



**FULL COUNCIL, Wednesday 8 June 2016**

## **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

### **CYCLISTS IN PARKS**

**1) To the Cabinet Member for Culture & Community Engagement, Councillor  
Melvin Wallace**

**From Councillor Reg Whitney**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm what action is being taken to deal with the increasing number of complaints of speeding cyclists in our parks.

**Response:**

The Parks and Open Spaces Service are not aware of any increase in complaints of speeding cyclists in our parks and would welcome further details of any such complaints that are being made; the service receives a few calls per year on average, where people report cyclists using parks irresponsibly.

In terms of managing potential conflict with cyclists and other park users, the Parks and Open Spaces Service use barriers on some entrances to parks where they are popular cyclist routes, for example Harrow Lodge and Hornchurch, which force cyclists to ride slowly or dismount.

The Parks Protection Service are not aware of any major problems – the issues that are brought to their attention are the occasional cyclist complaining about dogs and dog owners complaining about cyclists, however this is standard conflict management in large parks such as those in Havering.

The Parks Protection Service proactively monitor behaviour and pay particular attention to the Ingrebourne Way route which travels through several of our parks; on this route there is signage which indicates that pedestrians have priority.

In response to a supplementary question, the Leader of the Council (substituting for Councillor Wallace) explained that it was essential that records were kept of incidents of speeding cyclists and that all such incidents should be reported to Council officers in order that they could monitor the situation.

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## **HGV PARKING ON THE WENNINGTON BRIDGE**

### **2) To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Regulatory Services and Community Safety, Councillor Osman Dervish**

**From Councillor Jeffrey Tucker**

Would the Cabinet Member please provide an update regarding improving the condition of and removing HGV parking on the A13/Wennington Bridge which is a gateway to Havering?

#### **Response:**

Officers have been working in conjunction with Highways England whom have designed a scheme but which requires funding by the Council. A quotation for the scheme to be implemented has been received which is circa £65k. Officers will again contact the Highways England contractor to determine whether funding could be found.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member indicated that he would keep Councillor Tucker and the Independent Residents' Group advised as to progress with this matter.

## **BUS LANES IN STRAIGHT ROAD**

### **3) To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Regulatory Services and Community Safety, Councillor Osman Dervish**

**From Councillor Denis O'Flynn**

How many PCNs have been issued to motorists in the last 12 months for Bus Lane infringements in Straight Road Harold Hill?

#### **Response:**

1297 PCN's have been issued in the last 12 months at this location for the moving traffic contravention of driving in a bus lane.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that there had been a two month grace period when Moving Traffic Contraventions were first introduced.

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## **BLUE BADGE ENFORCEMENT**

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

#### **From Councillor John Wood**

Given a recent report in the Romford Recorder that over 350 blue badges belonging to people who have died might still be regularly used, would the Cabinet Member confirm what regular enforcement action is being taken to ensure that these are not used, as this reduces revenue for the council and stops genuine users from using spaces allocated to disabled drivers.

#### **Response:**

There are several reasons why the blue badge of a deceased resident is not returned to the Council. We may not receive a response from the next of kin when the letter asking for the badges return is delivered to the deceased address. The badge may simply be thrown away by the next of kin.

The badges expire after 3 years, so most, if not all of those not returned to the Council are no longer valid, and anyone found using one will have it confiscated and face criminal prosecution for fraud. As part of their normal enforcement patrols, Civil Enforcement Officers will randomly inspect a blue badge but this does require the driver of the vehicle to be present. An identity check is then verified by the CEO and information gathered so as to evidence whether the badge being displayed is genuine and is being legitimately used. The team have also previously held exercises with the police in the local area targeting misuse of blue badges.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member indicated that she would confirm to Councillor Wood the number of prosecutions for fraudulent use of Blue Badges over the last 2 years.

## **PLANNING ENFORCEMENT IN WILFRED AVENUE, RAINHAM**

### **5) To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Regulatory Services and Community Safety, Councillor Osman Dervish**

#### **From Councillor David Durant**

Would the Cabinet Member please provide an update regarding enforcement against the 2 metre high industrial front brick walls and hard front standing without drainage channels in a residential turning at 20 Wilfred Avenue, Rainham?

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**Response:**

The owners of the property submitted an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness claiming that the walls were permitted development and did not need planning permission. This application was refused on 9<sup>th</sup> May on the grounds that the walls due to their height and proximity to the pavement created a danger to pedestrians and therefore did not meet all the criteria for permitted development. The owners have been requested to reduce the height of the walls nearest to the pavement in order to meet the permitted development requirements. Their response is awaited. Should no works be carried out to reduce the height to the Council's satisfaction, an enforcement notice will be served requiring reduction in height of the wall.

