



FULL COUNCIL, Wednesday 6th September 2023

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Romford Conservation Zone

1) To the Cabinet Member for Development & Regeneration (Councillor Graham Williamson)

From Councillor David Taylor

Given the recent character study, which recognises the importance of heritage across Havering, would the administration commit to a review of Romford's Conservation Zone, with view to extending it?

Answer

The borough's 11 conservation areas all have Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans which serve to identify the special interest of each conservation area and provide a clear basis for assessing how far planning proposals preserve or enhance their character or appearance.

The administration is committed to an update of all of the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans and is in the process of procuring specialist expertise to undertake this work. The updated Conservation Area Appraisals will be subject to public consultation prior to being adopted. This update links neatly to the work already underway on characterisation and the wider Local Plan refresh. The update of the Romford Conservation Area Appraisal will consider whether the current conservation area boundary should be extended.

A supplementary question asked when the timeline for the consultation with residents would be available. The Cabinet Member responded that he hoped this would be by the end of the year and that he was keen for people to take part in the consultation.

Vehicle Carbon Dioxide Emissions Charging

2) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone)

From Councillor Darren Wise

Could the cabinet member please confirm that this Council will not be following other London Councils such as Royal Greenwich by introducing vehicle carbon dioxide emissions charging for parking charges and resident and business permits?

Answer

The Council has no plans to introduce any form of vehicle emissions charging either for parking charges in general or parking permits. The administration has made it quite clear in recent months its objections to vehicle emissions charging in the form of the

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ULEZ expansion that the Mayor has just introduced in the borough and has no intention of penalising hard-working motorists any further.

The Council's commitment to improving air quality can be seen in the Adopted Climate Change Action Plan, which sets out how the Council will reduce carbon di- oxide emissions and became a carbon neutral authority by 2040 or sooner. I believe we can achieve this without the need to introduce emissions based parking charges, which will just be yet another financial burden on hard working residents.

(No supplementary question).

Havering Faith Groups

3) To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ray Morgon) From Councillor David Taylor

Havering's faith groups play an important role in our community. They provide food banks, mother and toddler groups, tackle loneliness, and support people who are struggling with their finances. Will the Leader join me in thanking this community for their work?

Answer

I thank you for your statement. We fully agree that our Faith groups are one of the many groups that includes charities and residents that support our community. We join you in thanking these groups. Indeed, they were invaluable in helping us during Covid by reaching residents and encouraging take up of vaccinations.

The cost of living crisis and reduction in funding for local government, plus the rising costs in social care services mean we will have to work together to build further resilience into our communities. I hope the Conservative group will support and work with us on this moving forward.

A supplementary question asked if the Leader would be able to meet with Councillor Taylor and faith group leaders to discuss how the Council could work with these groups for the betterment of residents. The Leader responded that he was happy to attend such a meeting.

Council Staffing

4) To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ray Morgon) From Councillor Martin Goode

Could the Leader of this Council, please confirm the total number of temporary staff/ Consultants, currently being employed by Havering Council, and what that figure actually represents by way of a percentage, against all the staff currently employed by Havering Council?

Answer

The number of agency workers including outsourced staff and contractors is at 654 which is 21% of current staff. Every month we action plan to remove any unnecessary resource that is no longer required and to look at our resourcing options for posts to reduce cost and maintain skill.

We will only use agencies where

- There is a national shortage of staff (e.g. social workers)
- For some pieces of work, subject specialists are needed on a short term basis which is financially more viable than creating permanent posts, this would be in technology project management for example
- Sessional workers (e.g. parks ground staff) are included in the figures as are cleaners and drivers in passenger transport
- The new Target Operating Model and workforce management system will significantly help us to manage headcount and also make optimum use of flexible resource and to centralise where possible removing any duplication.
- We are developing more apprentice posts and graduate opportunities to avoid using agency workers in analyst, customer service and project management roles where this is appropriate
- In our library teams where we use agency staff we are converting agency staff to permanent contracts as needed

A supplementary question asked if the Leader felt the current level of temporary staff was too high. The Leader responded that agency staff were converted to permanent employees in certain circumstances but it was sometimes more cost effective to use agency staff. Numbers of agency staff were continuously reviewed by the Council.

