

**APPENDIX 4
(Minute 70)**

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Note: Questions 1 to 10 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 HORNCHURCH HIGH STREET: CONTINUED DISRUPTION

To the Cabinet Member for Value (Councillor Roger Ramsey)

By Councillor John Mylod

Owing to the continued disruption to Hornchurch High Street and the detrimental impact this is having on local upon traders in tough economic times, would the Cabinet Member agree that substantial rate relief should now be given as matter of urgency?

Answer:

The collection of Business Rates is a statutory duty provided by the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and as such the Council are required to administer the collection of the rates within regulations provided by the Government.

The basis of the rate charge is calculated by multiplying the Rateable Value (as provided by the Valuation Office Agency) with the relevant rate Poundage as determined by central Government. Therefore, the Council does not have any discretion in setting the rate charge.

Whilst the rate poundage is not variable, other than a lower rate for small businesses, the rateable value may be amended upon an appeal to the Valuation Office.

The Valuation Office will consider proposals from the ratepayer where there has been a material change to a property or area that has had an impact on trade depending on its severity and duration. Therefore businesses affected in this way should be advised to appeal their valuation. Full details are included on the Councils website or by reference to the VOA website at www.voa.gov.uk

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member stated that the primary course for non-domestic ratepayers to obtain relief from business rates was for them to submit an appeal. While the Council had power to grant relief in certain circumstances, the cost of doing so would fall on Council Taxpayers and ought, therefore to be avoided. Officers were in discussion with shopkeepers in Hornchurch and VOA about obtaining temporary relief while works were on-going.

2 MEETING WITH THE MINISTER

To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Michael White)

By Councillor Jeffrey Tucker

Is the Council Leader's refusal to invite all group leaders to his meeting with the Minister, about local government funding, because he rejects the idea of a cross party Justice for Havering campaign?

Answer:

No.

The invitation was directed to me personally and was not intended to include other councillors.

In response to a supplementary question, the Leader of the Council reiterated that, the invitation being personal to him, it would be inappropriate for others to accompany him.

3 POSSIBLE MAJOR HUB AIRPORT IN THAMES ESTUARY

To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Michael White)

By Councillor Keith Darvill

What response will the administration make to the Coalition Government's proposed consultation about the future of airports and aviation, in particular about the possibility of a major hub airport in the Thames Estuary?

Answer:

The Government started a comprehensive review of national aviation policy in 2011 and the Council submitted a full response to that. It is expected that further consultation will take place in Spring 2012 when the next stage in the preparation of the policy is published.

The Council does not know at this stage what will be included in the draft policy nor whether there will be any reference to a Thames Estuary airport.

The Council notes that the London Mayor has said that existing aviation infrastructure should be used to its fullest extent before other options are considered for providing further airport capacity.

Havering is committed to growing its economy and showing that it is 'open for business'. The response to the Government's consultation last year acknowledged the importance of a strong and vibrant economy and the role that aviation and other transport infrastructure and services will have in this. However, it also said how important it is that environmental considerations are taken into account to ensure that the high quality residential environment of Havering is maintained.

The Council's response highlighted the possible adverse environmental consequences of an airport in the Thames Estuary and the likely adverse implications for infrastructure priorities in the wider area, particularly transport. It said that the Council is aware that some residents in the borough have said that they consider that there are more flights over Havering and that the noise from these has had a detrimental effect. (For this reason, Havering's most recent response to London City Airport said that it opposed any further expansion there). The response concluded by emphasizing that the Government's national policy review should take account of issues associated with airports to the east of London as well as Heathrow and Gatwick as these have a far more direct influence on Havering.

In response to a supplementary question, the Leader of the Council indicated that the questioner was welcome to propose a motion for debate of the matter if he so wished.

4 CORBETS TEY SCHOOL

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

By Councillor Ray Morgon

Following a complaint from one of my residents, I highlighted safeguarding issues at Corbets Tey School almost two years ago. In a recent inspection at the same school by OFSTED, they have also criticised the school in the area of Safeguarding. Would the Cabinet Member explain why this issue has been ignored by the Council for the past 2 years and what measures are being put in place to rectify the situation?

