

COUNCIL Minutes

Place

**Council Chamber - Town Hall, Wellington Street, Woolwich
SE18 6PW**

Date

Wednesday 26 October 2016

Time

7.00 pm

Present

The Worshipful Mayor
Councillor Olu Babatola

Councillors:

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Tonia Ashikodi | Christine Grice | Matthew Morrow |
| Don Austen | Matt Hartley | Steve Offord |
| Barbara Barwick | Denise Hyland | Maureen O'Mara |
| Linda Bird | Mark James | Cherry Parker |
| Geoffrey Brighty | Sizwe James | Gary Parker |
| Mandy Brinkhurst | Chris Kirby | Denise Scott- |
| Peter Brooks | Averil Lekau | McDonald |
| Matthew Clare | Chris Lloyd | Harpinder Singh |
| Angela Cornforth | Allan MacCarthy | Aidan Smith |
| Spencer Drury | Clive Mardner | Jackie Smith |
| Mark Elliott | Christine May | Danny Thorpe |
| Bill Freeman | Sarah Merrill | Ray Walker |
| David Gardner | Paul Morrissey | Miranda Williams |

Minutes

Item No.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Norman Adams, Stephen Brain, John Fahy, Nuala Geary, Mick Hayes, Rajinder James, Mehboob Khan, Clare Morris and David Stanley.

2 Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meetings of Full Council held on 29 June 2016 and 27 July 2016 be confirmed and signed as a true and accurate records.

3 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor was pleased to inform Council that Chief Superintendent Simon Dobinson had been appointed as the new Borough Commander. He also welcomed John Scarborough and Florence Kroll as the Council's new Head of Legal Services and Director of Children's Services respectively to this their first meeting of the full Council.

The Mayor was pleased to announce that Theo Huagie and the Nil Recourse Team had recently won a 'Joint Working' award from the Home Office recognising the work undertaken with the embedded Immigration Officer in order to verify presenting issues, assist in the assessment process and ensuring that only those eligible for assistance from the Council received it. The joint working had informed a model of working which was being rolled out to other local authorities throughout the country. Theo Huagie accepted the award from Councillor Gardner, Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Care.

The Mayor was delighted to report that a number of awards had been won by several community groups based in the Borough as well as the Royal Borough of Greenwich in the RHS London in Bloom 2016. The following awards were highlighted:

- The Royal Borough of Greenwich winning a Silver Award in the City Group A
- Charlton Triangle Homes receiving a Gold Ward and winner of the Urban Community category
- Well Hall Pleasaunce winning a silver Gilt for Small Park of the Year

- The Charlton Community Gardens winning Gold in the ‘Our Community’ section and an ‘Outstanding’ in the ‘It’s Your Neighbourhood Awards’, for the second year in a row.
- The Friends of the Tarn receiving an ‘Outstanding’ in the ‘It’s Your Neighbourhood Awards’

The Mayor was pleased to announce GS Plus had won a number of prestigious national awards this year. These were:

- The Nan Berger Memorial Award, presented by the Lead Association for Catering in Education (LACA).
- The EDUcatering Excellence Award Contract Caterer of the Year, for the school meal service which recognised the significant advancement made in the school catering service including the creation of menus using the highest percentage of organic ingredients which have been accredited the ‘Food for Life – Gold Cater Mark’ by the Soil Association.
- The ‘Best Service Team’ award by the Association of Public Service excellence (APSE) to the Fleet Management Team for their ‘joined up approach’ and commitment to driving innovation, developing the service and providing excellent ‘value for money’ for clients and the local taxpayers. They were also runners-up in the category of ‘Best Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship Initiative’

The Mayor was pleased to announce that the Leader of the Council had signed a memorandum of understanding with Japan’s NEC to further develop a platform for the digital economy and the smart city programme to the benefit of our residents and businesses.

The Mayor advised the Council that Wynn Davies had stood down as a Councillor and thanked him on behalf of the Council for his commitment and service to his Ward and the Authority.

4 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Peter Brooks made a personal declaration, in relation to item 3; Mayor’s Announcements, as a Director of Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE).

Councillor Mark James made a declaration, as an employee of TfL, in relation to Item 15 – Motion on the ULEZ advising that he would not take part in the debate or decision making for this item.

Resolved –

1. That the list of Councillors' memberships as Council appointed representatives on outside bodies, joint committees and school Governing Bodies be noted.
2. The Councillors Brooks' and M. James' declarations be noted.

5 Notice of Members wishing to exceed the 5 minute rule

The Council noted that there had been no requests to exceed the five minute rule.

6 Petitions

The following petitions were presented at the meeting;

| Subject and Number of Signatures | Presenting Councillor | Lead Department |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| Parking issues in Willenhall and Elmdene Roads, SE18. 58 signatures | Councillor David Gardner | Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills |
| Speeding and noise pollution on Kidbrooke Park Road and Shooters Hill Road ¹Circa 149 419 signatures | Councillor Geoffrey Brighty | Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills |
| Non-resident parking in Ladysmith, Halons and Enslin Roads. 41 signatures | Councillor Matt Clare | Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills |

7 Public Deputations on matters not otherwise on the agenda

The Council noted that there had been no requests for public deputations.

8 Public Questions

The Mayor advised the meeting that notice had been received of 22 written questions by members of the public. The questions and replies, together with

¹ Amendment agreed, prior to signing of the minutes, at the Council Meeting of 14 December 2016.

the supplementary submissions made during the meeting are attached as Appendix A to these minutes.

9 Questions from Members

The Mayor advised the meeting that notice had been received of 29 written questions. The questions and replies, together with the supplementary questions made during the meeting, are attached as Appendix B to these minutes.

Under procedures for oral question, the Mayor invited questions to Members of the Cabinet for response.

In response to a question from Councillor Hartley, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Hyland, confirmed that she would be happy to pass the Conservative Group's best wishes to former Councillor Davies.

Councillor Hartley requested that the Leader ask the Chief Executive to look into the possible breach of the guidelines for the use of the Ward Budget Scheme as he felt that Councillor Bird in recent party political literature had made an inappropriate reference to a project funded through the Scheme. Councillor Hyland, Leader of the Council, in response stated that the guidelines were there to ensure that the Scheme was not abused during the Purdah Period and, it was her understanding that, Councillor Drury had also referred to the ward budget scheme in party political literature. Further, if he or any other Member had such concerns, they were able to raise them directly with the Chief Executive.

Councillor Brighty raised concerns that a private property company, Savills, was undertaking the stock condition survey of the Council properties, rather than officers and questioned if this was predictive of the disposal of housing stock. Councillor Lekau, Cabinet Member for Housing and Anti-Poverty, responded that Greenwich was acting as a responsible landlord and investing in maintaining its housing stock. She gave assurance that there were no plans to dispose of the Council's housing stock.

In response to a question from Councillor Clare regarding the effectiveness of the Mayor of London's measures to reduce air pollution given the reduction in street trees and the less than predicted decline in the use of cars; Councillor Thorpe, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainability, stated it was too early to judge, however, the Mayor of London had already made a number of significant announcements that, if implemented, would improve air quality.

10 Matters for early debate

The Mayor advised that no requests from the party whips for matters to be taken early had been received.

11 Interim Review of Polling Arrangements for local government and parliamentary elections

Councillor Hyland, Leader of the Council moved the recommendation.

Unanimously Resolved -

1. That the designation of changed polling places and polling districts for UK parliamentary and local government elections, as set out in this report, with effect from the publication of the next revised register of electors (scheduled for 1 December 2016 or later if any by-elections occur) be approved.
2. That it be agreed to instruct the Registration Officer to write to affected households notifying them of the changes to polling arrangements.

12 Petition Responses

In relation to the response to the petition regarding the restoration of free parking behind Eltham Station (paragraph 4 of the report), Councillor Drury expressed his disappointment at the response and reiterated the concerns expressed by the petitioners. It was stated that the current pay and display bays were not being used and the problem of commuter parking had been displaced to elsewhere in Eltham. In response, Councillor Hyland, Leader of the Council, stated the changes had been introduced to address the issue of commuter parking and that the extended Eltham Controlled Parking Zones would be reviewed in due course to assess their effectiveness.

Councillor Brighty welcomed the positive response to the petition requesting the introduction of a Controlled Parking Zone in Kidbrooke Grove (paragraph 6).

With regard to the petition relating to ‘Unacceptable levels of non-resident parking in Reventlow/Gaitskell/Novar Roads’ (paragraph 9), Councillor Clare requested if the review could be undertaken as a priority as the majority of residents do not have access to off street parking.

Resolved –

That the action taken in response to petitions presented at recent meetings of the Council be noted.

13 Changes to the Executive Functions Scheme of Delegation

Resolved –

That the change made to the executive functions scheme of delegation be noted.

14 Motion on Grammar Schools

Councillor Williams moved the motion advising that there was no evidence that Grammar Schools aided social mobility and any advantages of the selective system were outweighed. The Council was informed that there re-introduction would be a retrograde step and would, nationally, damage many already disadvantaged children who would be rejected at the age of eleven. It was stated that all children should be encouraged to achieve and reach their potential but under a selective system many children would be disadvantaged and that any appearance of advantage, for those attending Selective Schools, is outweighed by the disadvantages to those who did not.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Smith (A) stated that he felt that the introduction of Grammar Schools would be the provision of a private school system, without the fees. Further, their introduction would bring down the educational performance for all children, as there was a need for a wide level of abilities within schools. Council was informed that data indicated that in selective educational systems the majority fair worse with a minority benefitting. The importance of ensuring that all Greenwich's children and young people receiving a good education was stressed.

Councillors Gardner, James M, Barwick, Morrow, Hyland, Kirby, Bird, Smith J and Lloyd spoke in favour of the motion. It was stated that Royal Greenwich's schools are among the best in the Country and their standard should not be lowered. Council was informed that the inequality of the selective system did not support late developers, people with dyslexia or with Special Education Needs but did support those who could afford private tuition. Council was informed that the grammar system did not support an inclusive society where all can academically achieve and what was required were schools which inspired and developed all pupils to achieve their full potential.

Council was informed that the re-introduction of the 11+ exam would cause anxiety and stress to pupils and parents creating a fear of failure as the Grammar System will tell 80% of children that they are not good enough and

rejected. Members stated that there was a danger of creating a false perception of choice for parents and pupils, as only a percentage of children would be attending any new Grammar Schools and segregated education could put all schools in the Borough at risk. The re-introduction of a Grammar system would be bad for social mobility and divisive and any links between academia and vocation would be lost.

Councillor Hartley, Clare and Elliott spoke against the motion stating that it appeared to be based on ideology which did not support the interests of children or parents of the Borough. Council was informed that the proposals were not for a return to previous grammar school system and they would form one part of a mix of educational regime. Further there would be measures to ensure that grammar schools took more children from low income families as well as joint working with universities to improve the educational expertise for other local schools and support all children. Council was informed that the Government's proposals would not re-introduce a binary choice between selective and non-selective education but ensure that every child gets the best education available, tailored to their need and increasing parent and pupil choice. The proposals would not destroy the comprehensive education system but add to the mixture of educational provision. It was noted that the Motion appeared to have been submitted without consultation with the parents of children in the Borough and that, as part of a recent Ward survey covering a number of issues and sent to all residents, regardless of political persuasions, 757 responses were received and 69% in favour of Grammar School mix.

Councillor Williams closed the debate advising that Greenwich supported parental choice but not to the detriment of majority of children in the Borough.

Resolved –

That this Council opposes the introduction of Grammar Schools.

That the introduction of Grammar Schools would come with a divisive selection process and that this Council believes that every child should have every opportunity to succeed in life. That the judgement of adults and a baseless test should not be allowed to place limits on children's lives before they've even really begun.

That this Council believes that we need an inclusive, strategically planned school system that enables all our children to thrive, learn and attain. That we are proud that our schools are some of the best in the country.

That once again this government's dogmatic agenda of structures over standards will continue to negatively impact on our children's education.

