

COUNCIL MEETING: MONDAY 6 OCTOBER 2014
WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Question Number	Question asked by Councillor:	Subject
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – Councillor Tony Newman		
CQ394	Pollard H	Small Grant Funds
CQ428	Thomas	Speaking at local events
CQ430	Pollard, T	Free School
CQ431	Pollard, T	Board membership of local charities
CQ432	Pollard, T	Tenant Tax
CQ446	Creatura	Public engagement
CQ448	Thompson	Public engagement
CQ449	Thompson	Scrutiny
CQ459	Khan S	Electoral Roll sale
CQ472	Ryan G	Manifesto pledges
CQ475	Rendle	Autism champion
CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT Councillor Timothy Godfrey		
CQ403	Winborn	Park Hill park
CQ411	Hale	Ashburton Library
CQ412	Hale	Fairfield Halls
CQ413	Hale	Fairfield Halls
CQ464	Kyeremeh	Free swimming
CQ468	Mansell	Exercise equipment in parks
CQ469	Mansell	Allotments
CQ473	Rendle	Croydon heritage & culture
CQ488	Henson	Ashburton Library
CQ492	Quadir	Upper Norwood joint Library
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CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Councillor Tony Letts		
CQ434	Perry	JSA claimants
CQ435	Perry	Start-up loan scheme
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CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFETY AND JUSTICE - Councillor Mark Watson		
CQ392	Bashford	London Living Wage - Voluntary groups
CQ395	Pollard H	Controlled drinking Zones

Question Number	Question asked by Councillor:	Subject
CQ396	Pollard H	CCTV
CQ399	Mohan	Social Economic Audit
CQ400	Winborn	CCTV
CQ443	Cummings	Regulatory services
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CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT – Councillor Kathy Bee		
CQ397	Mohan	20 mph zones
CQ398	Mohan	NCP car parks
CQ423	Winborn	South End works
CQ424	Fisher	Shirley Ward - 20mph
CQ427	Thomas	20mph
CQ450	Thompson	20mph
CQ461	Khan S	Fuel duty
CQ462	Kyeremeh	street lighting
CQ466	Lewis	Cycling space
CQ476	Wentworth	20mph
CQ485	Pelling	Street lighting
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CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING – Councillor Alisa Flemming		
CQ405	Gatland	Parish Junior School
CQ406	Gatland	Looked after children
CQ407	Gatland	Children in care
CQ440	Neal	School governors
CQ454	Clouder	Child exploitation
CQ467	Lewis	Exam results
CQ478	Wentworth	Paxton Free school
CQ481	Canning	Children in care
CQ483	King	Children Safeguarding
CQ484	King	Safeguarding function
CQ489	Henson	Young people /Council interest
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CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND PEOPLE – Councillor Louisa Woodley		
CQ420	Mead, M	Free Health Checks
CQ421	Mead, M	Mental Health budget
CQ422	Mead, M	Adult Safeguarding
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Question Number	Question asked by Councillor:	Subject
CQ465	Lewis	Occupational therapists
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CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TREASURY – Councillor Simon Hall		
CQ391	Bashford	London Living Wage
CQ414	O'Connell	Resident engagement
CQ415	O'Connell	Budget
CQ416	O'Connell	Job cuts
CQ426	Fisher	School cost for London living wage
CQ453	Stranack	Monitoring performance contracts
CQ460	Khan S	London Living Wage
CQ470	Mansell	Call centre
CQ471	Ryan G	Jobs in Selhurst ward
CQ477	Wentworth	Staff smoking
CQ486	Pelling	Occupational Health teams
CHAIR OF THE PENSION COMMITTEE Councillor John Wentworth		
CQ401	Hopley	Pension Fund
CQ402	Hopley	Pension Fund
CQ404	Creatura	Pension Fund
CQ408	Clancy	Pension Fund
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CQ437	Buttinger	Pension Fund
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DEPUTY LEADER (STATUTORY) AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES AND REGENERATION – Councillor Alison Butler		
CQ419	Mead D	Bed & Breakfast
CQ436	Perry	Queens Gardens
CQ441	Neal	Affordable homes
CQ442	Wright	Green spaces
CQ452	Stranack	Building in Gravel Hill area
CQ456	Clouder	Housing
CQ457	Kabir	Housing waiting lists
CQ458	Kabir	Housing waiting lists
CQ480	Canning	households in borough
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Question Number	Question asked by Councillor:	Subject
DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CLEAN GREEN CROYDON – Councillor Stuart Collins		
CQ393	Bashford	South London Waste Partnership
CQ425	Fisher	Travellers clean up cost
CQ429	Thomas	Fly-tipping prosecutions
CQ451	Stranack	Fly-tipping
CQ463	Kyeremeh	fly-tipping
CQ474	Rendle	fly tipping fines
CQ479	Canning	fly tipping fines
CQ490	Mann	Fly tipping

CQ394-14 **from Councillor Helen Pollard**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Can the Leader tell me whether the current administration will continue the programme for Small Grant Funds? When will the next round of funding be taking place?

Reply

This administration is committed to ensuring that communities have access to funding to support new and innovative responses to meeting their needs and we intend to expand the scope of the previous grants scheme.

Councillor Mark Watson will be making a formal announcement about the next round of funding shortly.

CQ428-14 **from Councillor Phil Thomas**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Do you think it is right that Council Officers, Councillors or Cabinet Members should put pressure on people from the Business Community not to speak at local events?

Reply

I respect the right of every individual to exercise their own judgement about what events to attend and speak at. Organisers of such events have a responsibility to make it clear to all participants what their event is seeking to achieve.

CQ430-14 **from Councillor Tim Pollard**

To Councillor Tony Newman

In your capacity as Leader of the Council, do you support the principle of a Free School on the College Green/Barclay Road Annexe site?

Reply

This Labour administration made it clear in our manifesto that we are committed to tackling the school place shortage in Croydon. Our commitment is clear and we will support any school that wishes to work in partnership with us to deliver the highest standards of education to children living in Croydon. This means that we will support free schools that are in places where they are needed, that complement and improve local provision, that deliver high standards of education and are based in suitable, high quality premises.

CQ431-14 **from Councillor Tim Pollard**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Do you think it is appropriate for any cabinet member to chair the board of a local charity where he or she also determines the level and terms of council funding? Should they even be a member of the board?

Reply

As elected Members many of us serve in various capacities in a range of organisations. The Council's Monitoring Officer has provided guidance to all members on this issue, including the obligation to declare interests, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

CQ432-14 **from Councillor Tim Pollard**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Both Cllr Butler and Cllr Fitzsimons have recently admitted in public that it is likely that rents will rise as a result of Labour's £200 Tenant Tax. Do you support your colleagues' casual attitude towards penalising private sector tenants, many of whom are the most disadvantaged in society?

Reply

Councillor Pollard's assertion that Councillor Butler and Councillor Fitzsimons have publicly admitted that rents will rise, is inaccurate. The reality is that we are currently consulting the public about 'Selective Licensing' proposals and final decisions about the proposed scheme, including the license fee, will not be taken until early 2015, following analysis of feedback from the consultation.

This administration and the Labour party's prospective parliamentary candidate for Croydon Central are on the side of residents and tenants. We are committed to ensuring that they have decent living conditions, security of tenure and are charged a fair rent.

The Conservative party on the other hand has consistently shown its commitment to protecting the interests of landlords, whether good or bad. This tells us everything we need to know about how out of touch with real people the Conservative party has become.

CQ446-14 **from Councillor Mario Creatura**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Would the Council Leader please outline the policy of his administration for engaging with Residents' Associations and other community representatives?

Reply

This administration is committed to actively engaging with the community on the wide ranging issues which affect their lives. We intend to build on existing arrangements to ensure that the council's decision making is informed by the diverse views and opinions of the people in our community.

If there are specific issues that individual residents associations or community representatives wish to raise with me, they are welcome to contact me in writing or via telephone.

CQ448-14 **from Councillor James Thompson**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Does the Leader of the Council value the contributions to our debates by members of the public?

Reply

As an elected representative of the people of Croydon I warmly welcome and appreciate the diversity of views and opinions emanating from the local community. It represents a much valued contribution to local democracy. We have already demonstrated through action, our commitment to greater openness and transparency by agreeing a range of measures, specifically aimed at increasing including public participation. The list of measures includes;

- Reintroducing web casting of Council and Cabinet meetings;
- Increasing the amount of time available for public participation in meetings of the full Council;
- Increasing the amount of information in the public domain;
- Reducing the amount of information previously withheld from the public;
- Reducing the thresholds for the Petition Scheme so that debates can be triggered more easily by communities.

CQ449-14 **from Councillor James Thompson**

To Councillor Tony Newman

How valuable does Cllr Newman feel the current Scrutiny process is for holding the Council to account?

Reply

Scrutiny is a fundamental aspect of our democratic process. Councillor Sean Fitzsimons is determined to make Scrutiny relevant to the lives of the people of Croydon and has made an excellent start towards achieving this. I draw the Members' attention to the Scrutiny Business Report on this agenda, which demonstrates how Scrutiny has developed new initiatives to hold the council to account.

The structure of Scrutiny allows one of the sub committees to be chaired by the minority group – the Children and Young people's sub-committee chair is currently held by one of the minority group deputy leaders. This is an excellent example of an effective scrutiny structure.

The Scrutiny work programme requires a cabinet Member to attend at least one Scrutiny meeting in a municipal year so that they can be questioned in detail on their portfolio.

A new subcommittee has been established this year to reflect the concerns of the community relating to streets and environment.

A new process called "*Mini Review*" has been established this year. This will enable one or two councillors to pursue a matter of ward or local importance and to report their conclusions to Scrutiny committee for further consideration.

In the light of Mid Staffs Report (and now Rotherham Report), Scrutiny committee has also decided to include more community voices at all committee meetings where possible, so that Members can corroborate the information they receive through official reports.

Finally there are to be more meetings in the community (away from the Town Hall) in order to allow greater community participation.

Scrutiny is a Member Led process and this administration is ensuring that Members of all parties lead the work programme.

CQ459-14 **from Councillor Shafi Khan**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Junk mailing and cold calling companies are increasingly becoming a threat of our privacy and that is why, many of our citizens do not sign up to vote and it demeans the essence of our local democracy. Would the Leader agree with me that the law which forces councils to hand over personal details of our constituents to marketing companies should be scrapped?

Reply

Organisations can buy details of those on the electoral register from a local authority. There are two versions of the electoral register – open and closed.

Local authorities are obliged to release:

- a) The details of all those on the electoral register (both open and closed) to any credit reference agency on demand (for a fee)
- b) The details of those on the open electoral register to any other organisation on demand (for a fee).

Release of the details of people on the closed electoral register is restricted to credit reference agencies.

I agree that the obligation to release personal details of our constituents for marketing purposes can infringe privacy and consideration should be given to reforming the present arrangements.

CQ472-14 **from Councillor Gerry Ryan**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Please advise according to timetable how many of our manifesto pledges have been initiated thus far?

Reply

Having clearly outlined our priorities in our manifesto, we should be extremely proud as a Labour administration that in our first 15 weeks we have launched and are successfully delivering key initiatives, including:

- Don't Mess With Croydon
- London living wage
- 30% affordable Housing policy
- 5 year growth plan
- Free children summer swimming

We have also developed proposals to help improve conditions for private sector tenants, through a licensing scheme for private landlords and clearly outlined our ambitions for a 'Cultural Quarter'.

However there is much more to do; we have inherited the previous administration's self-confessed £100m financial black hole and found the fly-tipping and litter crises to be far worse than first feared. In every sense we have only just started to clean up the awful mess left by the previous Conservative administration.

CQ475-14 from Councillor Andrew Rendle

To Councillor Tony Newman

As the Autism Champion I have had a number of very positive meetings with officers, charities and the NHS. I wish to host an autism forum for all interested parties in my pursuit to make Croydon a flagship borough for helping people on the spectrum. Will the leader support me in my endeavours and what help can he give me?

Reply

Can I thank and congratulate Councillor Rendle for the excellent work he is doing as our Autism Champion. I applaud the work which is being developed to:

- Test our local offer for children with autism and their families to identify opportunities for further improvement.
- Explore schemes such as autism friendly 'kitemark'.
- Raise awareness of autism within the borough

I will ensure that my office works closely with Councillor Rendle, officers and other stakeholders to support delivery of a successful Autism Forum as well as the longer term objective, of making Croydon a flagship borough for helping people on the spectrum.

CQ403-14 **from Councillor Sue Winborn**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Could the Cabinet Member advise me on progress in preparing a business plan for Park Hill Park?

Reply

The Green Space Development Team (GSD Team) carried out a public consultation exercise to inform the feasibility plan. This exercise was carried out in July, using 'face to face' and an online survey.

S106 funding for the refurbishment of the play area (£99,950k), adapting the toilet block to be fully accessible and to add baby changing facilities (£46K) and the community garden, situated within the walled garden (£7.8k).

I think Park Hill Park is a very important park on the edge of the metropolitan town centre and the large residential area across the area. It is important that we look after this park and fully understand the work that is required across all of our parks and open spaces to benefit residents across the borough.

I envisage that we will develop a Borough Parks Plan that then has specific Park and open space plans within it. Work has started on the early stages of this.

CQ411-14 from Councillor Lynne Hale

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

If His Grace Evangelical Outreach can show evidence that they committed time and money to their plans for the renovation of the former Ashburton Library, will you commit to recompensing them?

Reply

As is the case for any proposed acquisition, any costs incurred by His Grace Evangelical Outreach whilst looking at the feasibility of the project and purchase of this building were incurred entirely at their own risk and at no time was it indicated that the Council would meet any of their costs should the matter not proceed to exchange and completion. The Council has no legal liability to compensate a purchaser for any costs incurred prior to contractual commitment as all negotiations are 'subject to contract'.

The Council would be most unwise to reverse this principle as it could result in substantial costs at a time when central government policy continues to reduce funding to Croydon.

I personally met with His Grace Evangelical Outreach Church and offered a package of measures to support them in their quest for their own building. However these were comprehensively rejected, as you would have witnessed at the last Council Meeting.