Travel Infrastructure in the Borough

**5) To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ray Morgon)
From Councillor Christine Smith**

Can the administration please provide an update on any new active travel infrastructure that has been commissioned under this administration?

Answer

The Administration is committed to delivering infrastructure that gives residents the choice of how they would like to travel in the borough.

Last financial year we delivered secure cycle parking for five residential estates in the borough. We are continuing this programme this financial year with a further round of residential cycle parking being funded through the Local Implementation Plan.

We continue to support many Havering schools develop and maintain their school travel plans. Last year we funded cycle and scooter parking across 15 Havering schools delivering 249 scooter parking spaces and 169 cycle parking spaces.

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A further £100k of our Local Implementation Plan programme is already committed to delivering cycle and scooter parking this year with 14 schools already expressing an interest.

Schemes are allocated funding through a competitive bidding process which has remained the same across multiple administrations. Successful schemes have to meet a range of criteria set by funders. The lifecycle of a scheme from concept through to delivery can therefore take several years.

The Council continues to develop Beam Parkway, a transformational scheme supporting walking and cycling proposed for the A1306, and a review of the scheme design is taking place, this year.

Work is underway investigating the feasibility for delivering cycling improvements along Rom Valley Way and establishing a new cycle connection from Dovers Corner roundabout towards Rainham Station.

The administration continues to expand its School Streets programme in locations which have school, local resident and Ward Councillor support. A further three schools are set to be implemented in the Autumn term bringing the total number of schools that are part of a school street to 17. The Council will be supporting these schools through complimentary measures where needed to help pupils travel to and from school by foot and by bike.

(No supplementary question).

School Crossing Patrols, Brentwood Road

6) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone) From Councillor Judith Holt

In response to my two petitions presented to Full Council on 22nd March 2023, requesting lollipop men or women for the crossings in Brentwood Road, Havering Council's position was "that new school crossing patrol sites will not be installed and it considers, in general terms, that the control measures at the zebra crossing adequately mitigate the risk of crossing the road". Please could the Council provide evidence of how it arrived at that conclusion?

Answer

Thank you for this question. I would like to start by saying I, and the Council, takes the safety of school children very seriously. I also understand the significant benefits of children walking, cycling and scooting to school and the Council supports this through a number of measures annually. These range from education, new or improved infrastructure, supporting school travel planning and enforcement.

As members may be aware road collision data is routinely reviewed borough wide and funding is targeted to address sites where there's a history or pattern of accidents and where measures may reduce these. The Council will continue with this

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approach and seek to enhance the safety of crossings where the data suggests this is needed.

With regard to Brentwood Road the zebra crossing itself is deemed suitable to provide a safe crossing facility for school children which is standard practice, it is also worth noting School Patrols are a discretionary service. I have asked Officers to arrange to meet with Councillor Holt to talk through potential options for safety enhancements in this area.

For information less than 15% of schools have a crossing patrol associated with them.

(No supplementary question).

“Wheelie Bin” Provision

**7) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone)
From Councillor Judith Holt**

With the start of the new waste contract with Urbaser Ltd on 22nd October 2023 and its fleet of new vehicles, please could the Council confirm whether it might intend considering changing from black and orange sacks to wheelie bins?

Answer

At a time of severe financial pressures on the Council, it is right that officers consider all areas where cost savings or reduced cost pressures can be achieved. There are currently no plans to introduce wheelie bins but it is an option we may have to consider.

Havering’s new collection contract with Urbaser includes the option to introduce wheelie bins during the contract duration, with the vehicles having the capability to be retrofitted with bin lifts. Officers are currently working with their counterparts in other ELWA boroughs, as well as environmental consultants, to model the cost and service implications of wheelie bins. It is appreciated that there are proven benefits to be had, from reduced spillages and being able to limit the amount of residual waste that residents can present, thus driving up recycling rates and reducing overall waste production in the borough.

