

COUNCIL MEETING: MONDAY 20 APRIL 2015

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Question Number	Question asked by Councillor:	Subject
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CQ194-15 **from Councillor Dudley Mead**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Will the Leader please accept my congratulations on the latest capital value of the pension fund at £805m? To my knowledge this is the highest it has ever been and probably represents 70% plus funding.

Reply

I am delighted with the progress of the pension fund under its excellent new chair, Councillor Wentworth and I would like to place on record my thanks to him and all members of the Committee on this year's successes. I am particularly pleased about early achievements such as withdrawal from investments in the tobacco industry.

Regarding the value of the fund, the latest valuation at 31 Dec 2014 recorded the total value as £804.8m, which in absolute terms is the largest sum it has ever been. Whilst this is indeed encouraging, there is no room for complacency.

As you are aware the pension committee is currently working on ensuring that our asset allocation is refreshed and we will be focussing on the next valuation due on 31 March 2016.

For the future we would like to see increased focus on investment in local ventures that in addition to increasing the value of the fund also provide greater benefits for local people. Potential opportunities include investment in housing to help meet local demand.

CQ214-15 **from Councillor Phil Thomas**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Why have you broken yet another promise to the people of Upper Norwood on the funding of the Library? You gave personal assurances on this funding as part of your election manifesto?

Reply

You cannot be serious. As an exercise in rank hypocrisy this question wins the gold medal. It is less than one year since the Conservative party was hell bent on closing Upper Norwood joint library (UNJL). As you will know this Labour administration is wholly committed to the library's long term success.

Councillor Thomas is mistaken in his belief that the council has withdrawn its funding for Upper Norwood Joint Library. The commitment made by this administration was to match fund the contribution made by Lambeth Council for the financial year 2015-16 and this we have done. We will meet with the community trust in due course to secure the library's long term future.

I feel compelled to say that it's this kind of petty point scoring, twisting of reality and misleading behaviour by Councillor Thomas and other Conservative members which contributed to your party being thrown out of office by the people of Croydon.

CQ232-15 from Councillor Wayne Trakas-Lawlor

To Councillor Tony Newman

St Patrick's Day is an important event in the calendar of the Irish community in Croydon. This year I was delighted to attend the ceremony, with the Leader, the then MP for Croydon North, Steve Reed and other colleagues, that seen the Irish flag being raised over Croydon Town Hall. It was disappointing, however, that there were not representatives present from other political parties in Croydon.

This event was significant as it marked the first time the Irish flag had been flown over the Town Hall in 8 years; recognising the enormous contribution of the Croydon's Irish community - a community I am proud to be a part of. Does the Leader agree with me that this important event is above politics and will he join me in encouraging representatives of all political parties to attend future events?

Reply

I am delighted with the question and the successful re-launch of St. Patrick's Day celebration, at no cost to the council.

St. Patrick's Day celebration is one of many events for which we open up the Town Hall to local people and I sincerely hope that the minority group will join in the celebrations next year.

CQ235-15 from Councillor Andrew Pelling**To Councillor Tony Newman**

As you approach your 21st anniversary of continuous service on the authority what is your judgement on how Croydon council's performance would be assisted by the election of a Labour government?

Reply

I was thrilled to have been here in 1997 to witness the positive impact that the election of a Labour Government made to the lives of people up and down the country. Working together with that Labour Government we achieved real and significant changes, which improved the lives of the people of Croydon. It is an honour and a privilege to lead Croydon Council at a time when we can once again anticipate a Labour council working in close partnership with a Labour Government to deliver services to meet the needs of the people of Croydon. We should not forget that it took the Labour Government in 1997 to rescue the NHS, deliver the minimum wage, build schools for the future and enable devolution for Scotland and Wales.

CQ239-15 from Councillor Andrew Rendle

To Councillor Tony Newman

Has the leader of the council had a look at www.croydon.gov.uk/autism and has he “liked” the Facebook page “Autism in Croydon”?

Reply

I have indeed looked at and liked [Autism in Croydon facebook page](#) and would encourage everyone to do so. Once again I will take the opportunity to thank Councillor Rendle for his ground-breaking work with officers to improve services and opportunities for people on the autism spectrum.