I can understand how frustrating it must be for His Grace Evangelical Outreach Church not to have been able to secure this large prestigious building for only £85,000 but it is important that we look after the assets of the people of Croydon and respect the integrity of this beautiful park.

CQ412-14 **from Councillor Lynne Hale**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Are you committed to a roll-on roll-off lift at Fairfield Halls?

Reply

As you will know, the Council has had various plans for the past 10 years to refurbish the Fairfield Halls and has not proceeded with any of those plans.

As detailed on the Cabinet meeting on 15 September, we are changing the approach of the council to this project to ensure that the full refurbishment of the Fairfield Halls takes place in a timely fashion. As I said at the Cabinet meeting, we are now in the season of delivery.

I am also very keen to ensure the Fairfield gets what it needs to be a modern, vibrant arts centre, including back of house. However it is important that the works at the Fairfield are driven by them and their needs and not what I may or may not think is a priority.

The 15 September Cabinet agreed the new vision for the College Green area including the Fairfield Halls as a key part of the boroughs new "Cultural Quarter" and agreed to integrate the College Green and Fairfield Halls Modernisation projects to form one comprehensive approach to realise this vision for the area.

The new approach has enabled 3 early win projects to be delivered over the summer including a new cinema offer, the studio, a new entertainment space in what was the green room and improvements to the Arnhem Gallery. These will be delivered by autumn this year.

The overall approach to the delivery will be flexible and seek to enable the redevelopment of the different component parts of Fairfield Halls in a timely fashion with clear timelines for when different elements of the work will take place over the next three years.

CQ413-14 **from Councillor Lynne Hale**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Are you committed to replacing the Mechanical and Electrical systems at Fairfield Halls?

Reply

Please see my detailed reply to CQ412.

The Mechanical and Electrical systems at the Fairfield Halls will be coming to the end of their natural life in due course, so it is the view of the Fairfield Halls and of Croydon Council that these systems will be replaced as part of the project for the renewal of the Fairfield Halls.

CQ464-14 **from Councillor Matthew Kyeremeh**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

I was quite impressed with the take-up of the free - swim during the summer in the Thornton Heath Leisure Centre. Can the Cabinet Member tell us how successful this offer was with respect to numbers and co-operation from Centre staff in the different parts of Croydon and if there are plans to continue this next summer?

Reply

I am happy to report that the free swimming scheme this summer was extremely successful and an example of the difference that a Labour Council has made to our borough already.

Free Swimming is a great way to promote healthy levels of activity and help tackle health inequalities issues across our borough.

I would like to thank our sport activity team and our contractor for making this scheme happen in such a short period of time.

The attendance figures for free swims over the summer school holiday period for this year and last are as follows:

Centre Name	July 14	July 13	Aug 14	Aug 13
New Addington	548	538	1181	1696
Purley	549	295	1254	1280
South Norwood	558	325	1271	1648
Thornton Heath	391	253	1021	882
Waddon	468	-	861	1578
<i>Total</i>	2514	1411	5588	7084

Summer 2013 total = £8495

Summer 2014 total = £8102

The manager at New Addington believes there may be a problem with the figures produced for New Addington by the data collection systems, as she feels she was far busier this year in comparison to last year. She is following this up at present and if there are any discrepancies Fusion will update us as soon as possible.

Centre staff have all been positive and enthusiastic about the scheme – they had noticed a significant drop in child attendance in the period when the scheme had stopped and were receiving queries and complaints from customers. Fusion has been looking at whether it can provide any alternative incentives to help to draw in more children but it cannot provide anything comparable to or as effective as the free swim scheme.

Everyone involved with the leisure centres would welcome a continuation of the scheme, should it prove to be possible, however given the level of government cuts to this council, it will have to go into the forward budget process. We would welcome funding from any other source to make this scheme possible again next year.

CQ468-14 **from Councillor Maggie Mansell**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Would you please list the sites and apparatus for adult exercise in Parks?

Reply

Apparatus for adults can be found in the following parks:-

- Duppas Hill - Outdoor gym
- Lloyd Park - Outdoor gym
- Coulsdon Memorial Ground- Outdoor gym
- Thornton Heath Recreation Ground - Outdoor gym
- Sanderstead Recreation Ground - Outdoor gym
- South Norwood Recreation Ground – Trim trail
- Wandle Park – Trim trail

I recognise how popular these gyms are and I am keen to develop our offering across Croydon and work with our council partners to bring more gyms and equipment to our parks. I have recently been shown pictures of outdoor table tennis equipment and would be keen to see a good variety of equipment provided.

CQ469-14 **from Councillor Maggie Mansell**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Would you please list the allotments in Croydon?

Reply

Allotments are popular and very important to the health and wellbeing of our entire borough. I am particularly keen to explore the possibility of creating city centre allotments in the new developments that are populating Croydon. These could be on waste ground, on roof tops or in under used parts of parks and open spaces.

I expect that we will be in a position to fully review our Allotment provision in the next 12 months.

There are 15 allotment sites in Croydon

Direct let sites i.e. those managed by the green spaces service are;

Hartley Down Allotment Society, Stoats Nest Road, Purley
Mickleham Way Allotment Society, Mickleham Way, New Addington
Mid-Day Sun Allotment Society, St Andrews Road (Off Chipstead Valley Road)
Coulsdon
Orchard Avenue Allotment Society, Orchard Avenue, Shirley
Pampisford Road Allotment Society, Pampisford Road, South Croydon
Sanderstead Allotment Society, Purley Oaks Road, Sanderstead

Lease sites i.e. those self-managed and or leased through the council property team are;

Biggin Wood Allotments, Biggin Hill, Upper Norwood
Gonville Road Allotments, Mayfield Road, Thornton Heath
Heavers Farm Allotments, Off Alverston Gardens, South Norwood,
Norbury Park Allotments, Norbury Avenue, Norbury,
Park Hill Allotments, Deepdene Avenue, Croydon
Bensham Manor Allotments, Thornton Heath
Smitham Allotments, Off Chipstead Valley Road
South Croydon Allotments, Sanderstead Road, South Croydon
Spa Hill Allotments, Spa Hill, Upper Norwood

Private sites

Enmore Road Allotment, South Norwood
Glenthorne Ave, Shirley

At the moment there are approximately 35 vacant plots which would be considered currently unworkable as they are overgrown but if somebody wanted to take one of these plots on they would be offered rent free for a period of time.

We will be opening up the waiting list again at the end of October.

CQ473-14 from Councillor Andrew Rendle

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Recently a blue plaque was unveiled by Madam Mayor in my constituency remembering the writer and dramatist RF Delderfield who lived in Ashburton between 1918 and 1923. The plaque was the idea of the Addiscombe and Shirley Park Residents Association and the unveiling was attended by members of the Delderfield family. Will the cabinet member join me in congratulating ASPRA and tell me how this administration will support residents associations who do a fabulous job highlighting Croydon's heritage and culture?

Reply

I am delighted to congratulate ASPRA on their success in getting a plaque erected in memory of RF Delderfield. I attended the end of the unveiling event and was impressed with the interest that this had generated.

This type of cultural activity is to be very much encouraged and is warmly welcomed.

We are committed to having strong and active communities, and continue to encourage the growth in resident associations and for them to apply for a small grant from the Council's active communities fund.

CQ488-14 **from Councillor Maddie Henson**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

What progress has been made on the consultation regarding the Ashburton library building?

Reply

The Council is looking at the former Ashburton Library building and the park as one, integral space and offering. I believe this park and its integral 'great hall' has the potential to become a well looked after, beautiful and popular local park.

Prior to a full community consultation, I have asked officers to review not only the 'great hall' but also the park in terms of the potential that this can deliver from all the buildings and other facilities in it. This will then be the subject of consultation with the local community and any other interested parties.

The park should not be seen in isolation as I am interested in reviewing all our parks and open spaces to see how viable it is for any of them to be included within a wider cultural offer that the borough can offer as well as being able to properly plan investment and care with the communities across Croydon.

I can assure you that I am committed to the proposals and uses being fully and carefully consulted upon so that we can properly care for and save the 'great hall' and the park. We do not yet have a timetable for consultation, but I very much hope that we will be able to go out to the local community and work with the 'Friends of Ashburton' Park this autumn / winter.

CQ492-14 **from Councillor Badsha Quadir**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Please could you let me know the latest position with respect to Upper Norwood Joint Library?

Reply

I am very pleased to be able to inform you that as per our manifesto commitment we have restored the matched funding with the London borough of Lambeth for Upper Norwood Joint Library for this year. This means that the library will have an additional funding of £47,500 in 2014-15.

It has yet to be determined how this additional funding will be spent but the intention is to work with Lambeth to invest the money in the library to improve facilities and services.

It is anticipated that the management of the library will be transferred to a trust and we will continue to match fund the library with Lambeth.

I very much welcome your interest in the boroughs Library service and hope that it marks a shift in attitude to our Libraries by the opposition group.

CQ493-14 **from Councillor Badsha Quadir**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Please outline your proposals for Ashburton Library and how you will consult and involve the local community and potential interested parties?

Reply

Ashburton Library is an important Library in a modern, purpose built building. We have no plans to consult and involve the local community and stakeholders other than through our plans to support and develop the library service across the borough.

If Councillor Quadir is referring to Ashburton Great Hall and Park then I can confirm that we will be undertaking a full and detailed consultation with local people on the potential that can be delivered from the buildings and other facilities in this significant park.

In a change from the previous administration, we will be considering the park as a whole and will be looking at how we can make significant improvements across the park.

It is important to note that this park should not be seen in isolation as I am interested in reviewing all our parks and open spaces right across the borough. We believe that our Parks and Open Spaces are vital for making Croydon a highly liveable part of London.

I can assure you that our proposals will be well thought through, informed by the local community and part of wider understanding of our cultural offer.

CQ434-14 **from Councillor Jason Perry**

To Councillor Toni Letts

Does the Cabinet Member agree that the continuing fall in JSA claimants in Croydon is a result of government policy combined with partnership working in Croydon?

Reply

It is great news that Croydon has seen such a significant reduction in the number of residents that find themselves unemployed. But we are very clear a number of local families, even where they are now in employment, continue to face huge financial and housing pressures and we are committed to doing more to improve that position.

One of the main factors that has contributed to the reduction is the way the council has worked both internally and with its partners to provide innovative and holistic solutions that give the right skills and opportunities to those most under pressure from the current economic position and welfare reforms. As further challenges come through Welfare reform and the introduction of Universal Credit in order to provide the right support locally we believe we need to build on the current service offer to create even more opportunities to assist people into an independent and sustainable lifestyle and will be working on those arrangements in the coming months.

Another key factor in that reduction is the work that continues to encourage businesses into the borough, providing those jobs for local people. A significant part of our manifesto is to ensure those jobs are then paid appropriately and therefore we are working hard to progress the London Living Wage to ensure those businesses are supporting our residents appropriately.

CQ435-14 **from Councillor Jason Perry**

To Councillor Toni Letts

Would the Cabinet Member please give an update on the progress of the government's Start-Up Loan scheme in Croydon?

Reply

Figures from the government-funded Start-Up Loans scheme indicate that Croydon is one of the higher performing boroughs. Over 345 loans were advanced in Croydon to date totalling over £1.81M, from an initial national loan pot of £151M (majority in Retail & Lifestyle sectors). Support provided includes mentoring, with referrals being made to opportunities for discounted accommodation and higher loan amounts.

In addition, the Croydon Enterprise Loan Fund resumed its start-up lending in August 2013 and has proved popular, approving over 21 start-up loans totalling £92,500 to date. This week Cabinet agreed further investment in CELF to support local business development and employment creation to start businesses. CELF has also recently launched a pilot blended loan and crowdfunding scheme for start-ups called Croydon Crowd Loans, which has generated initial interest locally.

SE-ASSIST was also launched in April 2014 in partnership with Charity Aid Foundation, Legal & General and Coast to Capital LEP. It has provided loans to two Croydon-based Social Enterprises valued at £13,000 each. It is anticipated that there will be a further round for applications later this year.

CQ439-14 from Councillor Michael Neal**To Councillor Toni Letts**

Would the Cabinet Member please detail the total JSA claimant count for the London Borough of Croydon, on a month by month basis, from May 2014 – August 2014, and detail the percentage change over that period.

Reply

The positive trend of reducing the number of JSA claimants for both 18-24 year olds and all claimants was maintained over this specific period. There was a -6% reduction in the 18-24 cohort and -12.20% reduction for all claimants within the working age cohort. Actual numbers and detailed month by month statistics are detailed in the table below.

Croydon JSA claimant count 18-24 year olds						
% change month on month			% change over the period			
	Actual	% change		Actual	% change	
May-14	1420		May-14	1420		
Jun-14	1280	-9.90%	Aug-14	1335	-6%	
Jul-14	1280	0				
Aug-14	1335	4.30%				
Croydon JSA claimant count total						
% change month on month			% change over the period			
	Actual	%change		Actual	%change	
May-14	6615		May-14	6615		
Jun-14	6150	-7.05	Aug-14	5810	-12.20%	
Jul-14	5975	-2.85				
Aug-14	5810	-2.8				

CQ447-14 from Councillor Mario Creatura**To Councillor Toni Letts**

Would the Cabinet Member please detail the JSA claimant count for 18-24 year olds, for the London Borough of Croydon, on a month by month basis, from May 2014 – August 2014, and detail the percentage change over that period.

Reply

The positive trend of reducing the number of JSA claimants for both 18-24 year olds and all claimants was maintained over this specific period. There was a -6% reduction in the 18-24 cohort and -12.20% reduction for all claimants within the working age cohort. Actual numbers and detailed month by month statistics are detailed in the table below.

Croydon JSA claimant count 18-24 year olds						
% change month on month			% change over the period			
	Actual	% change		Actual	% change	
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Jul-14	5975	-2.85				
Aug-14	5810	-2.8				

To Councillor Mark Watson

At the Cabinet meeting on 14th July 2014, we were told that this Labour Administration wants all contractors to pay the London Living wage. I asked if voluntary groups who provide a service via a contract will be required to pay their staff the London Living Wage, as this could have a serious impact. This part of my question was ignored and I wasn't allowed a supplementary question, so can it now be answered.

