



FULL COUNCIL, Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

### Visitor Parking Permits

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

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment confirm that the option of paper visitor parking permits is still available in Havering?

### Answer

Thank you for the question. Firstly, for information, this year so far 81,188 permits have been issued via the MiPermit platform, compared to 60 requests for paper permits.

I can confirm that in specific circumstances, for example where residents do not have internet access, the option to purchase paper visitor permits remains available. Residents requiring this service, or requiring assistance to apply for a permit online, can contact MiPermit on 0345 520 7007.

A supplementary question asked if this arrangement would continue for the foreseeable future. The Cabinet Member responded that, as sales of paper permits were only at the following levels:

2022 – 96

2023 – 76

2024, to date – 60

it was possible that paper permits would not continue to be offered in the future.

### Refurbishment of the A1306 Trunk Road

**2) To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor Graham Williamson)  
From Councillor Matt Stanton**

Will the Cabinet Member for Regeneration confirm whether the Council will be taking advantage of the funding opportunities offered by Transport for London to progress the refurbishment of the A1306 Trunk Road?

### Answer

Councillor Stanton will be aware that the A1306 Beam Parkway linear park scheme was due to be funded through TfL's Major Schemes programme, which was regrettably withdrawn by TfL following the pandemic.

TfL have recently confirmed that they have no immediate plans to reinstate their Major Schemes programme, but have suggested that Havering Council might want

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to consider using its Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding to contribute to the scheme. TfL has also offered support to a Levelling Up funding bid.

I can confirm that Council officers are in the process of preparing a 3-year Delivery Plan for submission to TfL (covering this year's 2025/26 to 2027/28) and will explore the extent to which the Linear Park proposal aligns to the various funding criteria across the LIP programme areas. Officers will discuss any funding opportunities with TfL.

The Council is also exploring other potential funding sources and reviewing the original scope, mindful that the original cost estimate for the full scheme was in the order of £15m, based on 2020 construction costs.

(No supplementary question).

### **Urbaser Contract**

#### **3) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone) From Councillor Martin Goode**

With the first year's anniversary of the appointment of Urbaser Ltd approaching, would the Cabinet Member please confirm whether or not, this Council is satisfied with the weekly service being provided?

### **Answer**

Urbaser are currently performing well, meeting the majority of their KPIs including missed collections (38 per 100,000 against a target of 60 per 100,000 with lower being better). This places Urbaser well above the performance of the previous contract. Whilst there are still complaints received around particular issues such as repeat missed collections for individual properties, our officers do monitor their performance and Urbaser have put systems in place to monitor and review these. Any issues are discussed at either the fortnightly operational meetings with Havering's contract monitoring team, or monthly meetings with the Head of Service and Assistant Director. This is helping to ensure a robust scrutiny and escalation path.

Urbaser have been providing officers with a monthly performance report, which has gained in detail month on month as the contractor has worked with the authority to tailor it in order to provide information around KPIs, but also to support Havering's climate change action plan and social value objectives. Officers have been working with colleagues in IT to obtain equivalent reports from Dynamics in order to sense check the data being provided by Urbaser and reconcile any discrepancies accordingly.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member was happy with Urbaser's performance on weekly waste collections. The Cabinet Member responded that Urbaser's missed collection rate of 38 per 100,000 was better than the previous supplier.

## East Havering Data Centre

**4) To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor Graham Williamson)  
From Councillor Judith Holt**

Following the meeting at Top Meadow Golf Club on Monday 29th July about the proposed data centre being built on Green Belt land, please could the Administration confirm what progress has been made in setting up the pledged monthly meetings between the Planning Department and North Ockendon and Uppminster residents?

### Answer

Councillor Holt may recall that the commitment to monthly meetings, as necessary, was in relation to meetings with the corporate supporters of the scheme and not the Planning Team with whom only one meeting was committed at this stage.

That meeting will focus on the process that the Planning Team are following, rather than the specifics of the proposal. If Councillor Holt reviews the recordings of the event, then I think she will find that this is what was agreed.