That this Council will write to the Secretary of State for Education and the Prime Minister to put on record our opposition to the reintroduction of Grammar Schools.

15 Motion on Ultra Low Emission Zone

Councillor Mark James made a declaration, as an employee of TfL, in relation to Item 15 – Motion on the ULEZ and took no part in the debate or decision making for this item.

The Mayor informed the Council that an amendment from the Labour Group had been published in advance of the meeting. It was stated that paper copies were available and that the amendment could be accessed by Members via their tablet device.

Councillor Hartley moved the motion as below:

‘Council notes that the Mayor of London is developing proposals to extend the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), currently set to come into force in September 2020 in central London, to a much larger area bounded by the North and South Circular Roads and from as early as 2019.

Council notes that Transport for London has stated that the reason that the North and South Circular Roads are being considered for the edge of the larger ULEZ is that these roads provide “the most appropriate ‘boundary route’ for drivers opting to avoid the zone.”

As the South Circular cuts directly through Eltham and Woolwich, Council notes that this decision could have a significant impact on local residents though altered traffic flows, including the potential for increased congestion on local roads outside the zone. Council further notes the potential impact on those local residents and small business owners who will be liable to pay for local journeys.

Council believes that no decision should be taken by the Mayor of London until a full study of the impact on local traffic flows of using the South Circular as a boundary for an expanded ULEZ has been carried out.

Council further requests that the executive carries out its own consultation during November 2016 with local residents and small business owners in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, to inform its formal response to the Mayor’s current consultation on changes to the ULEZ before the deadline of 18 December 2016.’

In moving the Motion Councillor Hartley stated that he was concerned about the effect of air pollution within the Borough but was also that the proposed Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) would cut through Woolwich and Eltham and the impact it would have on the Borough.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Matt Clare who felt that whilst the ULEZ could have benefits there would also be an impact on deliveries and business within the Zone. A concern was raised that the area outside of the zone could become more polluted as Transport for London (TfL) could move their older, more polluting vehicles out of the ULEZ. Concerns were also raised that residents, particularly those on low incomes, would be hit hard by the charges and there needed to be a better balance of affordable alternatives.

Councillor Danny Thorpe moved the tabled amendment. He stated that the Mayor of London had undertaken public consulted on the proposals and this was a way forward on tackling the issue of air pollution.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Christine Grice who was concerned at the high levels of pollution, particularly near the A2 and felt that the benefit to adults and children's health was of greater value than the possible adverse financial implications.

Councillor Hartley advised that he did not accept the amended motion.

The amendment was put to the vote and agreed.

Councillor Danny Thorpe closed the debate on the motion as amended.

Resolved -

That Council notes that the Mayor of London is developing proposals to extend the Ultra Low Emission Zone. That Council notes that 79% of respondents to the Mayor's first air quality consultation supported plans to bring forward the introduction of the ULEZ to 2019. That Council also noted that 71% of respondents also favoured extending the scheme from Central London, to cover both the North and South Circular Roads.

That Council commends the Mayor's commitment to air quality and shares his ambition to make our Capital the world's greenest.

That Council is pleased that the Mayor is working with the Royal Borough on the development of a Low Emission Neighbourhood Zone and looks forward to more joint working in the future.

That Council is aware that the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Sustainability recently led a public consultation on the 'Greener Greenwich' strategy and notes that a report on feedback and issues arising from that will be forthcoming.

That Council notes that the Mayor's current consultation on changes to the ULEZ ends on 18th December 2016. That Council notes that a response to the consultation will be prepared accordingly.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm

Chair

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Question from Ken Jackson, Eltham, to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Transport, Economy & Smart Cities

CPZ Charge - Why are local residents being charged to park their own vehicles in designated areas and what is the money raised being used for?

Reply –

I thank Mr Jackson for his question.

The Council, as does every other Council in London, charge residents for permits to park on roads within controlled parking zones during the times when the zones are in operation.

The Council's current charges compare favourably when compared with other London Boroughs including those of Lewisham and Bexley and the Council aspires to remain competitive in our approach going forward.

Charging for permits is an integral part of the Council's arrangements for managing parking in the Royal Borough as set out in our "Parking Strategy". It is all part of arrangements to provide residents with priority to park close to their homes and to encourage everyone to use sustainable transport where they can. The charges are also needed to cover enforcement and permit administration (back office) costs.

Any surplus generated from parking, including the sale of permits, has to, by law, be spent on "transport related) activity. The Royal Borough uses the surplus generated from parking to contribute to the cost of Freedom Passes – the passes which enable older residents to use London's transport system free of charge.

No Supplementary Question

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2. Question from Ken Jackson, Eltham, to Councillor Jackie Smith Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Environment.

Eltham Park South Cafe Ownership - Why did the previous tenants have to leave given they provided a much enjoyed successfully run public amenity for the benefit of many sections of the local community, what changes will be implemented by the new tenants/owners.

Reply –

I thank Mr Jackson for his enquiry.

The lease for Eltham Park South has recently been renewed but there has been no change in the tenant.

The tenant has temporarily closed the café to carry out a deep clean of the building, to undertake some internal re-decoration and to undertake repairs to the electrical system and is planning to re-open in the next 2-3 weeks.

The Royal Borough fully recognises the value that having an active café brings to the local community and parks environment.

No Supplementary Question

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**3. Question from Yusuf Ozkizil, Abbey Wood, to Councillor Averil Lekau ,
Cabinet Member for Housing and Anti-poverty**

My question is regarding the council's maintenance of the buildings in the Flowers Estate, Abbey Wood.

Two years ago an incident where a child fell through the glass pane of a stairwell window resulted in every single stairwell across the estate being boarded up with wooden panels. This decision and the time since, has resulted in the majority of those boards being graffiti-ed, and most of the glass panes in front of the boards smashed by vandals. This has really brought down the appearance of the area, making it look like a problem estate, especially with the fly-tipping it has attracted.

When will the council remove these boards and restore the windows?

Given the money coming in from housing developments planned for Thamesmead and Abbey Wood, can some of the funds the council will no doubt receive for these be redirected to better maintain its council estates such as the Flowers Estate?

Reply –

I thank Mr Ozkizil for his question.

The stock condition survey that the Council has just commissioned to help us prioritise investment decisions across our housing stock will, as a priority, look at the potential permanent replacement of these staircase windows.

In the meantime, I have asked officers to make good these glass panels and remove the temporary timber boards and the broken glass, replacing them with vandal-proof polycarbonate opaque sheets directly screwed into the frames. These replacement works should be complete within the next 3 weeks.

I have to say that the Conservative Government's freeze on rents has resulted in a shortfall of £33m into the Housing Revenue Account, resulting in less money to do repairs and improvements to our properties.

No Supplementary Question

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4. Question from Frances Hook, Blackheath, to Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care

Request that council takes action and to use their 'Statutory Duty' to ensure the residents of Greenwich have a good quality MSK Service.

We request that the Council instructs their Chief Executive to review the process of decision to award the MSK contract to Circle Holdings PLC [an Off Shore Company] We believe that the CCG did not follow their constitution, that there was not 4 GP's present their for there was not a quorum . We are requesting the council to review the CCG Constitution and to give an opinion on the legality of the voting process.

Has the Council seen the Impact assessment? If not can they request a copy and obtain a legal opinion on it?

5. Question from Frances Hook, Blackheath, to Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care

Has the council seen the MSK 'Alliance Report' which the specification was based on? If not can they request a copy of it; and to give a view and put it into the public domain?

6. Question from Paul Richardson, Woolwich Common, to Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Heath & Adult Social Care

How does the Council and the Health and Wellbeing Board intend to prevent the privatisation of Greenwich health services, such as the case of the musculoskeletal service?

7. Question from Paul Richardson, Woolwich Common, to Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Heath & Adult Social Care

It appeared from the comments made at the Health Scrutiny Committee that the proposed contract between Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group and Circle for musculoskeletal services has no guarantee of payment of the London Living Wage.

If this is the case, what actions will the Council, an accredited London Living Wage provider, take in relation to Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group?

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8. Question from Jenny Dyson, Charlton, to Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

With regard to the GCCG decision to award the contract for MSK services to Circle Holdings, does the Cabinet Member agree that in letting contracts organisations should take account of any company's reputation and to any historic performance issue on similar contracts?

9. Question from Shirley Gibbs, Blackheath, to Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

The Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign is submitting this question because we are very concerned about the decision of the Greenwich CCG to award the contract for musculoskeletal services to Circle. Is the Council aware that outsourcing this contract will have serious financial clinical and planning issues for the Trust?

We are pleased that the Greenwich Council Healthier Communities & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel has asked the CCG to provide further information on many aspects of the contract. But we would like to raise with the Council the fact that no impact assessment was made by the CCG board about the impact this would have on the local health economy and, in particular, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust.

Dr Louise Irvine chair of our campaign submitted an FOI to Greenwich CCG asking whether they had carried out an Impact assessment, they replied that they had done no assessment but that one had been done by NHSE. According to the L&G NHS Trust there has been no approach from NHSE asking for information.

We are also concerned that the CCG Board meeting lacked Greenwich GP presence and was potentially inquorate by their constitution. We have written to the chair on this.

Is the Council aware that outsourcing this contract will have serious financial, clinical and planning issues for the Trust?

Will the Council support the call for the CCG to re-evaluate this contract award after completing a full and relevant impact assessment?

Composite response to Public Questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9

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Thank you for your questions.

The process of tendering and letting the contract for MSK is a process initiated and managed by Greenwich CCG. The Council is not a party to the Contract. However, the Council has taken a very keen interest in this issue and its implications through the Council's Scrutiny process.

There was extensive public scrutiny of the decision at the Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel on 27 September. There is a further exceptional meeting scheduled to look specifically at the MSK issue on 3 November, which is open to the public.

These meetings have looked at many of the questions raised in these questions and there is the opportunity to further explore the issues on 3 November.

The Scrutiny panel has been concerned by both the process of letting the tender and the implications for the local Health system and, most importantly, for local people.

The Council shares many of the concerns represented in these questions. The Council has sought material from the CCG, including the background papers, including the Alliance report. The Scrutiny process will seek to put all this material in the public domain, provided it is not commercially sensitive and therefore confidential. Councillor Denise Hyland, Leader of the Royal Borough wrote formally to the NHS Greenwich CCG setting out our concerns.

The Council does believe there are fundamental questions about the level and rigour of public engagement, about the weight given to the sustainability of the local health economy and to what extent the CCG fully evaluated the track record of the bidders, and the associated risks.

The issue of whether the CCG decision making process was robust is one that has concerned the Scrutiny Committee, but the process of the tender award has been agreed as appropriate by NHS England.

The Council would take the view that staff providing the services should be paid the London Living Wage. The likelihood is that staff in the proposed Circle service would receive the LLW is high, but the Council will confirm this through the Scrutiny process.

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The Council shares the concerns about the track record of Circle Holdings PLC and the overall point of privatisation of the NHS. This was embodied in the motion agreed by full council on 28 January 2015 <http://committees.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=151&Mid=3417&Ver=4>. However, the approach to allowing private companies to tender for NS contracts is one that the NHS required as part of central Government policy. As such the Health and Well-Being Board comprises members from the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG), the NHS, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Lewisham & Greenwich Trust (LGT), Oxleas and Healthwatch. It has no delegated power to prevent the award of NHS contracts to private companies. The Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel does have powers to escalate their concerns to the Secretary of State in certain circumstances and the Council is considering this and will review this possibility following the Scrutiny meeting on 3 November.

The issue of the impact of letting the contract to Circle has been and remains of interest to the Scrutiny Panel and to the council corporately, particularly the impact on the NHS system locally.

The Council has consistently taken a strong interest in supporting and protecting the local NHS most recently through the Council resolution of July 2016. The Council continues to support staff across the local NHS who are working under huge pressures and doing so much for local people.

Supplementary to Question 4

Does the Council consider the process has been followed in accordance with the CCG's own constitution and would the Council ask for a legal opinion on the MSK contract to Circle?