Answer:

Support is being provided to Corbets Tey School to address the issues identified by Ofsted. During the inspection, Ofsted noted that both pupils and parents felt that the school was safe, however issues were identified with regard to paperwork at the school and these issues have now been addressed. The school is making strong progress.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member assured the questioner that the Education Service was working closely with the school to address the issues.

5 LANDFILLING AT HORNCHURCH COUNTRY PARK: IMPACT ON THE HIGHWAY

To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Tebbutt)

By Councillor Michael Deon Burton

Will the Council carry out a Highway Impact Assessment in Rainham Road, between Dovers Corner and the Cherry Tree, before more landfill is permitted in the Hornchurch Country Park?

Answer:

If a planning application is submitted for a proposal that is likely to have a significant number of HGV movements then it is a requirement of the Council that this be accompanied with a detailed Transport Assessment. Such an assessment should include details of expected impact on the existing highway network.

As part of the consideration of the application, the Transport Assessment would be scrutinised by the Council's Highway Engineers and issues related to highway impact would be included in the relevant report on the application to the Regulatory Services Committee.

The Cabinet Member declined to answer a supplementary question in view of his membership of the Regulatory Services Committee.

6 "MY PLACE" YOUTH FACILITY, HAROLD HILL

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

By Councillor Pat Murray

What are the Council doing to engage with service users about the future use of "My Place" in Harold Hill?

Answer:

The MyPlace development team has undertaken a number of engagement activities including involvement at the Central Park Festival to market and promote the centre through various interactive activities, engaging with new and existing MyPlace board partners and involvement of service users over the naming of the building.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member undertook to consider any suggestion from the Member for improving communication with potential users of the centre.

7 FUTURE HOUSING MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor June Alexander

Further to the consultation letter that has been sent to all tenants and leaseholders in respect of the future of housing management in the borough, it was previously agreed by stakeholders that the question of staying with Homes in Havering or going back in-house would be either a 'Yes' or 'No' answer. Would the Cabinet Member explain why another option (ie don't mind) was added in and why, when the format had already been agreed, were the views of stakeholders ignored?

Answer:

At the beginning of the consultation, Council staff sought the views of resident representatives in the design of the consultative process. Some residents asked that there should be only two possible choices on the questionnaire: to retain Homes in Havering or to bring the housing management service back in-house. It was confirmed by the Council that there indeed would only be two possible outcomes consulted on, although no undertaking was given about the exact wording of the questionnaire.

Following the appointment of Electoral Reform Services to conduct the test of opinion, officers requested the advice of these specialists on the wording of the questionnaire. They advised that in their experience the response rate would be boosted by offering residents the ability to express a neutral opinion. This has been commonly used by other local authorities consulting on the future of their ALMOs.

It was felt preferable therefore to include a 'I don't mind' box on the test of opinion questionnaire so that those who genuinely have no opinion either way are able to fully participate in the consultation exercise. As agreed at the outset, only two outcomes – retention of the ALMO, or bringing back in-house – remain.

Residents selecting the 'I don't mind' response will not be counted with either of the other two responses; the number ticking this box will be reported separately.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member reiterated that the "I don't mind" option had been included as it was understood to be good practice.

8 EFFECT OF COUNCIL TAX FREEZE

To the Cabinet Member for Value (Councillor Roger Ramsey)

By Councillor David Durant

Will accepting the Government grant to freeze council tax result in further cuts being made to local services?

Answer:

The Administration's final budget proposals are currently being formulated for consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 8th February. The current position, as set out in the recent report to Cabinet, is that the Administration believes that a rise in Council Tax is not appropriate, and the Council therefore intends to take advantage of the funding on offer for 2012-13. The report points out any risks attaching to the budget proposals. However at this point in time, accepting this additional and welcome funding is not expected to require any further savings in that year.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member reiterated that the Council would continue to seek a fair deal for Havering. The budget had been constructed to ensure that no savings beyond those already identified would be needed.

9 CHILD POVERTY IN GOOSHAYS AND HEATON WARDS

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

By Councillor Paul McGeary

Why has child poverty remained stubbornly high in Gooshays and Heaton wards?