Residents often enquire about the introduction of wheeled bins, however, this is a substantial investment for Havering to make, estimated at around £2m for one wheelie bin per kerbside property, and increased if wheelie bins were to also be introduced for recyclable materials. The containers would need to be maintained when damage or theft occurs which would incur further costs and administration, as well as the purchase and installation of bin lifts for the collection vehicles, and reprofiling collection rounds to account for additional time taken to empty and return bins. Consideration also needs to be given to properties that cannot facilitate a wheeled bin or number of wheeled bins/containers, such as terraced properties and those with smaller front gardens.

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A supplementary question asked if these issues could be discussed further at a meeting with the Cabinet Member. The Cabinet Member responded that there was nothing to discuss further until the new waste contract had commenced.

Local Area Co-ordination

**8) To the Cabinet Member for Adults & Health (Councillor Gillian Ford)
From Councillor Jason Frost**

Will the Administration commit to maintaining the Local Area Coordination programme beyond 2024/25?

Answer

The Administration is committed to Local Area Coordination for residents of Havering, with additional funding secured via the Havering Place Based Partnership, to enable its continuation and expansion. We are now expanding the scheme into wards in Romford, and are currently exploring the exact localities with the local community. We held an open day on 30/8/2023 in Romford, to which members were invited. With thanks to Cllr Viddy Persaud for her support on the day.

As all members are aware, the council's budget position is difficult, however this administration absolutely remains committed to working with partners to secure ongoing funding to keep the service on a sustainable footing in 2025/26 and beyond. We must thank our NHS partners in the Havering Borough Partnership for their ongoing financial commitment to date, as they do recognise that Local Area Coordination benefits local residents and patients, in the work that they do, reducing the pressure on statutory services, by working alongside people to improve their health outcomes and increase their aspirations to live good lives. The Chair of the Integrated Care Board has recently stated that they are very impressed with the work on this area that is being done in Havering.

Data and testimonials have shown that Local Area Coordination is having an impact on the lives of residents in supporting them to get the life they want. The team has completed a journey with 286 people to date and is currently walking alongside 160.

Local Area Coordination in Havering continues to be accountable to the Council and other stakeholders, via the monthly Leadership Group, and is also a member of the national Local Area Coordination network, where Havering has one of 14 Local Area Coordination teams across the UK.

A supplementary question stated that it was encouraging that the Administration was committed to continuing with the project.

Support Service for Young Carers

9) To the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People (Councillor Oscar Ford) From Councillor Jason Frost

Could the Lead Member outline progress on the commissioning of a new comprehensive support service for young carers in Havering?

Answer

The new Young Carers Support Service is due to commence 1st December 2023.

The service will be delivered to anyone aged 5-17 living in Havering who is taking on caring responsibilities for a family with a long-term illness, disability, mental health or substance misuse issue. The provider will work with schools, communities, and statutory and voluntary agencies to identify hidden young carers. Following assessment, the provider will offer a range of short-term interventions including signposting, one-to-one support, in school support and workshops.

The aim of the service is to reduce the negative and highlight the positive impact of being a carer such as increased resilience, empathy, non-judgmental attitude and caring nature.

Some of the outcomes and targets that the Service will seek to achieve include:

- reducing the number of young people that have inappropriate caring roles;
- reducing the number of caring activities that a young carer dislikes and upsets them;
- increasing the number of young carers who are better able to cope
- improving and maintaining emotional wellbeing, physical health and mental health;
- increasing access and participation in community-based opportunities;
- enabling those with caring responsibilities to fulfil their educational and employment potential;
- increasing the number of young carers who feel safer at home;
- increasing the opportunity for young carers to have a role in developing and shaping the service e.g. mentoring, volunteering, types of support offered and location of services.
- improved partnership working with all key partners – including stakeholders, other agencies, the young carers and their families.

The retender of the service has given the Council the opportunity to include the benefit of added Social Value to the service. In addition to the contracted service, at no additional cost to the Council, the provider will be expected to:

- promote local skills and employment
- invest in the local economy
- extend community participation, engagement, and cohesion
- help raise the attainment and aspirations of the young people
- promote environmental sustainability
- promote digital inclusion

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- work in partnership to improve the health and wellbeing of local people

A supplementary question asked how many young carers in Havering qualified for the support mentioned. The Cabinet Member responded that this information could be provided outside of the meeting.

