



MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Library Strategies

**1) To the Cabinet Member for Adults & Wellbeing (Councillor Gillian Ford)
From Councillor Keith Prince**

Can the Cabinet Member outline which community trusts or voluntary groups they have approached as an alternative to run the libraries they are currently consulting on for closure?

Answer

The recent draft Library Strategy consultation asked if community groups or associations should express a desire and capacity during the consultation to take over the running of a branch library proposed for closure.

We would give serious consideration and support to help make proposals viable and deliverable.

No community groups or organisations came forward during the consultation to offer to have such a discussion. One group did wish to discuss fundraising options but did not make any offer to manage a library.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member had undertaken any proactive consultation with community groups. The Cabinet Member reiterated that no groups had come forward to manage a library, even though the consultation had shown the proposed modes by which a library could be run.

Proposed Food Waste Collection

**2) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone)
From Councillor Trevor McKeever**

In view of the Government position that all local authorities should implement food waste collection separate from general waste by the end of March 2026 will the Cabinet Member for the Environment summarize the Borough's implementation proposals and resident's response to the Love Food Hate Waste Campaign?

Answer

Food waste collection proposals were laid out in the recent borough-wide survey which was conducted between in October and November 2024. A report detailing the scheme, implementation and financial arrangements will be recommended for approval at cabinet on January 22nd. Once the Cabinet recommendations are agreed, officers will work with FCC (the Council's Waste Contractor) and suppliers on a procurement process for containers and vehicles, and are looking to commence the roll-out of the service from October 2025 for kerbside properties, with the roll-out to communal properties to commence in spring 2026.

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Responses to the recent survey were positive with over 75% of residents indicating they would use the service. Officers will use the results of the survey to design an appropriate communications campaign and ensure that residents who need support, for example with assisted collections are helped accordingly.

The scheme will provide internal and external food caddies for residents to separate their food waste for collection which will be collected weekly.

Black sack and orange sack recycling collections will remain weekly and will be unaffected by the introduction of a new food waste collection.

A supplementary question asked how collection vehicles would be kept clean and odour free. The Cabinet Member responded that these vehicles had not been procured as yet but would be cleaned on a regular basis.

Repair of Potholes

**3) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone)
From Councillor Brian Eagling**

The Government announced funding of £1.6bn for Councils to repair potholes. Can the cabinet member confirm how much of this money has been allocated to Havering and is there a list of potholes broken down by Ward which will receive that funding to repair them.

Answer

As part of the 2024 Autumn budget the DfT announced nearly £1.6bn in funding for local highways maintenance for 2025/26.

The DfT have advised how much funding will be allocated per local authority. For Havering this will mean a total allocation of £1.082m in 2025/26. The funding is dependent upon meeting certain DfT criteria and comes with conditions.

The Council should receive a letter from the DfT sometime early in 2025 outlining the restrictions, rules and the criteria for how this funding is to be spent. The DfT have provisionally advised that this should not just cover the fixing of potholes but in maintaining all parts of highway assets including roads, bridges, streetlights and so on. This would likely mean a greater emphasis on resurfacing and planned replacement programmes.

Once this guidance is received the Council will ensure the funding allocation is spent as effectively as possible in keeping within the rules and restrictions stated. Communications as to how the funding is being used will be issued across all council channels in due course.

A supplementary question asked which wards would receive what levels of money for pothole repairs. The Cabinet Member explained that this could not be confirmed until the criteria for expenditure had been set by the Department for Transport.

Alternative Revenue Income for Libraries

4) **To the Cabinet Member for Adults & Wellbeing (Councillor Gillian Ford)**
From Councillor Keith Prince

Can the Cabinet Member set out what other commercial activities the Council has explored to generate a revenue income for the libraries they are currently consulting on for closure?

Answer

The library service is always looking to maximise income through room lettings and other commercial activity.

A recent example of this is partnering with Tapestry who will hire rooms on a permanent basis at Rainham library to provide essential services to older people in the south of the borough not currently served by Tapestry services. They will also deliver the community hub in Rainham.