Reply

The Council shares your concerns and a special meeting of the Council's Scrutiny Panel is being held to question the CCG on this contract. The Council has formally written to the CCG, expressing its concerns, and has withheld its position until such time as the Scrutiny process has finished.

Supplementary to Question 6

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We are very concerned that neither the Greenwich CCG nor NHS England have carried out an impact assessment in respect of the MSK contract, particularly given the 87 Quips or cuts proposed in the new contract. How will the council put forward its views as to the impact forward?

Reply

The Health & Wellbeing Board will maintain an overview of the Borough's Healthcare economy and encourage all providers to work coherently, which has not always happened (ref July Motion). I am happy to work with yourself and other groups to foster co-operative working.

Supplementary to Question 9

Is the Council aware that the outsourcing of this Contract to Circle will have both clinical and financial consequences and, although there has been no Impact Assessment, it is know that this will lead to a loss of senior clinicians and that GPs have not been involved in the process.

Reply

The lack of an Impact Assessment is an area that the Scrutiny Panel will be pursuing. Whilst there are issues of how the contract, if signed, would impact both Oxleas and Lewisham & Greenwich Trust, it is correct to assume there will be an impact, which is of concern and the impact on the quality of service to the residents of the Borough.

There were no GPs as all the Greenwich GPs, together with Oxleas & LGT Trust, were part of another Bid for this service and, therefore could not take part in the discussions. We have no evidence to suggest that the CCG were acting against their own constitution, with regards to this aspect.

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10. Question from Maria Freeman, Plumstead, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainability

While welcoming the renewed commitment to consultation with residents and users of the Warehouse and Plumstead Library, in the shape of the Plumstead Forum (and hopefully other mechanisms of engagement) will the Council now agree that before decisions are taken on the shape of the new "civic centre/gymbrary", that it would be inappropriate to proceed with any property sales in the vicinity while proposals - presumably for buildings and services - are under discussion?

For example the Kinara building which, as a community amenity building could be used to house a temporary library while works are carried out.

Reply –

I thank Ms Freeman for her question.

This is not a renewed commitment. The Council has encouraged and will continue to encourage stakeholders to engage with the Council on the plans for Plumstead.

The Council is committed to the regeneration of Plumstead and, to that end, has adopted the Plumstead Urban Framework to guide delivery of a range of civic improvement and public realm projects. As a demonstration of that commitment, the council is investing £11.2 million in the redevelopment of the Plumstead library and leisure centre, which will provide a state-of-the-art modern facility which respects the important heritage character of the building. Hawkins Brown Architects are leading a multi-disciplinary design team to develop proposals for the library. The existing library services can be maintained in the building during re-development.

Following consideration of the Framework, Cabinet agreed to the disposal of the Aberly Street Car Park, the former Kinara Building, and the Warehouse Leisure Centre site, the capital receipts from which would be ring-fenced to fund the redevelopment of the library. The Council had previously agreed to the disposal of the former Housing Office (256-258 Plumstead High Street). The Kinara Building and ex-Housing Office have been marketed and bids have been received. The sale will enable the properties to be brought back into use and to contribute to the general improvement of Plumstead High Street.

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The Council has undertaken consultation on both the Urban Framework and the redevelopment of the leisure centre. People who attended the consultation on the Urban Framework were supportive of the broad proposals for improvements to Plumstead. Some participants in particular were appreciative of the level of investment being made by the council in the redevelopment of the library, recognising its potential to act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the area and to stimulate private investment.

The Council will continue to consult with stakeholders and residents, including holding regular area stakeholder forums.”

Supplementary Question

Would you clarify the differences between the answer given here and what you said at the Plumstead Forum, last night? For example you said the car park was being reviewed for usage whereas here it states it has been agreed to be sold. Also that that sale had not been agreed on the Warehouse or the Kinara building but the reply here states that bids have been received indicating that the sale is going to go forward. Could I also ask that all Plumstead residents are informed of the next Plumstead Forum meeting?

Reply

We have not sold or marketed the Warehouse we have begun a process of disposal for the Kinara building and former rent office building. We will be looking at the Warehouse and wider parking issues at the next stage of the process. The Forum is a stakeholder meeting involving residents groups and partners and we will continue with these meetings as well as engaging in wider consultation.

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**11. Question from Maria Freeman, Plumstead, to Councillor Jackie Smith
Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Environment**

In view of the on-going concerns about the state of Plumstead High Street public realm, particularly as regards litter and general cleanliness, can the Council confirm what deep cleaning has taken place on the high street this year, (and when), and what monitoring of the impact of any cleaning has been undertaken?

Given that residents haven't noticed any marked improvements over recent months; can the Council confirm they are going to step up the cleaning programme, with scheduled deep clean/jet washes forthwith?

Reply –

I thank Ms Freeman for her question

The Council recognises there are challenges in Plumstead that the normal scheduled cleansing arrangements have not been able to address fully, such as excessive fly tipping and late night littering. In response, the Council has created an additional, dedicated team that works seven days a week to tackle these issues. The team consists of a waste advisor, an enforcement officer and two cleansing operatives. Its work includes removing dumped waste and furniture and also engages with landlords, businesses and residents to inform them of the services available as well as taking enforcement action, where necessary.

Furthermore, we have reintroduced two “barrow beats” operated by street sweepers in the roads surrounding the High Street to further alleviate the problems. We have also have changed the working hours of the street cleaning operatives assigned to Plumstead High Street to start earlier to address the problem of overnight littering.

A “deep clean” (washing with high pressure jetting equipment) of Plumstead High Street was undertaken over June and July 2016. This was carried out in the early hours of the morning to cause minimise disruption to the general public and local businesses. Both sides of the High Street from Bannockburn Road to the Mosque on Plumstead Road were deep cleaned.

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I would urge all residents to be vigilant and report any incidents of flytipping to the Council and to use the Council's bulky waste collection service and/or take items to the Reuse and Recycling Centre in Nathan Way, which is free of charge. The Council condemns all aspects of Anti-Social Behaviour and this includes flytipping and littering.

Supplementary Question

The street deep clean was in July but it appeared to have little impact and the streets are still dirty. Can you assure residents that a street deep clean will be carried out every quarter with assurance that an inspection of the condition of the streets, following the deep clean, will take place?

Reply

A street deep clean did take place but the Council can not be held responsible for people dropping litter, gum, etc. on the streets soon after. The Council has enforcement officers but also limited finances that have to be used for the entire Borough. We will look at continuing to keeping the area clean but there are elements we need to look at, such as resident's direct involvement and encouraging more environmental champions, which I am happy to talk to you about.

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12. Question from Eileen Glover, Eltham, to Councillor Maureen O'Mara, Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Anti-Fraud

When will we see an improved and up-graded Greenwich Council Web Site especially in relation to information on the work of the Scrutiny Panels?

Reply –

I thank Mrs Glover for her question.

The design of the Council's public website will be reviewed in late 2016 and early 2017.

Any design changes will take into account the online behaviour and top tasks of our residents and businesses, as well as using good practice from other local authorities. We are proud to hold 4-star status for our website in a national annual review and will be ensuring that all website changes create a more accessible and usable website for the future.

Over the next 12 months all of the content on our website will have been reviewed and updated - including information relating to the work of Scrutiny Panels.

In the meantime, we will examine what is currently published about Scrutiny, with a view to making improvements where we can.

Supplementary Question

If the Council is committed to improving community engagement with the work of the Council and Scrutiny Functions it is important that the Council website fills the gap left by the closure of the GreenwichTime by giving more provenance to community events and Scrutiny work, or if this is impossible, have an online GreenwichTime.

Reply

Greenwich Info will be used to publicise the work of the Council. There is always room for improvement and we will look at your suggestion of highlighting the work of the Scrutiny function on the Website.

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13. Question from Eileen Glover, Eltham, to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Transport, Economy & Smart Cities

Has the work program to rectify the problems of flooding in Avery Hill Road in the location of the new Toucan crossing been completed and did it include drain clearing?

Reply –

I thank Ms Glover for her question.

Yes, works to improve the drainage arrangements in the vicinity of the toucan crossing, located where Anstridge Path joins Avery Hill Road, have been completed. In addition, the road gullies along Avery Hill Road, between Bexley Road and Halfway Street have been cleaned. Officers will be inspecting the area over the next few weeks to verify that the works have improved the situation as envisaged.

Supplementary Question

Can you confirm that there is an on-going drain cleaning programme. Also the litter bins to the either side of the bus stop have not been replaced and the litter causes blockages to the drains, can these be replaced quickly.

Reply

There is a programme of drain cleaning and I will check out the position on the bins to get this resolved quickly.

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14. Question from Philip More, Kidbrooke North Residents Association, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Culture, Creative Industries and Community Wellbeing

There have been a large number of objections to the disposal of the Hervey Road Sports Field to Blackheath Rugby Limited by residents living in the area around this site. It appears most residents were unaware of the original tender process with the only publicity being an advertisement in Greenwich Time, despite the specification saying the site was the subject of considerable local interest. The tender process produced only one interested party but was not re-tendered with more publicity. Publicity for objections was two advertisements in a paper that rarely circulates to houses in the vicinity. The terms of the lease have not been provided to the public. The site is having around one million pounds of public money spent on it with no guarantee of public access to a field that is currently used by residents as a public park.

Given this background will the council confirm that the terms of any lease granted for the Hervey Road Sports Field will be discussed by our elected representatives and be subject to public scrutiny and that the lease will include strict restrictions on the hours that the operator can use the field strictly for its own purposes (team/club/students), restrictions on the number, size and nature of events in the pavilion and guarantees on the right of the general public to access the site for recreational purposes at all times during opening hours and with community oversight to ensure that the operator abides by the terms of the lease.

Reply –

Thank you for your question.

As you may know the Council in agreement with the community ensured that the playing field is now covered by a Deed of Dedication agreed by the Council and Fields in Trust that ensures the Field is protected in perpetuity.

The Council is committed to bringing the Hervey Road Playing Field back into use, as there is evidence that there is demand in the local area for space for the provision of a variety of different sports.

With regard to the tender process for an operator for the Field, the Council carried out a publicly advertised procurement process in line with EU regulations and placed an advert in Greenwich Time to promote the fact it was

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doing so. Any club or organisation could have bid to operate the site, as it was an open tender process.

The tender documentation was publicly available and included details of the heads of terms for the lease and headline service agreement conditions. The Council had to be mindful of appointing an operator who was able to demonstrate a financially viable and sustainable business plan.

The future use of the Field will take place within the terms of the planning consent, service agreement and lease between the Council and Blackheath Rugby Club. The planning application has been subject to full public consultation and all responses received will be taken into account by Members in reaching a decision on the application. The advertisement of the Council's intention to dispose of the site, by way of granting a lease, was advertised in the Mercury newspaper. This publication contains the notification of planning applications received by the Council and is now the main publication for items that the Council wishes to bring to the attention of Borough residents.

Responses to the intention to dispose notice will be reported to Members to take into consideration before a final decision is taken on whether to proceed with the grant of the lease. The terms of the lease will link with those of the service agreement and planning consent.

The Club is registering as a Community Trust and is committed to working with the local community, and reinvesting any profit it makes into the Field. The Club has specifically committed to providing the following activities, which will be open to all members of the local community:

- Provision of rugby, cricket, wheelchair rugby, football, tag rugby, multi sports on the MUGA including disability sessions and coaching.
- Supporting schools through the provision of specialist support in education and coaching to aid in the delivery of BTEC Level III Sports Science Diplomas.
- Provision of a community café and nursery (subject to demand).
- Access to bookable space in the pavilion which can be used to provide well-being activities for the local community e.g. Tai Chi, yoga etc.

The Field will be open for public use and the only restriction will be that the Club will ask that members of the public do not intervene or use the areas marked out as pitches while matches are taking place.

