

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Asylum Seekers' Accommodation

1) **To the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Housing Need (Natasha Summers)**

From Councillor Dilip Patel

Following the Government's recent announcement that asylum seekers may be accommodated in Local Authority housing on a voluntary basis, can the Cabinet Member confirm whether London Borough of Havering has been approached by the Home Office or intends to participate in this scheme, and explain what assessment has been made of the impact on local housing waiting lists, temporary accommodation and homelessness services?

Answer

The Government wrote to all councils in England on the 31st July 2025 asking for "support to make available basic alternative accommodation so that it can be used on a temporary basis to house asylum seekers waiting for their cases to be processed."

Given the housing pressures in Havering, and the current costs of temporary accommodation for local homeless people, and following consultation with the Leader and myself, Havering did not take up the invitation to participate.

A supplementary question asked if any future changes in this area could be brought to scrutiny and for formal consultation with ward Councillors. The Cabinet Member agreed that any such proposals could be brought to the relevant ward Councillors.

CCTV- Romford Town Centre

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

From Councillor Jane Keane

Could the Cabinet Member please advise what use has been made of the Council's CCTV system to prevent the repeated vandalism of its Romford Town Centre street furniture and misuse of town centre parking amenities which is resulting in many adverse impacts including detracting from the character and visual appeal of the Town Centre, lost revenue for the council whilst it is cutting services, lost customer parking for traders, loss of residents' parking amenities, and generally making some residents in the area feel unsafe?

Council, 21 January 2026

Answer

Council CCTV is used every day for the prevention and detection of crime and to uphold public safety.

On average, around 20,000 proactive visual camera patrols are carried out by the CCTV team each year.

Council CCTV does not cover every street in Romford Town Centre or indeed, the borough and not every offence that occurs is captured on CCTV. However, if any offences are caught on camera proactively by CCTV operators, the Police are contacted and are asked to attend to deal with the perpetrator. This includes Criminal Damage of Council property.

The CCTV cameras installed for public safety do not enforce parking regulations. These are separately enforced by parking services Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs).

In the past 12 months, no episodes of vandalism to town centre street furniture have been captured on CCTV.

A supplementary question asked for a breakdown of the number of times CCTV had been used in Romford Town Centre to detect crime. The Cabinet Member responded that he would ask officers to supply this information.

Penalty Charge Notices

3) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Muggleton) From Councillor Darren Wise

Could the Cabinet Member confirm the frequency and accuracy of real-time updates including the MI Permit data to the handheld devices that the Civil Parking Enforcement Officers use when issuing penalty charge notices.

Answer

The Civil Enforcement Officer handheld devices will alert the officer of a valid permit, when the Vehicle Registration is entered into the device and the location of the device matches a permit location.

The handheld devices work in real time, as does the MiPermit, RingGo and parking machine databases.

Contract KPIs have an uptime requirement of 99.8%, it is rare for any of the contractors to fall below this.

Customers who feel they have been given a Penalty Charge incorrectly can of course use the challenge process where all evidence is assessed to determine the outcome of a decision.

Council, 21 January 2026

A supplementary question asked how many PCNs had been issued in Harold Wood ward in 2025 and how many had been issued incorrectly and subsequently challenged. The Cabinet Member replied that he would obtain this information from officers.

Planned Provision for the Traveller Community

**4) To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ray Morgan)
From Councillor Keith Prince**

The large unauthorised traveller development in Church Lane, Noak Hill, has angered many Havering residents, who feel that the traveller community continue to game the planning system.

Can the Leader confirm how many of the existing sites which were identified by the Council in 2019, to provide planned provision for pitches and plots to meet the needs of Travellers and Travelling Show people are full, or have been developed beyond their permitted capacity?

Answer

The Council has been robust in its response to the unauthorised traveller development in Church Road and swiftly served Planning Enforcement and a Stop Notice. Development at the site of the Stop Notice has now ceased, in compliance with its requirements.

The dynamic situation at these types of sites means that it is not possible to respond with the information requested. However, work is well underway on a new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment to inform the next Local Plan. This will review the capacities and occupation of all the sites using accepted methodologies.

