



**COUNCIL, 17 January 2024**

**Question Number: 1**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Barry Mugglestone )**

**From Councillor Dilip Patel**

**Question:** Could the Administration explain the apparent lack of consistency in the locking of park gates across the Borough; being left open on some days but locked on others?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

As you know we ceased locking park gates in 2022 to make cost savings. However, it has been brought back under a mixed-contract pilot as a trial to see if we can re-introduce this service.

The locking is currently being undertaken, at no cost to the council, by National Enforcement Solutions as part of the littering enforcement contract procured last year. NES provide two officers who are focussed solely on parks locking and unlocking.

As this mixed-contract model has not been used before, the amount of resource needed to carry out the task of locking was underestimated by the contractor. There has also been recruitment and retention issues for NES for the park locking posts.

There are discussions underway regarding contractual performance and how this will work in the future.

A supplementary question asked why the gates to King George Playing Field had only been locked for 4 days last month, leading to a lot of anti-social behaviour and if this could be investigated? In response, the Cabinet Member explained that he was in discussions with the relevant contractor about their future performance in this area.

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**Question Number: 3**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Graham Williamson )**

**From Councillor David Taylor**

**Question:** Could the cabinet member please outline what work has been undertaken to assess viable alternatives for the management of Romford Market, including the option of engaging with private management companies to reduce cost to the council and ensure its survival?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

Cabinet have considered a range of short and medium term options to enhance the sustainability of Romford Market, including potential involvement of the private sector.

The scope and period of any arrangement with a private sector partner would need to be determined as these factors would have a significant impact on the likely terms. As a minimum, the arrangement might simply involve outsourcing the day-to-day management of the market to a private operator, but conceivably the brief might extend to seeking an investment partner willing to inject capital into regenerating the market. In the latter case a longer term agreement and greater return are likely to be sought by the private sector.

A provisional risk/benefit analysis has been drafted to identify all relevant considerations, along with a provisional timetable for the procurement of a suitable partner if this approach were to be adopted, but it is important to stress that no decision has been made by Cabinet pending consideration of the details referenced above.

A supplementary question asked if the Community Infrastructure Levy from the Seedbed Centre development could be used to invest in signage directing people to the market from Romford station. The Cabinet Member responded that the issue of market signage would be looked at and would be picked up as part of the Romford Masterplan.

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**Question Number: 4**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Barry Mugglestone)**

**From Councillor Martin Goode**

**Question:** Would the Cabinet member, please confirm what protocol will apply for a traffic enforcement officer to issue a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) to a vehicle for not displaying a valid parking ticket, when the P & D machines, in that vicinity are either 'not working or are out of use'?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

I thank Councillor Goode for his question.

Currently, before commencing enforcement in a street or car park, the Civil Enforcement Officer tests the Pay & Display machine(s) to ensure they are in working order. If in working order, the Officer will patrol the car park and enforce any vehicle for non-payment and or other parking contraventions.

If the machine is not in working order, the Officer will report the defective machine to the on-duty supervisor and only enforce the area for vehicles parked with wheels outside of the bay markings. Vehicles parked without payment will be logged and if the CEO is able to return to the location after 3 hours, will enforce any vehicle which remains parked (parked for longer than permitted).

In line with the installation of new Pay & Display machines, signage at each Pay & Display location will be updated to advise motorists that if they are unable to pay at a machine, they must use the alternative payment via phone method. Any vehicle parked without a valid paid for session, once new machines are installed, will be at risk of a Penalty Charge Notice.

A supplementary question asked if a PCN would be issued if the pay and display machine was not in use. The Cabinet Member replied that a Civil Enforcement Officer would issue a PCN if the car was still present after three hours.



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**Question Number: 5**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Barry Mugglestone )**

**From Councillor Osman Dervish**

**Question:** Following the government's announcement of over £10m of funding for road repairs in Havering, will the administration please outline how they will allocate that spending?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

I thank Cllr Dervish for his question.

The highways funding announced by Government is for £0.333m this year, £0.333m next year and £10.416m over all years to 2033/34.