Answer:

Although child poverty in Havering is generally lower than other areas, we are concerned that some areas do have relatively high numbers of children living in poverty and tackling this is a high priority for us. Significant projects are in place including major regeneration projects, Rainham Compass and Harold Hill Ambitions which are aimed at improving the quality of life for our residents. Tackling child poverty and improving outcomes for vulnerable families are key priorities for Havering Children's Trust and the Trust strategy includes working with vulnerable families, addressing the causes of poverty and helping parents into employment.

In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member affirmed that the Education Service was continuing to address the challenge of child poverty.

10 LEADER'S BLOG

To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Michael White)

By Councillor Clarence Barrett

In order to gauge the effectiveness and appeal of the 'Leaders Blog', as at 23rd January 2012 would the Leader set out how many visits have been recorded for each of the last five entries - ie:

- Christmas Message 2011 (19.12.11)
- Meet the new Youth Leader (15.12.11)
- Visit to CEME (9.12.11)
- Romford Christmas Lights (21.11.11)
- Icelandic Banks (14.11.11)

Answer:

Since November 2010, there have been over 8,000 hits on the Leader's Blog. However it is not possible to detail how many people have clicked on the last five entries due to the way the site records information.

In response to a supplementary question, the Leader of the Council expressed astonishment that the questioner appeared to oppose better communication with residents.

11 **“HAVERING HOMES FOR HAVERING PEOPLE”**

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor Mark Logan

Will the new rules regarding housing allocation give substance to the phrase Havering Homes for Havering People?

Answer:

The Localism Act 2011 gives local authorities greater freedom over who is and is not eligible to join the Housing Register, often called the council housing waiting list, and who should be given greater priority. It is expected that these freedoms will come into effect in April this year.

The Council wishes to make full use of these new flexibilities and is currently consulting on a series of proposals, including that only those who currently live in Havering, and who have done so for at least 12 months, can join our Housing Register. This, we believe, gives a clear commitment to providing Havering Homes for Havering People.

12 **DECENT HOMES FUNDING: TIMETABLE OF WORKS**

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor Denis Breading

In view of the revised roll out of decent homes funding, when will Homes in Havering provide details of the new timetable of works so that tenants are kept informed of progress and when improvements to their homes will be carried out?

Answer:

The detailed HRA capital programme for 2012/13, including Decent Homes works, is due to be considered by Cabinet on 8 February. The same report will include provisional programmes for 2013/14 and 2014/15 although it should be noted that these remain subject to confirmation that Decent Homes grant will be made available in those two years.

Homes in Havering will publish the full details of the 2012/13 programme by 1 April 2012. The details will be available online and through the new digital television access available to a number of tenants. As future years' Decent Homes grant allocations are confirmed, details of the roll out of the programme beyond 2012/13 will be finalised and published.

13 **PARKLANDS BRIDGE, UPMINSTER**

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

By Councillor Linda Hawthorn

Given that an Executive Decision made over 10 years ago (22.6.01) acknowledged that Parklands Bridge (Upminster) was in need of restoration, would the Cabinet Member explain why no plans were drawn up until 2008 and clarify what the latest position is regarding this matter?

Answer:

In January 2004 Havering appointed the Historic Buildings Officer and the project was assigned to him. A scheme for the restoration had been prepared before 2004 by David Ellis Associates. It was considered that the scheme was inadequate and not sympathetic to the listed bridge. Following attempts to get the consultant to modify the scheme the drawings and specification were still considered inadequate.

There were technical issues on the restoration concerning the proposed loading capacity of the bridge. The bridge loading specified by the consultant proved very difficult to achieve as it would have required building in heavy stainless steel sections that would not have permitted the design to be given listed building approval. Following extensive discussions with one of the council's structural engineers the problem was solved in order that it was deemed acceptable by Havering's Building Control.

When this problem was solved the Historic Buildings Officer prepared a complete new set of drawings that were more sympathetic to the repair of the bridge in its setting. These drawings were completed in 2008. The Council obtained Listed Building Consent on the basis of these drawings.