Following the work in 2019 there were 35 private sites without permanent permission allocated in the 2021 Havering Local Plan for Gypsy and Travellers. These were all then partly occupied but not full.

Since the adoption of the Plan the Council has granted permission for 27 of the Gypsy and Traveller sites. There are 2 sites with live planning applications. There are 6 sites without planning permission, of which 2 have been refused to date, with one allowed on appeal. The Travelling Showpersons site has permission. Overall, there is one allocated site that has been granted permission, at appeal, to develop beyond its permitted capacity.

A supplementary question asked, given that Havering had been identified as having one of the highest levels of unauthorised Traveller sites nationally, why it had taken so long to update Council plans and if this was exposing the Council to a higher level of risk. The Leader of the Council replied that work was in progress on a new plan which would form part of a revised Local Plan but this was a long and detailed process.

Council, 21 January 2026

The Council had acted swiftly on unauthorised encampments in Church Lane and officers visited the site regularly to ensure compliance.

Parking in Hornchurch

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

Now the revised parking costs of £1.00 for two hours and £2.00 for up to three hours are being trialled in the Fentiman Way and Appleton Way Car Parks in Hornchurch Town Centre to help support local businesses, will the Administration instigate the free 30 minutes parking for all the parking bays in Hornchurch beside shops for the same reason - including the bays outside the shops in Park Lane?

Answer

The recent change in Hornchurch is a pilot and will be monitored to assess impact on footfall, business feedback and car park use / income. The changes affect off-street car parks only where there is capacity. No changes are proposed on- street where higher turnover, is often desirable.

The impact of the changes on customer behaviour – in terms of number of visitors and length of stay will be monitored and at present there are no further proposed tariff changes in any other part of the Borough.

(No supplementary question).

Speed Restrictions in Wennington Road

**6) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mufflestone)
From Councillor Trevor McKeever**

Residents have reported that many vehicles travelling on Wennington Road in Rainham exceed the 20MPH restriction. What additional road safety measures can the Administration undertake to improve compliance and increase safety?

Answer

The Council has recently introduced a number of road safety improvements in Wennington Village including additional signage, the introduction of a 20mph speed limit and camera enforcement of the 7.5 tonne weight limit.

In the 2024/25 financial year 709 FPNs were issued for breach of the weight limit restrictions and a further 791 FPNs have been issued this financial year already. This was further to an in-depth Feasibility Study carried out by Officers in 2023 exploring a wide range of road safety concerns and potential solutions.

Please note the Council does not have any speed enforcement powers. This sits with the police. The Council has previously requested speed enforcement and an additional speed camera to TfL but unfortunately this request was not successful.

Council, 21 January 2026

The Council has further reviewed the road safety study for Wennington Village in the past year and have shared this with ward members recently. The study sets out further action that might be beneficial. Upon approval from ward members the additional measures can be progressed.

A supplementary question asked if a 20 mph speed limit could be introduced along the whole of Wennington Road. The Cabinet Member replied that such schemes would go to local Councillors for consideration and he would consider a 20 mph limit if this was supported local Councillors and residents.

Repairs to Potholes

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

Can the Cabinet Member please confirm the percentage of repairs to potholes that have to be re-addressed for further repairs within a one year period.

Answer

The Council's preference to repairing all defects is to complete permanent repairs the first time. We do this by ensuring a sufficient area is resurfaced with neat and sealed joints. However, this work can take time and may be disruptive to residents particularly on traffic sensitive streets. In these cases a temporary repair, until works can be batched together, may be better.

I know residents care deeply about the state of the roads. Under the current Administration the Council has prioritised road maintenance and completed 56.38km of resurfacing, spending £19.28m

Repair work is now completed by Marlborough Highways and the quality of work is normally to a high standard.

Each year we complete around 7,000 reactive road repairs of which approximately 2000 relate to filling in potholes. When our highway inspectors inspect these sites and raise works they check for previous reinstatements that may be failing early. In this case, as a requirement of the contract, the contractor would be required to return to site and repair at no cost to the council and a financial penalty may apply.