The Citizens Advice Bureau are another example of a commercial let of space within Romford Library.

Consideration is being given to space within existing libraries for other commercial opportunities. However, this is linked to the larger libraries that have space to accommodate such opportunities.

Council wide, opportunities are always being explored to maximise income to the Council, whether this be through fees and charges or commercial opportunities. There are already commercial lettings being developed as part of existing Regeneration programmes which support scheme viability and delivery of affordable homes.

The main issue is we cannot balance the budget as things stand and need to take out a £85m capitalisation direction next year. Any of the funding we have available and any income opportunities must offset against existing statutory service pressures in the first instance. We are unable to prioritise libraries over and above the other services we're reporting shortfalls and financial pressures against.

A supplementary question asked for detail of income generation targets for libraries and what other revenue opportunities were available apart from room hire. The Cabinet Member responded that some opportunities were being worked on currently and details would be supplied to Members in due course.

Lift Defects on the New Green Estate

**5) To the Cabinet Member for Housing & Property (Councillor Paul McGeary)
From Councillor Matthew Stanton**

Will the Cabinet Member confirm how many lift defects there have been on the New Green development since occupation and whether this number of defects are proportionate to other similar developments with lifts?

Answer

Thank you for your question.

The New Green development was handed over to LBH on 28 February 2023.

According to our defect reporting management protocol system there have been a total of 10 reported lift defects from February 2023 to date.

The blocks affected during this period were:

- Damselby Court
- Levin Court
- Masterton Court
- Silverfern Court
- Brooksmouth Court
- Goldendock Court

Defects were remedied by the contractor (KONE), during this period as part of their contractual warrant period. The Council is now responsible for lifts by maintenance contractor (Precision Lifts) who presently undertake the planned/preventative work to all the lifts at New Green. The number of defects is in line with new lift installations.

A supplementary question asked if the number of defects reported to date was in line with similar blocks. The Cabinet Member felt that these numbers were in line with those expected for new lift installations generally.

Recycling and Fly Tipping in Harold Wood Ward

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

Can the cabinet member confirm when the recycling bring banks in Harold Wood will be removed and please advise on actions to be taken by the council to catch the perpetrators of fly tipping on this area.

Answer

Officers have been liaising with the East London Waste Authority, who hold the contract for all the recycling bring banks in the borough. Officers are aiming to remove these as part of a borough-wide programme of removal, now that the majority of the materials form part of the household recycling service. There are

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contractual matters between ELWA and their contractor, Biffa, to resolve prior to the removal programme being confirmed.

The Council continues to prosecute those who are responsible for fly-tipping where evidence can be found, I encourage residents to report all incidents so they can be investigated accordingly.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member if the Cabinet Member felt that bottle banks encouraged flytipping and that they should be removed. The Cabinet Member agreed that bottle banks did cause flytipping problems.

Condition of Local Authority Housing Stock

**7) To the Cabinet Member for Housing & Property (Councillor Paul McGeary)
From Councillor Joshua Chapman**

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing please outline what proactive steps he is taking to ensure Havering's local authority housing stock remains in good condition?

Answer

Based on the English Housing Survey data released this week, Havering has the second lowest number of homes in London not meeting the Decent Homes standard for both the private sector and Council homes.

All council properties are subject to a maximum 5-year rolling stock condition survey programme.

This information is used to shape the HRA 30-year Business Plan and Planned Works programme.

Steps have been taken to procure long-term contracts to ensure ongoing and consistent delivery of Planned and Responsive programmes, such as the 10-year Repairs contract with Mears, and the 10+ year contract for Heating with K & T (Sureserve).

The asset data allows works to be delivered pro-actively, to maintain homes at the Decent Homes standard but not renew elements prematurely.

The preventative approach is also seen in two recently procured contracts; the 6 – year Gutter and Drainage contract, and the 7-year External and Communal Decorations contract.

The Business Plan, reviewed and approved by Cabinet annually, also has flexibility to address any unforeseen issues with the Housing stock, changes in regulations or advances in best-practice.