CQ260-15 **from Councillor Tim Pollard**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Does the leader of the council welcome the announcement by the government of £21 million for the rebuilding of a new and larger A&E for Croydon University Hospital?

Reply

Whilst I will always welcome much needed investment in the NHS, I am appalled that we had to wait until virtually the last day of the 5th year for this failed Coalition Government to deliver much needed funding for Croydon. Waiting lists are at an all-time high and A&E remains under severe pressure.

It is quite clear that the NHS is not safe in the hands of the Conservative party.

CQ272-15 **from Councillor Andy Stranack**

To Councillor Tony Newman

Following your commitment at the last Council meeting to have the Monks Hill Sports Centre open to the public by the 20th April can you outline the plans for the grand opening of the new facilities?

Reply

It is this Labour administration that has committed support and funding to enable provision of an excellent and much needed recreational facility for the community.

Groups that have shown interest in using the new facility on a regular basis have been consulted regarding the programming of activities. In addition it is proposed to leaflet local residents advising them about their new facility.

The council has recruited staff to manage and operate the sports centre which will open to the public on Saturday 25 April. We have put a system in place to ensure that any obstacles raised by Quest Academy do not prevent the centre opening.

I am sure as a former Council officer you will join me in thanking the Cabinet Member and current council officers for their hard work in ensuring that this fantastic facility opens as quickly as possible for the benefit of the local community.

CQ198-15

from Councillor Margaret Mead

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

I welcome the excellent news of the appointments of the three Food Flagship schools to increase young people's healthy lifestyles, together with the new school food development officer. Can the Cabinet Member tell me what monitoring is in place and how and when these schools will be liaising with all other schools in the borough to share good practice?

Reply

Each Food Flagship school will be creating their own School Food Plan (with the School Food officer) that will identify areas for development, planned activity, timescales and what the expected outcome is. These School Food Plans will also link to the wider borough priorities around children eating healthier breakfasts and lunches, more engagement in food growing and cooking, having a whole school approach to healthy eating and sharing good practice.

As part of the School Food Plans in each school, the Head teachers will be asked to complete and regularly update a school food checklist and this will be used to track progress over the 2 years of the programme. The schools will also be monitored on the progress of their School Food Plans and the impact of their activity – this will differ for each school, depending on their priorities.

A key priority of the Flagship Programme in Croydon is disseminating best practice, particularly the Flagship schools. Each Flagship school has agreed to share practice at the termly Healthy Schools Coordinators' meetings and they have a target of supporting 40 staff from other local schools over the 2 year programme. Each Flagship school is also required to hold 'open events' where other schools can visit. Additionally, good practice will be shared through a monthly Healthy Schools newsletter, the annual Healthy Schools celebration event and through termly school food training sessions, to be delivered by the School Food Officer.

Flagship schools will collect photographs, videos and case studies as evidence throughout.

CQ200-15 **from Councillor Margaret Bird**

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Schools and Academies maintain their own considerable budgets. Could the Cabinet member tell me how many Schools and Academies do not employ a financial advisor?

Reply

All schools employ staff members who have responsibility for finance, be that finance officers, business managers or bursars. The responsibility for deciding the staffing mix employed is delegated to each individual school.

In addition to staff employed, many schools buy in services from Schools Financial Advisors. This can be bought in from Octavo or other external providers in the market. To our knowledge six schools do not buy in such advice: this is a decision for individual governing bodies.

CQ204-15 from Councillor Maria Gatland

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Following the transfer of staff to Octavo could the Cabinet Member tell me how many officers remain at the Council dealing with schools and their functions?

Reply

In total there are 153 staff members remaining with the Council following the transfer of staff to Octavo in teams which deal primarily with schools and their function. These are comprised of:

- 47 staff (41.1 full time equivalent (FTE)) working in school standards, commissioning, NEET tracking, learning access, SACRE (Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education) and the music and arts service.
- 86 (78.31FTE) staff working with Special Educational Needs and Inclusion: these consist of statutory assessment and SEN specialist teaching services.
- 20 (9.75FTE) staff working in school place planning, admissions and estates

In addition there are other staff who work with schools as partners from other services, including, for example, safeguarding and Early Intervention and Support Services.