Current performance levels are that approximately less than 1% of potholes are required to be re-addressed for repair.

If Cllr Goode has concerns about a specific sites I will be happy to ask officers to provide further information and address this.

Council, 21 January 2026

A supplementary question asked if the figures quoted included temporary repairs. The Cabinet Member replied that he was happy to receive concerns about specific sites in Harold Wood.

Visitor Parking Permits

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

Will the Administration consider asking MiPermit to adapt Visitor Parking Permits from four-hour to smaller time increments, to save wastage for users?

Answer

Visitor parking permits are only used in CPZs and enable residents who live in controlled streets to have visitors, parked on street, during controlled times. The visitor vouchers costs £28.00 for 10 permits. The cost of an individual permit is £2.80 regardless of the length of the session.

Different zones have different operational hours and therefore the visitor permits allow either 4, 6 or 8 hours of parking according to the zone.

The Administration is of the view that the current regime and charges are reasonable and therefore smaller time increments are not being considered.

(No supplementary question).

Planning Contraventions- Romford Town Centre

9) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mufflestone) From Councillor Jane Keane

For the last couple of months there has been an increase in domestic rubbish dumped in South Street Romford. In at least one block of flats (Equitable House, 88- 100 South St, RM1 1RX) the facilities for tenants to store their waste and recycling to the rear of the building has been withdrawn, in contravention of the planning condition number three attached to P1599.17. Can the Cabinet Member update Members on how officers are working to address issues of this nature?

Answer

Officers have found that the requirement to provide refuse and recycling facilities in the plans for the Equitable House were not adhered to. This is due to the landowners at the rear of Equitable House ceasing to permit residents to use the land to dispose of waste, which is within their rights.

Council, 21 January 2026

Once the Council were informed about the change of arrangements for waste and recycling disposal, it was agreed that the residents should present their waste for collection on a small piece of public highway in South Street. Residents have been informed in writing of this change.

Planning Enforcement has also been notified to investigate and enforce accordingly.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member felt that waste collection arrangements at this location were appropriate. The Cabinet Member responded that he would look at this issue with officers and give an update to Councillor Keane.

Gallows Corner

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

Given that the works at Gallows Corner are likely to continue at least until the end of Spring 2026, will the Administration reconsider its determination to continue enforcement of yellow box junctions affected by the traffic diversions (e.g. junction of Ardleigh Green Road)?

Answer

The Council is fully aware of the issues caused by the delayed completion of work at Gallows Corner. We have done everything we can to hold TfL to account and ensure timely and accurate public updates.

As members will know, the Gallows Corner closure has caused significant additional traffic on parts of our own network. This has caused delays and frustration for residents and in a recent meeting with TfL's Commissioner of Transport, in which our concerns were raised in the strongest possible terms, he formally apologised to the borough for this.

Yellow box junctions are designed to ensure traffic on one road does not block traffic or vehicles movements on another. Our view is that pausing enforcement would be counter-productive and could cause even more congestion and delay with all aspects of the junction blocked.

Our approach is therefore to continue with the current arrangements and to press TfL to complete the work as quickly as possible.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member would meet with Councillor Vickery and colleagues on site at Ardleigh Green and also provide details of PCNs issued since the Gallows Corner closure. The Cabinet Member responded that cameras by yellow box junctions could be removed but this would cause further congestion. The Cabinet Member was happy to arrange a site visit to the location.

Housing Allocations

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

How is the Council working to address the backlog of new and renewed Housing applications?

Answer

We are aware of the concerns that have been raised following the delays in processing applications to the Housing Register. I have instigated an action plan with officers to clear the backlog as soon as possible. The action plan has a range of added measures:

1. Additional officer resourcing working through applications outside of normal working hours including weekends.
2. Prioritisation of applications with high indicative point scores, 70 or more points, to be able to bid by the end of January. Lower priority applicants to be able to bid from the beginning of February.
3. Streamlined verification to enable quicker processing and evidence-based criterion for lower indicative points applicants.
4. Additional monitoring and progression reports to the Lead Member of Housing Demand and Climate Change

These measures aim to ensure that the Council expedites applicant access to the register and maximise their opportunities to bid for social housing.

