

FULL COUNCIL, Tuesday 15 December 2020

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Parking Charges in Hornchurch and Upminster Town Centres

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

Businesses in Hornchurch and Upminster Town Centres are suffering due to the Covid19 pandemic. Hornchurch is losing a major retailer (Peacocks) which is a huge loss to the area and we are likely to see more shops close unless more positive action is taken. An experimental order to introduce 29 on-street parking spaces in Hornchurch Town Centre with a free hour parking has been introduced, but is having little impact and are in the main next to existing car parks that remain mostly empty. During the lockdown period these car parks were made free to use and were 90% full – which shows there is a requirement for off street parking. Would the Cabinet Member introduce one hour free parking in Hornchurch and Upminster Town Centre car parks to encourage the use of the car parks and help save the shops?

Answer

The Council are supporting local businesses, high streets and residents across the borough and this is why measures introduced from 3rd August for parking included a 20% discount when paying by the cashless app (Ringo) in all Council Car Parks. This was in addition to introducing a number of new on-street parking bays in Hornchurch to increase opportunities for parking and across these we have introduced one hour **free** parking.

This means local residents can visit Hornchurch and Upminster, shop for up to one hour, so putting money into the local economy and not have to pay to do so. In addition, if people want to support local businesses for a longer period for things like a haircut or having a meal, again they can do so by paying a discounted rate in the car parks and again this supports the local economy.

And further to this, we have once again introduced free parking in Council Car Parks over five weekends across the Christmas and new Year period to help people shop locally and support the local economy. The parking offer in Havering is better than our surrounding boroughs. Neighbouring boroughs such as Newham, Redbridge and Thurrock offer no reduced or free parking charges within their Council owned car parks and only a limited 30 minutes at some on-street locations.

Some initial analysis demonstrates that the average uptake of customers using car parks and benefitting from the 20% discount when paying cashless so far this year is, on average 34% of all transactions across the borough. It would

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therefore appear to be a welcomed much improved offer to the customer with an upward trend over a much shorter period when compared with 2019/20 which was 28%.

Almost half of the total number of on-street transactions since August have been made using the cashless app. With 45% of all on-street parking utilising the 1-hour free parking period compared to 26% in 2019/20 when 30 minutes free was offered.

We will continue to monitor use of car parks and parking bays but I believe our parking offer is popular and being well-used and it is too earlier to consider changes to the system.

Parking Review in Upminster and Cranham

**2) To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Damian White)
From Councillor Ron Ower**

Last year the Council sought views from residents concerning parking restrictions for Maple Avenue, Acacia Avenue and Sycamore Avenue. The scheme was put on hold pending the consultation on a borough-wide parking plan, the details of which have not been revealed to Members. What is the status of the borough-wide review and how much did it cost?

Answer

The CPZ review ended in November 2019 and results have been collected with recommendations pending via an ED to the Director of Neighbourhoods.

The Councils response to the Covid pandemic has delayed the outcomes of the consultation from being published and presented to Cabinet. It is hoped that this will happen before the end of the financial year.

The total costs for the consultation was £27,850+VAT which included face to face consultation in the areas involved, focus group meetings with local businesses and an online consultation.

Lockdown Restrictions

**3) To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Damian White)
From Councillor Jeffrey Tucker**

The Council Leader has suggested there will need to be many lockdown restrictions until a COVID-19 vaccine is available. Surely this is a recipe for mental/health and economic devastation! Is this still his view?

Answer

Faced with an unprecedented pandemic, the Government has chosen to prioritise the health of the nation and particularly that of vulnerable citizens – the elderly and those with pre-existing health problems above other considerations and thereafter mitigate the knock on impact on the social, cultural and economic life of the country. I continue to agree with this approach. Allowing the disease to spread unchecked would result in thousands of both deaths and survivors with persistent and debilitating disability. I note the concern of the councillor for the mental health of residents but wonder how bereavement on this scale would help in this regard? However, we will soon launch a campaign with Mind and other partners to support our residents in addition to the support already available.