CQ205-15

from Councillor Maria Gatland

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Is the Cabinet Member confident that the needs of vulnerable children and young people are being met?

Reply

This is an exceptionally important area of the Council's work and I am pleased to announce that this Labour administration will be introducing mandatory safeguarding and corporate parenting training for all Members in the next municipal year.

To answer your question directly, this is a very broad question. Taking the system as a whole, yes I am confident that the educational and care needs of vulnerable children and young people are being met. I am assured for three sets of reasons, as follows:

1. The robustness of our systems

Our local systems are designed to ensure that we meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people. These include:

- A comprehensive **needs analysis**, such as was presented to the Local Safeguarding Board in summer 2014, enables us to have an overview of need and to make sure that we are planning appropriately to meet that need.
- Our **assessment and referral** systems are designed to make sure that we get to know about the children and young people we need to know about and that we properly assess their needs and provide an appropriate response. The recent strengthening of our systems in this regard includes the implementation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and the implementation of processes for statutory assessment leading to joined up education, care and health plans.
- The **effectiveness of services**: at a time of growing demand due to population increases we keep under constant review the capacity of the service to meet individuals' needs. This Administration is committed to ensuring that this happens, as shown recently, for example, by the growth we agreed in the budget for increased capacity to deal with child sexual exploitation. Both the LSCB and the Children and Family Partnership Board ensure that partners work together to create effective multi-agency responses to the needs of vulnerable children and young people.
- Comprehensive **performance management information and auditing** across services to monitor activity levels, timeliness and quality of response. Different levels of detail of this information is used within services to ensure effective responses, monitored by managers so that any necessary remedial action can be taken, and reported to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board so that partners can hold each other to account.
- **Accountability to Cabinet members** is assured both through my regular 1:1s with the relevant divisional and executive Directors. In addition there

are formal processes through which there is also regular direct reporting by the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding board both to myself as the Lead member for children, and the Leader of the Council.

2. The evidence about quality of service and outcomes for young people

There is a range of information which indicates that young people in Croydon experience quality provision and achieve positive outcomes. For example:

- All of Croydon's special schools and PRUs are judged by OFSTED to be good.
- In summer 2014 the LSCB arranged for an independent audit of work with 73 of the most vulnerable children and young people in Croydon. The findings showed that partners work together well, focussing on improving outcomes.
- Work through the Fair Access Panel has transformed schools' approach to those at risk of permanent exclusion from worst to best quartile performance.
- In the last quarter of 2014-5 general waiting times for CAMHs provision through SLAM reduced from 18 weeks to 9.7 weeks.
- Monthly audits by all social care managers show a sustained trend of improvement in the quality of social care practice.
- Educational outcomes for children with special needs and those entitled to free school meals are relatively good. A recent report by OFSTED shows Croydon to have the 15th narrowest gap of 150 Local Authorities nationally between those eligible for free school meals and their peers in achieving 5 A* - C GCSE's including English and mathematics.

3. My own visits, observations and discussions

Of course it is important that I triangulate the information I am given and told about, with my own experience of visits to the front line so that I can understand the direct experience of vulnerable children and young people. My recent visits over the past few weeks have included visits to two special educational need schools, observation of child protection conferences and visits to looked after children in their foster placements. I am pleased to say that my own visits have confirmed the positive picture painted by the performance and audit information referred to above.

We can never be complacent about meeting the needs of vulnerable children and we are working to strengthen our consistency of response across all types of needs

CQ206-15

from Councillor Maria Gatland

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Could the Cabinet Member tell me if there is a link between children who go missing and gangs?

Reply

Unfortunately, in some incidences there is a link between children who go missing and gangs. This is demonstrated in a number of ways, for example:

- Looked after children placed in Croydon by other local authorities. We have over 500 such children. This occurs for a variety of reasons. One of those is because social work and youth offending teams, the police and courts (and sometimes the young person themselves) believing that placing children 'out of borough' ameliorates gang associations and concurrent risks (but this is not the primary reason for children being placed in Croydon). Currently there are around 30 children known to be associated with gangs placed within Croydon. Not all of these young people are going missing. On occasion, Croydon will also place children outside the area for the same reasons. Croydon attracts larger numbers of children from other authorities because of the high number of foster carers and residential units within our boundaries.