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The Council recently convened a public meeting with local residents to discuss the scheme and to gather feedback from the community on specific areas of concern and the details of the meeting will be fed into the development of the service agreement. Ward Members attended the meeting and have been advising officers about the concerns of the local community. The Council will be working in partnership with the Blackheath Rugby Club to mitigate the concerns of local residents. The aim of both the Council and the Club is to develop an excellent community facility that will enable many more local people to engage in sports and recreation, and make the Field accessible to all.

Supplementary Question

Is it not the case, as it appears to be so, that there is a pre-determined drive to do what the Council wants with the Hervey Road sports field regardless of the feelings of the residents. There is no indication of any true engagement with the residents and plans are never change to reflect our views. The terms of the lease need to be discussed in public.

The Mayor felt this was a comment and no question was put requiring response.

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15. Question from Dr Carol O'Toole, Blackheath, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainability

Protection of Habitat on Hervey Road Sports Field in Relation to Proposed Development by Greenwich Council - Request for Survey of Bats and Their Roosts on entire site.

The recent planning application 16/0544/F by Footscray Rugby Club for additional building, floodlighting and car parking was submitted with an extended phase 1 Habitat survey and Bat survey. The planning application for new buildings, floodlighting and car parking at Hervey Road Sports Field was submitted in September. During the 3 months leading up to this the local residents provided detailed evidence to Greenwich Council that bats are present at this site and use the boundary areas for foraging - including where the building and floodlights are proposed. They repeatedly requested a bat and tree Roost survey prior to the submission of this planning application but this did not happen.

Can the council now confirm, that as the Freeholder of Hervey Field, is aware that it has a Legal requirement to protect the conservation status of bats and their roosting sites, in compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, that the Greenwich Biodiversity Plan applies to all parts of the borough, including Kidbrooke, and that a phase 1 Habitat and Bat roost survey using recommended methodology will be carried out at the Hervey Road Sports Field prior to any consideration of this planning application?

Reply –

I thank Dr O'Toole for her question which helpfully focuses on the Council's legal responsibilities as a public authority to the natural environment.

I believe the 'legal requirement' she makes reference to is that set out in Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). This places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. As a public authority Royal Borough of Greenwich of course recognises its statutory obligations and fulfils these as part of its policy and decision making.

But more than that, it recognises the importance of minimising the loss of biodiversity and integrating biodiversity because it is the right thing to do.

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A bio-diverse environment is a strong indicator of a healthy, quality, valued environment that can be enjoyed by our communities and which contributes to their health and well-being.

I would also refer to the London Plan, Greenwich Biodiversity Plan and Greener Greenwich supplementary planning guidance, which set out the policy context for how this Council will consider the impacts of proposed developments.

Turning to Dr O'Toole's specific area of interest, the Hervey Road Playing Fields, I must first acknowledge that this is the subject of a current, live planning application. As such there is only so much I can say on the matter as Members involved in the decision making on a planning application must keep an open mind. However, what I can say is that the NERC Act's obligations extend to the Council's function as a local planning authority. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity. A local planning authority must consider how a development might affect protected species.

Dr O'Toole refers to bats that are evident in and around the Hervey Rd area and which can be seen flying over the playing field. In determining the planning application therefore the Council will need to have regard to Natural England's advice in relation to assessing the impacts of the development on bats. This will involve the applicant, which in this case is Royal Borough of Greenwich, undertaking survey reports and providing mitigation plans.

Although the results will be part of the detailed consideration of the planning application I can advise that an ecological assessment including a phase 1 habitat survey for the whole Hervey Road Sports Field site has been commissioned. Additionally there will be bat surveys undertaken of the whole site and a flood lighting design report submitted to support the planning application. There will also be ecological mitigation and enhancement measures proposed as recommended by a suitably qualified ecologist.

I am grateful to Dr O'Toole and the Kidbrooke Resident's Association for having submitted information relating to bat activity on the site and I hope she and they understand that Royal Borough of Greenwich take its obligations to protected species and biodiversity very seriously.

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Supplementary Question

How does the Councils planning application match with its agreed Management and bio-diversity programme for Hervey Road Fields?

Reply

Consideration of the application, in line with the Core Strategy, the London Plan and the Greener Greenwich SPD document and bio-diversity, will happen as part of the planning process.

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16. Question from Kevin Gilligan, Kidbrooke, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainability

With reference to the proposed Hervey Road Sports Field development, Greenwich Council requested a traffic/parking survey to be done on a Friday and Saturday at the height of the summer holiday season, when it states clearly in the Royal Borough of Greenwich guidelines and national guidelines that it should be done during normal working hours of peak traffic.

Can the council confirm who instructed this and what were the costs and which source of public funds were used to pay for this survey and if a replacement survey will be carried out, as confirmed by Denise Scott McDonald at a recent residents meeting on the 17th of October and what are the likely costs and who will pay for the second survey and will the council now be resubmitting their planning application on this project as the data provided by the first traffic survey provides misleading data?

Reply –

I thank Mr Gilligan for his question.

Ecology

An ecology survey was carried out in March 2016 covering the proposed construction site area. The survey highlighted the need to be sympathetic with the use of external lighting in relation to any foraging bats; it did conclude that the proposed works would not impact upon the ecological functionality of the local landscape. Our externally appointed Ecologist has subsequently reviewed the case law in respect of Local Planning Authorities and European Protected Species, which states that the LPA should only consider refusing planning permission where there is a breach of Article 12.

Article 12 prohibits;

- a. All forms of deliberate capture or killing of specimens of these species in the wild;
- b. Deliberate disturbance;
- c. Deliberate destruction or taking of eggs
- d. Deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting place.

The proposed development will not involve any form activities defined under sections (a), (c) or (d).

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On the question of Point (b) we are not planning to undertake any deliberate disturbance of species

In summary the proposed development is not significant in terms of scale or extent and consequently based upon advice from our ecologist it has been assessed by officer that no further surveys are required at this stage. Notwithstanding this having had further discussion with the Royal Borough of Greenwich Sustainability I intend to commission an additional survey to cover the rest of the site (field and trees).

Traffic

The survey carried out in August highlighted surplus street parking spaces of 411 and 398 on a Friday and Saturday. We intend additional parking counts which will be commissioned to take place outside of the summer holiday period and this data will be made available. The anticipated peak times of activity for the playing fields will not coincide with weekday and evening peak transport periods.

Costs

The cost of surveys is met from the project budget;
Ecology survey £1,050
Transport survey and assessment £11,315

Supplementary Question

The survey was carried out at anticipated peak times but the site will be use 8am to 11pm, 7 days a week, with the Blackheath Rugby Club having 30 events a year and as a social area as well as Charlton Athletic FC using the site. Can I request the new survey is carried out taking this into consideration, as the date being used for the planning application reflects the minimum not the maximum amount of disruption to residents and, therefore, the planning application is incorrect?

Reply

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The second survey will be carried out. I note that the future hours of operation for the development, have not yet been determined.

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17. Question from Kevin Gilligan, Kidbrooke, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Culture, Creative Industries and Community Wellbeing

With reference to the proposed Hervey Road Sports Field development:

The Assistant Director, Community Services, confirmed at a public meeting on the 27th of September that even though the planning permission for the Hervey Road Sports Field planning application has not been granted, the council will proceed with drainage improvement works very soon. Local residents do not believe the field is in need of drainage improvements. Will the council confirm what the costs of this drainage work are and that it will not be proceeding prior to planning agreement?

Reply –

Thank you for the question.

The project budget has £30K allocated for the drainage works and the provision of a cricket square.

The work was programmed for completion in the September/October growing season however in light of public opinion and local sensitivities it was decided to postpone this work until the next growing season following the planning period.

A survey of the field was completed by specialist turf consultants in Oct 2011. This identified a significant clay element and increased wetness within the topsoil and subsoil at the southern end of the site and hence the need for improved drainage.

No Supplementary Question

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18. Question from Anna Townend, Blackheath, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Culture, Creative Industries and Community Wellbeing

Would it be possible to improve the access for residents to the planning documentation at the Woolwich Centre?

Currently files of planning applications are stored in filing cabinets near the entrance to the library opposite Love Lane. The larger table on which the files could be opened has gone, the space now being occupied by a large yellow cabinet against the wall. The small circular tables remaining are usually occupied by school children and parents engaged in school work, or by students from language colleges. Provision for both these sections of the community is already elsewhere in the library satisfactorily.

Reply –

Thank you for the question.

We always welcome feedback from library users. Woolwich library is one of the busiest libraries in the Country and receives over 1 million visits per year. Due to the high usage, many areas of the library are busy with people, reading, studying or taking part in activities. I will ask GLL, as the library operator to look in to this issue with a view to ensuring there is suitable space to review planning applications going forward.

Supplementary Question

I would like to suggest a meeting between you and members of the Greenwich Environmental Group, as there are a number of suggestions for the wider use of the space which could benefit all parties.

Reply

I am happy to meet with you.

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19. Question from Anna Townend, Blackheath, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainability

The former Woolwich Library had full research and planning documentation facilities now no longer available. Current community participation across the age groups, and therefore protection of the Borough's built and natural environment would be enhanced, would it not, by improved facilities and access?

Reply –

I thank Ms Townend for her question.

The new Woolwich Library is one of the most successful in the country, receiving over 1 million visits per year. Library usage in Royal Greenwich is increasing whereas the national trend shows a decline. Our family-friendly approach to delivering library service tries to ensure that we provide spaces and places to meet the needs of our all our residents. With specific regard to Woolwich, this library is very busy and we have significant demand for a range of activities and computers and study space is often at a premium. When reviewing the usage of the library we have found that there is not a similar demand to reinstate the previous research facilities that previously existed in the former Woolwich Library. However, we will request that GLL review the current space to ensure that planning applications are easily accessible.

Supplementary Question

There is a lack of any central team to look at the overall environmental effects on the Borough, in light of the massive re-development projects in the Borough. Would the Council consider using the library space adjoining Love Lane as a community sustain exchange centre?

Reply

The Planning Meeting is the right place to express any concerns on these developments. Come along to the Planning Board to make your concerns known.

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20. Question from Paul Callanan, Charlton, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Housing and Anti-Poverty

In June you the council sent notices out to all local council tenant threatening rent increases under the Pay to Stay provision of the 2016 Housing and Planning Act.

The government have not yet published the regulations governing means testing. Bodies such the National Federation of ALMO's have said that this means that the act will be ready for implementation by April. Theresa Pearce, shadow housing minister and local MP also urged councils to pause on the implementation of the act to consider the effects on council and social tenants. This position was accepted by Labour Party conference.

In light of all this does the council not think it was massively jumping the gun by sending out that letter?

Reply –

I am grateful to Mr Callanan for providing me with another opportunity to state the Council's position that we are fundamentally and vehemently opposed to the Housing and Planning Act.

Overall the Royal Borough will only implement those aspects of the Act where there is no discretion to do otherwise. We have not implemented the Act nor will we do so until the regulations have been received and considered.

The Royal Borough's Housing Service has over 11,000 tenants who are not in receipt of benefits and could be potentially affected by the legislation. Officers have written to those tenants advising them of the implications of the Act insofar as they are known at present.

As a responsible social landlord we have a responsibility to notify our tenants of legislative change affecting them and would be doing them a disservice if we failed to do so. A number of Local Authorities have taken the same course of action. However, officers are clear that they must interpret the regulations, when they are published, with the aim of lawfully excluding as many households as possible from the provisions of Pay to Stay.

I would urge households to co-operate with officers, when the time comes for the implementation of Pay to Stay, in order to protect their own interests.

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Officers will seek to minimise the impact of the Act, through the provision of advice and support and by use of their discretion when allowed to do so. The Council has provided a telephone information hotline which has been well received.

Supplementary Question

Greenwich sent a threatening letter to all of its Council tenants, a few months ago, regarding Pay to Stay. Further, residents have now received letters from Savills, a private Estate Agent, telling them their homes will be surveyed. My Supplementary would not be, why is the survey being undertaken by a private company and not in-house?