After Listed Consent was given Technical Services were appointed to prepare working specifications with guidance from the Historic Buildings Officer. The estimate of costs for the scheme was not able to be contained within the Parks Capital programme within one year, therefore it was planned to fund the project over two financial years. A budget was set for a first phase of the scheme in the 2009/10 Parks Capital Programme, this was the smaller proportion of the total scheme requirement and it was hoped that further funding from the capital programme in following years with the addition of external funding would enable the completion of the project. Regrettably, it has not been possible to allocate all of the funds required to complete the project from the parks capital budget and external funding of £4000 has been sourced to date. Officers are continuing to search for external funding sources for this scheme.

The restoration of Parklands Bridge remains a Council priority and it is intended that the project will progress when sufficient funding becomes available.

14 **PHOTOCOPYING FACILITIES FOR MEMBERS**

To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety (Councillor Geoff Starns)

By Councillor David Durant

I received a Council email containing the following information.

“In accordance with the agreed strategy of moving from individual "at desk" printers to multiuser printers/copiers (known as multi-function devices or MFDs), the photocopier in the Members' Resources Room has been converted to operate as an MFD.

“The aim is to reduce costs substantially by using more economical means of printing, especially by doing away with individual copiers, which are costly in terms of toner usage.

“Attached are two documents - a poster showing how to use the MFD and a note explaining the background!”

I replied:

"I can understand the change-over for council staff, but I do not think this should apply to councillors.

"There are rules regarding what we can print, but unless you are implying significant abuse, there is still the question of confidentiality. If the MFDs record an image of all printing, then presumably they will be monitored, but by whom? I do not think council officers should be monitoring councillors letters and printing.

"You say "in accordance with agreed strategy", but has the issue of the members room photocopier gone before the Governance committee, bearing in mind that the members room is for councillors not council staff?"

In the absence of a reply to my email, I have submitted my concerns as a question.

Answer:

The print strategy has been implemented to save costs by significantly reducing the previous number of desktop printers and replacing them with a small number of multi-function devices (MFDs), for which the unit costs for each print are considerably lower.

The MFD's operate with 'Uniflow' software which mean that items are only printed when the user is present at the MFD and able to swipe their access card across the card reader. This offers a much more secure environment than the desktop printers which would generate printing as soon as the print command was entered, irrespective of whether the user was available to collect the print from the printer - the risk being that sensitive content could be left on the printer tray until collected.

The Uniflow software keeps a log of print volumes and costs related to each user, but the system administrator does not have general access to view the content of images arising from printing and scanning.

Whilst the need for political confidentiality is acknowledged, the same system is used by officers working in Children's Social Services, HR (e.g. CRB checks) and other data-sensitive environments, therefore giving some assurance about security.

15 ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN NOAK HILL ROAD

To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Tebbutt)

By Councillor Denis O'Flynn

Following another serious road traffic accident in the stretch of road between Straight Road and North Hill Drive will the administration take urgent steps to make representations to TfL and the Metropolitan Police to review traffic calming measures and hazard signs in the area?

Answer:

Havering Council is the highway authority for the road and therefore TfL have no jurisdiction. The Metropolitan Police are responsible for the roads policing and not the operation of traffic calming which is the Council's responsibility in this case.

StreetCare is reviewing the conspicuity of the pinch point island on Noak Hill Road with a view of providing a larger lit bollard and better quality lighting of the feature following complaints from residents.

StreetCare is also working with the prospective developer of the former Whitworth Centre in terms of providing a kerbed roundabout at the development to replace the existing mini-roundabout.

Beyond those items, there are no current plans for a review, but if a request is submitted to StreetCare in writing, then it will be reported to the next available Highways Advisory Committee for discussion.

16 HOUSING BENEFIT

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor Ray Morgon

Would the Cabinet Member confirm the highest amount of annualised housing benefit paid to a Havering resident.

Answer:

If all things remain equal to the end of the financial year the highest amount of annualised Housing Benefit will be £22,379.76.