It is our priority to ensure Council tenants and leaseholders live in good quality, safe and comfortable homes. The programmes and projects mentioned are just some of the work taking place to ensure we continue to deliver on this commitment.

Over the next five years Havering plan to make an investment of approximately £260 million in our existing homes.

A supplementary question asked what were the Council's current and planned social value priorities. The Cabinet Member replied that he wished to get as much as possible out of social value. Lists of completed and existing programmes such as careers support from Mears were available. Regular meetings were held with contractors to plan social value expenditure going forward.

Borough's Bed & Breakfast Elimination Plan

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

Will the Cabinet Member for Housing Need provide details of how the Council will implement its Bed & Breakfast elimination plan for those in need of temporary accommodation.

Answer

Like all councils with families in hotel accommodation Havering is required to submit an action plan to MHCLG to set out how it intends to reduce the numbers of households in hotels. Our action plan includes the following actions:

Havering has an action plan to support reducing households in both hotels and nightly let accommodation, which is monitored through the temporary accommodation board meetings. Below are an example of actions;

- Regeneration - development of the new 74 unit family welcome centre, Harold Hill
- Buyback of 80 ex-council properties to provide temporary accommodation
- Partnering with private equity groups to purchase between 150 and 400 properties in the open market
- Leasing of refurbished for office to residential conversions bringing in 55 units
- Ringfencing properties freed up by downsizers from council properties for people in temporary accommodation more than 6 years
- Over 55 plan for people who are accepted as homeless can get rapid access to our sheltered schemes
- Pay to stay scheme – incentives for families evicting their children to keep them in the home supporting with financial stress for the additional burden of keeping them at home
- Modular housing scheme – Waterloo Road Estate meanwhile use for 18 unit scheme
- Using Royal Jubilee Court, Romford as a hostel for homeless families

The council continues to do all we can to reduce and stop the use of expensive temporary accommodation such as hotels and bed and breakfasts. However, like boroughs across the country – Havering is experiencing a housing crisis. Therefore we have been forced to rely on hotels etc. to house homeless individuals and families, due to the chronic shortage of housing and unprecedented demand on housing stocks.

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A supplementary question asked what the Council was doing to ensure a targeted response to families with young children in bed and breakfast accommodation and that their time in such accommodation was minimised. The Cabinet Member responded that the Council was trying to reduce the numbers of people housed in hotels and the proposals for several conversions of offices to residential accommodation.

Development of Green Spaces

**9) To the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor Graham Williamson)
From Councillor David Taylor**

Can the Administration please confirm whether or not it is considering the disposal for development of green spaces around the Borough which are not formally designated-park land but maybe informally used as such?

Answer

The Council is not currently considering any development proposals on parks land.

A supplementary question asked if any such discussions had taken place with central Government. The Cabinet Member confirmed that no such discussions were taking place at present.

Road Safety Measures Proximate to Hylands School

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

When will arrangements for the enhanced attendance of Traffic Enforcement Officers be implemented to the roads surrounding Hylands School (including Globe Road, Granger Way and Francombe Gardens) with the purpose of deterring inconsiderate, and in many cases dangerous, parking and thus reducing the increasing risk of accidents and personal injury?

Answer

Thank you Councillor Keane for your question.

I would advise that all schools across the Borough receive regular enforcement patrols during drop off and pick times.

It was agreed in December 2024 that Francombe Gardens would receive some additional patrols, where possible, due to parking issues connected to Frances Bardsley School.

Records show that officers patrolled Francombe Gardens a total of 13 times in December, with 1 Penalty Charge being served.

Globe Road had 4 patrols during December with zero Penalties served and Granger Way had 9 patrols with 4 Penalties issued.

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Officers will continue to patrol these 3 locations more regularly during January 2025, subject to staff resource.

It is of course the responsibility of drivers to follow the parking restrictions that are already in place and to behave responsibly.

A supplementary question asked how many meetings the Cabinet Member had held with the Borough Commander on these issues. The Cabinet Member responded that it was the Leader who held meetings with the Borough Commander.