The next planned monthly event with the corporate supporters of the scheme will take place after the intended Planning Team meeting, the date for which is being finalised. Of course, I'm sure other meetings with various parties will take place as and when there is more pertinent information to share.

A supplementary question asked if the Council would commit to informing all residents of the outcomes of the meetings. The Cabinet Member responded that the Environmental Impact Assessment would be presented to Strategic Planning Committee and hence to all residents.

## London Climate Resilience Review

**5) To the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Housing Need (Councillor Natasha Summers)  
From Councillor Keith Darvill**

Following the Final Report of the London Climate Resilience Review and the guidance and recommendations within that report to London Borough Councils, what action is being implemented in Havering?

### Answer

The Council endorses the strategic recommendations outlined in the London Climate Resilience Report and is actively collaborating with London Councils to assess any additional implications. Havering is committed to integrating the review's findings into its existing Climate Change Action Plan, ensuring that any new initiatives or requirements are effectively addressed. This integration is contingent upon the provision of necessary funding, which will enable the Council to implement measures that are both impactful and sustainable. The Council's dedication to enhancing climate resilience is reflective of its broader commitment to becoming carbon neutral and its role in fostering a greener, more sustainable Havering for all residents.

A supplementary question asked if the Council had considered funding applications to support such schemes in the Borough. The Cabinet Member confirmed that funding applications were being looked at.

## **Highway Tree Maintenance**

**6) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone)  
From Councillor Martin Goode**

Would the Cabinet Member please clarify, what criteria is required for a tree that is located on a residential street to undergo a major prune or have its roots cutback to prevent the cause of any damage to residential property, or the surrounding area?

### **Answer**

Currently the tree budget covers works to any trees that are considered dead, dying, diseased or dangerous. The term “dangerous” may relate to any of the aforementioned issues, as well as damage from cars, vandalism or storms.

When it comes to specific damage to property, the burden of proof rests with the property owner to provide a claim for damage with appropriate evidence, which would then be reviewed by the tree officer and a report provided to the Borough’s Insurance Team to make the final decision on any pay-out, should the tree be found to be the cause of damage. The insurers may issue a vegetation management request, which the team will duly undertake to ensure no further damage is caused, or otherwise they will remove the tree in question.

Should there be no claim to property, but it is clear that the tree is touching property which may result in damage, the team will issue a works order to have it pruned accordingly. The team also works with the Highways service to undertake root prunes where roots are damaging footways, however this is dependent on whether the removal of the root in question is likely to destabilise the tree – on rare occasions the tree may be removed. The tree team are working with highways colleagues to understand where there may be alternative surfacing materials that might help retain trees in future.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member could get officers to check which trees could be treated earlier and if these trees were being inspected against the criteria. The Cabinet Member responded that, in order to meet its legal responsibilities, the Council worked to ensure that any issues that may cause a tree to become dangerous were resolved accordingly. Members were welcome to raise issues from their respective wards with him and officers would be advised accordingly. The Council was also looking at recruiting voluntary tree wardens.

## Highway Tree Inspections

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

Does the Cabinet Member for the Environment agree that the length of time between inspections of street trees (for the purposes of regulating their growth etc) is too long and the thresholds required for intervention lacking in clarity?

### Answer

The current frequency for tree inspections is 3 or 5 years depending on the location and species. The criteria for undertaking works following inspections is summarised on the Council's website.

Due to pressures with the arboricultural industry, with a lack of trained officers on the market, the Council has allocated alternative resources to address all outstanding inspections. Officers have been reviewing best practice and costs to provide proposals for increasing the frequency of inspections, along with the expected resource required. This is due to both the reduction in insurance risk this would bring, the ageing nature of the borough's tree stock and threats from climate change.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member would meet with the relevant ward Member to look at a specific tree that was causing issues. The Cabinet Member responded that he was happy to meet with the ward Member and asked if they could forward a photograph of the tree in question.