17 COMPENSATION CLAIMS

To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Tebbutt)

By Councillor Ray Morgon

Would the Cabinet Member confirm how many claims for compensation have been lodged in each of the last five years as a result of:

- a) Tripping on the highway
- b) Damage from highway trees

Answer:

Number of claims for compensation lodged

| | a) Tripping on the highway | b) Damage from highway trees |
|------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2007 | 78 | 48 |
| 2008 | 99 | 44 |
| 2009 | 98 | 32 |
| 2010 | 131 | 58 |
| 2011 | 98 | 26 |

18 FRIENDS OF PARKS GROUPS

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

By Councillor Linda Hawthorn

This council is quite rightly proud of its achievement in obtaining eight Green Flag awards, and it's initiative in starting 'Friends of Parks' groups. Would the Cabinet Member please set out how many 'Friends' groups have been established over the past 18 months and what encouragement is given to people who express an interest in starting one?

Answer:

The Parks Service is currently working on ensuring the retention of the eight Green Flags that we are so rightly proud of. To retain these awards, the applications for the 2012 Green Flags have been submitted before the 31st January deadline.

The Parks and Open Spaces currently has 17 'Friends' groups. All of these groups have been established longer than 18 months and Hornchurch Country Park/Ingrebourne Valley are on the verge of forming the 18th Friends Group. Of the current 17 groups, 7 have achieved 'Official Friends' status and have signed an agreement that requires them to carry out various roles and responsibilities in an agreed manner. Amongst other things, this scheme encourages the groups to bring in external investment and undertake events in our parks.

The Parks Service and officers from Havering's Community Regeneration team support members of the community who would like to start new friends groups. This support involves:

- public awareness meetings in the park to drum up support for those trying to start a group;
- advice on how existing Friends Groups operate;
- booking meeting rooms to allow open dialogue to take place;
- linking in members from other Friends Groups who can share their experience of setting up a Friends group
- inviting potential new Friends Groups to attend the Parks Forum (to be held this year at Dukes Hall on March 17th) in order that they can network with other Friends Groups, officers and Councillors on issues in their park and setting up their group.

19 MAYLANDS FIELD – VILLAGE GREEN APPLICATION

To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety (Councillor Geoff Starns)

By Councillor Brian Eagling

Would the Cabinet Member responsible for the Maylands Field Harold Park Town Green Application please confirm what the latest situation is and when a decision is expected as he must realise that this application has been going on for many, many years and the residents of this area deserve an answer. If there is no definite date could he please make enquiries as to why this application is taking so long?

Answer:

Prior dates in late 2011 and early 2012 did not prove convenient to the parties to the inquiry and we are currently seeking dates in July, and August 2012 at the request of the applicants.

20 STOLEN COUNCIL PROPERTY

To the Cabinet Member for Value (Councillor Roger Ramsey)

By Councillor Ray Morgon

Would the Cabinet Member confirm that Council property that is stolen in a particular ward, such as drain covers, is reported to the Police and/or local Safer Neighbourhood Team?

Answer:

45 crimes were reported to the police in 2011 with items stolen ranging from aluminium, copper, metal, power tools and fuel.

Any instances of theft should be reported to the Police.

21 EMPTY HOUSING STRATEGY

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor Ray Morgon

Since the Empty Housing Strategy was agreed, would the Cabinet Member confirm the number of properties that have been brought back into use by this Council each year and how many empty properties are currently on the list for consideration?

Answer:

Since the first Empty Property Strategy produced in 2004 until December 2011, the Council's efforts have assisted in bringing back 1,540 empty private sector homes into use.

The full breakdown year-by-year is as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|-------|
| 2004 - 2005 | 36 |
| 2005 - 2006 | 24 |
| 2006 - 2007 | 152 |
| 2007 - 2008 | 451 |
| 2008 - 2009 | 324 |
| 2009-2010 | 243 |
| 2010- 2011 | 200 |
| 2011 – Dec 2011 | 110 |
| TOTAL | 1,540 |

The Empty Property Team currently has 620 properties on its list. Interventions range from providing information about lettings and sales options, to the payment of grants in return for leasing the property to the Council, and to compulsory purchase where the property has been empty for some time, is becoming more derelict and the owner is unwilling to take any action.

22 HOUSING BENEFIT CLAIMANTS

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor Ray Morgon

Would the Cabinet Member confirm the number of claimants of housing benefit at the end of December 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011?