What is clear is that there are no easy choices – this Council will continue to do all it can to protect the health of residents and the economic life of the borough while the pandemic persists. With this in mind we need to make sure contrary messages are not promoted to residents which either confuses or encourages people not to stick to the rules.

Moreover, we will encourage every resident who can to take up the offer of vaccination as soon as they are authorised for use as being safe and effective. At that point we can truly begin to put the pandemic behind us.

“Laptops for Schools” Programme

- 4) **To the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families (Councillor Robert Benham)**
From Councillor Paul McGeary

How many laptops have been provided for Havering’s children as part of the ‘Laptops for Schools Programme’? How many have been provided directly by schools and separately by the Council? How many such laptops have been gifted to children and how many are on loan?

Answer

As part of phase one of the Department for Education’s (DfE) digital device rollout, the council have allocated 662 laptops to children and young people with a Havering Social Worker as per the eligibility criteria. We have also set up a dedicated phone line, in partnership with OneSource, operating five days a week to provide after care support for the devices.

Any remaining devices will continue to be allocated to children and young people with a Havering social worker as part of business as usual. Collection from the Town Hall on a fortnightly basis is carried out by the child’s social worker.

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As per DfE guidance, the devices allocated as part of this rollout are a DfE asset until March 2021. After this point, they will become an asset of the council.

Phase two of the DfE's digital device scheme for vulnerable children without a social worker is managed directly by the schools with allocations set by the DfE. The council is currently awaiting details as to how many laptops have been allocated directly by schools as this data is held directly by the schools.

Public Protection

5) To the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Safety (Councillor Viddy Persaud)

From Councillor Brian Eagling

What powers do the Council's Enforcement officers have when dealing with issues regarding Covid-19 and related matters.

Answer

The Council has a number of enforcement options available, which in general, focus around the obligations placed on businesses. These are outlined in the Public Protection Outbreak Control Enforcement Policy. In addition to the informal enforcement options such as guidance and signposting and verbal/written advice, officers have powers to provide both written and verbal warnings. These would be appropriate where contraventions are due to a lack of understanding and no significant health risks are present or likely to be present.

Formal enforcement options include:

- Prohibition notices under the Coronavirus Regulations to deal with business that should not be open
- Closure Notices, where authorised, necessary and appropriate, in consultation with the Director of Public Health in cases of serious and imminent threat to Public Health.
- Fixed Penalty Notices may be used as an alternative or precursor to prosecution.
- Revocation, refusal or review of licence (where relevant)
- Prohibition notices under the Health and Safety at Work Act may be appropriate in certain situations
- Formal cautions, may be offered as an alternative to a financial penalty or prosecution
- Prosecution, in the most serious of cases

Throughout the COVID pandemic – we have ensured our enforcement and compliance teams get the balance right between encouragement and enforcement. We continue to engage with businesses to offer advice support – as well as using

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our enforcement powers where necessary to ensure the safety of our residents and communities.

Mayor's Charities 2019/20

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

Would the Leader of the Council confirm how much Councillor Michael Deon Burton raised as Mayor for his chosen charities?

Answer

When funds are donated in response to a mayoral appeal, payment may in some cases be made directly to the nominated charities rather than through the Council. Payments made to the Council are processed through the "The Mayor of Havering General Appeal Fund". In accordance with the relevant regulations, records are kept for each financial year as opposed to each mayoral year and passed to the Charity Commission. However, the efforts of current and past Mayors in promoting worthy local causes deserve the support of all members.