Reply

As you have stated the Cabinet confirmed its commitment to ensure that the London Living Wage forms a part of any new relevant commissioning and procurement (being guided by the Living Wage Foundation criteria). So far this has included the Integrated Framework for Social Care and Health which relates to significant ranges of services within the Social Care market where there are issues in relation to the payment of staff within those markets. The Council also seeks for existing contractual arrangements to move towards the London Living Wage in an appropriate timescale.

As I have mentioned we will be guided by the London Living Wage Foundation criteria when deciding how to implement London Living Wage in our contracts however, the Council expects this requirement to also apply to community and voluntary organisations, who, I am sure would support the principles of the London Living Wage and understand the many benefits that receiving a fair wage would bring to some of the most vulnerable households in our community. It is also important to acknowledge the benefits of being a London Living Wage employer.

I have listed below a mere extract from recent studies that set out the business benefits that London Living Wage a fair wage can bring about in terms of productivity and staff morale. Positives that help contribute to an organisation's development as well as ensuring that those people working for not-for-profit organisation, who are focussed on supporting some of our most vulnerable residents, are able themselves to receive a fair wage for their hard work and dedication.

In 2009, independent research on behalf of the Greater London Authority identified the following benefits of implementing the London Living Wage:

- Recruitment and retention of staff:
 - Significantly lower rates of staff turnover
 - Substantial cost savings on recruitment and induction training
 - Employees more likely to stay with organisation
 - Increased tenure of workers and continuity of workforce
- Lower rates of absenteeism and sick leave
- Productivity
 - Evidence of enhanced quality of work
 - Widespread efficient work reorganisation
- Significantly boosted worker morale and motivation
- Improved willingness of workers to implement changes in working practices and in adopting change more quickly.

Source: An independent study of the business benefits of implementing a

Living Wage policy in London (GLA Economics):

http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic_unit/docs/living-wage-benefits-summary.pdf

1) Research in 2012, by Queen Mary, University of London looked into the costs and benefits of a London Living Wage. This included examining workplaces before and after they introduced the London Living Wage as well as comparisons with workplaces where the London Living Wage was not paid. The finding from this research included the following:

- Over half of those in Living Wage workplaces (54%) felt more positive about their employment after it was introduced and a similar number (52%) felt more loyal towards their employer.
- The introduction of the Living Wage (LW) resulted in staff leaving rates falling by 25%.
- Companies paying the LW identified improvements in the stability, attitudes and characteristics of the workers.
- Reputational benefits to companies paying the LW were significant, including helping to attract new business/customers and in recruiting staff to professional roles.
- Workers in LW workplaces had better psychological well-being than those in non-LW workplaces.
- Savings from reduced staff turnover (such as recruitment savings and reduced levels of sickness) were low and on average represented 0.3% of overall costs.

Source: The Costs and Benefits of the London Living Wage:

<http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage/pdf/Livingwagecostsandbenefits.pdf>

In addition to the above, there is also research and studies that have been carried out regarding the Living Wage more generally, some of which are referenced on the Living Wage Foundation's website.

The Council will continue to move forward on this agenda as we believe that people should be paid a decent living wage for the job they do. It makes business sense and is part of our commitment to tackling in-work poverty.

CQ395-14 **from Councillor Helen Pollard**

To Councillor Mark Watson

Can the Cabinet Member advise when the review of Controlled Drinking Zones will take place? Will it include Park Hill Park?

Reply

All of the existing Controlled Drinking Zones and any proposals for new ones are being considered as part of the rollout of the new ASB and Policing Act 2014 which comes into force on 20th October. The new ASB Act replaces all of the existing legislation to deal with Anti-Social Behaviour including the Designated Public Places Order (otherwise known as a Controlled Drinking Zone) legislation. The new Public Spaces Protection Orders will provide the Council with much greater flexibility to tackle a range of behaviours in a designated area including drinking and any other type of ASB (such as noise, begging etc). They will also be much easier to implement and will contain flexibility in varying the specifics of the order. Another benefit will be that breaches of the PSPO conditions can be dealt with by both the Police and designated Council officers who will have the ability to issue fixed penalty notices to offenders.

The Safer Croydon Partnership are currently reviewing local needs and liaising very closely with police neighbourhood teams to determine the priority areas for the use of the new legislation. It is likely that the town centre will be addressed first of all and that Park Hill Park will be considered as part of that process.

CQ396-14 **from Councillor Helen Pollard**

To Councillor Mark Watson

Can the Cabinet Member tell me when he will act on the advice of the Police and install CCTV in Lansdowne Road?

Reply

I am unaware of any request from the police to install CCTV in Lansdowne Road. We have been working in partnership with the police, YMCA and outreach services to deal with anti-social behaviour at this location though, which has had a considerable impact and there are no ongoing concerns about this location at present. There are currently no plans to install any permanent CCTV in any location of the borough at the moment although we will be doing a review of all of the public space CCTV in advance of the regeneration of the Town Centre and will be looking at opportunities to expand the existing network as part of this. This will include Lansdowne Road.

CQ399-14 **from Councillor Vidhi Mohan**

To Councillor Mark Watson

Could the Cabinet Member for Communities please let me know if the final report on the independent Social Economic Audit, commissioned by the previous administration as part of the MRF package, has been submitted to the Council? When will this be available to the public?

Reply

The independent report commissioned as part of the MRF package by the previous administration is known as the Social Audit Report. A draft has recently been submitted to the Council and is being reviewed. It is my intention to make the report available to the public before the end of the year.

CQ400-14 **from Councillor Sue Winborn**

To Councillor Mark Watson

Could the Cabinet Member please confirm if he has plans to install CCTV in Spices Yard following several acts of vandalism on cars parked in this car park?

Reply

There are no plans to install permanent CCTV cameras anywhere in the Borough at present. CCTV coverage in the town centre will be reviewed as part of the regeneration planned over the next few years but this is unlikely to extend to Spices Yard Car Park. The Council does have mobile CCTV cameras that attach to lamp columns. These are deployed to areas around the borough to prevent and detect crime, anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and other environmental offences as and when they are needed. We have checked police records for this car park and we can only find one report of criminal damage on a car since April 1st 2014. This would not be enough for it to be considered a hotspot location and as there is significant demand on the cameras that we hold Spices Yard car park is not likely to be considered as a priority location at the moment.

We are aware though that the public realm improvement contractors installed CCTV on their compound within Spices Yard which although doesn't cover the public area can act as a deterrent.

CQ443-14 **from Councillor Jason Cummings**

To Councillor Mark Watson

What is happening with Regulatory Services now that the Council has pulled out of the previous administrations money saving cross Borough deal. How will these savings now be recouped?

Reply

Regulatory Services have recently come under the management of a new Head of Service position; Public Safety, which is in effect the bringing together of the two areas of community safety and regulatory services into a Public Safety division. There are clear synergies across these two services and this change released a Head of Service post which will contribute to the savings targets that are required.

There are a range of projects being considered through the Croydon Challenge programme looking at ways to adjust service delivery and make savings as this service will be part of that process. As these plans develop, it will become clearer who they impact on individual services including regulatory services.

CQ444-14 **from Councillor Jason Cummings**

To Councillor Mark Watson

Can the cabinet member please confirm the start date for the additional Council funded police officers being provided for New Addington? Can he also confirm that they will only serve in New Addington and for how long they will be funded?

Reply

I am able to confirm that provision has been made in the budget to purchase 2 police officers for New Addington for a period of 3 years.

The supply of any additional officers is subject to availability within the Metropolitan Police and acceptance of our 'letter of intent'. We await that confirmation.

It is our understanding of these contracts that the officers will be posted to the identified area and we will be able to influence their activity, within the requirement that the police retain overall operational control and they may be deployed to what we would understand as major incidents where urgent police attendance is required.

CQ445-14 **from Councillor Jason Cummings**

To Councillor Mark Watson

Can the cabinet member please provide the date for the installation of the 'brand new state of the art' CCTV system promised by Labour for Central Parade and wayside?

Reply

As you know the council has invested significantly in the CCTV infrastructure, where we now have a state of the art control room and much improved maintenance facilities.

Since taking on the Cabinet Member lead for Safety and Justice I have asked the officers to provide me with details of the CCTV coverage in the area together with the maintenance history for each camera. Officers have assured me that the cameras are all working properly but together with the ward Councillors I am visiting the control room to view the arrangements myself.

CQ397-14 **from Councillor Vidhi Mohan**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Could the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment spell out in detail her plans for consulting with individual residents before introducing 20 mph zones in residential areas?

Reply

Local residents will be consulted on the possible introduction of area wide 20mph speed limits, but the exact methods likely to be used are yet to be decided upon.

Councillor Mohan may recall from the Scrutiny committee that the current thinking is to set up a working group with key stakeholders to help direct this project forward. We will also be talking to other boroughs in order to establish best practice in the design, consultation and delivery of this project.

CQ398-14 **from Councillor Vidhi Mohan**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Could the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment please tell me if she has had any recent meetings with NCP to discuss their car parks in Croydon?

Reply

The Council now has a new administration and it is our aim to be an accountable, open and transparent council. We are working to support our local street markets and our local economies and we will deliver our commitment to provide free parking for the first hour in all our district centres. This will not only make shopping easier for residents but will also support our local traders.

In the short period since I took on the role of Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment the importance of providing parking for many of our residents and businesses has been emphasised time and again. Over the coming year officers will be undertaking a “Strategic Parking Review” to introduce a “fair parking policy”. We also have a huge number of different charges across Croydon and we want to make this simpler.

It has been 6 years since the Council last carried out a comprehensive review of how it delivers parking services and since then the context within which parking operates has changed significantly with the introduction of new legislation and technology and this will involve working with other providers in the borough such as NCP.

CQ423-14 **from Councillor Sue Winborn**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Would the Cabinet Member please confirm that the South End public realm works will still be completed by Christmas 2014?

Reply

We are still on programme to complete the public realm works at South End before Christmas although the building frontage works will continue into the early part of next year.

Once completed this will be an immense improvement to the look and feel of the restaurant quarter area.

CQ424-14 **from Councillor Mike Fisher**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

What parts of the Shirley Ward do you consider suitable for a 20 mph zone ?

Reply

Our intention is to roll out 20 mph in residential streets in wide areas rather than individual streets or small groups of streets. The boundaries of the areas have yet to be finalised. It is likely that Shirley residents will be consulted on whether they wish to have 20 mph speed limits as part of a wider area. The results of the consultation will determine whether residential streets in Shirley have 20 mph speed limits.

CQ427-14 from Councillor Phil Thomas

To Councillor Kathy Bee

What is the point in introducing a 20mph speed limit on roads in Croydon if the Police refuse to enforce it?

Reply

The Council are committed to improving the environment and safety of all road users and residents of the borough, there are a number of benefits on introducing 20mph limits where residents want them. These include reducing traffic speeds, reduction of collisions and casualties and a greater chance of survival of pedestrians in collisions at lower speeds. Experience in areas where these have been introduced has seen a reduction in average speeds. These streets should therefore provide a pleasant and safe place for people to walk, meet and socialise. This should also encourage more people to walk in the local area, which could greatly assist in improving health and tackling obesity. Cyclists should be able to negotiate local residential streets without the threat of collisions from fast moving motorised traffic.

The Metropolitan Police have indicated that they will enforce the 20mph speed limit to the same degree that they currently enforce the 30mph limit. Even without enforcement, there is research which shows that if a small percentage of motorists comply with a 20mph limit that then reduces the average speed in a road. On the whole there is some reduction in both average and highest speeds in the absence of active enforcement. To compliment the police enforcement the local Safer Neighbourhood team can provide their 'Road Watch' project. This project uses local resident volunteers, supported by the Police Community Support Officers, to monitor traffic speeds using laser guns and electronic display signs. The information gathered by the teams is then passed on to the Metropolitan Police, to target regular offenders for speed enforcement. The day-to-day management of 'Road Watch' is carried out by the Metropolitan Police's Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the Waddon Safer Neighbourhood Team can be contacted on telephone number 020 8649 3512. For further information on the Safer Neighbourhood teams, see their web site at:- <http://www.met.police.uk/teams/croydon/index.php>

CQ450-14 **from Councillor James Thompson**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Please could you confirm how many 20mph zones you plan to create with the earmarked £300,000 spending and how you plan to fund the programme in future years?

Reply

Cllr Thompson will know from the recent scrutiny meeting on this subject that the Council is still in the early stages of developing plans for the area wide 20mph speed limits. Our current thinking is to introduce 20mph speed limits across a large area rather than in small localised areas and/or individual roads as this provides a better cost benefit. Further discussions are taking place and the Council is looking to introduce a single area comprising up to 20% of the borough in the first year. A working group will be set up develop and further this proposal.

CQ461-14 **from Councillor Shafi Khan**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Would the Cabinet member agree with me that existing fuel duty, we pay the treasury at the pumps should be reinvested back into local areas to help bring our crumbling and decaying roads up to scratch?

Reply

The concept of fuel duty and Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) tax receipts being used to increase funding for local roads is extremely sensible.

2012/13 figures show the tax receipts from fuel duty and VED was £33.2 billion; while £19.3 billion was spent on transport only £1.7 billion reached the local roads.

We are aware that the Department for Transport is increasing funding to local roads through the next Comprehensive Spending Review, 2015/15 -2020/21. However this is likely to be linked to Highway Authorities demonstrating asset management (long term investment planning) and efficiencies. Croydon recently secured significantly enhanced funding to reduce the occurrence of potholes.

We will continue to support London Councils lobby for an improved settlement for London and as Croydon continue to engage with Department for Transport to raise awareness of local challenges, thus promoting the benefits of investment in local highways.

CQ462-14 **from Councillor Matthew Kyeremeh**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

While congratulating the Cabinet Member for her efforts in ensuring that the street lights and road repairs programmed are receiving the needed attention, I will be grateful if she could give me the information that I can give to my Thornton Heath ward residents who are now fed up with waiting to know exactly what is happening to their roads in these two areas (street lights & road repairs).

