommon in neighbouring authorities, as well as our own, now.

As part of our on-going expansion plans we have looked closely at the impact on existing pupils and the school community as a whole and there is no evidence of any impact on standards.

We work closely with headteachers at any schools we expand to ensure they have the right support in place, and the resources to deal with more pupils.

In fact, when expanded, our schools are benefitting from enhanced, more modern facilities, including better technology in the classroom, new kitchens and refurbished dining areas.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed she had visited all schools in the Rainham area and added that a Cabinet decision had already been taken about the expansion of Parsonage Farm School. It would be necessary to consider in the future the rising demand for places at all schools within Havering.

**10) To the Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services & Community Safety,  
Councillor Osman Dervish**

**From Cllr Jeffrey Tucker**

The last Council meeting passed a Conservative amendment calling on the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the London Mayor to provide the Havering Borough Commander with the resources needed to implement the New Policing Model. Please provide the date and details of the messages sent and responses received.

**Response:**

In line with the Metropolitan Police approach to 'total policing', a Local Policing Model was implemented from Spring 2013.

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) Police and Crime Plan 2013-16, identified proposed numbers of police officers working at Safer Neighbourhood level. Havering's officer numbers were projected to increase from 53 to 107, an increase of 54 officers, or more than 100 per cent. As of 19 November, Havering has 160 officers at SNT level. This comprises three Inspectors, eighteen Sergeants (fifteen Sergeants aligned to eighteen wards, two Town Centre Team Sergeants and one Detective Sergeant) a hundred and two Police Constables and thirty-seven Police Community Support Officers.

There are various opportunities for discussion between the Borough Commander and a number of representatives of the Council. On a monthly basis, the Tactical Intelligence Meeting takes place between the Police and our Community Safety officers, which looks

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at emerging issues and trends affecting the borough, and the resources that need to be employed. Minutes of these meetings are restricted under data protection legislation.

I meet with the Borough Commander on a fairly regular basis, both formally and informally, where many relevant issues are discussed. The Leader of the Council and others are also in contact with him and his office.

In September this year, the Community Safety Team Leader contacted the Borough Commander asking about staffing levels. The response from the Commander's office was that there were no particular resource issues that required additional support from the Council. The statement by the Chancellor earlier that day had also confirmed that there would not be any cuts to Police budgets.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member stated that the Metropolitan Police Service served the community with extreme distinction. Partnership working between the Council and Havering Police had recently won an international award and further improvements were expected.

**11) To the Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services & Community Safety,  
Councillor Osman Dervish**

**From Cllr Keith Darvill**

When is it anticipated that the Article 4 Direction and the proposed Licensing Scheme Relating to Homes of Multiple Occupation will be implemented and how many properties is it estimated will have to apply for a Licence?

**Response:**

The Article 4 Directions in relation to HMOs are due to come into force on 13 July 2016. From this date planning permission will be required to change the use of any dwelling to a HMO in Gooshays, Heaton, Brooklands and Romford Town Ward and to change from any dwelling, except a detached house, to a HMO in the rest of the Borough.

The proposed licensing scheme will relate to all private rented housing, not just HMOs. The Council must take reasonable steps to consult those likely to be affected by the proposal; the minimum period is 10 weeks. A business case to scope resources and costs is being undertaken, following which a project plan would be developed setting out consultation timings and a projected implementation date.

For numbers, the most reliable estimate comes from the 2011 census which put total households at 97,000 and private rentals at 11%; which equates to 10,760 properties. However, this is now likely to be an underestimate.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member agreed to confirm specific dates for the start of the consultation period and added that he did not want any slippage in the timetable for introduction of the Licensing Scheme.



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**12)To the Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services & Community Safety,  
Councillor Osman Dervish**

**From Cllr Ian de Wulverton**

Earlier this month a KFC opened at Gallows Corner, since then it has caused chaos for drivers coming off the roundabout heading up the A12. What traffic impact studies were made prior to granting planning consent?

**Response**

Planning permission was granted for this site in 2013 as a restaurant/drive through. KFC submitted supporting documents with their application including a transport assessment. This assessment included information on the likely number of vehicles that would use the site during peak periods, based on data from other comparable sites.