School Streets

**7) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Osman Dervish)
From Councillor Christopher Wilkins**

The Council has introduced the School Streets' Scheme in Cedar Avenue, where Branfil School is situated. Local Members were provided with very short notice regarding the scheme. During the consultation period, Local Members did raise concerns regarding increased congestion and pollution for those living in adjoining streets, prior to the scheme being introduced. There appears to have been no, or little, consultation with residents in adjoining roads. Can the Cabinet Member confirm:

What steps will be taken to alleviate the pollution and congestion in the adjoining roads, where the School Streets' Scheme was introduced?

Answers

We monitored roads surrounding all of the School Street schemes during November. This involved looking at the volume and type of traffic using the school streets scheme. We used video cameras to record and analyse the behaviour of motorists, such as double parking, drop kerb obstruction and dangerous manoeuvring. This monitoring took place for one week during the morning and afternoon school runs.

Pollution cannot be measured in any meaningful way for a period of less than six months to a year. Diffusion tubes passively monitor nitrogen dioxide and are highly unlikely to demonstrate any effect on minor roads with low traffic volumes.

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Air Quality mesh monitoring provides hourly monitoring and is more effective, but unfortunately is too expensive and not covered by TfL funding.

The results from the monitoring will provide the basis for a lesson learned report – including any suggested actions - for the consideration of senior management and Members.

The school's streets scheme was consulted on with those residents where the restrictions would be put in place. This is our normal practice with any traffic and parking consultation, in that the consultation is with those affected by the restrictions being proposed and not the surrounding areas. Other boroughs in London have forged ahead with changes to their streets in response to the Covid pandemic with no consultation with local people and as a result have received considered backlash and, in some cases have had to reverse the work they'd implemented. Taking the approach we have, ensure local residents are on board with our proposals before we undertake any costly work.

“DoingMyBit” Campaign

8) To the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Safety (Councillor Viddy Persaud)

From Councillor David Durant

The Council's “DoingMyBit” campaign was launched without undertaking a Medical Risk Assessment into the pros and cons of mask wearing and without a report being approved by Cabinet. This failure matters as the morally coercive campaign could undermine human and employment rights and result in an increase in Disability Hate Crime, and make the council potentially financially liable for any medical harm caused to people from heeding the campaign.

In view of this does the Cabinet Member for Public Protection agree the “DoingMyBit” campaign should be halted until an MRA is undertaken and a full report on the matter is prepared and approved by Cabinet?

Answer

No, I do not agree.

It is a lawful requirement to wear face coverings in public settings. The hugely successful Public Services Communications award winning Doing My Bit campaign sets out to raise awareness of this along with a range of other measures to prevent transmission of Covid-19 and save lives. And because it is lawful requirement, people could be fined if they are not exempt.

Exemptions based on age, health or disability exist so that people who cannot wear one do not have to. We have promoted initiatives supporting awareness of this.

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Nobody who is exempt from wearing a face mask should experience discrimination or aggression because of it and because of that risk it is vital that only those with a legitimate reason use that exemption.

For those who are not exempt, there are no 'cons' of wearing a mask. It is part of being a decent and compassionate member of society.

The spread of this virus is enabled by the spread of hoaxes and lies. I hope Cllr Durant will see fit to retract his statement that, and I quote, "if you wear a face mask for a long period of time this could actually reduce your oxygen levels in your blood and cause you more harm". This is not true and has been comprehensively debunked by doctors. It is damaging and dangerous to spread this sort of fake news.

SEND Pupils in Havering

**9) To the Cabinet Member for education, Children and Families (Councillor Robert Benham)
From Councillor Keith Darvill**

How many SEND pupils are there in Havering and what is the current cost of sending some of those pupils out Borough for their education needs separated between private and public sector providers?