Reply

We did not send a threatening letter but sent an information letter, which was clear that it was not a decision of the Council and that we would be making further decisions on receipt of the Government instructions. This is the action of a responsible landlord.

The remainder of your question is not a supplementary to that put and I will not deal with it here.

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21. Question from Paul Callanan, Charlton, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Housing and Anti-Poverty

In Islington the council sent letters to tenants calling them to a public meeting. At the meeting the Councillors outlined ways in which they could avoid implementing parts of the act like pay to stay. They also stated they would continue to issue secure tenancies. Councillors also said they would be active in building a mass campaign against the bill. Furthermore many council members have got involved in campaigning against the act. Would Greenwich council now consider following this example?

Reply –

I thank Mr Callanan for his question.

The Cabinet and Labour Group believe that the Housing and Planning Act and the programme of welfare reforms implemented by the Government represent an unprecedented attack on social housing and are regressive; punitive policies which disadvantage the poorest sections of our community.

My colleagues and I know from our casework the hardship and stress experienced by residents and these difficulties will be exacerbated by the Housing and Planning Act.

We remain fundamentally and vehemently opposed to the Housing and Planning Act and have set out our position throughout the consultation period, making representations to the DCLG and through London Councils. We have said that the timescale for implementation is unrealistic and the cost of implementation is likely to be more than the Government can expect to receive in revenue, certainly in the first year. The Government is in no doubt about our view and that of other Labour Authorities.

There is a legal duty on Local Authorities to introduce Pay to Stay and a clear indication from the Government that it will be from April 2017. However, as you state the regulations which were due to be published in the summer are yet to be issued. These regulations will provide the detailed statutory guidance for local authorities on the implementation of the Act. I sincerely hope that the delay along with the appointment of a new Prime Minister will cause the Government to revise its position.

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Any campaign that we as Members may wish to support must be distinct from the action officers have to take, in order to prepare for the implementation of the Act

Supplementary Agenda

Will the Council call a public meeting, in respect of the Housing Act, so that the residents and Councillors could work together in opposition to it?

Reply

The Council has been clear that we oppose the Housing Act and have been in regular dialog with a number of residents groups on this issue.

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22. Question from Jenny Dyson, Charlton, to Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

With regard to Sustainability and Transformation Plans, is the Council aware that these can have a disastrous effect on the residents of Greenwich?

Reply –

I thank you for your question.

The Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) are a vehicle that the NHS has adopted to help to plan for improvements and financial sustainability. Across England, there are plans being drawn up on sub regional foot prints, larger than an individual CCG or Council. There are no parallel governance structures and the STP planning process does not have any statutory organisational footing. There are potential opportunities for looking at issues at this scale; e.g. improved workforce planning, greater population based approaches, more localised handling of tertiary care. However, there are potential risks too, where local preferences and differences are obscured in attempting to save money and rationalise services. Councils across the six boroughs of South East London are working together to engage in the STP process, although this has not been completely successful so far.

South East London starts from a more advanced position, because of the adoption of an over-arching strategy in 2014 “*Our Healthier South East London*” with its focus on community care and local networks, which was subject to extensive scrutiny by the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee of the six Boroughs and by the Health and Wellbeing Boards. The STP develops this adding a financial plan. The council believes that the local NHS requires greater investment as outlined in the motion carried by full Council on 27 July 2016. We also believe that the STP process should be more transparent and that the draft STP should be published and subject to full pre-decision scrutiny. Royal Greenwich will always put the needs of its residents first and will seek to ensure that local people get the best outcomes from the Health and Social care system, regardless of the chosen planning mechanism.

Supplementary Question

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Will the Council hold a consultation with the public and put the documents in the public realm, as other Councils do?

Reply

The Council has requested a copy of the Sustainability & Transformation Plan, which we will publish, once received.

We want to see the widest public engagement and our Scrutiny section will also look at this.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

1. Question from Councillor Sarah Merrill to Councillor Denise Hyland, Leader of the Council

Can the Leader say what she thinks the impact on Greenwich businesses will be of the Government's revaluation of London's rateable properties which may increase some rates in the borough in the bigger properties, such as the supermarkets for example, by as much as 45%?

2. Question from Councillor Sarah Merrill to Councillor Denise Hyland, Leader of the Council

Can you please let me know what she think the effects of the London Business rate rises will have on consumers in the Royal Borough of Greenwich?

Composite Response to questions a 1 and 2 –

I thank Councillor Merrill for her questions.

Business rates revaluation is an important issue facing businesses, particularly due to the time since the last revaluation in 2010 based on 2008 data, and the increase in rental values since then.

London businesses will be hit hardest from increases with average increases of 21% across the borough. The impact of this will be felt disproportionately by the 2,000 retail and leisure premises operating in our high streets, town centre and across the borough, along with larger employers.

London businesses will pay an extra £900 million as a result of the revaluation, while all other parts of the country will see a fall in average business rates.

Businesses are already operating in an environment of growing uncertainty, and the ill-advised 2 year delay in business rates revaluation is one of a number of key factors impacting on business and consumer confidence along with the outcome of the EU referendum. Whilst there is evidence that the national economy has initially absorbed the shock following the referendum, the weak pound and forecast rising inflation will inevitably hit consumers.

A combination of the increased costs and protracted period of Brexit negotiations is adding to uncertainly and instability which means that businesses are likely to hold off making any investment decisions. Without the

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required intervention by central government in the medium to longer-term this could impact on the local economy with fewer jobs being created and subsequently higher unemployment. The Council will, as part of our discussions on devolution, continue to petition government to address the cumulative impacts of their inaction.

And of course locally I will do all I can to continue to support the local economy building on successful programmes such as the Council's London Living Wage commitment and ebusiness support programme having already supported 400 businesses enabling them to increase their turnover by £8m.

The Council is also building on the opportunities arising from the fantastic attractions in the borough continuing to put the borough on a world stage for tall ships as well as expand on our collaborations through our digital innovation

These examples show how this Council is well placed to develop programmes that support economic development and growth and protect our high streets and town centres to ensure they continue to be an important source of new and existing jobs for local residents.

Supplementary in relation to Question 1

Given the impact on our retail industries, due to the large increase in London Business Rates, do you believe that there will be increase's in the price of goods?

Reply

There is a typographical error in that the paragraph at the top of Page 2 should read uncertainty not uncertainly.

We still wait to hear what the cap will be and it is likely that any shortfall in retailers' profits will be passed onto the consumer, which will have an effect on our anti-poverty strategy. We do though need to await the details on the Governments transitional arrangements.

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3. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley to Councillor Denise Hyland, Leader of the Council

At the July Full Council meeting, in answer to my question proposing a council tax exemption for care leavers under 25, the Leader of the Council agreed to instruct officers to consider this proposal - including considering both the arrears and collections aspects to more accurately assess the financial cost of this move to the Royal Borough. Can the Leader update us on the results of this work, and whether any decision has been made?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

I was fortunate to be able to meet with the Children's Society in September to discuss this issue amongst others.

The matter has now been referred to the Fairness Commission for consideration, alongside the full range of measures available to the Council and its overarching anti-poverty programme and overall funding envelope.

Supplementary Question

Thank you for taking these proposals seriously.

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4. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley to Councillor Denise Hyland, Leader of the Council

Why were members not consulted on plans to reorganise the council's Members Services function in advance of the current restructuring consultation?

Can the Leader outline this plan - which affects all of our roles as councillors - in full in her response?

Does she consider it appropriate that this essential support function for members - including for backbench and opposition members whose role it is to hold the administration to account - is to be run from her Leader's Office in the future?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

Staffing issues are a matter for the Chief Executive, as the Head of Paid Service. Questions relating to issues of this nature should be addressed to the Chief Executive.

Supplementary Question

I take the point of the Leader's response but there is concern among Members at the re-organisation and I will be speaking to the Chief Executive on the matter. Will you join me at that meeting to raise any concerns, jointly?

Reply

If or when any of my fellow Councillors have concerns, I will raise them with the Chief Executive. However, the Chief Executive is the head of Paid Service and it is not for Members to pre-empt any decisions on staff management that he wishes to make.

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5. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley to Councillor Maureen O'Mara, Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Anti-Fraud

I have previously asked whether the Council will consider exploring shared IT systems with other authorities, which is saving significant sums in other parts of London (for example, the One Source shared service arrangement between Newham and Havering boroughs).

Can the Leader provide an update on whether this option is being formally considered?

Can she provide figures' showing how much the Council spends on delivering IT services and infrastructure, along with comparable figures for other London boroughs?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

The overall position hasn't changed and the Council remains open to considering shared service arrangements where they fit with our strategic objectives. That said, the market place remains difficult for the procurement of high quality ICT services, with many Councils therefore still looking to appoint a sole managed service provider, rather than moving to genuine in-house provisions that can be shared. Using a sole managed service provider is not the strategic direction that the Council wishes to take, as this has proven to be both costly and poor performing for the Council in the past.

It is difficult to provide a true comparison with other London Boroughs as we are unable to extract figures with sufficient detail from their publicly available records. However, from the data available, by way of illustration:

The LB of Bexley, recently signed a contract with Northgate for the provision of a managed ICT service at an approximately £2.4m per annum. This contract replaces a contract with Sopra Steria which was nearer £5m per annum. The LB of Southwark, are in the process of running a procurement to replace their existing supplier (Capita). In order to give them time to implement the new operating model they have extended Capita's contact for a further 12 months at a cost of £12m.

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The Northgate and Capita contracts excludes the cost for software licences and payments to other service providers for line of business applications. These have not been disclosed. Both Councils support a similar number of staff and both have a diverse network of remote sites.

The Council's budget for 2015/16 was £5.4m. This figure included internal staff costs and payments to line of business application suppliers.

The Council has previously contracted with Northgate and for a managed ICT services. The Northgate managed service contract came to an end in February 2016, as part of an insourcing of the service. This process has given the Council full control over its ICT service and spend, allowing the service to make the best use of the resources available to achieve the Council's business objectives.

Supplementary Question

Is the new in-sourcing arrangements, post Northgate, a cost saving arrangement and what is the new cost compared to the £5.4million 2014/15 budget?

Reply

Our IT has been stable for a number of years and I do not want to disrupt or undermine the secure and stable IT arrangements by sharing services with other Boroughs.

I will get the detailed statistics to you.

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6. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Housing and Anti-Poverty

In September 2015 the Royal Borough of Greenwich announced that it was prepared to play its part in the then Prime Minister's extension of the Syria Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme to resettle a total of 20,000 refugees from war-torn Syria. This is an issue on which there is cross-party support. The Government subsequently announced five-year funding for local authorities to support the scheme. Can the Cabinet Member update us on the council's implementation of the scheme, including how many, if any, refugees have been resettled in the borough so far?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

The Royal Borough is fully committed to playing its full part in supporting Syrian refugees, who have experienced unspeakable suffering, to rebuild their lives in London. Accordingly, the Royal Borough has given an undertaking to provide up to 20 properties for Syrian refugees. This is an issue that has recently been discussed at London Councils'.

London is facing a housing crisis and the lack of available and affordable housing makes it very challenging to secure appropriate accommodation and provide sustainable resettlement for refugees. We know that delivering sustainable resettlement in London on any significant scale will require more financial support from Government. That is why, in early June, the Mayor of London wrote to Richard Harrington MP, the relevant minister at the time for the resettlement of Syrian refugees. This set out London's desire to help resettle Syrian refugees, whilst at the same time, highlighting the need for appropriate Government funding that recognised the unique challenges London faces. The Mayor's proposal, developed with London borough leaders, was for an innovative regional model that sought to mobilise the resources of the whole city to enable London to participate at scale, providing sustainable offers of resettlement to Syrian refugees. Additional Government funding of £6.5m could unlock resources from communities and the charitable sector which would help meet an estimated funding gap of £14.5m to 2025.