Accessible Strategy for Parks in Havering

**10) To the Cabinet Member for Environment Councillor Barry Mugglestone)
From Councillor Viddy Persaud**

Would this Administration agree to the development of an accessibility strategy for Havering's parks and green spaces, recognising the needs of those with physical disabilities (especially children) to have as complete access to the play/leisure facilities as possible?

Answer

Accessibility will be covered in the Parks Strategy that is currently being produced and which is expected to be completed later this year.

In addition I would add that equality of access in our parks is generally good with step free access at most entrances and where practicable, there are networks of hard surfaced pathways that link facilities. We also have a regular programme of pathway improvements subject to available capital funding. Benches and picnic tables are designed to cater for people with disabilities and there are also disabled toilets, including an adult changing area, across the borough.

All play areas have some inclusive play equipment, depending on the size of the area, so children of all abilities can play together. This includes items such as, wide slides, basket swings, ground level roundabouts and springies with backs. These types of equipment are specified in all play area improvement projects.

The Parks Department has, in the past, received small grants from Lucas Play Site Trust for installation of accessible equipment in play areas.

A supplementary question stated that it was reassuring that the strategy would be in place by the end of the year.

Park Closing Times

**11) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone)
From Councillor Keith Prince**

Many residents will welcome the news that our parks will once again be locked after dark. However, could the Lead Member please explain why the long-standing policy of sunrise-sunset (officially published by the Met Office) opening times has been changed to 8am-dusk (the definition of which is far more subjective)?

Answer

We are pleased that we can now offer this service once again with the start of the new contract.

With regards to opening and closing times, there has not been a policy of sunrise to sunset.

Our parks and open spaces that are locked in the evening have always been closed approximately half an hour after sunset, i.e. dusk, and then opened by 8am.

(No supplementary question).

Measles Vaccinations

**12) To the Cabinet Member for Adults & Health (Councillor Gillian Ford)
From Councillor Christine Smith**

In light of recent warnings from the UKHSA on the declining rates of measles vaccination across the capital, can the Lead Member please outline what Havering are doing to ensure that uptake within the Borough remains at the recommended level?

Answer

Since 1 Jan 2023, 115 (88 confirmed and 27 probable) measles cases have been reported in London; there have been no confirmed or probable cases in Havering. With continued community transmission of measles in London vaccination is essential.

NHS England are responsible for commissioning MMR vaccination programmes, provided via GPs and supported by catch-up campaigns; 320,000 children across London were identified as either missing or only partially vaccinated for MMR. Uptake in Havering is better than London, but worse than England.

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Working in partnership with NHSE, NHS ICS colleagues, Havering LA, schools, parents and communities, the following actions are taking place:

- 2023 London MMR/polio campaign has protected thousands of unvaccinated children against measles; an additional 14% of eligible children were immunised.
- Schools-based providers called almost 10,000 families who have unvaccinated children, with around 11% of calls answered and 1,000 children vaccinated; additional clinics were put on by Vaccination UK in Havering at MyPlace and Fairkytes Arts Centre.
- The NHS in London launched a digital marketing campaign targeting those most at risk in London.
- A monitoring exercise by Children's Social Care has confirmed that all children in care under the local Authority's responsibility are fully up to date with necessary vaccinations.

A supplementary question asked if there was a strategy to follow up on the receipt of measles vaccinations for children from BME groups. The Cabinet Member responded that the overall vaccination strategy had been considered at the last partnership meeting.

13) (Question withdrawn).

Parking Arrangements on Ardleigh Green Road Parade

14) **To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone)**
From Councillor Christine Vickery

Would the Cabinet Member agree to changing the parking period for the parade on Ardleigh Green Road between Helen Road and Squirrels Heath Lane from the current Ring Go offer of 30 mins free parking with no return the same day to no extended parking (a feature presently allowed on the Ring Go app) as this is blocking the bays and reducing foot fall?

Answer

I thank Councillor Vickery for her question.

I would be more than happy to meet with Cllr Vickery to understand the impact the current arrangements are having on foot fall in the local parade and any potential solutions. I can then consider how this may be addressed including the potential for any review of the local parking arrangements.

A supplementary question confirmed that Councillor Vickery would like to meet with the Cabinet Member in order to discuss the matter further.