Answer:

At December:

| | |
|------|--------|
| 2008 | 17,933 |
| 2009 | 20,127 |
| 2010 | 20,749 |
| 2011 | 20,947 |

23 **FUNERALS****To the Cabinet Member for Individuals (Councillor Steven Kelly)**

By Councillor Ray Morgon

Would the Cabinet Member confirm the number of Council funded funerals in the past three years?

Answer:

- 2009, 3 Council funded funerals - total cost £4,027.44
- 2010, 3 Council funded funerals - total cost £2,744.78
- 2011, None.

24 **PENSION SCHEME: CONTRIBUTIONS****To the Cabinet Member for Value (Councillor Roger Ramsey)**

By Councillor Ray Morgon

Would the Cabinet Member confirm the amount paid into the Local Government Pension Scheme in each of the past ten financial years split between staff and Havering Council?

Answer:

| | Employer Contributions £000 | Member Contributions £000 | Total £'000 |
|----------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2010/11 | 19,102 | 5,633 | 24,735 |
| 2009/10 | 19,194 | 5,544 | 24,738 |
| 2008/09 | 17,994 | 5,290 | 23,284 |
| 2007/08 | 17,182 | 4,702 | 21,884 |
| 2006/07 | 16,667 | 4,677 | 21,344 |
| 2005/06 | 15,417 | 4,439 | 19,856 |
| 2004/05 | 13,679 | 4,114 | 17,793 |
| 2003/04 | 11,826 | 3,990 | 15,816 |
| 2002/03 | 11,765 | 3,608 | 15,373 |
| 2001/02 | 11,143 | 3,706 | 14,849 |

25 **PENSION SCHEME: ALLOCATIONS OF CONTRIBUTIONS****To the Cabinet Member for Value (Councillor Roger Ramsey)**

By Councillor Ray Morgon

Would the Cabinet Member confirm that the government's planned 3% increase in pension contributions from staff will actually be paid into the Council's pension scheme?

Answer:

The option to increase employee contributions formed part of the Government's proposals to deliver short term savings in the LGPS. Following consultations with interested parties we understand that these proposals will not be implemented. The Government now intends to introduce a new LGPS scheme in 2014. It intends to introduce a career average scheme at that time and it is expected that employee contribution levels will be increased. However, the Government are currently in discussions with Unions and Employers and the details have yet to be agreed.

26 PROVISION OF POLYCLINICS IN HAVERING

To the Cabinet Member for Individuals (Councillor Steven Kelly)

By Councillor June Alexander

Would the Cabinet Member provide an update as to the future of Polyclinics in the borough and when the next one is due to open?

Answer:

Havering has a network of existing polyclinics and health centres, which provide primary care for local residents. NHS Outer North East London (NHS ONEL) is continuing to explore how to improve primary care services in Havering.

NHS ONEL are expecting the new St George's Health Centre to be open in early 2015.

27 DEMOLITION OF OLD WINDMILL HALL

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

By Councillor Linda Hawthorn

Would the Cabinet Member set out the time table for the demolition of the Old Windmill hall, and what is the latest position regarding the refurbishment of the New Windmill hall?

Answer:

Council officers have begun the process of commissioning the work that will be required to safely demolish the Old Windmill Hall, which includes removing asbestos in the first instance and these works will begin once a contractor has been appointed.

The latest position with regard to the New Windmill Hall is two positive meetings have taken place between Council officers and representatives of the user groups, with a view to the user groups forming a new Community Association to run the Hall. Assuming that the Hall is subsequently transferred to a newly formed Community Association, the Council will undertake some urgent refurbishment works, to be determined at a later stage following further discussions with the prospective Community Association.

28 SALE OF FORMER GARAGE SITES

To the Cabinet Member for Value (Councillor Roger Ramsey)

By Councillor Ron Ower

Would the Cabinet Member set out what receipts have been received by the Council in respect of the sale of former garage sites over the last two years?

Answer:

In Phase 1 of the disposals, the Council has received £2,662,970. In the 2nd Phase, an additional sum of £1,700,000 is projected giving a projected total receipt of £4,362,970.

The Council has agreed to re-cycle £2,152,000 of the receipt as local authority grant to ensure the delivery of affordable homes for rent.