Government has set the condition that the funding should be used to deliver additional highway maintenance.

Accordingly, for this year and next year it is proposed to use this funding to meet the cost of the service and deliver additional maintenance works and to also help fund new asset management software that would otherwise be met from Council revenue allocations (that are forecast to overspend). This allows the existing provision to be reallocated and helps reduce an overspend generally.

Specifically, therefore, the funding will be used to:

- Pay for highway maintenance
- Additional road and pothole repairs and other essential work
- Footway repairs

The funding has only just been announced so the exact details of this are still being worked up.

A decision in how the funding will be utilised in future years is yet to be made.

A supplementary question asked if there was a timescale for when decisions on how the funding would be spent would be made. The Cabinet Member responded that he intended to shortly ask all Members for the top 5 roads in their wards that were in need of repair.

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**Question Number: 6**

**Question to the Leader of the Council (Cllr Ray Morgon)**

**From Councillor Keith Prince**

**Question:** Following the administration's commitment to putting in place a plan to reduce call-in waivers, can the Leader please outline what progress has been made to develop and implement this plan?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

The Monitoring Officer has considered the constitutional position regarding waivers and does not consider there to be a deficiency in the current process.

The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer have therefore recently discussed this issue with the Executive Leadership Group and have emphasised that waivers should only be used as a last resort. This is consistent with this Administration's stated aim to encourage and empower scrutiny.

The Monitoring Officer has also recently suggested that it should be a standing item at Overview and Scrutiny Board to allow the Chair to report to the Board on any exemptions he has approved since the last meeting.

A supplementary question asked if there was a plan in place, as per the motion at the last Council meeting, to reduce the number of call-in exemptions. The Leader of the Council advised that the Chief Executive had made it clear to his management team that call-in waivers for decisions should only be used as a last resort.

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**Question Number: 7**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Barry Mugglestone )**

**From Councillor David Taylor**

**Question:** With work now confirmed on the Eastern Road / South Street junction, to improve cycling connectivity, can the administration outline what other cycling infrastructure projects are in progress across the borough?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

Through the Local Implementation Plan the administration supports delivery of an annual programme of cycle and scooter parking in schools. Last year over £100k of LIP funding was allocated to 18 schools across the borough, which delivered 350 scooter parking spaces and nearly 200 cycle parking spaces, and we are working with a further 24 schools this year.

We want to deliver safe and secure cycle and scooter parking in every school that wants it and to that end the administration has committed £50K of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to support school cycle and scooter parking.

We also deliver an annual programme of secure cycle lockers for our Residential Estates across Havering. Last year cycle lockers were installed across five residential estates and further cycle lockers will be installed in the coming months.

My Officers are currently reviewing cycle parking provision in our town centres and a programme of installation will take place in the coming months to make sure residents have access to secure cycle parking in all our major and minor district centres.

The administration continues to look at opportunities for improved cycling connectivity in the borough and is currently undertaking feasibility work to assess the potential for a safe cycle link along Marshway to provide access towards the London Riverside Business Improvement District.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member would write to Councillor Taylor to outline the new cycling schemes. The Cabinet responded that he would write to the relevant ward Councillors regarding any such schemes planned for their wards.

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**Question Number: 8**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Graham Williamson)**

**From Councillor Keith Prince**

**Question:** The council has waived the need for the Upminster battery storage facility to be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment. A similar exemption has been made for the Como St car park site.

Can the cabinet member for Climate Change explain how this fits into the administration's ambition to protect the environment?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

Whilst the Administration is committed to achieving the objectives within the Climate Change Action Plan, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a specific and technical part of the planning process. The need for an EIA only applies to those projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

For projects that exceed minimum thresholds stated in legislation, a developer can seek to confirm whether an EIA is required or not through submitting a Screening Opinion request. The Council should only request an EIA where the nature of the proposal is likely to have significant effects through, for example, emissions, pollution, visual impact or traffic due to its scale or being in a sensitive area.