Reply

The council's highway team undertake 6 monthly safety inspections of the highway and any defects found are recorded, if a defect reaches an intervention level 20mm on a footway and 40mm on a carriageway then a task order is raised to repair it. over the past 6-8 months there has been a number of localised repairs to both Beulah Road and Burlington Road. Funding has been identified in the 2014/15 Highway budget to resurface parts of Mersham Road and a large section of Whitehorse Lane was resurfaced earlier this year.

If Cllr Kyeremeh or his constituents notes any defects these can easily be reported online via "My Account" or directly
<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/transportandstreets/rhps/highwayres>

Download our free 'My Croydon' reporting app from the [Google play store](#) for Android smartphones or [Apple iTunes store](#) for iPhones.

I can confirm the street lighting replacement programme in Thornton Heath is on-going and is due for completion around July 2015. However there will be an amount of stump columns left to remove as these are being used as temporary feeder pillars as these are keeping the existing lights working in the surrounding areas. Once the ward is complete then UK Power Networks can de-energize the cable network and these stumps can be removed.

I would encourage Cllr Kyeremeh to contact Steve Iles, Head of Highways and Parking, steve.iles@croydon.gov.uk on individual roads/footpaths that he is concerned about.

CQ466-14 **from Councillor Oliver Lewis**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Will the cabinet member for transport ensure that adequate space for cycling is provided in planned regeneration schemes?

Reply

Helping more people to cycle is vital to meeting the challenge of growth in Croydon. As the numbers of people and jobs in Croydon grow, the amount of street space will change little. We will have to be cleverer about how we use that street space, and that includes helping more people to make journeys by bike. The Mayor of London's Vision for Cycling includes a network of Quietways for cyclists. As the term, suggests this network will be away from the busier roads in the Capital. I am conscious that many cyclists will continue to want to use the main corridors, and we should aim to accommodate their needs. However it is probably at high streets sitting on those corridors where the competing demands for carriageway space are greatest (demands for loading, parking etc). It is here we need to be most sophisticated in our thinking and approach to allowing cyclists to take their share of carriageway space whilst ensuring we enhance the vitality and hence viability of our high streets. I am conscious that sustaining local services within easy cycling distance is one of the main ways we can help foster cycling. However, in seeking to regenerate our high streets and other important places, I will ensure that accommodating safer movement for cyclists and providing the right quality and quantity of cycle parking are at the top of our objectives.

CQ476-14 **from Councillor John Wentworth**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Would the council support the introduction of 20 mph zones in Queen Mary Road, Upper Norwood and Beaumont Road, Upper Norwood. What steps would residents need to take to get these implemented?

Reply

I am pleased to hear that residents support our commitment to introducing 20 mph speed limits

Our intention is to roll out 20 mph in residential streets in wide areas rather than individual streets or small groups of streets. This will enable us roll out 20 mph across the borough rapidly, subject to support in the consultation. The boundaries of the areas have yet to be finalised. It is likely that residents in Queen Mary Road and Beaumont Road will be consulted on whether they wish to have 20 mph speed limits as part of a wider area. It will be very helpful to know those areas where residents are keen for 20 mph to be introduced; residents should notify their ward members who can pass on their interest to council officers.

CQ485-14 **from Councillor Andrew Pelling**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Please detail any works likely to take place over the next twelve months to cut back tree and leaf growth obscuring illumination from street lights in Hillside Road, Waddon?

Reply

The trees and woodlands team prune our street trees via a ward based programme. Hillside Road, in Waddon Ward was last pruned in the 2012/13 financial year and is not scheduled to be pruned again until the 2016/17 financial year. However officers have been asked to attend site and undertake pruning of tree and leaf growth to prevent obscuring illumination of street lights.

CQ491-14 **from Councillor Stephen Mann**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Ashburton was flooded in areas surrounding the Chaffinch Brook last year. What work is currently being done by the council to mitigate future flood risk in this area?

Reply

I thank Councillor Mann for his question and bringing this to my attention,

The Highways team were not aware of flooding in the Chaffinch Brook area but I can confirm that the Internal Flood Group will be investigating this in conjunction with other agencies such as Thames Water and the Environment Agency. If you could please provide detail of the flooding incidents in Ashburton, these will be added to our action plan, investigated and any necessary flood alleviation measures implemented.

I am sure Members will be pleased to hear that a report will be presented to Cabinet on 20th October 2014, titled 'Flood Prevention & Winter Preparations'. The report outlines our preparations for flood and winter across the borough and includes information about our current work as well as our longer term proposals. Some of the work completed to date include the setting up the Internal Flood Group to encourage a partnership approach to flood risk management and to help improve communication between the different departments and agencies responsible for managing flood risk.

One of our responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act, as a Lead Local Flood Authority is to establish and maintain a register of structures and features which, in the opinion of the authority, are likely to have a significant effect on a flood risk in its area. A register has been set up listing some of the Council's known assets such as culverts, pumps, gullies and ponds and their condition, where known. The internal flood group has also been collaborating to identify records held by different teams on asset maintenance, which may be relevant. Ultimately the register should look to encompass any asset in Croydon regardless of who owns or maintains it to help identify more quickly responsibilities for resolving flood problems and this is being continuously developed with partner stakeholders. The strategy which is currently in a draft format is being prepared to be reported to committee by November for approval to carry out a public consultation. Following consultations, the final version would then be adoption as Council policy at a later date.

CQ405-14 from Councillor Maria Gatland

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

What plans has the Cabinet Member put in place to assist Parish Junior School to come out of Special Measures?

Reply

Parish Church Junior was inspected in June 2014 and deemed to require special measures. The publication of the report was delayed by Ofsted until September.

Parish Church C of E Junior School was judged outstanding in its previous inspection and was, therefore, the subject of light touch monitoring through its allocated Link Adviser.

My officers have worked with the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education to put an experienced Headteacher in place with a track record of improvement.

Further details of the actions to be taken, together with intended outcomes and arrangements for monitoring impact are to be found in the Local Authority action plan, which has been sent to Her Majesty's Inspectors for approval.

The LA has worked closely with the Executive Headteacher, school and the Diocese to ensure a coordinated approach to the school's post-Ofsted action plan. The Local Authority, in collaboration with Parish Church Junior, will provide targeted support for the school as detailed.

Support will include:

- Learning walks
- Support for establishing leadership structures
- Teaching and Learning reviews
- Moderation of writing judgements
- Support with data and tracking through attendance of training and direct LA support
- LA officer to support with targeting provision for SEN pupil
- Support for the revision of the school development plan
- Review of pupil premium funding to ensure funding is effectively targeted
- Governance review to ensure governors are appropriately challenging and supporting the school
- Coaching and support for middle leadership

The Local Authority has brokered additional weekly support from one of our teaching schools. One member of this team is an accredited Ofsted inspector who is already giving advice and support on the ways to improve the quality of learning and teaching and tracking. Another team member is team teaching, to practically demonstrate alongside colleagues the ways to improve children's learning.

The Local Authority will carry out termly school progress review meetings to hold the school to account and to review the impact of support systems in place. These meetings provide an opportunity for LA officers to scrutinise and challenge the progress made by the school's leadership through a robust examination of data and other evidence. The Diocese will be invited to all progress review meetings. These

reviews examine all ofsted criteria and the schools response to their action plan alongside monitoring and challenging attainment and progress in each year group. As a result of each meeting the school is given a rating for each Ofsted area.

HMI will visit the school within 4-6 weeks of the publication of the report to ensure all plans are fit for purpose. They will return at regular intervals, to monitor progress until such point they deem that the school as no longer requiring special measures.

With robust support and intervention packages in place, the LA and the Diocesan Board believes the school is likely to have the capacity to make rapid improvement

CQ406-14 from Councillor Maria Gatland

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

What is the Cabinet Member doing to improve the lives and life chances of Croydon's Looked after Children?

Reply

All Council members have the role of Corporate parents to Children Looked After. As the Cabinet Member and Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel I take a leading role in ensuring that we are meeting this duty.

As Corporate parents, Council members have a duty to:

- Find out information about the outcomes for the children and young people for whom they are responsible. Always ask the question – ‘would this be good enough for my child?’
- Make decisions about a range of services that will affect these children and young people.
- Listen to children and young people about their experiences.
- To be a champion for looked after children and care leavers, including celebrating their successes.

The Corporate Parenting Panel of 9th July agreed the updated Council Pledge to Children Looked After, which had been developed by young people in conjunction with staff in the Children’s Social Care Service. I remain committed to honouring these promises. The Panel will also look at further ways in which we can develop opportunities for Council members to have direct contact with children and young people and ensure that we understand their wishes and opinions.

A key current project is ‘Looking After the Right Children’, where we are working in a variety of ways to ensure that as far as possible we look after children where we can make a positive difference to their lives. Our absolute priority remains the security and welfare of all children. Where children can safely be looked after within their own families and communities are developing services to support this. Services to children and their families as part of early help will avoid the need for children to require being looked after later in their lives.

Croydon currently also looks after 387 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (as at 19th Sept). I am equally committed to ensuring that these children have a high quality service from the Council.

I have asked Council officers to develop a full range of opportunities for me and for other Council members to meet with Looked After Children, Care Leavers, foster carers and adopters in the coming months. I am particularly concerned to listen to the voice of Looked After Children, to help inform further improvements.

There is a monthly Corporate Parenting Board where the Director and senior managers meet with children and young people and address any issues that young people raise. We are currently facilitating additional groups for children over 14 and

those 10-14 to increase the engagement of a wider range of children. These start over the summer and I am looking forward to meeting with the children and young people.

The service is also striving to make improvements in the following areas:

- Raising educational outcomes: The Virtual School for Looked After Children is working hard with social workers, foster carers and schools to monitor and drive up performance and outcomes.
- Improving mental health services for children looked after: We are currently working with the Clinical Commissioning Group to improve the mental health services for all children in Croydon, but Children Looked After will remain a priority group.
- We are working with the CCG to improve broader health outcomes for children looked after, by ensuring they have their annual health check (once every 6 months for children under 5).

I am making sure that the above areas combine to make progress, for example by talking to staff, reviewing monitoring data, and reviewing the work of the LAC Strategic Group, which reports into the Children and Families Partnership. I am also making sure that progress in improving the life-chances of our Looked After Children is reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

CQ407-14 **from Councillor Maria Gatland**

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

How many children in care in Croydon are currently missing?

Reply

There are 3 young people looked after by Croydon Council who are currently missing from care.

All three young people are subject to Croydon's Missing Children Procedures, and the Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service is chairing regular strategy meetings attended by the Police and our partners to ensure that all necessary actions are being taken to trace and return them.. The most recent strategy meeting was held on 29 September 2014. There is on-going local and national media publicity, national alerts to all police and local authorities, and also to the Missing Person's Helpline.

Two of the missing young people are in our care as unaccompanied asylum seeking children and the Home Office have also been alerted to initiate their own searches and checks. The Director of Children's Social Care and Family Support has been briefed after each strategy meeting and made aware immediately of any further developments; and in turn the Executive Director of Children Families and Learning, the Chief Executive and myself have been briefed.

The police are actively searching for all 3 young people and all is being done to achieve their safe return.

CQ440-14 **from Councillor Michael Neal**

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Has the Cabinet Member had the opportunity to meet Croydon' school governors?

Reply

Yes. I have met with governors who attended a meeting called to discuss the implementation of the London Living Wage in Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools.

I have arranged to visit some primary and secondary schools within the borough. In addition I have been invited by some Governing Boards to visit their schools and have taken up all offers. It is both a pleasure and a privilege to witness first-hand the hard work that schools in this borough put into educating our children, and I am happy to accept all invitations to visit schools from across the borough.

CQ454-14 **from Councillor Pat Clouder**

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Would the Cabinet Member not agree with me that the damning report released last month detailing how 1,400 children were sexually exploited in Rotherham over a 16 year period is a scandal?

The reports presented historical evidence that the police in Rotherham failed to take sexual violence and child sexual exploitation seriously. Moreover, it was appalling when victims, encountering men who groomed them, years after the crime, were arrested by the police then when they challenged the perpetrator.

Would the Cabinet Member assure me that the issue of grooming of young women for sexual exploitation will be investigated to ensure this is not happening in Croydon? Furthermore, would the cabinet member assure me that this investigation will be carried out immediately as a high priority issue? Would the Cabinet Member further assure me that the police will take all issues of sexual violence seriously and that any reported incident is fully investigated?

Reply

I fully agree that the report on events in Rotherham illustrated very disturbing evidence of a failure to protect children over a long period of time.

For this reason, a report on the situation in Croydon regarding such issues has been commissioned for the Scrutiny Committee in October and will be considered at full Council on the 6th October. This report will set out the current work and the further steps that are planned.

The Council works closely with colleagues in the Police and with other agencies, including the Voluntary Sector. The prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation is a priority for the Children's Safeguarding Board. The Police take seriously allegations of sexual violence against children and ensure these are fully investigated.

There is never any room for complacency in protecting vulnerable children and the role that Council members can play is very important. I welcome your interest in this issue and your commitment to ensure that it remains a high priority for the Council and our communities.

CQ467-14 **from Councillor Oliver Lewis**

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Will the cabinet member for education join me in congratulating schools and students across the borough for their recent GCSE & A-Level Results?

Reply

Reply

Croydon schools and their students thoroughly deserve our congratulations following the publication of this year's examination results.

At GCSE 62.3% of students achieved the key standard of 5 or more A* - C including English and mathematics. Whilst this is a small decline from last year, the national results also declined. Based on unvalidated data (and using the 'best' result candidates achieved as opposed to the 'first' result they achieved), English results remain well above the national average at 71.8% and students and their teachers deserve praise for maintaining these standards in a year which has seen a national decline in outcomes. Similarly maths results remain well above the national average at 68.2% based on 'best' results compared with 'first' national results of 62.4%. More pupils achieved the suite of qualifications that make up the English baccalaureate, enabling them to study the so called 'facilitating' subjects at 'A' level and therefore better placed to apply to Russell Group Universities.