Often these young people are unhappy about being placed away from their associations and friendship groups and return to their home borough. Although approximately 80% of referrals to the Police regarding children missing from home relate to children looked after placed in other areas. It is impossible to say at this time how many of these reports relate to children associated with gangs. Where a child is repeatedly going missing from placement we will write to the placing authority requesting them to review the placement as it is clearly not keeping the child safe.

- Young people who are subject to or at risk of child sexual exploitation via peer on peer abuse often happens through suspected gang influence. Part of the indicators of this exploitation is going missing. These children are usually living at home. Children at risk of sexual exploitation are monitored through the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel (MASE). There are a number of Croydon children and young people who have gang membership who will go missing from home or care.

The Council and its partners work on the link between children going missing and gangs activity in a number of ways, for example:

- The Gangs Team is a well-established unit that works closely with all agencies and develops relationships with young people to divert them from gang activity.
- The Council is strengthening our work with other local authorities who place children in Croydon. The Chief Executive has written to all authorities who have more than eight children placed within Croydon to invite them to develop joint commissioning arrangements to offer improved support to children and their placements and we have begun to develop this work with a pilot group of

authorities. We have asked all these authorities to review their overall arrangements for the placement of children.

- We have reviewed our internal procedures for reporting missing children and for ensuring that there are multi-agency plans in place to secure their return.
- We have also commissioned the NSPCC to undertake 'return home' interviews. These enable the child to speak to an independent person on their return and give their reasons for going missing.

As I am sure you will agree this is an area of great concern not just for Councillors in their roles as corporate parents but for all members of society. We must continue to raise the profile around this area and ensure that more children are found, returned home safely and supported to remain at home, in safe and loving environments. Where this is not possible we must continue to ensure that alternative arrangements are made.

CQ207-15 from Councillor Simon Brew

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Please will the cabinet member advise me what actions have been taken to address the disappointing Key Stage 2 results in a number of schools?

Reply

It is worth remembering that the latest key stage 2 examinations were taken at a time when the previous Conservative administration had been almost entirely responsible for those pupils' education.

Our challenge in Croydon is exacerbated by the Conservative led Government's refusal to fully fund new school places or to fund pupils on an equitable level with other London Boroughs.

However, this Labour administration is committed to delivering the highest standards of education and during the current education year, OfSTED inspections of primary schools have continued to result in an improving picture of schools judged good or better. This now stands at 87% which compares with 64% in Summer 2012.

Since the summer 2014 results we have taken the following actions:

- All schools with low pupil outcomes at KS2 are identified for our vulnerable schools programme, which brokers support and challenge for schools including partnerships with good to outstanding schools. Progress against the improvement agenda is monitored through termly meetings with the senior leadership team and Chair of Governors. Teaching and learning reviews are also encouraged in these schools as part of our traded support. Support and challenge is targeted to address specific issues in reading, writing and mathematics in individual schools.
- We are working with our Head Teacher Advisory Group, which comprises head teachers of maintained, church schools and Academies, to agree and take action on whole Borough priorities for improvement and co-ordinated, collaborative work to address those priorities.
- Support for schools has been provided from the 'Power of Reading' project following a successful bid to the The Mayor's London Schools' Excellence Fund. 35 schools have benefitted from this training and support which uses books to excite and stimulate children's writing.
- To reflect the new assessment arrangements for English at KS2 a programme to support schools has been put in place including frequent moderation cluster meetings and courses to improve teachers' subject knowledge. Courses are also being run to train teachers in the demands of the Level 6 tests in English and mathematics. Specific programmes to support children's achievement in writing are being put in place. Our processes have been held up as models of good practice and we have been asked to moderate other authorities as a result.