Government advice on indicative thresholds for EIA, include where energy facilities would lead to significant emissions to air, transportation of fuel and visual impact or where residential development on non-urbanised areas would provide greater than 1000 dwellings. Neither the battery storage facility nor the proposals for Como Street were considered to meet these specific thresholds.

The acceptability or otherwise of proposals is not dependent on whether an EIA is required or not - the impacts of each development would still be assessed as part of any planning application.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member believed that the battery storage facility did not pose any danger to the environment. The Cabinet Member asked if Councillor Prince could write to him with specific concerns and he would meet with officers accordingly. The Cabinet Member was also happy to take input into the Climate Change Action Plan.



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Question withdrawn by the Conservative Group.

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)





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**Question Number: 10**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Paul McGeary)**

**From Councillor Joshua Chapman**

**Question:** Can the Cabinet Member give an update on how many Havering vulnerable residents have been housed outside Havering in the last 2 years?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

2022 – 12 households were placed out of borough in Council managed private sector leased (PSL) accommodation and in 2023 – 9 households. We send section 208 notices to the hosting local authority.

Vulnerability Include –

English not first language	4
Mental Health	4
Mobility	2
Domestic Violence & Abuse	1
Substance Abuse	1

Given that all homeless applicants being homeless are vulnerable we provide



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support upon letting. We complete a support assessment and action plan within 3 weeks of letting and work with statutory and voluntary agencies for specialist support. All out of borough PSL households are visited bi-annually to complete property inspections and in addition an annual support plan with reviews completed.

Of the 12 households from 2022, one assessment was amber needing moderate support and the remaining households are green meaning they are independent living. From 2023 placements, there are 2 amber households requiring moderate support and the remaining are green.

The settling in visit process embeds 3 visits within the first year of letting.

A supplementary question asked if housing locally produced the best outcomes for local residents and how could housing supply options be increased. The current void property turnaround times were also requested. The Cabinet Member agreed that housing locally was the best option and would respond separately regarding the void turnaround times.

**COUNCIL, 17 January 2024**

**Question Number: 11**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Keith Darvill)**

**From Councillor David Taylor**

**Question:** Could the cabinet member please provide an update on work to reopen Royal Jubilee Court and provide a projected date for opening?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

The cost of living crisis has led to the collapse of the private rented sector meaning households are no longer able to secure a private rented property in the market that is affordable.

Opening Royal Jubilee Court offered relief to our families placed as an emergency into hotels where they lived indeterminately without cooking facilities whilst experiencing disruption to their children's education. Havering Council were also responsible for paying the premium hotel rates in the market.

The Royal Jubilee Court was opened for occupation on the 6<sup>th</sup> November with plans to fully occupy the 74 units with families by the end of the financial year.

To date Royal Jubilee Court has so far been able to settle 33 families prior to the Christmas period moving them on from hotel accommodation. We anticipate 17 more to move in over the coming weeks.

So far the families are all settled and have been really positive about their move.

A supplementary question asked for an assurance that the gate at the rear of the property would be kept locked. The Cabinet Member confirmed he would arrange for officers to respond on this.

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**Question Number: 12**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Graham Williamson)**

**From Councillor Viddy Persaud**

**Question:** Could the Cabinet please outline what conversations they are having with Wates, over the option of beginning work on the Waterloo Estate, following the government's confirmation that work on such sites can take place?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

The JV Board decided to pause the WQS Phase 1 in May 2023 due to regulatory uncertainty about the requirement for a second staircase, in high risk buildings.

In July 2023, following consultation with the industry about the height of new build developments requiring a second staircase, the Secretary of State, The Right Hon Michael Gove MP, announced that all new residential building over 18 m would require a second staircase in the future, as supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council, RIBA and others.

In October 2023, The Secretary of State made a further Statement in the House, concerning proposed transitional arrangements, which could, under defined circumstances, enable developers to build single stair buildings before all of the new regulations came into force, if they felt that was appropriate.

The Secretary of State did not compel developers to build out their existing single stair designed residential buildings. Mr Gove described single staircase buildings as “not inherently unsafe” and it is now the duty of each developer to establish which option they feel is acceptable.