29 UNLAWFUL SUB-LETTING OF COUNCIL HOUSING

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Lesley Kelly)

By Councillor Ron Ower

Would the Cabinet Member state how many prosecutions have been made for sub-letting over the past three years?

Answer:

The Council is aware of the government's proposal to create a new criminal offence of tenancy fraud to tackle the subletting of social housing.

For some time, the Council has taken such fraud very seriously and welcomes all opportunities to further strengthen our approach, although to date, the Council has been successful in regaining properties through voluntary relinquishment of the tenancy following in-depth investigations.

In 2010/11, eight council properties that were being sublet were released following investigation. In the first eight months of 2011/12, four properties have been released. In all cases, the properties were voluntarily relinquished.

So far in 2011/12, two further cases of people attempting to gain a council property through fraud relating to their homelessness claims have been successfully dealt with.

At any one time, the Council's Internal Audit team will be investigating around 60 cases of alleged tenancy fraud, of which around 40 involve alleged subletting.

Unfortunately, reliable records regarding the regaining of sublet properties prior to 2010/11 are not available.

30 WASTE MINIMISATION

To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Tebbutt)

By Councillor John Mylod

In respect of waste management, would the Cabinet Member:

a) Advise how the Waste Minimisation Campaign is proceeding and can we have more detail of how residents can reduce waste and save money, as well as details of the free cookery workshops?

b) Is the two black sacks limit dependent upon the number of people who live in the house or is it just per household?

c) How is the scheme being funded and what time scale can be anticipated before we see results?

Answer:

a) The general waste minimisation campaign is going well and tonnages are reducing. The part of the campaign which involved sending information to residents explaining how they can reduce their waste was delayed and only began last week, however a number of other events/ educational programmes are ongoing. These include:

- A Reduce Waste and Save Money leaflet was produced in October highlighting the three key ways that residents can reduce waste and save money (Love Food Hate Waste, home composting and reuse). These leaflets have been given out at events and distributed in Harold Hill, Hornchurch and Rainham during November 2011.
- Thirty Love Food Hate Waste Cookery Workshops have been carried out since September 2011 which have been very well received and attended by Havering residents (380 have attended to date). In addition, 800 school children have been involved in 'Cook Off' assemblies where the workshops have taken on a different format. Six of the cookery workshops were carried out during the European Week of Waste Reduction and were funded by Recycle for London
- An additional Twenty eight cookery workshops are scheduled to take place before March 31st 2012 throughout the borough. These free cookery workshops are an excellent opportunity for Havering residents to learn how to reduce food waste and save money by taking part in a fun and interactive cooking session with professional chefs. All cooking utensils, aprons and ingredients are provided free of charge. Residents can book on by calling StreetCare on 01708 432563 or emailing waste-team@havering.gov.uk. Details of all the forthcoming workshops can be found at www.havering.gov.uk/lovefood
- At workshops and events, residents are being informed about the benefits of home composting in both cost saving and environmental terms. Between 30-40% of waste can be composted. Residents can order discounted compost bins (£15 + plus delivery charge including a buy two get second half price offer) and other waste minimisation accessories by calling 0844 571 4444 or logging onto www.getcomposting.com .
- In order to promote 'Reuse' four Give and Take Days have been arranged. These are a great opportunity for Havering residents to make use of items other people would otherwise throw away. Two have already taken place at the Royals Youth Centre (December) and the Mardyke Community Centre (January) which were well attended. Two more are scheduled to take place (Romford Salvation Army, Saturday Feb 18th 11am - 3pm & Upminster Library, Saturday 17th March 11am - 3pm). Flyers and posters have been produced to promote the Give and Take Days.

These events have been promoted in Living and the local papers

b) Whilst we fully accept that larger families will generate more waste we will work with everyone to help them reduce their waste and their household bills. Information about how residents can minimise their waste is being sent to all households which have produced three black sacks or more each week over a three week monitoring period.

c) The waste minimisation campaign is funded from a recycling and waste management communications budget held in Streetcare. Waste tonnages are already reducing as a result of ongoing communications work and educational campaigns but it will be difficult to attribute reductions generated as a result of any specific element of the general campaign.

We have also had funding support for some of the cookery workshops from Recycle for London, who funded 6 cookery workshops as previously explained.