- A range of training targeting specific aspects of underachievement at KS2 is being offered, including strategies to support and challenge more able pupils, targeted support for mathematics and improving engagement and attainment in writing.
- The Local Authority has engaged with schools to discuss best practice in developing writing. Advisers have met with a range of schools whose progress in writing has been in the top quartile for the Borough and with those where progress has been in the lowest quartile so that best practice is shared effectively.
- Borough networks and training for English and mathematics co-coordinators support the development of subject leaders in schools. Through the network meetings we are helping subject leaders to analyse their school results and improve provision for pupils not meeting expected standards.
- We are working closely with our three new teaching schools to use additional training capacity to best effect.
- We continue to support a research based gifted and talented programme to support our more able students.
- The school improvement service has worked closely with schools to challenge any underachievement and support improvement, including through partnerships with Academy chains and other good or outstanding schools where necessary. This work will continue through the commissioning contract with The Octavo Partnership. These partnerships are designed to bring about rapid improvement and develop capacity for sustained improvement in standards, quality of teaching and effectiveness of leadership and management.

CQ208-15 from Councillor Luke Clancy

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Is the Cabinet Member satisfied with the range and quality of post 16 education?

Reply

There is a very broad range of post 16 provision in Croydon, covering all sector subject areas, including provision rated Outstanding by Ofsted. We are encouraging all our post 16 providers to work collaboratively to align their offers wherever appropriate and deliver high quality provision to meet the needs of our all our young people.

There is sufficient and appropriate good quality post-16 provision available. This is demonstrated by:

1. **Low NEET rates** amongst our sixth form age residents (students in years 12 & 13) which, as at the 31st March 2015, was 2% (185 young people).
2. **Ofsted view of quality:** In recent years there have been overall improvements in the proportion of provision judged good or better and the current position is as follows: The three FE/sixth form colleges in the borough are all rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted: Croydon College (Good), Coulsdon Sixth Form College (Good) and John Ruskin College (Outstanding). Additionally we have two specialist colleges, Capel Manor College (Good) which provides land-based provision from its Crystal Palace Park centre and the BRIT School (Good) is dedicated to performing arts, media, art, design and related technologies. All five colleges offer both academic and vocational curriculum to 16-19 year olds, and most also provide apprenticeships/traineeships opportunities.

We currently have 17 schools with sixth forms of varying sizes, offering a predominantly academic curriculum but with some vocational delivery in areas such as business, ICT, health & social care and sport. 11 of these schools are graded by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding.

We have no 16-19 provision graded by Ofsted as inadequate.

3. **Alternative post-16 provision:** Numerous and wide ranging voluntary sector, faith and independent organisations offer provision in non-traditional settings and/or work-based learning to Croydon young people. This includes; apprenticeships, traineeships, employability skills, literacy, numeracy, ICT, outreach and engagement, coaching, mentoring and personal skills.

The above leads me to have a significant level of satisfaction about the quality and range of post-16 education in Croydon. The areas which we are working to improve are as follows:

- Demand - We recognise that we have some gaps/shortages in provision for a small number young people for whom existing provision is not suitable. We are

therefore working with a range of partners to maximise the opportunities arising from funding opportunities (e.g. European Social Funding) for the benefit of these young people.

- We are working with schools whose sixth forms are not yet judged to be good or outstanding to support and challenge the pace of improvement, and to encourage collaboration across schools as part of this process. The latter will support the development of specialisms as well as secure provision which is more cost-effective for the providers.

Improvements in provision in recent years and the work being undertaken as described above will have the impact of continuing to secure the trend of improvement in higher level grades achieved by providers in Croydon.

CQ237-15 from Councillor Joy Prince

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Can you please provide an update on the proposal for a new primary school in Waddon?

Reply

The site for the proposed new primary school is at the junction of Purley Way with Propeller Crescent, near to the Fiveways junction and Waddon Leisure Centre. This site will allow for a new build school with access to green space and sports facilities. The academy sponsor is Oasis Community Learning and the new school will be called "Oasis Academy Fiveways".

The Council has commissioned a feasibility study for the new site at Fiveways and a draft version was recently presented to officers and the academy sponsor. This showed how the new school could fit onto the available site. The next stage is to appoint the main contractor so that surveys can be carried out and design development commence. Subject to planning permission, construction should start on site in early 2016.