Unfortunately, the new Immigration Minister, Robert Goodwill, has indicated that he does not believe the Mayor's proposal would constitute value for

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money. The Minister has, however, expressed an interest in working with the Mayor of London and the boroughs to develop a community sponsorship model that could build on the goodwill of so many Londoners and lead to offers of resettlement.

The Royal Borough will continue to work with the Mayor and other London boroughs to ensure that Syrian refugees resettled in London are able to rebuild their lives by moving into stable and secure accommodation. It is essential that the Government recognises the scale of this challenge and makes a commitment to the provision of a comprehensive and sustainable package of funding able to meet the long-term housing and support needs of Syrian refugees.

No Supplementary Question

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7. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Housing and Anti-Poverty

In October the Department for Communities and Local Government announced a £40 million homelessness prevention programme, which included inviting local authorities to bid for a pot of £20 million in funding to pilot new initiatives to tackle homelessness in their areas. Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on whether she has reviewed this offer, whether the council will be bidding for a share of this funding, and the details of the bid if so?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Hartley.

The Royal Borough has an excellent track record preventing homelessness – and was awarded the Government “Gold Standard” for tackling homelessness by the National Practitioner Support Service in September 2015. However, homelessness is increasing nationally and London boroughs are experiencing the most significant rises. The number of homeless households to whom London boroughs have accepted a duty rose by 118% between 2010/11 and 2015/16 and levels of homelessness are set to continue rising, given the acute shortage of affordable private sector housing. This has been exacerbated by the Government’s freeze on Local Housing Allowance, the introduction of the lower Benefit Cap and the other changes in welfare legislation. Consequently the Royal Borough is experiencing an unprecedented demand and a parallel increase in the number of homeless households placed in temporary accommodation.

The Royal Borough has received the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG’s) information inviting local authorities to submit bids for funding to support work on homelessness prevention. The Royal Borough is reviewing the criteria for the programme with the intention of submitting a bid for funding before the deadline at the end of November. However, the limited funding that the DCLG is making available (£40 million nationally) does not address the fundamental challenges and budget pressures which local authorities are facing in responding to the escalating levels of homelessness, which previously under the Labour Government fell by 75%.

No Supplementary Question

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8. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley to Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

Does the Council hold information on the number of public defibrillators in the borough, and if so, could she share details including where these are distributed?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

The Council does not hold this information; nor does the Council believe does the local NHS or Ambulance service.

The provision of defibrillators is a matter for individual business or premises.

There are a range of places where defibrillators are in place, usually as business or services take the view that this would be helpful to support people working or visiting. The issue of training and maintenance of each defibrillator rests with the organisation, which has purchased it.

There is a view that the provision of defibrillators is helpful to the population and can help to save lives.

Supplementary Question

It is extraordinary, given the importance of defibrillators to the community that there is no map of locations. Could the Cabinet Member discuss with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) or officers as to whether there was an economical way of gathering the information to identify any gaps?

Reply

I thank you for highlighting this issue. There appears to be no complete information held by any organisation as to the provision of these and there is no statutory obligation to have defibrillators available in buildings.

I am happy to discuss this further with you and our partners on ways to integrate this into the Healthy Workplace scheme.

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**9. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley to Councillor Jackie Smith,
Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Environment**

I am sure the Cabinet Member is as alarmed as I am to learn that there have been 53 fires caused by faulty electrical goods in the borough over the last 5 years, which as well as posing a threat to life are estimated to have cost more than £3 million in damage and cost to the taxpayer. Does the council have any plans to support London Fire Brigade's 'Total Recalls' campaign on this issue, or to raise awareness of particular product recalls amongst council tenants in particular?

Reply –

Thank you for the question.

Greenwich's Trading Standards team are routinely notified by the London Fire Brigade's Fire Investigation Team of fire incidents caused by faulty electrical appliances within the borough. There have been two such relevant notifications in the past year, one fridge/freezer incident in June 2016 and the other a tumble dryer incident in November 2015.

Trading

Standards will be raising awareness of the "Total Recalls" campaign as part of their on-going communications, including social media. The Trading Standards Team is supportive of the local LFB teams operations, particularly with regards to explosive licensing arrangements, and participates in the pre-planned safety campaigns of London Trading Standards (a co-ordinating body) which ensures a London-wide approach to promoting consumer safety.

It is helpful if residents register their new products with the Company, making it easier to notify them of any product recalls.

No Supplementary Question

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10. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Culture, Creative Industries and Community Wellbeing

Can the Cabinet Member update us on the promised mitigations against the impact of closing the mobile library service since the last meeting?

Reply –

Thank you for the question.

Since the withdrawal of the mobile vehicle, Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) has worked hard to continue to provide a high quality library outreach service.

All regular users of the mobile library at roadside stops were notified and invited to become users of the Home Visit service. 26 new members of the Home Visit have signed up in this time and all are now receiving regular visits.

Similarly, all primary schools and nurseries were contacted by GLL to offer a deposit and collection service.

GLL has not received any complaints thus far following the withdrawal of the vehicle.

GLL continue to discuss with staff how they might further enhance the outreach service. As an example, the service is looking to provide visible mobile shelving units that can display books and materials for the deposit and collection service to schools and nurseries.

A full assessment to measure the impact of withdrawing the mobile vehicle will be presented to the Libraries Advisory Board before May 2017. This will enable GLL to evaluate the first 9 months of the outreach service following the withdrawal of the vehicle.

Supplementary Question

Are smaller libraries being used as part of school engagement and if not, why not?

Reply

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All our libraries are used at all the times through the year.

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**11. Question from Councillor Mark Elliott to Councillor Jackie Smith,
Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Environment**

When reports are made of breaches of licence conditions such as opening hours, can the Cabinet Member explain what measures are then taken to remedy the situation and how many random in-person checks are subsequently routinely made in order to enforce the condition?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Elliott for his question.

The Licensing team respond to complaints relating to i) breaches of licensing conditions where a premises holds a licence and ii) complaints where a business is operating without a licence. A range of measures are taken by the team to draw the business owner's attention to the fact that they are either operating without a licence or operating in breach of their conditions. These measures include in-person inspections, formal meetings and written warnings. The number of random, in-person checks undertaken by the team will depend on the severity of the situation and whether or not other partner agencies (such as the police) are needed in order to enforce relevant breaches or to gather evidence. The team operates a regular schedule of out-of-hours and weekend inspections to target premises and provide feedback to partner agencies and internal teams.

When Greenwich's licensing team receives a complaint regarding a premises breaching the "terminal hour" of their licence (i.e. when the permitted activity should cease), the premises are formally written to and then monitored for compliance, by licensing and the police, or both. If they continue to breach the terminal hour of their licence, they are invited to a formal meeting with the relevant 'responsible authorities' (defined in the Licensing Act 2003), depending upon the nature of the issue. For instance, if concerns exist with respect to noise and anti-social behaviour, a formal meeting may be arranged with licensing, the police and the noise team. The premises licence holder will be told that if they do not comply with their licence conditions they may be subject to a formal review process, which could change the licence conditions or, ultimately, revoke the licence. The team and other agencies would then undertake follow-up inspections.

Should the premises not improve, they would most likely be subject to a review rather than prosecution as this is a more effective deterrent.

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If the premises is not licensed but is providing licensable activity (such as late night refreshment after 2300) a warning letter would be sent to them and the premises monitored by the team. Should the premises not comply, they would be prosecuted. For those premises who do not hold a licence but are operating in breach of conditions imposed through the planning regime, the planning enforcement team take the lead.

Supplementary Agenda

Could process be developed to allow residents' concerns at breaches of Licence Conditions to be heard quicker and dealt with more effectively, particularly where there is an impasse between evidence and what the resident are telling officers and it is affecting residents quality of life.

Reply

I was not aware there was a blockage and if you have any specific concerns please email me as chair of Licensing and I will ensure it is looked into.

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**12. Question from Councillor Mark Elliott to Councillor Jackie Smith,
Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Environment**

It is imperative we encourage people enjoying our parks to use the bins provided. Can the Cabinet Member detail the programme to keep those bins emptied and comment on claims that, this summer, collections have less frequent. I hear reports of bins not being emptied regularly enough and that bags of rubbish have sometimes been left by the bins for days (attracting vermin and pests).

Reply –

I would like to thank Councillor Elliott for his enquiry regarding the rubbish collection in the Royal Boroughs Parks.

During this year's peak summertime, the Royal Borough experienced a particularly high usage of the parks by families and social groups. This is excellent news. Officers have noted an increase in late evening picnics. This resulted in an increase in food packaging placed in the bins or left near the bins, which does attract animals. To address this issue, the Park Ranger mobile team, who lock the parks at the end of the day, now carry out inspections of the bins and empty them as required. The frequency of bin emptying has not decreased and where parks have a resident Park Ranger, the bins are checked and emptied daily.

No Supplementary Question

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13. Question from Councillor Mark Elliott to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainability

Can the Cabinet Member update us on responses to the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: site allocations? When can we expect the next stage of the consultation to begin?

Reply –

Thank you for your question

The Council is currently updating the evidence base in support of the next stage of the Site allocations local plan process. A key input to this work is The London Plan which is also being reviewed at this time. We are working closely with the GLA on key studies such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Employment Study as these must inform our site allocations document. As and when these studies are concluded and the outputs available, which I anticipate will be early next year, Officers will incorporate this into the considerations for our own local plan.

As a result once the studies are concluded I can assure you we will update our local Plan timetable and publish a revised version on our website.

No Supplementary Question

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14. Question from Councillor Geoff Brighty to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainability

The Cabinet Member is probably aware of the frustration some applicants have experienced in recent months over delays in dealing with planning applications in a timely way. Can he say whether there is still a backlog and if so when it will be cleared?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Brighty for his question.

I am indeed aware of the frustration among some applicants about the timeliness of planning decisions. I do acknowledge that, at the moment, we are not providing the quality of service in the Royal Borough's planning system that applicants, agents, Members, even our own officers, would expect to see delivered by this Council.

The planning service has a fantastic record of work with applicants to facilitate sustainable growth. We are however experiencing unprecedented demand for our services at a time when there has been some turnover of permanent staff and some recruitment challenges to secure the right level of experience and expertise. I can assure you I am working closely with Officers to ensure that we respond to applications in a timely manner

The service is currently working on an improvement plan of 'quick wins' to remove some of the clear barriers to effective and efficient working. I can say that staff are fully committed to getting on top of the caseload. We are already seeing, for example, some significant improvement in the time taken for applications to be validated and registered so that they can be with the relevant case officer ready for their professional assessment a lot sooner than has been the case of late.

Longer term, once we have implemented the improvements that can deliver some immediate benefit, we will be turning to some more substantive opportunities to improve the service and ensure we make decisions in an even more timely manner. That will take a little longer to bring about but will deliver transformational change in how the service operates.

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I will of course keep Members informed as those longer term plans are formulated and their impacts for Members, applicants, agents and members of the public are understood.

No Supplementary Question

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15. Question from Councillor Geoff Brighty to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainability

There is growing concern about the number of basement applications, especially in areas with potential for subsidence, and that the recently adopted Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Supplementary Planning Document may not be comprehensive enough in dealing with basement applications. How does Greenwich's SPD compare with restrictions in other Boroughs - Camden, Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea for example - on basements?

Reply –

First of all let me say that I think there is a premise in the question that I need to challenge. The reference to the basement documents in other London Boroughs insinuates that because they are bigger, longer documents than the Greenwich document they must somehow be better and more appropriate. I do not believe that is true.

The Greenwich Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions SPD was, as Councillor Brighty recognises, only recently adopted in early 2016. I think it is somewhat churlish to suggest that already it can be concluded that it is not fit for purpose. The document was adopted by the Council on the basis that it strengthened certain aspects of its consideration of the impacts of basements. It was prepared with reference to other similar SPDs in other parts of London although it was considered unnecessary to simply cut and paste them given Greenwich's circumstances differ from other Boroughs. I'm sure we are all aware of some of the extensive pressures to undertake major basement works in areas like Kensington and Chelsea that are major feats of engineering in themselves, of a scale and depth that have not been a feature of basement conversions here.