Answer

- Currently there are 1870 children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans in Havering.
- Of these children/young people 205 (10.9%) attend educational placements out of the borough (further details below).
- The breakdown between maintained (public sector) and independent/voluntary sector (private) is as follows:

	Maintained Setting Placements		Independent/Voluntary Sector Placements	
	Current Numbers	Cost 2020-21 £000	Current Numbers	Cost 2020-21 £000
Pre-16	74	985	44	2,412
Post-16	76 (47 in B&D college)	690	11	941
Total	150	1,675	55	3,353

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- Children are generally placed out of borough because there is no local provision, due to the speciality of the provision, or capacity that can offer a place at the necessary time, or because the child is placed out of the borough in a foster placement or residential care due to social care reasons. They tend to be the children with the most complex needs, and if they were to remain in Havering the placements would be in the higher cost brackets.
- The total cost of these placements is £5m. This represents 20% of the total spend of High Needs Budget of £25m.
- It is of note that Havering were in the top 10 authorities for achieving good outcomes for the amount of money invested from the high needs funding in the Impower Best performing Councils of 2020 report. It remains a priority to place children in education that represents good value and achieves positive outcomes.
- Havering's High Needs Review and action plan has identified the need to develop more local specialist provision with plans underway to increase Primary and Secondary Additional Resourced Provision (Specialist units in mainstream settings), by a further 50 places before 2022. This is in addition to the 60 place special free school due to open in 2022.

Public Firework Displays

**10) To the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Safety (Councillor Viddy Persaud)
From Councillor Martin Goode**

Further to our agreed Motion at January's Full Council meeting, what progress has the Council made to encourage all public firework displays within the Local Authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event? A public awareness campaign about the impact fireworks have on animal welfare and vulnerable people will allow residents to take appropriate precautions and encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display

Answer

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic no applications for firework events were received this year. However all public firework displays organised by school or community groups which charge a nominal fee (e.g. up to £10.00) would normally be publicised in advance via our event webpage. Firework displays which are organised by Commercial operators will have their own independent advertising policy. Although the council would not fund the advertising of commercial events they would be able to advertise in Living in Havering magazine and the Heart magazine

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All firework retailers were written to this year and reminded that the council had adopted the motion and that they should consider stocking quieter fireworks. The matter was also added to the authority's inspection sheets to remind officers to discuss the stocking of quieter fireworks during proactive visits.

Council communications have included advice on protecting vulnerable people, how to keep pets safe and encourage residents to buy quieter fireworks. Social media has also been used to promote this messaging throughout the firework period. We also linked up with the RSPCA campaign to increase awareness of how animals and pets are affected by fireworks and what steps can be taken to help keep pets secure during this time.

Educational Attainment Information

**11) To the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families
(Councillor Robert Benham)
From Councillor Ray Morgon**

Would the Cabinet Member confirm what steps he will take to ensure that all schools provide clear and transparent information on their results performance and place the collective information on the Council's website?

Answer

Maintained schools, academies, free schools and colleges must publish specific data online, including a range of exam, assessment results and information for key stages 2, 4 and 5 where appropriate.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online>

The Local Authority checks that this information is made available through its existing quality assurance processes.

For academies, free schools and colleges, this is also done by the Department for Education Regional Schools Commissioner.

Ofsted also check this information is available as part of their inspection process.

In addition, a comprehensive set of statistics and performance tables is regularly published by the Department for Education;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-performance-tables>

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This allows parents to review the performance of primary, secondary and post-16 providers across a wide range of measures, including progress, standards, absence, workforce and finance.

Schools must also include a link to the DfE school and college performance tables (above) and their school's performance tables page.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department for Education has cancelled the 2019/20 national curriculum assessments and associated data collections. The Primary and Secondary school performance tables: 2020 publication has been cancelled due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

However, other non-standards related data will still be available, including progress, Not in Education Employment and Training (NEET), absence, finance, workforce, finance.

Havering Local Register

**12) To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Joshua Chapman)
From Councillor Linda Hawthorn**

There are many buildings in Havering, which although of local interest, are not eligible for national listing. We used to have a local list of such buildings, which gave them some protection. This has been shelved for many years now. Can the Cabinet Member please advise when this list will be returned, and Councillors are able to apply for buildings in their wards to be added to it?