There is further good news to share concerning 'A' level results. A*-A grades are up by 2% as are A*-C grades. This means that Croydon is narrowing the gap with the National average on higher grades. When all grades are taken into account our overall pass rate was broadly in line with the National average. These results reflect the hard work of both students and their teachers who, in some cases, are establishing new sixth forms.

CQ478-14 **from Councillor John Wentworth**

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Could you please update me on the development of the Paxton Free School & Harris Invictus Free Academy?

Reply

All responsibilities for the opening of free schools lie with the Education Funding Agency and the sponsor, not the Council. We do seek to work collaboratively with the responsible bodies to support where we can and to challenge where necessary.

The Harris Invictus Free School opened for its year 7 intake on 9th September. The current accommodation is an arrangement of high quality demountables in a hoarded off area of the former hospital site. Our feedback from the Harris federation is that staff, parents and children have been very positive about the accommodation. The permanent building is intended to be on the remainder of the hospital site. I understand that officers in the Planning department have not yet received a planning application for the school.

With regard to the Paxton Academy, the first two cohorts of children were due to be accommodated in an arrangement of demountables for a two year period at the Streatham and Croydon Rugby Club whilst the Education Funding Agency took forward a plan to provide permanent accommodation at 843 London Road. However, the demountables were delivered late and could not be connected to utilities in time for the start of the autumn term. As a temporary measure the school opened at Lombard House for a 2 week period and were bused to and from the accommodation each day. The children have now spent their first week at the Rugby Club.

CQ481-14 **from Councillor Robert Canning**

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

How many children does Croydon Council currently have in residential care and what steps is it taking to safeguard them from abuse?

Reply

Like all Local Authorities, Croydon places children in residential provision for two main reasons:

- if they are looked after and they need a very specialist placement;
- if they have high levels of special needs that can only be met by a residential placement.

Croydon currently has 13 children who are looked after in residential care. This is an unusually small proportion, compared with other authorities, and represents 1.6% of Croydon's looked after children. Croydon only places children in Units which have been rated as either Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.

The following steps are taken to safeguard those children:

- Children have regular visits from their social worker. The statutory minimum for the regularity of visits is every six weeks in the first year and every three months after that. Croydon maintains the minimum of a social work visit every six weeks. Children are seen on their own during the visit by the social worker and given an opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
- Family members are encouraged to keep in contact with children.
- Every looked after child has a Looked After Child Review on a six monthly basis. There is an initial Review within one month of the child joining the placement. The Review considers whether the Care Plan for the child remains appropriate and also draws together information on their progress in the placement, any safeguarding issues, their educational progress and any health concerns. The Review is chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The child meets separately with the Independent Reviewing Officer as part of the Review. The IRO will have oversight of the plan between Reviews and will also have contact with the child.
- Where children do not have regular contact with a family member, they are entitled to have an independent visitor to befriend them. This service is also commissioned by Croydon.
- Any ongoing concerns about the safety of the child would trigger a strategy meeting between Children's Social Care and the Unit in order to plan to keep the child safe.

Croydon currently also has 31 children with special educational needs in residential special schools outside the borough. While we seek to place all children and young people with special educational needs in local schools, both mainstream and special schools, there is a small cohort of young people up to age 25 with severe and complex needs who require very specialist provision. Placements are reviewed annually as part of the annual statement review and this will continue as statements are transitioned to education, health and care plans. We also take due account of Ofsted inspections of these schools.

CQ483-14 **from Councillor Stuart King**

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Does the cabinet member agree that the Croydon Local Safeguarding Children's Board plays a vital role in protecting vulnerable children in our borough? In light of the importance of this role, and notwithstanding the sensitivities involved in the work undertaken by the board, does the cabinet member agree with me that it is regrettable that apart from the chair, none of the members of the board are publicly identifiable in either the recent annual report or on the board's website?

Reply

I completely agree that the role that the Safeguarding Board undertakes is vital in protecting vulnerable children and in holding all agencies to account for their role. The Board is committed to having a much greater public profile, which is why I welcome the fact that a stand-alone website has recently been established. The Business Plan for the Board, which is available on the website, sets out that one of the priorities for this year is to strengthen engagement with local communities and develop the use of feedback from children and parents.

The website does have an additional document that gives the structure of the Board and its constituent sub-groups. The names of chairs of sub-groups are given. The Director for Children's Social Care is named on the Home page. Contacts and names for the Board Manager and administrator are also available.

Safeguarding Boards are constituted through the representation of agencies rather than individuals and this is an important principle. The list of member agencies is available. However, I do agree with the imperative of openness and transparency in such an important area of work. We will have further discussions to further develop this.

The Independent Chair attended the recent Cabinet meeting that discussed the report. She has also attended the Health and Wellbeing Board and is due to attend CFL Scrutiny Committee in October, along with other members of the board.

CQ484-14 from Councillor Stuart King

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Does the cabinet member agree that transparency in decision making is an important part of holding any organisation - and those in governance positions within them - to account, especially where they are in receipt of public funds and/or undertake such important safeguarding functions?

Reply

I fully agree that such transparency about accountability is vitally important. In respect of the Council, the lead officer with responsibility for children's safeguarding is Ian Lewis, the Director for Children's Social Care and Family Support. Ian reports to Paul Greenhalgh, Executive Director, Children, Families and Learning, who carries the statutory Director of Children's Services' role.

The Children's Scrutiny Committee receives an annual report on Children's Social Care. This was last submitted in February 2014 and this year's report is due to be considered in March 2015.

The annual report of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board has been presented to the Cabinet, to the Health and Wellbeing Board and to the Local Strategic Partnership's Chief Executive's Group. It will be presented to Scrutiny Committee in October.

The Children's Social Care service and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board is subject to inspection by Ofsted on a three yearly cycle.

CQ489-14 **from Councillor Maddie Henson**

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

By making the Town Hall more open and accessible what would be the likely improvements in engagement and interest by young people in the work of the council?

Reply

My hope and aspiration is that by making the Town Hall more open and accessible, young people will strengthen their understanding of the democratic process, be more willing to give their views and become more interested in the potential they can bring to civic life in the future.

I meet regularly with our UK Youth Parliament members and I am heartened by the potential in this area of work.

CQ494-14 **from Councillor Badsha Quadir**

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

How do you see the ongoing development of Croydon Music and Arts?

Reply

The Council is proud of the services to Children and Young People provided by Croydon Music and Arts. No decision has been taken about changing arrangements for the music service.

CQ420-14 **from Councillor Margaret Mead**

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

Following the campaign for Free Health Checks for 40 – 74 year olds in March this year, please state the number of people who took advantage of these health checks and where they attended?

Reply

The free NHS Health Check programme is a mandatory public health service for local authorities which aims to help prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease and certain types of dementia. Everyone aged between 40 and 74, who has not already been diagnosed with certain conditions or have certain risk factors, is eligible for a free check. People will then receive support and advice to help lower their risk of developing these common but often preventable diseases.

A campaign to promote free NHS Health Checks in Croydon took place in March 2014 with advertisements on trams and buses.

Between April and September 2014, 1,919 Croydon residents have had an NHS Health Check:

- 363 people chose to attend a community pharmacy (14 pharmacies are accredited to deliver NHS Health Checks)
- 532 chose to attend a GP surgery (8 surgeries are accredited to deliver NHS Health Checks), and
- 1,024 had their free NHS Health Check at various venues across the borough delivered by a community outreach provider.

A second advertising campaign will begin at the end of October 2014, involving advertisements on Decaux boards, newspaper coverage and use of social media. Both campaigns are part of a broader strategy to improve take up of NHS Health Checks in Croydon.

CQ421-14 **from Councillor Margaret Mead**

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

To meet the predicted increases in demand £650k growth money for people suffering with a mental health disorder and £700k for additional services for young people growing up, were identified in the budget you inherited for this year. Is this growth money still in the budget and can you give an assurance it will remain in the budget to meet future needs?

Reply

The 2014/15 budget does contain 2 growth items as follows :-

- £656K for demographic pressures resulting in an increase in people with complex needs and psychoses requiring higher cost commissioned services
- £700k for Learning Disability – annual additional cost to the adults budgets resulting from young people with complex needs and behaviour coming to Adult's Services from Children's Services.

The budget for 2015/16 is being worked on and all elements of expenditure and income are being reviewed to ensure that our resource allocation is focused on our priorities. I can assure Councillor Mead that we will ensure that these critical services are appropriately provided for.

CQ422-14 **from Councillor Margaret Mead**

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

At the recent Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet meetings, you joined with me in acknowledging the excellent work of Croydon's Adult Safeguarding Board. You mentioned extra plans which are in place to encourage greater confidence in Croydon's BME community to report any concerns of abuse. Please detail what are your additional plans?

Reply

The Croydon safeguarding service works closely with the BME forum in providing bespoke training opportunities to BME groups and communities within the borough. This training focuses on the barriers to disclosing adult abuse within the boroughs diverse communities.

Training is arranged at the BME forum and introduces attendees to the different forms of abuse and how they may present. Attendees are targeted by the BME forum and to date the courses have been heavily oversubscribed.

CQ433-14 **from Councillor Yvette Hopley**

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

I am pleased that you are supporting the Heart Town initiative set up by Cllr Mead and would be grateful if you could list the range of events you have in place across the borough and across the departments for the coming year?

Reply

I am delighted to give continued support to the Croydon Heart Town programme. Heart disease remains one of the borough's biggest killers. The Council will continue to work with its partners to raise awareness, support and enable behaviour change and tackle inequalities in heart health outcomes.

As requested, I attach a schedule of Heart Town sponsored events from September onwards.

Heart Town Events Schedule 2014-2015

Heart Town Events Schedule 2014-2015

Event	Date	Venue	Objective – Fundraising, awareness, branding,	Status
Bag It Beat It	September 2014	Campaign promoted on internal and external Council comms; no promotional material received from BHF to send externally	fundraising	complete
Cycle to Work Day	4 th September 2014	https://www.cycletoworkday.org/what-is-cycle-to-work-day	awareness	complete
CHT logo on all franked Council mail	September - November	All franked mail	awareness	in progress
LAS – Shockingly Easy Campaign business event	16 October 2014	Fairfield Halls	awareness	in progress
Selsdon Education Partnership event	25 September 2014	Gilbert Scott Primary	awareness	complete
Harvest Festival Healthy eating event	Saturday 27 th September	Surrey Street Market	awareness	complete

Heart Town Events Schedule 2014-2015

Event	Date	Venue	Objective – Fundraising, awareness, branding,	Status
Big Launch Event	Monday, 29 September 2015	Braithwaite Hall and Queen's Garden	awareness	complete
School Survey Launch	30 September 2014	Addington Road, South Croydon CR2 8YA	awareness/information	in progress
Stoptober	October 2014	Borough wide	awareness	in progress
Step Challenge (for council staff)	October 2014 (launch Monday 29 th September)	Council venues	awareness; fitness promotion	in progress
Duathlon	November 2014	Croydon Arena	awareness	in progress
LAS – Shockingly Easy Campaign – further promotions	Winter 2014	-East Croydon – the platform -Croydon BID	awareness	planning in progress
National Heart Month	February 2015	various	fundraising; awareness	planning has not started yet
Ramp up the Red	February 2015	BWH	fundraising; awareness	planning has not started yet

Heart Town Events Schedule 2014-2015

Event	Date	Venue	Objective – Fundraising, awareness, branding,	Status
Big Pedal	March 2015	http://bigpedal.org.uk/	awareness	For more info contact Carol Crankshaw at Carole.Crankshaw@cro ydon.gov.uk
Duathlon	March 2015	Croydon Arena	awareness	in progress
Positive Steps MIND walk	May 2015	Lloyd Park	fundraising/awareness	in progress
Ben Nevis 2015	June 2015	Ben Nevis – Engagement team expressed interest for 2015.	fundraising/awareness	planning has not started yet
Council Heart Town summer event	Summer 2015	TBC	fundraising; awareness	planning has not started yet
Vanguard Way Marathon	August 2015	Lloyd Park (start and finish)	awareness; as a HT marathon	planning for 2015 in progress

CQ455-14 from Councillor Pat Clouder

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

In September 2014 MPs approved regulations to allow clinical commissioning groups to form working groups to commission health and social care services for their communities.

There are 211 GP-led CCGs in England, which are responsible for commissioning the vast majority of NHS services and they control a large proportion of the NHS budget.

Could the Cabinet Member tell me if these approved regulations could be seen as increasing pressure on NHS England and some of its local offices in delivering services? Could the Cabinet Member assure me, that in the understanding of the regulations, that this draft order would not take away their local autonomy? Furthermore, can the cabinet member tell me if this could result in CCG, s being force into committees making decisions that may not be in the best interests of our local people?

Reply

Amendments to the National Health Service Act 2006 have been approved by Parliament to enable (a) two or more Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to form joint committees when jointly exercising their functions or (b) for one or more CCGs and NHS England to jointly exercise the functions of a CCG and to form a joint committee when doing so.

It is important that, when necessary, two or more CCGs are able to work together to exercise their commissioning functions jointly in relation to issues that cut across boundaries such as continuing healthcare, or reconfiguration of local health services. Joint commissioning will play a more and more prominent role in the delivery of health services.

However, there was no express provision within the Act to enable CCGs to form joint committees when doing so. This means that CCGs were unable to create a joint decision-making body as their predecessors, Primary Care Trusts, were able to do under section 19 of the NHS Act. This created many practical challenges for CCGs unable to form joint committees to make decisions. As an interim measure CCGs formed “committees in common” in order to exercise their functions jointly. The absence of legislation has meant that CCGs have had to undertake significant work with lawyers to ensure that agreements drawn up to establish “committees in common” meet due legal process. This approach was not only an administrative inconvenience, but an obstacle to efficiency, productivity and value for money. The reforms have addressed these issues.