## Traffic Enforcement Globe Road, Grange Way & Francombe Gardens

**8) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone)  
From Councillor Jane Keane**

Will the Cabinet Member arrange for Traffic Enforcement Officers to attend more frequently Globe Road, Grange Way and Francombe Gardens to act as a deterrent to those drivers who regularly park vehicles inconsiderately and in many cases dangerously to prevent the ever increasing risk of accident leading to personal injury?

### Answer

It is disappointing that members of the public choose to park in an inconsiderate manner which can also lead to safety issues, especially around schools.

The enforcement teams are already deployed in the roads mentioned, and the frequency of patrols will be reviewed.

A supplementary question asked if there would be a campaign of zero tolerance against bad driving in these areas. The Cabinet Member responded that ward Councillors were welcome to undertake such a campaign and he was happy to look at any petition etc resulting from this.

## **Council Tenants Home Maintenance**

**9) To the Cabinet Member for Housing & Property (Councillor Paul McGeary)  
From Councillor Jason Frost**

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing please clarify whether or not Council tenants are exempt from seeking permission to paint, decorate and/or modify fencing belonging to an adjoining private property?

### **Answer**

Council tenants are not exempt from seeking permission to paint decorate and/or modify fencing belonging to an adjoining private property. They should seek permission from their neighbour if they know the fence is not theirs.

Resident Services receive complaints from residents who are not aware that a fence does not belong to them because a new fence has been erected within their neighbour's boundary. Sometimes investigation is required by the Council's Housing Officer and Property Surveyor to establish the facts around the fence ownership and boundary issues. We have seen an increase in this type of request.

A supplementary question asked if details of a particular case could be given to the Cabinet Member. The Cabinet Member responded that he was happy to receive such details.

## **Unregistered Children's Homes**

**10) To the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People (Councillor Oscar Ford)  
From Councillor Mandy Anderson**

How many properties in Havering are known to be operating as unregistered Children's homes?

### **Answer**

Havering officers are aware of 3 properties which are being used as unregulated children's homes within the Borough. This is a reduction from 4 at the beginning of the year. Havering do not commission from these providers or any unregulated residential children's home provision.

All three properties (two Providers) have applied to OFSTED for registration, and this is being supported by the other Local Authority Children's services (Croydon, Lambeth and Hampshire) who are using the three homes.

A supplementary question asked what safeguarding children work was being done to ensure the swift and effective communication of responses to residents and ward Members. The Cabinet Member responded that Havering kept oversight of children's homes but children from other boroughs were the responsibility of their individual Local Authorities.

## **Parking Arrangements on the new Waterloo Estate**

### **11) To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor Graham Williamson) From Councillor Tim Ryan**

Would the Cabinet Member for Regeneration care to explain why the Administration have been reluctant to provide details on the scope and extent of parking provision to be made available to residents and visitors on the new Waterloo Road Estate, and will they commit to accompanying me to meet with residents on site to address their concerns?

### **Answer**

Thank you for your question.

The hybrid planning application (P0761.20) for the proposed redevelopment of W&QS, received the grant of approval on 12th November 2021.

W&QS lies on the edge of Romford Town Centre and has good access to bus and rail services, which greatly reduces reliance on the private motor vehicle.

The application provides for 370 car-parking spaces, 80 of which will be designated as disabled bays, along with cycle spaces, in accordance with planning policy.

It is intended that most of the new parking will be contained within secure car-parks or be secure off-street parking.

As set out in the planning application report that was considered by the Strategic Planning Committee, the site is also proposed to have its own Controlled Parking Zone. This would be a permit based scheme. Any vehicles without a permit would be subject to enforcement action.

Officers already attend a local residents meeting, and this matter, along with the existing CPZ that covers Cotleigh, Honiton & other local roads, has already been discussed.

Given this, it would not seem appropriate to suggest that there has been any 'reluctance' to discuss the issue.

That said, we could ask an officer from Parking Services to attend a future meeting of the local residents group to clarify any issues, if this would be helpful?