The new school opens in September 2015 and will be temporarily housed in the Long Lane campus of Oasis Academy Shirley Park. A bus will carry children each day from a point in central Croydon to Shirley Park until September 2016 when the school will move to the new permanent site.

As with all new schools, the initial intake will only be Year R (Reception Class) in the first year, Year R and Year 1 in the second year, and Years R, 1 and 2 in the third year. This will continue a year group at a time until the school is completely full. Because the size of the school must accurately reflect demand in the local area, the school will start with 3FE (forms of entry; 30 children per form) which means a total of 90 children. This will expand in 2017 to 4FE (120 children each new school year). This is set out in the table overleaf.

Because Fiveways junction is intended to benefit from TfL investment in highways improvements, direct conversations will take place between officers and TfL to ensure that the school's needs are taken into consideration and that its impact on the local community is not detrimental. Other measures will include retaining existing trees at the front of the site in order to provide a green screen and maintain air quality. The provision of additional pedestrian entrances to the site is being explored, and parking in the local area will be discouraged by Oasis through implementation of a sustainable travel plan.

Pupil numbers at Oasis Fiveways

Year	Total no. of children	Year Groups	Location	Notes
2015	90	90 YR only	Oasis Shirley Park	
2016	180	90 YR 90 Y1	Waddon site	
2017	300	120 YR 90 Y1 90 Y2		Expands by 1 FE (30 children)
2018	420	120 YR 120 Y1 90 Y2 90 Y3		
2019	540	120 YR 120 Y1 120 Y2 90 Y3 90 Y4		
2020	660	120 YR 120 Y1 120 Y2 120 Y3 90 Y4 90 Y5		
2021	780	120 YR 120 Y1 120 Y2 120 Y3 120 Y4 90 Y5 90 Y6		
2022	810	120 YR 120 Y1 120 Y2 120 Y3 120 Y4 120 Y5 90 Y6		
2023	840	120 YR 120 Y1 120 Y2 120 Y3 120 Y4 120 Y5 120 Y6		School reaches capacity

CQ273-15 from Councillor Andy Stranack

To Councillor Alisa Flemming

Can the Cabinet Member update me of the progress of the review "Are We Looking after the Right Children?"

Reply

Looking After the Right Children' is a series of projects aimed at ensuring that, as far as possible we concentrate our resources on the children for whom looking after them will have a genuinely positive impact on their lives.

It is aimed at 'local' Looked After Children, rather than those who become looked after through presenting as Unaccompanied Minors.

This is being achieved through a number of approaches, for example:

- Ensuring that we improve early intervention services to support families keep children at home.
- Sound management oversight of all decisions to accommodate children
- Review of all children looked after through voluntary arrangements to assess whether they can be safely returned home
- Use of Family Group Conferences to look at the strengths of extended families to support children at home
- Maximising the use of adoption and special guardianship to support permanent arrangements outside the Looked After Children system.

The number of local or indigenous Looked After Children was 424 at 31.03.14 and rose by June to 447. The number at 31.03.15 was 397, which shows an overall reduction of 27 through the year. This does represent good progress. This is a three year project overseen through Croydon Challenge.

The total number of children looked after is 802, as the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children has risen from 365 to 405 in that period.

Although the national figures show that Croydon has a high rate of Looked After Children compared to statistical neighbours, the impact of the Unaccompanied Children means that this figure is unrepresentative: when only considering local Looked After Children, the figure is relatively low as a proportion of the overall population.

CQ190-15

from Councillor Sara Bashford

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

I am aware that a planning application will be submitted to change the use of the 4th floor of Central Library to office use. This question is not related to the planning issue, so I hope that won't be a reason not to answer my questions. However, I am aware that the lease has been agreed before the planning decision has been made.