Similarly there was a need for CCGs and NHS England to be able to work together and to form a joint committee when doing so. A practical example for enabling CCGs to carry out a function jointly with NHS England is where there is need to redesign a service that cuts across both NHS England and CCG commissioned services. Joint commissioning by NHS England and CCGs is likely to become more and more prominent as health services are reconfigured in the most effective ways, and the lack of an ability for NHS England and CCGs to jointly exercise CCG functions, and to do so by way of joint committee, presents an administrative inconvenience and is a barrier to efficiency, productivity and value for money. The objective is to enable

CCGs and NHS England to make more effective decisions where those decisions cross CCG boundaries, or cross CCG-NHS England commissioning responsibilities. NHS England and CCGs can currently exercise jointly NHS England functions, but not CCG functions. This is intended to facilitate more effective commissioning. The policy is also intended to reduce the administrative burden on CCGs and NHS England.

CQ465-14 **from Councillor Oliver Lewis**

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

Is the number of Occupational Therapists in Croydon sufficient to meet the needs of local people?

Reply

There are 30fte posts within the Croydon Occupational Therapy (OT) service which is managed by Croydon Health Services under a Section 75 partnership agreement on behalf of Croydon Council and Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group. The community OT service receives referrals of Croydon residents who may benefit from an OT assessment and the prescribing of specialist equipment or adaptations to enable them to live more independently in their own homes.

Demand for this service is always high and so referrals are screened to ensure that urgent situations are prioritised. The current anticipated waiting time for a non-urgent assessment is 13 weeks, which is similar to OT waiting times in a number of other local council areas. However I can assure you that the Croydon OT service and their commissioners are not complacent about the length of time that some local people may have to wait for a service. Officers are currently undertaking a review of the Section 75 partnership agreement and, as part of that review, will be looking at opportunities to improve the productiveness of the service.

CQ482-14 from Councillor Stuart king

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

Does the cabinet member agree that the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board plays a vital role in protecting vulnerable adults in our borough? In light of the importance of this role, and notwithstanding the sensitivities involved in the work undertaken by the board, does the cabinet member agree with me that it is regrettable that apart from the chair, none of the members of the board are publicly identifiable in either the recent annual report or on the board's website?

Does the cabinet member agree that transparency in decision making is an important part of holding any organisation - and those in governance positions within them - to account, especially where they are in receipt of public funds and/or undertake such important safeguarding functions?

Reply

Yes I do agree that the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board plays a vital role in protecting vulnerable adults in our borough.

With regard to the question of whether Board members should be publicly identifiable it is important to note that, apart from the independent chair, all other Board members are nominated as representatives of their organisation and are fulfilling the role on behalf of that organisation. Hence when considering the matter of accountability it is those actual organisations that need to be held to account rather than the individual who attends the Board.

I am very pleased to report that we have active representation on our Board from the key public sector organisations in Croydon, which are listed in an appendix to the annual report. This provides transparency in decision making and enables local people to hold to account all the organisations that constitute the Board's membership.

The matter of transparency has been raised with the independent chair for her to consider, with Board members, whether further information about the Board's membership could be added to the website and to subsequent annual reports.

CQ391-14 from Councillor Sara Bashford

To Councillor Simon Hall

At the Cabinet Meeting on 14th July 2014, Cllr Hall stated that productivity was increased if staff were paid the London Living wage. I asked him to provide me with the facts to back up his statement. He agreed to provide this but to date I have not received a response. I am therefore requesting by way of this written question for the facts and the source he used.

Reply

The studies referred to below highlight the benefits of implementing the London Living Wage, many of which are directly or indirectly linked to productivity gains.

1) In 2009, independent research on behalf of the Greater London Authority identified the following benefits of implementing the London Living Wage:

- Recruitment and retention of staff:
 - Significantly lower rates of staff turnover
 - Substantial cost savings on recruitment and induction training
 - Employees more likely to stay with organisation
 - Increased tenure of workers and continuity of workforce
- Lower rates of absenteeism and sick leave
- Productivity
 - Evidence of enhanced quality of work
 - Widespread efficient work reorganisation
- Significantly boosted worker morale and motivation
- Improved willingness of workers to implement changes in working practices and in adopting change more quickly.

Source: An independent study of the business benefits of implementing a Living Wage policy in London (GLA Economics):

http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic_unit/docs/living-wage-benefits-summary.pdf

2) Research in 2012, by Queen Mary, University of London looked into the costs and benefits of a London Living Wage. This included examining workplaces before and after they introduced the London Living Wage as well as comparisons with workplaces where the London Living Wage was not paid. The finding from this research included the following:

- Over half of those in Living Wage workplaces (54%) felt more positive about their employment after it was introduced and a similar number (52%) felt more loyal towards their employer.
- The introduction of the Living Wage (LW) resulted in staff leaving rates falling by 25%.

- Companies paying the LW identified improvements in the stability, attitudes and characteristics of the workers.
- Reputational benefits to companies paying the LW were significant, including helping to attract new business/customers and in recruiting staff to professional roles.
- Workers in LW workplaces had better psychological well-being than those in non-LW workplaces.
- Savings from reduced staff turnover (such as recruitment savings and reduced levels of sickness) were low and on average represented 0.3% of overall costs.

Source: The Costs and Benefits of the London Living Wage:

<http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage/pdf/Livingwagecostsandbenefits.pdf>

In addition to the above, there is also research and studies that have been carried out regarding the Living Wage more generally, some of which are referenced on the Living Wage Foundation's website.

CQ414-14 **from Councillor Steve O'Connell**

To Councillor Simon Hall

The Cabinet Member has talked about radical change in how the Council does business and budgets. Can the Cabinet Member update on how residents will be engaged in this process?

Reply

We received a mandate from the residents of the borough in May on our ambitious for Croydon manifesto. This will form the basis on our budget decisions. We are already engaging residents further for example in our plans for culture for the borough. As we develop our proposals further you will see detailed engagement with our community.

CQ415-14 **from Councillor Steve O'Connell**

To Councillor Simon Hall

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on progress on the Budget for next year? Given the significant gap between current expenditure and future income which areas of the Council will be cut?

Reply

I attended Scrutiny last month and set out clearly the size of the budget challenge and our approach to tackling it. The Cabinet and officers are working hard together on proposals with our manifesto guiding our priorities. It is too early to provide detailed options at this stage however we are ensuring all areas of the organisation and our spend will be subject to challenge.

CQ416-14 **from Councillor Steve O'Connell**

To Councillor Simon Hall

Can the Cabinet Member confirm where he will be looking at cutting the 500 jobs he expects to axe over the next 3 years?

Reply

Our approach, unlike the opposition when they were in power, is to be open and transparent.

Given the scale of financial challenge in real terms is over £75m over the next 3 years, due almost entirely to the attack on local government from the Conservative-led national government, it would be unrealistic to say the number of staff employed by the council will be untouched over this period.

Our focus will however be on ensuring we avoid compulsory redundancies wherever possible and reduce the over-reliance on interim staff in some parts of the organisation.

CQ426-14 **from Councillor Mike Fisher****To Cllr Simon Hall**

What is the estimated cost to each school in the Borough (Please list the cost for each school separately) for the introduction of the London Living Wage and how much money has your department set aside to assist schools with this requirement ?

Reply

The table below shows the estimated cost by school of introducing the London Living Wage for schools that the Council holds data for. It is estimated that applying the London Living Wage will increase the pay of more than 400 workers and can be accomplished within schools' existing resources.

School	Total
All Saints C of E Primary School	£306
Archbishop Tenisons C of E High School	£0
Beaumont Primary School	£286
Beckmead School	£4,083
Bensham Manor School	£2,682
Beulah Junior School	£2,225
Coulsdon Nursery	£133
Courtwood Primary School	£717
Crosfield Nursery	£9
Cypress Primary School	£621
Davidson Primary School	£2,067
Downsview Primary School	£3,026
Edenham High School	£1,864
Elmwood Infant School	£491
Forestdale Primary School	£1,135
Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School	£2,106
Greenvale Primary School	£650
Heavers Farm Primary School	£1,841
Kenley Primary School	£1,127
Kensington Avenue Primary School	£4,882
Kingsley Primary School	£7,522
Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School	£1,667
Norbury Manor Primary School	£1,067
Orchard Way Primary School	£595
Parish Church C of E Junior School	£2,130
Parish Church C of E Nursery and Infant School	£2,171
Parish Church Infants and Juniors Catering	£98
Park Hill Infant School	£159
Priory School	£0
Purley Nursery	£0
Purley Oaks Primary School	£4,012
Regina Coeli RC Primary School	£2,454
Rockmount Primary School	£345
Selhurst Centre	£123
Selsdon Primary School	£2,857
Smitham Primary School	£2,230

School	Total
South Norwood Primary School	£1,488
St Andrews C of E Voluntary Aided High School	£134
St Chads Catholic Primary School	£2,403
St Johns C of E Primary School	£33
St Josephs RC Infant School	£0
St Josephs RC Junior School	£385
St Marys RC Junior School	£1,317
St Peters Primary School	£560
The Crescent Primary School	£1,192
Thomas Moore School	£9,145
Thornton Heath Centre	£0
Tunstall Nursery	£110
Winterbourne Junior Girls School	£1,198
Wolsey Infant School	£1,211
Grand Total	£76,858

CQ453-14 from Councillor Andy Stranack

To Councillor Simon Hall

In relation to my question to the last Council meeting (CQ355-14), if the Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury cannot tell me how many key performance indicators make up the 280 contracts with our partners in the private and voluntary sector, can he tell me how he monitors the performance of these contracts?

Reply

The Council has contract management arrangements across a range of services which is developed proportionate to the risk, impact and size of the contract. Some of these contract management performance requirements will be key areas within the Council's corporate performance framework and reviewed at a Cabinet level. Contract management performance of our significant contracts will be reviewed by Cabinet members within their portfolio areas with the relevant Executive Directors, as well as my having an overview of key contracts.

As I explained in the previous answer to the Council question you asked at the last meeting, as part of our manifesto commitments, we have indicated that we will be reviewing the approach to commissioning and procurement because of our concerns regarding the policy direction taken by the then Cabinet Members.

This review will include our approach to commissioning and contract management and key performance indicators we agree with providers (including existing contracts, where in the best interests of Croydon residents). We will ensure we have an approach that is proportionate to the size and nature of the contracts and the risks and complexity of services delivered, thus providing the best deal for Croydon residents whilst getting the best services from our providers. This is why we have identified this as one of the 'Croydon Challenge' workstreams.

CQ460-14 **from Councillor Shafi Khan**

To Councillor Simon Hall

Can the Cabinet member outline the measures taken and progress made so far to implement the London living wage policy in Croydon?

Reply

The Cabinet resolved at its July meeting to implement the London Living Wage for non-school employees by September 2014 and for employees in schools by April 2015. All non-schools Council employees are now receiving a rate of pay that is at least the London Living Wage. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury, the Executive Director for CFL and the Director of Human Resources held a meeting with Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors of community schools to set out the rationale, timeline and estimated costs for implementing the London Living Wage in schools. The feedback received at the meeting and subsequently suggests significant support for implementing the London Living Wage with some schools indicating a desire to implement it before April 2015.

At the same meeting the Cabinet resolved that the Council seeks for existing contractual arrangements to move towards the London Living Wage in an appropriate timescale with, in particular, a commitment to ensure that the London Living Wage is part of any new relevant commissioning and procurement (being guided by the Living Wage Foundation criteria).

Since July, in all new relevant contracts where the payment of the London Living Wage is appropriate, the Council have implemented this policy commitment. This has included the Integrated Framework for Social Care and Health which relates to significant ranges of services within the Social Care market where there are issues in relation to the payment of staff within those markets.

The Council will continue to move forward on this agenda as we believe that people should be paid a decent living wage for the job they do. It makes business sense and is part of our commitment to tackling in-work poverty.

CQ470

from Councillor Maggie Mansell

To Councillor Simon Hall

What are the standards for the call centre answering calls to the council; How is the performance meeting the standards; what action is being taken to improve access by phone?

Reply

The previous administration had chosen to focus on the number of calls answered within 20 seconds. Their target being 80%. This has not been met over a significant period due to the level of demand and the lack of resources made available. Whilst the timeliness of responses has not been as expected, we are very happy that customer satisfaction with the service provided by our customer contact centre which is now at 89% (against 73% in august 2013) and we want to build on this.

We are therefore committed to improving our residents access to services, not only on the phone but also building on current on-line services and the use of new technology such as mobile apps and social media. This will ensure more choice and that the simpler transactions and enquiries can be accessed wherever most suits freeing up resource to ensure those residents needing to call can get a quick and high level service, resolving issues as quickly as possible.

As examples of what we are already doing – we have increased the resources on our dedicated “Don’t Mess with Croydon” telephone hotline to ensure residents can report issues as quickly as possible. We have also developed our mobile app which in the coming days will include facilities to report empty homes and eyesore gardens as well as anti-social behaviour. Very shortly innovative approaches to reporting noise nuisance will also be available.

Ensuring local people are able to resolve their any concerns or questions as quickly and effectively as possible is something very important to us.

CQ471-14 **from Councillor Gerry Ryan**

To Councillor Simon Hall

How will the Fisher black hole for jobs potentially being lost impact on Selhurst Ward?

Reply

Despite the unfair cuts in funding that the conservative led government has given to all local government we still believe in the potential of all of Croydon to be regenerated. Our Growth promise approved by Cabinet last week showed the plans we have for our district centres which we will deliver on

CQ477-14 **from Councillor John Wentworth**

To Councillor Simon Hall

What action is being taken about members of staff who persist in smoking directly outside BWH and also at the back of the Town Hall in Mint Walk? I think it gives a very poor impression?

Reply

Whilst the Council prohibits smoking in its workplaces, it has limited powers to enforce a smoking ban in public areas such as Mint Walk, Fell Road and Queens Gardens. The No Smoking Policy has been updated this month and staff are asked to help maintain a positive and professional image by not smoking in Council uniform or when wearing Council ID badges. Staff are also asked to move away from the boundaries of Council workplace paces when smoking. The revised policy is currently being communicated to staff.

CQ486-14 from Councillor Andrew Pelling

To Councillor Simon Hall

What is the current position on those receiving support from the council's occupational health team on tackling any mental ill health or addiction challenges that they might encounter?