A supplementary question stated that residents felt neglected due to the parking restrictions in the area and asked if this could be reviewed. The Cabinet Member confirmed that this could be looked at.

## **Cottons Park Play Area**

### **12) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone) From Councillor David Taylor**

Could the Cabinet Member for the Environment please outline his plans to ensure that the children's play area in Cottons Park is fit for purpose, clean and safe for use by our younger residents?

#### **Answer**

There is a robust system in place by Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA ) trained staff to ensure all of Havering's play and recreation areas are safe to use. Routine inspections take place at least weekly when they are litter picked and any issues reported. Operational inspections take place quarterly when all equipment is thoroughly checked. Independent safety assessments take place annually by RoSPA which officers use to prioritise any necessary repairs and improvements.

This year there are several minor repairs required in the play area at Cottons Park, including replacement of bearings and gate adjustments, which will take place later in the year.

If customers wish to report issues in the parks, they can use the online forms available on the Council's website.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member would commit to the creation of a sinking fund for play spaces funded from the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Cabinet Member responded that he would look at all areas of funding.

## **Funding for Road Repairs**

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

Can the Cabinet member please identify the roads which have benefitted from the recent government grant of additional road repairs funding?

#### **Answer**

I thank Cllr Prince for his question.

The way in which the Council is using the additional highway maintenance funding provided by the Department for Transport is set out on the Council's website. The funding is being used to cover a variety of activities, road repairs, preventative works and research into possible innovation (in relation to pothole repairs) was completed.

The Council also publishes information about our highways improvement programme, in which £5.5m of investment in roads, pavements and street lighting will be made by the Council this year. For example, 42 roads are expected to be resurfaced and three busy local shopping parades will be renewed and improved along with essential street lighting column replacements.



As such, due to the way funding is being used, and being brought in to support and extend existing programmes, it would not be correct to simply list a set of streets that have been funded by the DfT funds directly.

A supplementary question asked why it was not possible to list the roads that had benefitted from Government funding and if such a list could be provided in writing. The Cabinet Member confirmed that such information was on the Council's website and added that he had asked all ward Councillors for their five worst roads in their wards. Around nine miles of road surface was being repaired each year.

## **CCTV in the Borough**

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

Following the announcement of an update to Havering's CCTV network, can the Cabinet member please provide an update on the upgrade and expected completion dates?

#### **Answer**

Phase one of the CCTV project is construction of the new CCTV control room. This is currently being constructed and should be built and operational by next month.

The next part of phase one is the switch over to digital cameras and fibre infrastructure in Romford Town Centre which is envisaged to take 6 months and take us up to April 2025.

Following on from that, the existing Housing Estate cameras and transmission paths will be upgraded, and these will be installed and transmitted back to the CCTV control room. This is envisaged to take 6 months or up to October 2025.

A supplementary question asked if cameras with facial recognition technology could be used in areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour. The Cabinet Member replied that there were no current plans to use facial recognition technology in the CCTV control room. There may be a later need to allow the Police and security services to access the CCTV system to conduct urgent enquiries.

## **Community Safety**

**15) To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ray Morgon)  
From Councillor Keith Prince**

In light of the recent violence across the UK, can the Leader please outline what discussions he has had with the Borough Commander, regarding any response to potential local disturbances?

### **Answer**

Havering Police adopted the Met-wide Policing plan to deal with any potential disturbance in Havering. Specialist units were put on standby and intelligence was assessed to be prepared to proactively respond to any events.

A strategic coordination and communication group was facilitated by Community Safety in conjunction with Havering's Police Superintendent.

As a result of intelligence gathered, several sensitive sites were proactively visited by Police and advice was offered to those sites to increase vigilance and review site security.

A meeting was also set up with Havering Council leadership and local faith leads to offer reassurance and listen to any concerns.

A supplementary question asked if the Leader would join Councillor Prince in thanking the Metropolitan Police and other partners for their work to avoid disorder in Havering. The Leader of the Council agreed and thanked the Police and partners for their work to improve safety and community cohesion.