A supplementary question asked why it had taken so long to reach this stage. The Cabinet Member explained that this had been due to delays with the new software system for allocations.

North Street/Como Street Sub-Way, Romford

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

Previous Council targets to infill the North Street / Como St subway have stated that work would begin in 2025. Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Liveable Neighbourhoods Scheme, making sure to include information on start dates for the work on the subways?

Answer

The provisional programme for the North St/Como St subway showed a potential start at the end of 2025, based on assumptions about the extent of the traffic modelling that TfL would need to do in order to approve the scheme.

Council, 21 January 2026

Unfortunately, TfL significantly expanded their modelling requirements, and whilst this work is underway, the expected scheme start date has been pushed back to the summer of 2027. We look forward to the point when this scheme can be delivered, but the delay caused by TfL is disappointing.

More generally, TfL withdrew funding from the Liveable Neighbourhoods Scheme on Romford Ring Road in 2023 due to their financial position after Covid. The Council is continuing to seek funding for the work that was originally proposed in the Liveable Neighbourhoods Scheme.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member would review the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy for this scheme. The Cabinet Member replied that he would look at this.

Temporary Homes on the Waterloo Estate

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

Can the Cabinet Member for Regeneration please provide an update on the placing and occupation of the proposed temporary homes on the Waterloo Estate?

Answer

Preparatory works in the form of groundworks, installing services etc. are currently in progress on site.

The modular units are currently in production off-site. The first two units are expected to be delivered to site in February, with the remainder arriving through March and April.

Occupation of all units is expected in May 2026, following the installation, commissioning and completion of associated external works.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member could provide an explanation for the delay in the modular homes and the cost of this to the Council. The Cabinet Member replied that the delay had been due to the better quality specification of homes that was now being supplied.

Council, 21 January 2026

Road Safety- Lower Mawneys

**14) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mufflestone)
From Councillor Viddy Persaud**

Can the Council commit to a traffic monitoring exercise in the Lower Mawneys area, specifically the roads adjacent to Mawney Road, which are used as rat-runs for people avoiding traffic on Mawney Road?

Answer

The normal process for a ward member to seek a traffic survey of this nature is to submit a Validation Form. Cllr Persaud will know that she has submitted such a form and I am happy to confirm that the traffic surveys are being commissioned. Officers have met with Cllr Persaud on site to discuss this.

The survey data will provide vehicle speed and traffic volume information and can be overlaid against the recorded collision data to enable analysis and better understand the issues as well as to inform any future interventions. Additionally, some local amendments to lines and signs are being arranged.

A supplementary question asked if the Cabinet Member would consult residents within the next three months on traffic calming measures and what roads were being monitored. The Cabinet Member replied that roads would be monitored as per the validation request received from Councillor Persaud.

Parking Enforcement

**15) To the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Barry Mufflestone)
From Councillor Nisha Patel**

Given the regular occurrence of parking enforcement complaints across the Borough, where residents say they have entered their number plate into the machine but still been fined, what steps are the council taking to ensure that the registration process is clear and understood?

Answer

Typically, each year, there are more than two million parking sessions per year on street and in borough car parks.

The vast majority of these are problem free, with customers understanding the rules and having a choice to use the RingGo parking app or, in all our busiest places, a parking payment machine.

Council, 21 January 2026

Enforcement is an essential component of the parking service to ensure everyone sticks to the rules, pays when they are required to, generate turnover and maintain safety.

Parking information is available on the internet generally as well as specific information for the borough on the Council's website. From time-to-time articles have been placed in Living.

No one likes receiving a parking PCN but where a customer considers one has been issued incorrectly, there is an appeals process they can follow for the Council to review. Ultimately, if a customer is dissatisfied with the Council's decision the matter can be escalated to an independent adjudicator whose decision is binding.

A supplementary question asked what was being done to improve the clarity of prompts and signage as residents were still being penalised for honest mistakes. The Cabinet Member stated that he was meeting regularly with parking enforcement officers and that residents should challenge PCNs. He was happy to look at genuine errors by residents and Councillor Patel was welcome to send him details.