Reply

Occupational Health: The Council engages an Occupational Health service which, in the main, provides interpretation of medical advice to enable managers to make decision about whether employment can continue or not, or whether reasonable adjustments need to be made in the event of a disability/medical condition.

Employee Assistance Programme: The Council also provides Employee Assistance Programme facilities to its staff. This provides 24 hours day, 7 days a week, access to comprehensive online resources, confidential telephone-based and referral where to specialist services which maybe appropriate, for example in cases of depression or addiction. In addition, there is also provision for some face to face support where this is needed. Staff can access these services without going through their line manager.

Mental Health and stress: Additionally, the Council provides guidance on its intranet about how to complete stress risk assessments; and is amending its processes so that managers who are referring staff to Occupational Health for a stress related issues can complete and forward a copy of their risk assessment with their referral. This facility should become available during October 2014 following an upgrade to the Occupational Health IT system.

Over the past year the Council has trained approximately 80 members of staff as Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) to offer emotional support to employees at times of crisis. 35 of those trained have agreed to be part of an 'active list' of MHFAs available to other colleagues.

The Council is also in the process of forming a Mental Health Staff Network under the sponsorship of Dr Mike Robinson.

The Council is also focusing on lunchtime and after work exercise sessions.

Addiction: The Council has not prioritised work on addiction because the staff wellbeing survey the Council conducted suggested the issues of most concern were obesity, lack of physical activity, food and mental health.

CQ401-14 from Councillor Yvette Hopley

To Councillor John Wentworth (Chair of the Pension Committee)

Could you confirm that the reason you fired the two pension advisors is because you didn't like the advice you were given and since taking control of the pension fund in May neither the Chair nor the Vice chair have made any contact at all with any of the investment managers?

Reply

We have not fired two pension advisors. The services of one independent advisor have been terminated, as Cllr Hopley is aware as the council's monitoring officer has written to her on this subject, the independent advisor was originally brought in to advise the Pension Sub-Committee at a time when the Pension Fund was administered wholly in-house and when one firm provided the full suite of services, such as administration, custodian, brokerage and so forth. This represented a concentration of risk and an independent voice was considered valuable at that time to provide some balance. As the position has evolved this, as you will be aware, is no longer the case hence recent change.

The current arrangements provide for layers of independent, regulated advice. We have separate advisors for actuarial services and investment; both companies, AON Hewitt and Hyman Robertson, have extensive resources that are put at our disposal, are authorised and regulated by the FCA and have robust governance procedures supporting the advice they provide. In addition each of our fund managers, and indeed other managers with whom we are not invested, provide advice on the markets and macro-economic landscape. This support and advice network represents an entirely different and more sophisticated structure than was in existence at the time that the independent advisor was originally retained.

A series of meetings with our fund managers has been arranged.

CQ402-14 **from Councillor Yvette Hopley**

To Councillor John Wentworth (Chair of the Pension Committee)

Could you please confirm that the co-opted member attended all the training but the vice chair didn't attend any of the courses or meet with any of the fund managers in the previous year and as a completely new committee no one had received any training or advice in relation to how the pension fund operated before taking significant decisions?

Reply

The Annual report has full details of all formal training undertaken. Training and development of the committee is key, hence the renewed focus on training at both meetings of the committee since May and there is a full range of training opportunities available to all members. The vice chair has been on the committee for over 8 years and therefore has received significant training as part of the committee in a formal way and also through informal or unstructured training, consistent with his professional qualification.

CQ404-14 **from Councillor Mario Creatura**

To Councillor John Wentworth (Chair of the Pension Committee)

One of your first diktats when the first pension committee met was to straightaway fire all the equity managers and your two advisors. When an Independent Board is appointed next year it is almost certain that your office would be in question. I can't envisage any accredited fund manager supporting this clear lack of strategy. Why have you placed your political motivations before the growth of the pension fund that so many Croydon workers rely on?

Reply

The first committee meeting received a report on the performance of our active equity managers and made a recommendation to move to a passive fund based on the continued under performance of those managers which had been discussed for the past 2 years by the committee, viz active fees for worse than passive performance. We are fully focused on the best possible performance of the fund. Achieving good ethics in investment and good returns are not mutually exclusive as the report to pension committee set out

CQ408-14 **from Councillor Luke Clancy**

To Councillor John Wentworth (Chair of Pension Committee)

How will divesting the pension fund of its active equity managers and appointing one passive manager following an index-approach to run that money achieve diversification of risk?

Reply

It has been made clear that the movement of all our equity asset allocation to a passive fund is a short term decision given the poor performance of current managers. We have already set in train a full review of our asset allocation with professional support and the full involvement of all the committee to ensure our risk and return strategy is effective going forward.

CQ409-14 **from Councillor Luke Clancy**

To Councillor John Wentworth (Chair of the Pension Committee)

In the interests of transparency could you publish the recent correspondence between the Independent Pension Advisor (who was recently fired) and the Chief Executive? No paperwork has come to committee in relation to the costs of divesting the fund or indeed the set-up of any future fund management before taking this exit strategy. Why are you refusing to share important information with members?

Reply

There has been no correspondence between the advisor and the Chief Executive. Any commercial information in respect of our investment decisions were in Part B of the Committee agenda. At a high level the transfer to our new passive fund will have minimal costs as a number of the stocks will be transferred to our new manager.

CQ410-14 **from Councillor Luke Clancy**

To Councillor John Wentworth (Chair of the Pension Committee)

The pension committee has not been given any information on the ethical screening of the new fund and it is possible that it will not be able to invest in some pharmaceutical developments that conduct trials on tobacco - such as the new ebola vaccine. Has this potential consequence of the ethical screen been considered?

Reply

The areas screened by the new fund were set out in the report to pension committee.

CQ417-14 **from Councillor Dudley Mead**

To Councillor John Wentworth (Chair of the Pension Committee)

Why did you fire all the equity managers on the pension fund on day one without a full analysis of the risks and discussion with our investment advisors and put the money in one ethical pot? This caused so much concern that the union representative raised concerns several times at committee.

Reply

It was not day 1. The money is in a passive fund with one of the largest fund managers in the world and as you say in an ethical fund which we are proud of and was shown to deliver a greater return over the last 5 years than the standard passive fund. The performance of our active equity managers had been a concern at committee meetings, particularly from our members, for some time. We took the bold decision that current pensioners, Croydon Council staff and residents of Croydon could not put up with under-performance any longer.

CQ418-14 **from Councillor Dudley Mead**

To Councillor John Wentworth (Chair of the Pension Committee)

Why did you go against the advice of the pension fund's advisors who stated that "coming out of defensive stocks" should be further considered and that "strangling the investment managers would strangle the fund"?

Reply

We did not go against any advice. A range of advice was given at the meeting, from advisors, as well as comments from officers and members of the committee (both voting and non-voting). I seem to recall Cllr Mead did not attend but, as he will know, a paper including detailed performance information was presented by officers. A vote was taken and the recommendation agreed.

CQ437-14 **from Councillor Jan Buttinger**

To Councillor John Wentworth (Chair of the Pension Committee)

Why did you fire a senior financial independent advisor who had been with the committee for twenty years and was President of the Independent Pension Fund Advisors' Group and why did you fire the co-opted member, a respected surveyor who advised on the property portfolio, both without consulting the committee?

Reply

In terms of the Co-opted members we felt it was time for a review of the co-opted members on a number of committees. You will also note we have taken a report to General Purposes and Audit Committee to ensure there is a clear and transparent process for future appointments. I seem to recall in opposition we found out about new co-opted members when we arrived at committee. The rationale for the decision on the independent advisor is set out in my response to CQ401

CQ438-14 **from Councillor Jan Buttinger**

To Councillor John Wentworth (Chair of the Pension Committee)

Cllr. Mead and Cllr. Hopley spent a number of days with the investment advisors at the time the initial strategy was implemented, analysing the strategy and programme of investment, in full consultation with opposition members before taking any decisions. Please explain why you did not do the same.

Reply

A decision to change fund managers was taken at committee in the same way a number of these decisions have been taken over the last few years, all members get an opportunity to give their views. As has been made clear a more fundamental review of asset allocation will be taken with the involvement of all of the committee.

CQ419-14 **from Councillor Dudley Mead**

To Councillor Alison Butler

Can the Cabinet Member tell me the number of people who were in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks at 30 June 2014 and 30 September 2014? I appreciate the latter figure may have to be a best estimate.

Reply

On the 30th of June there was 1 family over 6 weeks and on 30 September there were no families over 6 weeks.

CQ436-14 **from Councillor Jason Perry**

To Councillor Alison Butler

Would the Cabinet Member please confirm that at no time have the Queen's Gardens been at risk of being 'taken away' from the people of Croydon?

Reply

The current planning permission for Taberner House significantly encroached on Queens Gardens and included the unnecessary loss of existing mature trees. The proposed layout of the gardens included a semi-enclosed square surrounded by new build, which represented around 20% of the overall area of the gardens. It was clear that the area of the semi-enclosed square would be seen as private, more associated with the residential units, rather than public and part of Queens Gardens.

I am pleased to say that the new design seeks to remove the square and extend Queens Gardens through the centre of the new development up to the Croydon Flyover (A232). The overall area of Queens Gardens should increase by about 12% under this approach, but more importantly should be clearly seen as single public space rather than part private given the new design approach.

I also welcome the increase in affordable housing. Saving the trees, more affordable housing, increased accessible green space – all in all, a better deal for the people of Croydon.

CQ441-14 **from Councillor Michael Neal**

To Councillor Alison Butler

Can you please give me specific details of the locations of the 1800 affordable units you have planned, their planning permission dates and start dates?

Reply

The Council recently issued a press release setting out details of the affordable housing starts in the year 13/14. This was a figure of 800 starts and the Councillor may be referring to this figure. If this is what he is referring to my officers can provide the details that he has requested.

CQ442-14 **from Councillor Chris Wright**

To Councillor Alison Butler

Following the recent comments of Labour campaigners, are our green open spaces and much cherished green belt really safe with Labour?

Reply

Green Belt policy is set out in the NPPF, the London Plan and the Croydon Local Plan. It sets a strong level of protection to such land and only certain specified development that is necessary can be permitted. In other circumstances other material considerations must amount to very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh the strong presumption against development in the Green Belt.

This Council will continue to apply this policy protection to land identified as the Metropolitan Green Belt.

CQ452-14 **from Councillor Andy Stranack**

To Councillor Alison Butler

In light of Labour's PPC's recent comments that we need to 'build in places people might not want us to', can the Cabinet member clarify what this statement might mean for the green fields at the bottom of Gravel Hill and along the Kent Gateway?

Reply

I would recommend that Councillor Andy Stranack addresses his question to Labour's excellent candidate in Croydon Central, Sarah Jones, who is raising the issues that really matter to Croydon people.

CQ456-14 from Councillor Pat Clouder

To Councillor Alison Butler

Would the Cabinet Member not agree with me, that Britain is in the grip of a housing crisis of a sort not seen before? Where even the most unexpected people, are finding themselves' homeless. Every two and a half minutes someone in Britain is threatened with losing their home. This was highlighted in a Panorama Special that follows four stories over five months and reveals the devastating impact of being evicted from your own home and losing everything - from an investment banker sleeping rough in a park in Croydon; to a businessman who lost his company in the recession; and a grandmother who gets cancer, has to stop working and then has her house repossessed.

Would the Cabinet Member also agree with me that in Croydon affordable housing shortage has reached such a crisis point, a family of five has been forced to share a single room is unacceptable? The lack of housing, the impact of welfare reforms and the rising number of homeless people is piling the pressure on private lets which are often badly maintained properties which are also having a wider effect on local communities.

While I understand the cabinet member has only just inherited what is a very difficult portfolio and I look forward to the recent policy decision of the licensing of landlords that I agree will go a long way to improve some of these problems?

However, could I also ask the Cabinet Member to investigate the practice of allowing houses of multiple occupations in Croydon North? These are not the answer to affordable housing but are often overcrowded badly maintained rooms with amenities that leave a lot to be desired and are let for little effort but maximum profit. These often have a quick turnover that damage local community's cohesion and have been allowed in Croydon North and now are widespread?

Reply

Houses in multiple occupation (HMO) are regulated by two areas of work, planning and housing enforcement.

From a planning viewpoint, planning permission is not required for a change of use from a dwellinghouse to a small scale HMO occupied by up to 6 tenants. Permission is required for a change of use from a dwellinghouse to a large scale HMO in which the number of tenants exceeds 6 as this is not in the same use class. As such, the planning service does not have full control over the growth of HMOs. Current planning policy recognises that HMOs can provide a contribution to meeting the borough's housing needs. Each planning application received is considered on its individual planning merits.

From a housing enforcement viewpoint, additional HMO licensing has been in operation for several years which requires landlords to apply for a licence for properties which are occupied by 3 or more tenants. This means that HMOs are inspected and enforcement action taken to require the landlord to carry out works to ensure that HMOs meet the full standard of fire safety and sufficient cooking, bathroom and toilet facilities for the number of permitted occupants are provided. Minimum room sizes, as well as the provision of amenities, are used to calculate the

permitted number of occupants.

Once a property has a licence it is inspected at a minimum of every 5 years, and more frequently if tenants approach us for assistance. Management regulations are in force which are used to ensure that the properties are maintained in good condition, and licence conditions are enforced to ensure that there is no overcrowding.

We are very aware of the need to ensure that people live in safe and suitable accommodation and take our responsibilities in this area very seriously. HMOs provide affordable accommodation for a significant number of people who may have difficulty securing alternative accommodation. Recognising this, the Council actively seeks out HMOs which may be in use but are not licensed to ensure that the accommodation is inspected and brought up to the required standard. Tenants may approach us for assistance in this, the housing enforcement team also work closely with colleagues to exchange information relating to HMOs. We are aware that there are a number of landlords who try and avoid licensing and officers actively pursue these landlords, ultimately by taking prosecutions against them should that prove necessary. Earlier this year there was a serious fire in an unlicensed HMO where two residents were hospitalised. The owner and managing agent were prosecuted for failing to licence the property and on conviction in the magistrates' court both were fined £3,000 and ordered to pay £2,500 costs.