Answer

A review of the existing entries on the Local List and the ability to propose additions to it will be considered further as part of the future planning policy work programme, following the adoption of the Local Plan.

The Local List highlights heritage assets which are of local heritage value, ensuring that their importance is taken into account through the planning process. Any impact upon these assets is always reviewed and carefully considered as part of the decision making process on planning applications.

Havering's Local List has not been 'shelved' - it continues to exist and is available to view on the Council's website.

This Council is extremely proud of our borough's rich history and heritage and we will always do our utmost to protect it.

Testing Centre in Cherry Tree Car Park

13) **To Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Safety (Councillor Viddy Persaud)**

From Councillor Natasha Summers

Despite claiming to support the High Street the Executive harmed the High Street by closing the Cherry Tree car park, for 6 months, and opening a 'coronavirus testing centre'. No shopkeepers, residents or local councillors were consulted and the centre was operational before the decision to close the car park was made. Will the Cabinet Member for the High Street admit a terrible mistake has been made and relocate the testing centre to a more appropriate location?

Answer

No.

This decision was taken as a matter of urgency against a backdrop of rapidly increasing Covid-19 cases in the borough. It has been of huge benefit in the fight against this pandemic that we have had increased testing capacity located close to where people need it.

The Cherry Tree car park site is the one which we believe best meets both ours and Department of Health and Social Care criteria.

Not taking that decision or taking months over it would have the effect of drawing residents in Rainham and South Hornchurch in to making long journeys to Dagenham or Romford to obtain a test. The impacts on infections if that was the case do not bear thinking about.

Council and PSL Tenants

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

How many Council and PSL Tenants are currently living in overcrowded accommodation (as defined in housing legislation) and have applied to the Housing Department to move into a property that meet their housing needs?

Answer

Housing legislation defines a property as being overcrowded only in very severe circumstances and therefore it includes few households. As a result the council uses the more reasonable bedroom standards that includes more households. We have applications on the Housing Register from 24 households in PSL properties, and 227 in council properties, who have requested a move because they require an additional bedroom for the size of their household.

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The Council is committed to reducing the levels of overcrowding in all tenures and we have taken action to increase the supply of larger homes in the borough:

- Purchasing of 38 three and four bedroom homes at Crow Lane.
- Increasing the support provided to under-occupiers in council housing to enable them to down-size thereby releasing their home for another family to move to.
- Amending the Housing Allocation Scheme to give greater priority to under-occupying tenants and overcrowded households.
- Increasing the supply of family sized homes in our housing regeneration schemes.
- Buying back former family sized council homes for overcrowded tenants to move to.
- Implementing a programme of loft conversions and extensions where it is feasible to give families more space and create more large family homes.
- Increasing the supply of family homes in the private rented sector through the Capital Letters Scheme.

Charging Points for Electric Vehicles

**15) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Osman Dervish)
From Councillor Reg Whitney**

Given the increasing demand and need for electric vehicles, would the Cabinet Member confirm the Administration's Strategy on charging points?

Answer

The Government wants the UK new car market to offer no petrol or diesel vehicles by 2030.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has restated its vision that all drivers of Electric Vehicles in the UK should be able to access public charging infrastructure that is affordable, efficient, and reliable.

The current London Plan requires all new developments with parking provision to include 20% of the spaces with Electric Vehicle Charging Points ready to use and 20% of the spaces ready prepared for the addition of charging infrastructure when demand increases in the future.

Havering's emerging Local Plan states that developments will need to include the minimum required electric vehicle charging points in line with the London Plan requirements.

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It is recognised that electric vehicle (and hybrid vehicle) numbers will increase significantly over the coming years and that presents both opportunities and challenges.

Last year the Council commissioned a study on Electric Vehicle Charging Points and the potential demand for such infrastructure in the borough.

Further work is taking place exploring options for how EVCP infrastructure can be introduced in the borough and the funding opportunities that are available.