With regard to the hard surface at the front of the property, it has been demonstrated that the surface is porous and therefore meets the requirements of permitted development.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member indicated that he would confirm to Councillor Durant whether the rear of the property had been investigated regarding whether this area also breached planning requirements.

## **MEASURES FOR DEALING WITH REGULAR VEHICLE COLLISIONS**

### **6) To the Cabinet Member for Environment, Regulatory Services and Community Safety, Councillor Osman Dervish**

#### **From Councillor Barry Mugglestone**

Whilst Transport for London provides funding for traffic calming measures where their Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) criteria is met, would the Cabinet Member confirm what action this council will take to deal with those locations where the KSI criteria is not met, but where there are regular vehicle collisions.

**Response:**

Our casualty-reduction programme concentrates the limited funding available through the Transport for London Local Implementation Plan to those areas and locations in the borough which have the most serious history of injury collisions, especially locations where people have been killed or seriously injured. TfL coordinates casualty data across London which is initially collected by the police and it is this data we use in reviewing and proposing places for treatment. If there are areas with significant levels of slight injuries, we do look at area wide schemes which may not necessarily be based on KSIs alone.

There is no system for collecting data for collisions which do not involve injuries and therefore the Council has no way of objectively considering sites which may anecdotally have a non-injury collisions.

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Given the limited funding of the LIP overall and in particular the need to consider reducing the levels of death and injury on borough roads, the Council has no plans or resources (financial and staffing) to deal with locations which do not have injury histories.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member agreed to hold discussions with Councillor Mugglestone concerning the lack of a current safety scheme in Rainham Road.

**PRIMARY SCHOOL AT DOVERS CORNER**

**7) To the Cabinet Member for Children & Learning, Councillor Robert Benham**

**From Councillor Keith Roberts**

Would the Cabinet Member please provide an update regarding securing a 3FE Primary school as part of the Dovers Corner-Dagenham New Road Housing Zone to ensure a sustainable development?

**Response:**

Government policy for building new schools requires the local authority to go to tender for a free school, wherever a complete new school is required.

Local authorities are able to expand their existing schools and this has been the main method the local authority has used to create sufficient school provision.

Local authorities are funded for their capital works on a notional formula based on pupil numbers and their types of need, there are different funding models for special schools compared to mainstream school for example.

All new schools or existing school expansions are designed to meet planning regulations, including appropriate facilities needed to provide a high quality education for their children.

The Rainham housing zone is being developed to ensure that facilities, including schools, is designed as part of the development from the beginning. Close working between developers and the council ensures that the school facilities provided include a primary school and a 0.8a site has been agreed with developers.

The Rainham area is experiencing significant additional growth at present and the current plans to expand existing schools in the area include to meet the current needs as well as future demand.

Pupil projections suggest that there is a need to expand existing schools as well as build a new school. Council policy expects schools to collaborate, by working in partnership or federations. The council believes that a strong partnership between groups of

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schools and across the whole education community and the Havering Education Strategic Partnership works closely with officers to strengthen the relationships between schools and the local authority.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that he would be meeting with developers and that a school would be constructed in the area. The Cabinet Member would bring a report on this matter to the Rainham and Wennington & South Hornchurch working party.

## **OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS FOR NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE POST**

### **8) To the Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Ramsey**

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

Would the Leader of the Council agree with me that it is right that all members of staff have clear objectives and targets, and would he further agree with me that those set for the new Chief Executive should be shared with this council and an update on each target reported back to Members on a regular basis.

#### **Response:**

The current appraisal process is in place for all employees of the Council. Managers are given guidance on setting SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant and Time bound) objectives and competency conversations are also undertaken as part of this process, as these reflect the kind of behaviour we want our employees to exhibit in the course of their duties.

With regard to the new Chief Executive, his objectives and targets are set by the Leader of the Council during the annual review and are discussed during 121 meetings through the year. It is important to note that, in line with best practice, the objectives set may change during the year dependent on Council priorities and these can also be presented to Members.

These matters are generally covered by the Corporate Performance reported regularly to members. The new Chief Executive intends also to report annually to Governance.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member advised that corporate performance indicators were reported regularly to both Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny. Parts of the Chief Executive's appraisal were required to be kept confidential for legal reasons.

## **BED & BREAKFAST ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES**

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

#### **From Councillor Michael Deon-Burton**

Following reports in other areas of Councils being unable to provide suitable accommodation for homeless families, would the Cabinet member confirm if Havering has ever found itself in a bidding competition with other authorities e.g. Newham, for bed & breakfast accommodation?