Social Value Impact Report

11) To the Cabinet Member for Adults & Wellbeing (Councillor Gillian Ford) From Councillor Jason Frost

At the November meeting of Full Council, the Administration gave an undertaking to produce a Social Value Impact Report. Can the relevant Cabinet Member please provide an update to members on this?

Answer

At the November meeting of Council, I did state that producing a Social Value Impact Report would be investigated but this was in relation to procurement rather than Warm Spaces. I can report that an officer is now in place who will aim to maximise social value benefits to the borough, something that the Administration is very committed to.

(No supplementary question).

Traffic Enforcement in Mildmay Road

12) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone) From Councillor Viddy Persaud

Would the Cabinet Member for the Environment please explain why the camera enforcing the one-way traffic restriction in Mildmay Road has been removed?

Answer

Council Officers monitor all existing Moving Traffic Contravention (MTC) cameras to determine sites of both good and poor compliance. Where Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) issuance is low this is a good indication of good compliance for a restriction. Where a camera has a high level of compliance over a period of months, it may be considered for relocation to another area where there is a greater need for a camera. This is the case for the one-way MTC camera in Mildmay Road.

This approach has been adopted due to the significant purchase costs of the cameras. Officers will continue to monitor and if issues were to arise again, Officers can relocate a camera to any location where there is low compliance.

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A supplementary question asked who the Cabinet Member had consulted on the removal of the camera. The Cabinet Member clarified that officers did not consult when cameras were removed.

Maintenance of Drains in Wennington

**13) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mugglestone)
From Councillor Jacqueline McArdle**

Can the Cabinet Member for the Environment give a commitment to securing a long-term resolution to the historic problem of blocked drains in Wennington caused by a lack of maintenance, not at the street end, but in and around the discharge areas which are located on lands held by private individuals?

Answer

Since 2022 all gullies in the borough have been cleaned on a yearly basis. We are aware that between cleans blockages can arise and we therefore address known “hotspots” more frequently.

Since August 2022 an additional 36 gullies along and near to Wennington Road have been cleaned (in addition to the annual cleans). Two damaged gullies and gully connection pipes have been replaced. Additionally, another repair order has recently been raised for a gully and pipe along Wennington Road.

Where there are drainage issues on private land away from the highway our powers and responsibilities are more complex. The Council will work to identify drainage issues and lobby to resolve them but do not have the power to go onto private land and take action ourselves.

The Council is aware of issues in the private field near to Eastwood Drive and is working with the landowner and the Environment Agency, to resolve these. Additionally, the Council has lobbied Network Rail to de-silt one of their railway culverts along Wennington Road, southwest of the cottages between numbers 1 and 16. Works will be undertaken here soon.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member could commit to try and secure funding to clear blockages. The Cabinet Member confirmed that officers would look to try and secure funding.

Heating Repairs for Local Authority Housing

**14) To the Cabinet Member for Housing & Property (Councillor Paul McGeary)
From Councillor Dilip Patel**

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing confirm what is the average lead time for heating repairs for HRA tenants?

Answer

Between April to December 2024, 4,667 heating repairs were carried out to our HRA properties.

For almost all priorities we have achieved over a 90% rate of first-time fix with 4,334 of 4,667 repairs being reported as completed first time.

Of the 4,667 calls received:

- 114 were completed as 4 hour emergencies and 99.1% of these were completed first time. The average response time was 3 hours and 4 minutes.
- 1,080 calls were given a 1 day priority and 96% of these were completed within the first visit. The average response time was 16 hours and 26 minutes.
- 1,704 calls were given a 3 day priority and 93.5% of these were completed on the first visit. The average response time was 1 day, 3 hours and 43 minutes.
- 1,769 calls were given a 7 day priority and 92.9% were completed first time. The average response time was 2 days, 11 hours and 9 minutes.

There are some instances where boiler or system repairs are more complex i.e. a small leak from a heating pipe within the fabric of the building is not always easy to resolve first time, or, boilers that are beyond repair and require replacement, these examples obviously do have an impact the first-time fix statistic, which is reflected in the above percentages.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member thought it was acceptable that an 85 year old resident should be left without heating for nearly a month.