I would be grateful to know

- A) If planning permission is not granted is there a clause in the lease to ensure Croydon has no liability. If there is can you please provide it.
- B) Is the rate being paid by Octavo a commercial rate
- C) Can you please provide details of the amount Octavo will be paying over the 5 year lease period and what that equates to per sq ft.
- D) I have been made aware that the space Sport London are vacating will be held for potential expansion or alternative use. Can you please let me know if you have any plans and when the space will be advertised to obtain revenue from it, as I am aware there are many organisations wanting this type of accommodation.

Reply

The 4th floor of the Library was built to service a professional library service for the borough. Since you sold off our Libraries to a company in the construction industry, our libraries are now run from another part of London.

It is important to protect and develop our cultural assets and to that end we are currently beginning a piece of work that could restore the Clocktower to its rightful place as a busy cultural asset for the borough. That work will include all 4 floors of the Library, the Braithwaite Hall, David Lean Cinema, Museum, Achieve, Local Studies and Galleries.

- A. The lease will not complete until planning permission is obtained. A letter of comfort for Octavo's current occupation is being finalised. If planning permission is not obtained Croydon will provide alternative accommodation at Davis House at a suitable rent.
- B. Please see answer to C.
- C. £58,000 per annum. This is an inclusive figure including rent, service charge, business rates and utilities. This breaks back to a rental level of approximately £8 per square foot. The element for service charge and utilities increases annually by RPI.
- D. We are currently exploring the options for the remaining space on the 4th floor that has recently been vacated by London Sport.

CQ217-15

from Councillor Lynne Hale

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Re – Ambitious for Parks and Open Spaces Will the Council continue to enter Croydon parks and open spaces in the prestigious ‘Green Flag’ awards scheme?

With the loss of an identified green spaces officer to support them - how will the Council continue to support charities such as the Eleanor Shorter Fund to make a positive contribution in managing our parks and green spaces?

At the recent Community workshop, questions arose in relation to organisations such as Residents and Friend’s groups taking control of individual parks and their budgets. Attendees indicated that they would need to know the budgets for individual parks and open spaces before they could consider taking this forward. If such separate budgets exist, please list them. If not currently available, when would you expect to have such budgets in place?

Reply

The recent attendees at the Ambitious for Parks and Open Spaces event were keen to see the establishment of a Borough-wide Friends Group Forum, and as agreed at the meeting this will be implemented later this year.

It was evident at the meeting that across the Friends Groups there is a diverse range of skills, knowledge and experience that can be shared across all Friends Groups. This will lead to new opportunities for Friends Groups working within their local communities and also enable the exploring of existing council budget provision for the service and also any external funding options.

By working in partnership with Quadron, our grounds maintenance contractor, they have submitted this year’s applications for Green Flag status and we await the results of the judges deliberations in due course.

I am keen that we bring as much transparency to both the Parks budget and contract and am currently working with officers to achieve that aim. This is being done in tandem with producing a parks strategy that will draw together all the existing excellent work being done across the borough as well as the opportunities. This plan will enable both the parks department and friends groups to be in a better position to target external funding as well as demonstrate the importance of Parks and Green Spaces to the well being agenda and other strategies such as Heart Town.

Once we have the Parks Strategy in place it will be far easier for friends groups to see what resources we have available and how they can add significant value.

Volunteers are vital to this, as they are for Nature Conservation.

CQ218-15 **from Councillor Lynne Hale**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Re - Library services

What changes are being proposed for library services in this financial year? Will there be any reductions in the budget which will be likely to lead to closures of any libraries and are any changes to library charges being made?

Reply

I am very pleased to be able to say that there will be no reductions in the library budget this year. There are no plans to close any libraries. The last library to close was under the previous Conservative Administration, when they closed the Mobile Library.

Yes, library charges are reviewed and adjusted periodically to reflect costs and bring them in line with other library services. For the 2015/16 13 charges have decreased, 4 charges have remained the same and 10 have increased. A new charge to cover the cost of events and activities such as author events has been introduced.