#### **Response:**

Havering, like all other London boroughs do use local bed and breakfast accommodation for limited periods for homeless families. However, we are not aware that we have ever been in a bidding competition with any other authority. In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council would provide suitable accommodation where there was a legal duty to do so. The Council would support other people to find accommodation for themselves.

## **PAVEMENT IMPROVEMENTS IN SHOPPING AREAS**

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

#### **From Councillor Stephanie Nunn**

There are a number of small scale shopping areas across Havering where pavements have not been renewed despite high footfall. Would the Cabinet Member confirm what strategy is in place to bring these areas up to a better standard?

#### **Response:**

There is no current strategy in place to upgrade small scale shopping areas, however each location is inspected as part of the current highway safety inspection regime. Previously there were works carried out to some smaller shopping areas, as part of a joint funding initiative between (the then) Streetcare, Strategic Property Services and Regeneration. Unfortunately no such joint funding initiatives are available at the present time. It should also be noted that some of the smaller scale shopping areas have areas of private forecourt which are not the Council responsibility to maintain.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that a monitoring scheme for contractors was in place and that contractors would be brought back if it was found that work was not up to standard.

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## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR RENTED ACCOMMODATION IN THE BOROUGH**

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

#### **From Councillor Graham Williamson**

Havering's two new Housing Zones will deliver thousands of new properties, many more than could be filled by Havering residents looking for a home. However, can the Administration assure us that any and all properties for rent taken over by Housing Associations are offered firstly to our Council under 100% Nomination Rights so that we can clear our Housing Register.

#### **Response:**

Any Housing Association that develops affordable rented units in the borough has to offer Havering 100% nomination rights. The challenge for us will be to encourage Housing Associations to deliver affordable rented units as they will no longer receive grant to deliver those units by the GLA. In addition, the Government has clearly indicated that it wants any affordable homes to be built in future to be for starter homes for ownership. It is therefore expected that, the only affordable units for rent that will be built in the two housing zones, will be built by this council unless the units are provided via s106 agreements.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member indicated that he and officers would meet with Councillor Williamson to discuss the process for nomination to vacancies in older developments.

## **TRANSPORT FOR LONDON FUNDING FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE**

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

#### **From Councillor John Mylod**

Currently Havering Council is funded by Transport for London to ensure category "A" roads across Havering are in good condition. Has the Cabinet Member any plans to press Transport for London to extend this to category "B" and "C" roads?

#### **Response:**

Transport for London (TfL) allocates London Boroughs funding for carriageway maintenance of its Principal Road Network (PRN) through their Principal Road Maintenance budget. Havering's Principal Roads are essentially the "A" roads in the borough excluding the Transport for London Road Network roads which are A13, A12 and A127 in Havering. Funding is allocated by TfL to boroughs on the basis of the condition of their Principal Road Network.



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TfL publishes guidance notes each year setting out specific criteria that boroughs are required to adhere to when delivering their TfL funded programmes. This criteria includes the need to meet Mayoral targets and key outputs set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy. Each year when the Council submits its funding programme to TfL, it encourages TfL to give the borough greater flexibility on how it can spend this funding.

In the near future I will be writing to the new Mayor, urging him to retain the Pan London LIP Settlement at its current rate of £147.8m to enable Havering as well as other London Boroughs to be able to deliver improvements that benefit local residents. I am however aware of TfL's own funding constraints following the governments Comprehensive Spending Review last year.

**COUNCIL TENANTS FROM OUT OF BOROUGH**

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

**From Councillor Ray Morgon**

Would the Cabinet Member supply the current number of council properties, broken down per ward, now occupied by tenants emanating from outside Havering.

**Response:**

The Localism Act 2011 empowered councils to use local priorities to decide who is eligible to join the housing register. The Council initially exercised this power in April 2013 when a residency criteria of 2 years was introduced. This was extended to 5 years in September 2014. Therefore to date, a combination of the 2 schemes is applied – whereby an applicant must have lived in Havering for at least 2 out of the last 5 years OR for at least 5 years before they can join the housing register. We have recently reviewed the residency criteria and subject to cabinet approval, we will be implementing a 6 year residency which also has to be a continuous period.

There are some exceptions which includes ex-service personnel or where there is a legal duty to provide accommodation to a homeless household who is in severe need (e.g. needs adapted property). Such placements are very few (less than 10%) as the main pathway is to place majority of homeless households in private rented sector leased properties which are managed by the Council through Liberty Housing.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that, from 2014, the Council was obliged to provide accommodation for anyone who had lived in the borough for either the last two years or for two of the last five years. The Cabinet Member would ask officers to provide a further breakdown of the figures for this subject, if IT systems allowed this.