Of course, the technical aspects of installing new or extended basements still need to comply with the requirements of other relevant legislation. Planning can only look at the material planning issues. Standards of design and construction are still expected to comply with Building Regulations, for example, while the Party Wall Act requires developers to obtain from neighbours consent for works that affect shared boundaries between properties. Nevertheless, I acknowledge the concerns amongst certain residents living in areas where basement conversions are currently more likely to be a key feature

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of property investment in this Borough. It is important to get the balance right however between the needs of residents affected by development and our residents wanting to carry out the legitimate improvement and extension of their homes. The planning system must be proportionate.

I am happy to agree to a review in 12 months to assess the impact of the new policy.

No Supplementary Question

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16. Question from Councillor Geoff Brighty to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainability

Can the Cabinet Member confirm whether the Council has looked at the combined potential impact on air pollution levels in the area of all the new developments in the East Greenwich area - including Silvertown Tunnel, IKEA, and Enderby Wharf?

Reply –

Thank you for your question

I can confirm that the Council does consider the cumulative effects of new development on air quality in respect of those developments that require the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment. Where those assessments show an increase over baseline levels of air pollution that are considered unacceptable then mitigation measures would be sought through the planning process. The specific examples mentioned in the question were all developments that did require the submission of an EIA. But, as he is aware, not all developments require EIAs and so the Council cannot, as a matter of course, take cumulative air quality effects into account.

As Councillor Brighty knows, air quality is a matter of intense interest amongst Londoners and the new Mayor has made it a top priority. It was an issue raised in the legal challenge into the Council's decision on Enderby Wharf where the judge found that the Council had done all it could do in respect of the proposal's air quality impacts. We await a further appeal against that judgement.

In the meantime, Councillor Brighty as a member of the Planning Board and Greenwich Area Planning Committee is already aware of the extent to which the Council can take account of air quality in its assessments of planning applications. For significant schemes such as Silvertown Tunnel and Enderby Wharf an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken assessing the cumulative impact of other consented schemes in the vicinity in combination with the proposals are assessed. These EIAs are then reviewed by the Council and taken into consideration in the decision making process.

No Supplementary Question

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**17. Question from Councillor Spencer Drury to Councillor Averil Lekau,
Cabinet Member for Housing and Anti-Poverty**

I note that the Cabinet Member for Housing & Anti-Poverty has appointed Savills to carry out a stock condition survey to look at Council Housing. Given that the survey will only cover 20% of stock internally, how will the Council know which specific properties are in need of repair or suffer from excessive damp?

Reply –

Thank you for the question.

The aim of the stock condition survey is to inform our understanding of where investment decisions in the Council's housing stock should be prioritised. Social rent reductions have a significant impact on the future income the Council receives (projected at a reduction of £33m to the Housing Revenue Account over the next 4 years). It is critical that the Council has a clear and robust picture of its liabilities regarding the condition of its housing stock. The stock condition survey will enable the Council to forecast its investment needs over the long term and budget accordingly.

The intention of the survey is to assist with determining future investment needs. With regards to 'internals' i.e. Kitchens/bathrooms, a 20% sample is considered statistically sound and will provide sufficient accuracy (within 5%) at an individual property level due to the similarity of the internal components across high rise/blocks/houses, with no need to incur the costs that visiting every property would require. In essence, officers do not need to see every property internally.

This is not the case with "externals" (i.e. the outside of buildings) which are more complex and vary considerably with each building type (window/roof type/size etc.) and hence the need for a 100% on externals to achieve the necessary accuracy.

Before any work starts within any property, an internal survey will be undertaken (of those not previously surveyed) to establish the exact work requirements.

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Supplementary Question

Can you clarify why the private company Savills were appointed instead of Council Officers to carry out the stock condition Survey?

Would Council Officers been able to survey a greater proportion than has been agreed with Savills?

Reply

We do not have the capacity internally to undertake the survey. A stock condition survey is required and Savills were appointed in accordance with the correct procedures.

With regards to internal structures, surveying 20% of properties provides up to 95% accuracy, due to the similarity of fixtures and fittings in blocks. There will be a 100% external survey.

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18. Question from Councillor Spencer Drury to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Transport, Economy and Smart Cities

In the past it has been suggested that the Council will ensure that Adult Education classes continue to be offered from the Eltham Centre, however, this autumn all classes except a single session first aid course have been cancelled. Can the Cabinet Member explain how the Council's policy led to the loss of all substantial Adult Education classes from the Eltham Centre, including the Eltham History ones run by local historian John Kennett which were traditionally well subscribed and I would have thought self-funding?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Drury for his question.

The Council has a dedicated space for adult and community learning (ACL) within the Eltham Centre and as previously stated has committed resources to support this over the next three years. The Eltham Centre will be used to offer courses delivered by several of the Council's ACL providers which as well as London South East Colleges (formerly Bromley, Bexley and Greenwich Community Colleges) includes City Lit, Ravensbourne and Greenwich Cooperative Development Agency.

The Council procures its ACL provision through a Framework Agreement. This year the commissioning process took longer than anticipated as a new four year Framework had to be set up and a high number of good quality submissions were received in response to tenders. This led to a delay in the start of some classes, but the 2016/17 programme is now up and running.

There are over 30 courses scheduled at the Eltham Centre this autumn giving people an opportunity to gain qualification, improve skills, start a business, run a club, and learn for general interest. Some of the courses LSEC plan to run at the Eltham Centre will start in January. Any self-financing classes that the College are no longer running can book rooms at the Eltham Centre free of charge. Contact has been made with John Kennett regarding the History of Eltham group to offer this facility.

We will be holding another open day at the Eltham Centre in November with taster sessions and advice and guidance run by our providers including LSEC.

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If there is sufficient demand, for particular courses we will work with providers or interest groups to facilitate this.

Supplementary Question

Will you commit to updating me with the full details, when available in November?

Reply

Of course.

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**19. Question from Councillor Spencer Drury to Councillor Jackie Smith,
Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Environment**

I note that the tennis coach who previously provided coaching sessions at Eltham Park has left. Can the Cabinet Member provide me with the date that the coach left, why he decided to leave and what maintenance has been done over the last year on both the hard and grass courts in Eltham Park?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Drury for his enquiry regarding tennis provision at Eltham Park South.

The tennis coach recently ceased his coaching session at the park to focus on training sessions at John Roan School Playing Fields, Kidbrooke, and a new indoor facility at Eltham Hill School.

Parks officers are in discussion with another coach who has expressed an interest to offering sessions in the park next year.

The Council's Ground Maintenance staff carry out a routine maintenance programme for both the grass court and hard surface court. Park Rangers also routinely inspect the courts, undertake litter picking and report any repairs that may be required. At the end of each season more major repairs are undertaken to ensure the courts are fit for use for the following season. Parks officers are currently dealing with issues relating to the lighting and also as a result of the courts being used wrongly for playing football.

No Supplementary Question

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**20. Question from Councillor Spencer Drury to Councillor Jackie Smith,
Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Environment**

In August the BBC published an article about recycling rates nationally and the Royal Borough of Greenwich received a special mention as it has one of the highest levels of recyclable waste rejected in 2014-15 (14.4% compared to a national average of 3%). Following this article the News Shopper published a follow up with a longer quote from a Council spokesperson which read:

“The Royal Borough of Greenwich takes the contamination of recycling very seriously.

"We pursue a proactive approach on this issue through engaging with residents, businesses, managing agents and landlords on how to make best use of the services the Council provides, including the proper separation of recyclable material.

"Following our engagement activity, anyone found to be continually contaminating will have their recycling bins removed.”

As a naturally curious Councillor I followed up on this comment asking exactly how many bins had been removed in previous years and discovered that the Council kept no record of this figure.

How can the Cabinet Member know if this policy is working if there are no figures available to know how many bins have been removed?

Reply –

Thank you for the question.

Street Services do keep a record of those individual properties where bins have been removed - as this action is only taken after officers have made visits and letters to the property owners over a period of time, in an attempt to improve matters. It is simply that this information is not held in summary format. The Council is in the process of procuring a new Environment Management system that will address this.

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The overall effect of the policy is evident through the total contamination levels reported through analysis undertaken when material is delivered to the materials recycling facility.

This information is regularly reviewed to identify areas of poorer performance which enables waste awareness officers to prioritise their work and focus on those addresses which are presenting contaminated recycling bins.

Supplementary Question

Surely it is not a good position to not know how many bins have been removed and can you assure me when this situation will be rectified?

Reply

I can assure you we do keep a record and know where the bins are, however not in a summary format. We are procuring IT which would allow this form of interrogation.

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21. Question from Councillor Spencer Drury to Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care

I understand that the Council uses a substantial number of locums or temporary staff in its Occupational Therapy (OT) Department. I was informed in the summer that the majority of permanent Occupational Therapists were temporary (8 compared to 3 fully employed) and both the Principal OT and Manager were locums. Can the Cabinet Member outline the cost of a temporary OT as against a permanent one over the course of a year and suggest whether this arrangement is efficient in cost or service terms?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Drury for his question.

Recruiting Occupational Therapists (OT's) is difficult for Council's across London. Royal Greenwich has recently undertaken a public advertisement recruitment for OT's. This included national advertising. The process yielded one candidate. The Council's wage rates were benchmarked with other Local Authorities. The Royal Borough of Greenwich's rates were broadly comparable. The Council has appointed a Principal OT, to create stronger professional leadership, following the model used in Social Work. Work is underway to develop a common career structure with our partners Oxleas NHS Trust, with a view to common recruitment, including graduate recruitment and shared career paths.

Continued use of agency staff therefore is essential. We are committed to working with other Councils across London to look at OT recruitment, but there is a shortage of OTs and Councils compete with the NHS and the private sector for available staff. Inevitably there is a premium for an OT from an agency. This varies on the length of the contract/assignment and skill/experience level of the OT. The Council's salary cost per OT averages £47k per year, the agency cost averages at around £62k per year (this includes the agency fee). This is a premium of around 30%.

Supplementary Question

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I understand that some temporary OT staff have been with us in excess of four years. Is there any compromise we can reach to reduce the premium for temporary staff or employ them as permanent staff?

Reply

Following the re-organisation of our OT service, which is now integrated with Oxleas, this is an area I am pursuing.

There are issues around increasing the numbers of permanent staff and reduction of locums in conjunction with our health partners. I am happy to meet with you to discuss any specific concerns.

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22. Question from Councillor Spencer Drury to Councillor Denise Hyland, Leader of the Council

Given residents have the option of not having Greenwich Info delivered, can the Council either refund the money saved by not producing a copy for each household or allow people to nominate the services they would rather the funds were spent on?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Drury for his question.

Greenwich Info has been so well received by local residents that only 19 households have opted out of receiving our information sheet.

Council tax is levied upon the value of a resident's home and not the services that the residents in a household choose to use.

Even if the Council could offer a rebate, given the low number of opts out and the low unit costs associated with producing Greenwich Info, the costs of administering and issuing the rebate would likely be more than the amounts involved.

Supplementary Question

How many residents would need to opt out of receiving Greenwich info to provide a rebate?

Reply

160,000 households. However, Council Tax is not predicated on that algorithm.

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23. Question from Councillor Matt Clare to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Environment

Would the cabinet member please confirm if there is now a timetable for delivery of the Anaerobic Digestion plant?

Reply –

Thank you for the question.

Councillor Clare asked previously a very similar question to this – at the 29th July 2015 Council meeting. At the time the response was:

“In April 2014, the procurement to design, construct and operate an Anaerobic Digestion plant was ceased as the Council was unable to secure acceptable commercial terms from the only bidder remaining in the process, which meant the proposal no longer represented value for money. A procurement exercise is now underway for a contract to process organic waste collected at the kerbside. Three tenders have been received and are due to be evaluated. It is expected that the contract will be awarded in August/September 2015.”