Transport for London is responsible for the A12 and Gallows Corner and was also consulted on the planning application. TfL did not raise any particular concerns. The application was considered by the Regulatory Services Committee in July 2013, where it was resolved to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. All details of the decision and the plans are available on the Council's website.

The approved scheme included 44 car parking spaces, including two spaces at the end of the drive-through lane where customers can wait if their order is not ready for immediate collection. Officers will check whether these spaces have been provided. There was an initial rush in the first few days of opening, however the traffic appears to have died down since. We will continue to monitor the situation.

I agree that the general situation with traffic at Gallows Corner is a cause for concern.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that he would work with KFC and officers to manage traffic issues at Gallows Corner at peak times.

**13)To the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Damian White**

**From Cllr John Glanville**

What impact does the council foresee on the availability of social housing in Havering, if and when the legislation extending the right to buy to housing associations comes into effect?

**Response**

The extension of the Right to Buy could potentially affect around 1.3m Housing Association tenants. Much of the detail as to how RTB will operate will come from the regulations once the Housing and Planning Bill (2015) becomes law. The extended RTB scheme for Housing association tenants is closely aligned to the sale of high value

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vacant Council stock. Final values have yet to be set out in the regulations. The values at which any of our Council stock could be considered high, has only up until now been an estimate of the likely figures to be used.

When the policies were announced in the Chancellor's Summer Budget, officers here used the figures being considered as the likely values and concluded that if these values remained, Havering would not have any properties which would meet the proposed definition of 'high value'. Once a decision is made by the Government on what the proposed values will be, Housing Services will then be able to work closely with Property Services to establish if this position has changed. We also intend to liaise with Housing Association colleagues, who provide social housing in the Borough, to ascertain how many HA tenants they anticipate will take up the extended RTB. This will enable us to predict the true impact on social housing in Havering.

What is very clear is that we, as a local authority, have a responsibility to do what we can to increase the number of affordable homes for local people. So far, the Council has built 121 new homes in Havering and, at the September Cabinet, we agreed to build a further 1,000 homes for local people at affordable prices. We are also lobbying Government in a bid to be allowed to raise more funding to build more homes.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed the Council was trying to encourage and increase social housing in the Havering. The Council was however no longer in a position to be responsible for all social housing units in the borough.

**14)To the Cabinet Member for Housing Company Development and oneSource Management, Councillor Ron Ower**

**From Cllr Lawrence Webb**

If as is likely that the TTIP will be agreed in the EU parliament what risk impact assessments have the council undertaken on how this could affect decisions around planning and procurement?

**Response:**

We believe that Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will give us a wider pool of suppliers for Council business, which is likely to be helpful in getting a better deal both in terms of price and quality. Assuming it is passed by the European Parliament, we would review the implications for procurement, financial and risk elements in light of the guidance notes that haven't yet been issued. It isn't realistic to look at running impact assessments without those guidance notes. We would then make any necessary changes to our procedures, as we did recently with the changes to the EU Public Contract Regulations 2015.

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**15) To the Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services & Community Safety,  
Councillor Osman Dervish**

**From Cllr Philip Martin**

The Council are making a substantial financial investment in the Dover's Corner development to ensure that the target of affordable homes is met. If the recent exposure of the performance of the company Persimmon on the TV programme Watchdog is to be believed there is a risk that the poor standard of construction reported from its many sites over the UK could be repeated in this major development in South Hornchurch. What safeguards are being put in place to ensure this does not happen in the Dover's Corner site?

**Response:**

The council has no power to refuse planning permission or building regulations consent on defects in the final quality of what is built on any housing development. These issues are controlled through warranty schemes that house builders are required to provide.

House builders may use warranty schemes available through the National House Builders Federation (NHBC) or Local Authority Building Control (LABC). These are usually 10 year schemes and during at least the first two years the house builder is legally obliged to address any defects reported to them.

There are Persimmon schemes in the borough already and we are not aware of any significant complaints about quality defects.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member agreed to seek to persuade Persimmon to put oversight of their work under the auspices of the Council's building control section. He added however that Persimmon could not be forced to do this.