Following these announcements, the Joint Venture Board has been giving careful consideration as to how it may want to proceed, taking account of safety of residents, a moral question of whether we should be building to new standards of safety that are supported by National Fire Chiefs, RIBA and the Regulator, prior to the new legislation being formally adopted, and the need to provide much needed housing. Every developer is grappling with this issue with many still opting to build to the new standards.

The new Part B (Fire) of the Building Regulations is not expected before mid-2025. It is hoped that this will clearly set out the detailed fire safety requirements.



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Some changes to the approved planning permission for the scheme at WQS might be able to be considered as non-material amendments by the Council, acting as LPA, but significant changes could require a new planning application.

It is anticipated that these deliberations will be completed and reported to Cabinet over the next 3 months with the annual review of the Havering/Wates JV Business Plan with re commendations on how to proceed.

A supplementary question asked for the date when a decision on work starting would be made. The Cabinet Member explained that this was uncertain as the project was a Joint Venture. Decisions were required from the Council's partner and Council officers before the final decision was taken by Cabinet.

**COUNCIL, 17 January 2024**

**Question Number: 13**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Keith Darvill)**

**From Councillor Dilip Patel**

**Question:** Could the cabinet member please provide an update on the progress of the programme to purchase homes for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

As you know we have successfully been awarded two grants from the GLA and from the Department of Levelling Up and Communities. This gives us an acquisition capacity of 62 properties of which 24 properties have been completed with another 32 acquisitions in progress. We are envisaging that the remaining six will be negotiated and in progress by the end of March 2024.

All of the 24 properties have nominations from the Ukraine and Afghan cohorts as required in the grant funding. Six families have already moved into their nominated properties.

A supplementary question asked if the properties would house refugees for three years and then be returned to Havering residents. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the relevant Government grants were made on this basis.

**COUNCIL, 17 January 2024**

**Question Number: 14**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Barry Mugglestone)**

**From Councillor Jason Frost**

**Question:** With the Administration decision to remove the width restriction in Lawns Way, will the Cabinet Member for the Environment commit to the introduction of speed monitoring equipment so as to demonstrate to residents that the said restriction had no impact on regulating the speed of vehicles using this route?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

The Council has taken the decision to remove the existing width restriction features for the following reasons:

- They are temporary and therefore would either have to be made permanent or removed.
- They were put in with a view to controlling HGV movement along the roads. Cameras have now been implemented to enforce the weight limit and data through PCNs shows that contraventions levels are low.
- The Council has received a number of complaints and evidence associated with turning movements from HGVs causing damage to residents' property at the locations of the width restriction blocks.

Both Lawns Way and Faircross Avenue already have traffic calming / speed humps. Therefore, suitable speed control devices are in place. There are limited additional speed control measures that could be implemented.

The Council has a programme of monitoring all roads in the borough for road safety and where Personal Injury Collisions have occurred and can addressed through engineering measures the Council will bid to TfL for funds to remediate.

There are currently no proposals to undertake further surveys in these roads.

(No supplementary question).

**COUNCIL, 17 January 2024**

**Question Number: 15**

**Question to the Cabinet Member (Cllr Gillian Ford)**

**From Councillor Jason Frost**

**Question:** Telecoms firms have been obliged to announce a pause on the switching of vulnerable landline customers over to digital connections - after a number of "serious incidents" in which telecare devices, intended to summon assistance in an emergency - stopped working. Telecoms firms have urged local authorities and telecare firms to share more data on which residents have devices whose functioning could be affected. Can the Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care ensure this Council that they are cooperating with any requests for data so as to facilitate the safe transition to digital connections among our most vulnerable residents?

**Answer:** (The response should be no more than **200 words** in length)

Absolutely. The Council is in progress of procuring digital Telecare equipment to replace all analogue equipment currently in the homes of Havering vulnerable residents who use this system. The new equipment will be installed before the switching off of analogue lines. The project will be overseen by Havering Telecare service, and vulnerable residents will receive regular updates throughout the process.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member was aware of guidance issued by the Local Government Association in this area. The Cabinet Member confirmed that she was and supported the guidance.