CQ457/458-14

from Councillor Humayun Kabir

To Councillor Alison Butler

CQ457: Can you tell me how many applications are in Band 1A of the Council Housing waiting list: please include a breakdown of in terms of number bedrooms required; How many people were rehoused last year and what was their average waiting time?

CQ458: In relation to my first question, how do you propose to solve this problem and is it your priority?

Reply

Applications in Band 1A as at 31 August 2014 - bedrooms required:

1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4+ beds	Total
91	54	36	23	204

Sixty two households in Band 1A were rehoused to permanent accommodation in the financial year 2013/14. Those households experienced an average waiting time of 2.5 years.

The problem which the Council faces, which has not changed for many years, is that the demand for social housing in Croydon is greater than the number of homes available. This regrettably means that many households face a long wait before they are housed. The Council is however fully committed to maximising the provision of affordable homes. Current actions and initiatives include;

- Council new build –we recently secured funding from the GLA from the 2015-18 programme for 300 homes
- 5 year housing delivery plan – 9,500 housing starts in Croydon over the next 5 years
- New affordable housing requirement of 30% to increase affordable housing delivery.
- Croydon Council Housing Investment Fund which will be able to help address viability issues on stalled schemes and secure additional affordable housing.
- Improve conditions in the private sector through Selective Licensing
- Making the case for Croydon – writing to government ministers and London Mayor explaining the situation in Croydon and making to case for additional resources.
- Establishment of a development company to lever in finance for building new homes but which will not be constrained by public sector borrowing.

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CQ480-14 from Councillor Robert Canning

To Councillor Alison Butler

What estimate has the council made of the number of households who have moved into the London Borough of Croydon from inner London boroughs as a result of the Conservative-led government's changes to welfare benefits?

Reply

The welfare reforms affected over 16,000 residents where in total they experienced a reduction in over £4m in financial support.

Unfortunately it is not possible to monitor the number of customers that moved into the borough due to welfare reform. This is because customers are not required to disclose their reasons for moving and then applying. What is safe to assume is that customers in this group would apply for support through housing benefit.

The table below reflects the increase in housing benefit customers over the last 5 years, which confirms we have seen the smallest increase in customers between April 2013 (when welfare reform was introduced) and April 2014 at 0.5%. However, there has been no reduction in claims despite the work carried out by officers where they have assisted over 3,000 households with solutions linked to budgeting, finding work and moving where appropriate.

	Apr-10	Apr-11	Apr-12	Apr-13	Apr-14
Housing benefit caseload	32,505	34,265	35,872	36,232	36,428

CQ487-14 from Councillor Andrew Pelling

To Councillor Alison Butler

Please set out the schedule of works undertaken at Messer Court in the Waldrons since April 2013?

Reply

A total of 122 repairs have been carried out to the communal areas of this block of flats since April 2013 and a summary of these is set out below.

This list does not include repairs to the 44 individual flats as this would take considerable time to put together from our repairs database and our contractors records.

Mitie were our repairs partner (contractor) up until April 2014 when Axis took over.

Job Type	Work carried out by MITIE or other specialist contractors up to 31 March 2014	Work carried out by AXIS or other specialist contractors since 1 April 2014.	Total
Front entrance door (Melray)	7	8	15
Lift repairs (Elite)	14	1	15
Lighting	14	4	18
Leaks	12	1	13
Communal aerial (Crystal aerals)	15	1	16
Locks	3	0	3
Fire equipment (Fuego)	16	0	16
Roof	4	0	4
Pumps (KGN)	2	0	2
Graffiti	1	1	2
Soil stack	1	2	3
Blocked drains	2	0	2
Signs	1	1	2
Painting	1	1	2
Tank Room	1	0	1
Pigeon mess (Cleanup Solutions)	1	0	1
Gullies/rainwater pipes	1	0	1
Asphalt work (car park)	1	0	1
Rendering	1	0	1

Fire door	1	0	1
Floor tiles	0	1	1
Fence /railings	0	1	1
Door frame	1	0	1
Totals	100	22	122

CQ393-14 from Councillor Sara Bashford

To Councillor Stuart Collins

At the last Council meeting you were asked if the Labour Administration would withdraw from the South London Waste Partnership and you said 'no' because it would cost too much.

Does this mean that all the time you were telling residents that you didn't want to be part of this, you had no idea of the implication of the message you were giving and had never bothered to investigate the situation before you made your comments. This is very concerning as residents thought you would do as you said.

Reply

If you recall correctly your Administration signed the contract leaving no flexibility to pull out and would not allow the opposition to see the contract. You should also recall that opposition Councillors were unhappy that they were barred from speaking at a South London Waste Partnership meeting held in our own Town Hall. The lack of disclosure and public accountability your Administration showed made it almost impossible for anyone to investigate or scrutinise this contract.

Our concern all along was that we disagreed with incineration on sites so close to densely populated areas, that concern remains and has been voiced at the partnership.

With regard to the future, the South London Waste Partnership leads on a range of contractual arrangements for the disposal of waste on behalf of the constituent boroughs and I am aware and supportive of any approach which looks to provide improved and more efficient services and also contribute to our savings targets.

Work has been undertaken by the boroughs that make up the South London Partnership (SLWP) to assess the merits of procuring a range of environmental services in partnership as opposed to procuring alone or retaining or extending existing arrangements, which has suggested significant service savings could be achieved on the collection service alone. It would be right to allow them to undertake this work and I am willing to work with them to see if these savings can be achieved while delivering the services that I want to see.

CQ425-14 **from Councillor Mike Fisher**

To Councillor Stuart Collins

Could the cabinet member tell me how much has been spent so far this financial year on clearing up after travellers?

Reply

There is a perception that all travellers are fly tippers but this is not the case. The Borough experiences a number of different groups of travellers and officers believe that most of them do not fly tip.

Although we suspect that a group of travellers have been fly tipping there has been a lack of sufficient evidence for the Council to be able to prove this beyond reasonable doubt.

Suspected traveller fly-tips have happened many times before this Administration took power, however for the first time an action plan will be put in place at a future Cabinet meeting this year, as I have described in my previous answers.

It has been estimated that each encampment cost approximately £1925 for the Council to deal with. This is not just clean-up costs though and includes officer costs to assess and arrange eviction notices, legal costs, bailiffs, preventative measures as well as clean-up operations.

The Council has been directly responsible for dealing with 37 unauthorised encampments between April-Sept 14. Therefore the total estimated cost so far in this financial year is £71,225.

CQ429-14 from Councillor Phil Thomas

To Councillor Stuart Collins

During the Summer holidays our Borough was subjected to an epidemic of flytipping. As well as our streets subjected to increased fly tipping our Parks and open spaces were targeted. As you have said numerous times you will get the people responsible to Court?

As everyone knows who the people responsible for the mess in Ashburton, Purley and John Ruskin playing fields are what legal action was taken and how many people have been charged and will appear in Court?

Reply

The Borough was not subject to a fly-tipping epidemic and the incidents of trespassers on our parks leaving fly tips was not a new issue. The success of the reporting systems we put in place along with the three new teams meant we were reacting to and clearing fly-tips at a quicker pace. The fact is that the previous administration had made massive cuts and had left us with a massive task, one which cannot be achieved overnight.

The Council have a number of investigations and possible prosecutions under way for fly tipping and whilst I recognise you had no experience of taking prosecution action or how long the process takes, it is common sense that gathering evidence to putting it before a court takes several months not weeks.

Our Enforcement officers are issuing Fixed Penalty Notices every day as well as carrying out weekly visits to shops serving a number of notices on premises suspected of having no contract in place. FPNs and prosecutions are progressing as a result of those proactive investigations and FNP's are up by 50%. You should know that enforcement is not just about taking people to court. We are confident that we will be taking people to court in the coming months but enforcement officers are issuing more fines, more warning letters, more notices and more duty of care visits than ever before so we have significantly increased activity in this area.

Regarding the various parks that you mention, although we may suspect who was responsible the Council has to be able to prove it. We know that it occurred whilst a traveller group were there but without anyone to provide us a statement to the contrary, the group have denied doing it so we cannot take action against them. As you should know, fly tipping is a criminal matter, which means that we need to prove beyond reasonable doubt that a person is guilty of an offence before we can take criminal proceedings against them.

CQ451-14 **from Councillor Andy Stranack**

To Councillor Stuart Collins

I have used the 'My Croydon' app to report fly tipping in Tedder Road, Monks Hill on the 13th, 18th and 23rd of September. Despite reporting this fly tipping on three separate occasions the mess has not been cleared up. In light of this should the Council's new logo be re-branded 'Dump mess in Croydon'?

Reply

Since the launch of the Clean & Green initiative there have been hundreds of reports through My Croydon App and we are now removing fly-tips within 48 hours in some 78% of cases.

This was a particularly large fly-tip and required Veolia to attend on more than one occasion to remove the black bags and then return with a bigger vehicle to remove the builders rubble. All the fly-tipped material has now been removed.

CQ463-14

from Councillor Matthew Kyeremeh

To Councillor Stuart Collins

Residents in Thornton Heath have seen real improvements and the urgency that have been given to streets cleanliness under the new administration. However there still remain some very disturbing hot spots for fly-tipping, especially of bulky items. Can the cabinet member tell us how the "Don't Mess with Croydon. Take Pride" campaign is going and what else is being pursued to deal with the situation in the Thornton Heath ward apart from catching and fining culprits?

Reply

We have made significant progress with the Don't Mess with Croydon Campaign. There is a whole range of activity around and some notable successes including:

- The launch of a media campaign with branding and publicity material. This includes new signage that is being erected around the Borough
- There is a new flytip@croydon.gov.uk email address and the Report it app has been developed to incorporate a wider range of issues such as eyesore front gardens, making it easier for the public to report environmental issues
- We have put in place three additional fly tip removal vehicles and reduced the target time for fly tips to be removed from 72 hrs to 48 hrs.
- We have changed the process for dealing with fly tips, removing unnecessary processes and freeing up officers to problem solve issues and do more enforcement
- We have increased the amount of enforcement with 208 FPNs for fly tips issued since May 2014 compared to 69 for the whole of 13/14
- We have been targeting irresponsible residents, shops and businesses with a series of early morning operations to identify who is responsible for putting out waste illegally. This has included an operation in Thornton Heath
- We have been developing the Clean and Green Champions scheme and will be launching this in October. We have over 100 names of people that have come forward volunteering to take part and are organising our first Community Pride event in Thornton Heath.
- We have been going out with officers and ward Councillors on a series of ward visits so that we can get to the heart of the issues facing the community. One of the first visits was to Thornton Heath
- We have seen a reduction of nearly 600 fly tips for August

All of this suggests that the campaign is working but we are clear that there is still much to do.

CQ474-14 **from Councillor Andrew Rendle**

To Councillor Stuart Collins

Please can the cabinet member for Clean Green Croydon tell me how many FPNs have been issued for fly tipping since he took office?

Reply

We have seen a significant increase in FPNs being issued for fly tipping since I took office as follows:

Month	No FPNS Issued for Fly tips
May	24
June	58
July	57
Aug	30
Sep	39
Total	208

This compares to 69 FPNs for fly tipping for the whole of 13/14. So, it is quite clear that our approach is working and that there has been a significant increase in enforcement activity.

CQ479-14 from Councillor Robert Canning

To Councillor Stuart Collins

A number of green spaces in Croydon, including the Purley Way playing fields in Waddon, suffered over the summer from large amounts of rubbish being dumped illegally - allegedly by traveller groups. What steps is the council taking to identify and punish those responsible and what measures are being considered to make sure that these incidents do not happen again?

Reply

We have a number of regular groups of travellers in Croydon throughout the year. Officers believe that most of them do not fly tip and even the ones that do fly tip don't do it at every site they visit. When we do have a group that we suspect may fly-tip, there are a range of options we can carry out. Our new action plan regarding trespassers on our land who may fly tip includes issuing warning notices informing them that they are likely to be monitored. This both deters them from fly tipping on the site and also covers our obligations around deploying covert surveillance and recording them on site. We can also deploy the high visibility mobile CCTV van when possible to further deter offending.

When people witness fly-tipping and they report it we will offer to take a statement from them. As it is a criminal matter we need to prove beyond reasonable doubt that a person is guilty of an offence before we can take criminal proceedings against them. Whilst we may suspect that a group are involved, we must prove exactly who was involved within that group. Anonymous statements from unwilling witnesses render us unable to take any action except to gather intelligence.

We try to move on illegal encampments as soon as we can. We attend immediately and carry out assessments 7 days a week. We will always try to serve notice to move on within 24 hours unless there are exceptional circumstances within the group.

With groups that we suspect of fly tipping we issue the CCTV warning letter, deploy the CCTV van and will follow up on witness reports by trying to take statements and progress the cases legally. When on parks and green spaces land a review of how access was gained is undertaken and any repairs made immediately. There is also a programme of preventative measures across parks and green spaces to reduce the possibility of illegal encampments in the future.

CQ490-14 **from Councillor Stephen Mann**

To Councillor Stuart Collins

With a major fly-tip taking place in Ashburton ward can the cabinet member please tell us what lessons have been learnt?

Reply

Unfortunately, the incident at Ashburton Park was not unique and Croydon has suffered similar incidents at other locations this year. We believe that that travellers who illegally encamped at this location were responsible but we do not have evidence to prove it. We know that it occurred whilst a traveller group was there but without anyone to provide a statement to the contrary, the group have denied doing it so we cannot take action against them.

However, we know that we need to put in place the warning notice re CCTV, deploy the CCTV van and be highly visible to the groups that are liable to fly tip to deter the offending. We have also started to proactively target waste carrying vehicles before we have actual evidence of fly tipping. This is a trial scheme which the Environmental Enforcement Team have created and are leading on. There are no clear legal guidelines to this process but we hope to establish some best practise to effectively target waste carriers.

In addition at this particular location the Parks were instructed to look at the site security and see if it could be improved without making the access dangerous (ie blocking off completely to allow access for fire/ambulance and maintenance vehicles etc.).