I am happy to report that officers concluded the process to award the organic waste contract in September 2015. Food and garden waste is now transported and treated at an “in-vessel composting facility” as part of a contract that will continue until 2027.

No Supplementary Question

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**24. Question from Councillor Matt Clare to Councillor Danny Thorpe,
Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainability**

In light of the delays in delivering the Anaerobic Digestion plant what progress is the council making to facilitate maximum generation of local clean energy from renewable sources?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Clare for his question

The Council is committed to supporting the development of local clean and renewable energy production, such as district heat networks and solar power; and is continually exploring ways in which it can do this. The Anaerobic Digestion plant has been cancelled as it was non-viable.

District heat networks are a fantastic opportunity to provide local lower emission heat to the Borough's residents; they are more efficient in the use of fuel and therefore produces less pollution than equipment supplying individual premises. In the last two years the Royal Borough has facilitated the development of such a network on the Peninsular which will supply 13,000 homes with low emission energy; and further networks exist in Woolwich and Kidbrooke. Work is also ongoing to better understand the potential of a new network in East Greenwich, which would make use of waste heat from Transport for London's operations at Greenwich Power Station, to provide low carbon heat to residents of Greenwich and Greenwich Peninsula. In addition, as part of the European Union funded project, the innovative addition of a water source heat pump to this network is being explored, which would use heat from the Thames to supply local social housing blocks; if installed this would be the first project of its kind in the UK.

The Royal Borough has voluntarily committed to procuring all of its electricity from green sources, and has recently invested in a solar PV programme which saw the installation of Solar PV to 7 Royal Borough owned sheltered and residential blocks.

Through the planning process the Royal Borough also advocates the installation of low carbon and renewable energy technologies in new developments.

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It is recommended that all new major development establish, connect, or provide for future connection to decentralised energy networks. Major developments are also required to achieve reductions in CO₂ emissions by utilising renewable energy technologies. This has resulted in over 35,000 m² of solar panels being installed on new developments in the Borough since 2010, the equivalent of 3 football pitches worth of solar panels; and the application of other renewables such as biomass, solar thermal and ground source heat pumps.

Regarding waste to energy development in the Borough, although Anaerobic Digestion is no longer a feasible consideration, the Royal Borough has one of the lowest proportions of waste sent to landfill, a good recycling rate for a dense urban area and much of the waste that is not recycled is sent to SELCHP, a waste to energy centre in South East London which has been running for 20 years. For example in 2014/15, around 35% of the waste collected in the Royal Borough was reused, recycled or composted, and only 6.5% was sent to landfill, one of the lowest figures in the UK.

Supplementary Question

As well as these initial 7 residential blocks, are we working with South East London Energy to extend the service to a wider area including blocks which have RTB leaseholders who may wish to contribute to solar panels?

Reply

The Council owns about 25% of the Borough's housing stock, and there is a lot less interest in the remaining 75%, in the use of Solar. We are working with SE Energy to drive the number of private homes up.

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25. Question from Councillor Matt Clare to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Transport, Economy and Smart Cities

Several cycle superhighways have been successfully delivered across much of London. However South East London has missed out so far. CS4 (From Tower Bridge to Greenwich) and CS5 (From Pimlico to New Cross Gate) are significantly behind schedule. Would the cabinet member please outline what council is doing to help secure these 2 essential routes as soon as possible?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Clare for his question.

The Cycle Superhighway programme put forward by the previous Mayor of London included proposals for CS4 from Central London to Woolwich. This scheme was originally scheduled to be delivered as one of the early Cycle Superhighways but has suffered numerous delays as TfL and the Mayor Johnson's delivery priorities changed.

Subsequently CS4 was planned for completion by 2017. Again implementation has been significantly delayed by a TfL review of design standards for Cycle Superhighways after the standards employed for the initial Cycle Superhighway programme proved to be inadequate. This review has also affected delivery of CS5 to New Cross, with the focus of this scheme to date being improvements to the route within Central London.

The new Mayor of London is yet to outline his Transport Strategy for the whole of London. A new Transport Strategy is anticipated in the first half of 2017, and will give clarity on how the Cycle Superhighways programme will be taken forward under the new administration.

In the meantime, and despite the delay to the programme, officers have been working closely with TfL's Cycling team to review initial designs for Phase 1 of CS4 which is proposed to link central London to Greenwich Town Centre. Our understanding from TfL is that initial consultation on this route is now scheduled for early 2017, and we are continuing to press TfL to bring forward these proposals as quickly as possible, and deliver the full scheme to Woolwich as originally intended.

No Supplementary Question

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26. Question from Councillor Matt Clare to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Environment

Every year the council plants trees in our borough at a cost of £200-400 each only to see an unacceptable number die through inadequate care in planting or insufficient watering. In some cases 2 buckets of water a week in the summer months (perhaps poured by residents, council or local business employees in the area) would help these vital filters of our polluted air survive and thrive. We have a vibrant network of community environment champions. Should the council either widen their role or should a second network of 'Green Guardians' be created?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Matt Clare for his observations and suggestions regarding the care of newly planted trees in the borough.

The majority of tree planting is undertaken on behalf of the Highways Department, with a small number planted on Housing sites. Over the past 4 seasons, approximately 1,500 trees have been planted on the public highway and careful consideration is taken on the variety of tree for each location. The survival rate of the trees we have planted is good with an 89% success rate in recent years.

To assist the new trees a watering programme is put in place to either water weekly or make approximately 20 visits in their first growing season.

Greenwich Transportation runs a tree adoption scheme where residents care for newly planted trees. Approximately 20-25% of trees planted are adopted by residents. Greenwich Transportation has also planted 153 trees on Housing sites which have been included in the annual watering programme.

Supplementary Question

Do we have a database of trees planted and which ones have adopters nearby?

The survival rate of Trees in Eltham is less than 75%, which I would be happy to discuss with you separately.

Reply

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We do know where we plant trees and where they survive. We don't have separate tree adopters but environmental champions and friends groups who look after our trees.

I will be happy to discuss with you the particular issues relating to Eltham South.

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27. Question from Councillor Matt Clare to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Environment

In June the council committed to £400 fixed penalty notices and put in place 2 'dedicated task forces assigned to Plumstead and Charlton.'

A) What concrete results have been achieved?

- How many FPNs of over £200 have been issued, and what proportion paid?
- What proven, measurable improvements have there been (i.e. reductions in resident calls to the Contact Centre vs. the same period in the previous year)

B) Has the location of these 2 dedicated task forces proven to be optimal to cover the whole borough so far?

C) By dedicated does that mean these 2 task forces are fully utilised full time on fly tipping enforcement? If so how much of that cost is being recouped in fixed penalty notices?

Reply –

Thank you for the question and I will address each point:

A) What concrete results have been achieved:

- **How many FPNs of over £200 have been issued, and what proportion paid?**

The Unauthorised Deposit of Waste (Fixed Penalties) Regulations 2016 came into force on the 9th May 2016. Greenwich adopted the Policy on 8th September 2016 and a fly tipping FPN (£400) was made available to officers to issue from this date. Officers have so far issued 2 x £400 FPNs and both have been paid in full. In addition to the 2 FPNs issued, officers also recovered an additional £300 for the removal and disposal of the waste.

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- **What proven, measurable improvements have there been (i.e. reductions in resident calls to the Contact Centre vs. the same period in the previous year)**

Given that the new policy has only been in operation for six weeks, it is too early to measure the success as the £400 FPN policy was only adopted on the 8th Sept 2016. I have asked officers to carry out a full evaluation of its impact after six months.

- B) Has the location of these 2 dedicated task forces proven to be optimal to cover the whole borough so far?**

The two taskforce teams each work in clearly defined areas, specifically within Plumstead and Charlton. The rest of the borough is serviced by the existing waste management services.

- C) By dedicated does that mean these 2 task forces are fully utilised full time on fly tipping enforcement? If so how much of that cost, is being recouped in fixed penalty notices?**

The taskforce teams consist of an Enforcement Officer and an operational street cleansing crew (two officers) with the support of a Waste Advisor. The teams have a constant presence - one within the defined Plumstead area and the other in the Charlton area – every day, Monday to Friday, with frequent weekend visits. The teams were set up as the Council recognised that normal cleansing arrangements were not sufficient to maintain acceptable levels of cleanliness in these particular areas. In Plumstead, the high number of HMOs posed a particular problem with high levels of bulky furniture being dumped on the pavement. Businesses on Plumstead High Street and in surrounding roads (Lakedale Road, Conway Road, Plumstead Road) also presented other issues associated with illegal trade waste. Similar issues were being experienced in the Charlton area with street cleansing: bags frequently dumped on the pavement in specific roads (egg: Floyd Road), and businesses in Charlton Church Lane using street litter bins for business waste and not complying with their “Duty of Care” responsibilities to manage and dispose of waste appropriately.

Whilst dealing with fly tipping and taking enforcement action where perpetrators are identified, the teams also provide advice to residents of the

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correct routes for disposal (e.g. by using the Council's bulky waste collection service and/or by taking items to the Reuse and Recycling Centre in Nathan Way free of charge) and advise residents of the waste and recycling collection service's work, particularly reminding them of their collection days

The taskforce vehicles are marked with posters warning of the consequences of fly-tipping. As a result of the Taskforce activity, 113 FPNs (at £75 each) have been issued to offenders in the Plumstead area since June 2015. In addition to this, officers have recovered £3,608.71 in disposal costs as a result of the proactive removal of bulky items and fly tips. In the Charlton area, 30 FPNs have been issued since the end of November 2015.

More recently, at the end of August 2016, a third taskforce team was established in Abbey Wood to address increasing problems in the area.

No Supplementary Question

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**28. Question from Councillor Matt Clare to Councillor Denise Hyland,
Leader of the Council**

A growing number of public and private sector organisations are offering the gender neutral title of Mx (Mixter) in forms and systems which some transsexual people feel is more suited to them than Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss. Is the council among them?

Reply –

Thank you for the question.

As a Council which takes Equality issues seriously we are happy for any resident to use the term Mx as a prefix.

Supplementary Question

Can we formalise this and communicate as well as encouraging other organisations, fully or partially owned by the Council to encourage use and expansion?

Reply

Yes, I'm happy to do that. However, we can't get rid of all the existing Council forms, to re-print them.

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**29. Question from Councillor Sarah Merrill to Councillor Averil Lekau,
Cabinet Member for Housing and Anti-Poverty**

Can the Cabinet Member say what she thinks the impact of the pressure on the Royal Borough of Greenwich to sell its high value properties will be on homelessness in the borough?

Reply –

Thank you for the question.

The Royal Borough has more than 15,000 households on its waiting list for social housing and in common with other London boroughs is also facing a dramatic rise in the number of households applying and accepted as homeless. The number of homeless households to whom London boroughs have accepted a duty rose by 118% between 2010/11 and 2015/16.

In this context, the sale of high value properties would have a serious adverse effect on the Royal Borough's ability to rehouse homeless households and other priority groups. This difficulty would be especially severe if the Royal Borough had to sell larger properties, as there is an acute shortage of 3 & 4 bedroom properties. In consequence, homeless households and other priority groups, such as those who are severely overcrowded or have serious medical needs would have to remain longer in temporary accommodation or unsuitable housing conditions. This would increase the Royal Borough of Greenwich's existing budget pressure related to the provision of temporary accommodation. In addition, it is likely to put additional pressures on health and social care services, if homeless people and other vulnerable groups face increased delays before they are rehoused to suitable accommodation.

The new Government should review the previous Tory Government's legislation which has disproportionately affected working class people, the poor and vulnerable.

Supplementary Question

The number of homeless households, which the Authority has a duty to assist, has risen. Do you think the Housing Act will limit or alleviate our ability to respond to this demand?

Reply

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This Act will have an impact on ability to meet the housing need.

There is little we can do about it and it will create expensive areas without Social Housing and, in effect, resulting in social cleansing. This Council is going to do all it can to encourage the Government to re-consider.