2015-16 FEES AND CHARGES**DEPARTMENT NAME: PEOPLE****FEE OR CHARGE CATEGORY: LIBRARIES ***

FEE OR CHARGE DESCRIPTION	2014-15 CHARGE PER UNIT	2015-16 CHARGE PER UNIT
	£	£
HIRE CHARGES		
Talking Books (set of up to 4 cassettes) 3 weeks	0.50	1.00
Talking Books (set of up to 5 cassettes) 3 weeks	1.10	1.20
Talking Books (CDs) 3 weeks	2.20	2.20
N.B. Childrens talking books are issued free and no charges are made to registered disabled		
Music CD (single) 3 weeks	1.20	1.10
Music CD (set of 2 or more) 3 weeks	2.50	2.20
Language Course (single CD + book) 3 weeks	0.70	1.50

Language Course (2 or more CDs + book) 6 weeks	5.10	2.50
DVD - Adult 1 week	2.20	2.20
DVD - Children 1 week	2.20	1.40
N.B. Children DVDs will be on promotions over school holiday periods		
Photocopying Charges		
Black & white A4 per sheet	0.12	0.15
Black & white A3 per sheet	0.24	0.25
Colour A4 per sheet	1.10	0.25
Colour A3 per sheet	2.20	0.50
Reservation Charges		
Books, music CDs, talking books & language courses (per item)	1.10	0.00
Inter Library loans	3.00	4.00
British Library and specialist libraries loans	10.60	11.15
DVDs - in stock only (per item)	2.20	0.00
Periodical Articles (per item)	1.10	6.85
Periodical Articles charge per A4 sheet	0.12	0.00
Periodical Articles charge per A3 sheet	0.24	0.00
N.B. There is no charge for reserving large print books or childrens' books		
Lost Tickets		
Adult	2.10	2.15
Children under 14	1.00	1.00

Overdue Charges		
Books, music CDs, talking books & language courses - up to a maximum of £5.00	0.20	0.20
Childrens books and talking books (age 5-15)	0.05	0.00
DVDs	2.20	1.00
Printouts from People's Network		
Per black & white sheet A4	0.12	0.15
Per colour sheet A4	1.10	0.25
	Library member	non member
Film Club refreshments	1.50	3.00
Craft activities for Adults (covers cost of materials and refreshments)	1.50	2.00
Ticketed author talks specialist speakers for adults*	1.50 - 3.00	3.00 - 5.00
* depending on cost of speaker		

April 2015

CQ219-15 **from Councillor Lynne Hale**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Please advise what actions will be taken to support Fairfield pending the delivery of the full College Green and Fairfield Halls Development.

Reply

Thank you for your question:

The Council has now appointed locally based consultancy Mott MacDonald and architects Rick Mather, renowned for working on some of the biggest theatres in the country, to oversee the design of the redevelopment of College Green including the Fairfield Halls development.

The project team's objective will be to deliver a planning application for the College Green area, which will include the full refurbishment of the Fairfield Halls.

Fairfield Halls are a key stakeholder in the development. They sit on the project board and will continue to do so through the scheme.

We are working closely with them to identify and prioritise early works to be delivered over the summer of 2015. Further to this, the main works will be phased over the next 2 to 3 years to support the business.

CQ252-15

from Councillor Vidhi Mohan

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Could the Cabinet Member please explain why the Labour Administration broke their promise to the Upper Norwood Joint Library and cut their funding after the first year?

Reply

Thank you for your question; it gives me the opportunity to update Council on the future plans for Upper Norwood Joint Library.

I welcome Councillor Mohan's sudden interest in the Upper Norwood Library and am only sorry that he didn't oppose the behaviour of the previous council administration in seeking to firstly cut and secondly end funding for Upper Norwood Library.

I am very pleased to confirm that we have fully met our election pledge on Upper Norwood Library and did so from 1st October 2014 when we match funded Lambeth Council, a considerable increase from the Tory Councils funding level.

I can confirm that like Lambeth, Croydon has to make significant cuts to front line services because of the ongoing cuts from the Tory led Government.

The two Councils have been working together to support Upper Norwood Library. This has enabled us to respond to a request from the Trust to confirm the next three years of funding.

Each Council will be providing:

In 2015/16 this is a funding allocation of £125K.

In 2016/17 this is a funding allocation of £50K.

In 2017/18 this is a funding allocation of £50K.

In addition the trust will be able to apply to a specific fund for services for Lambeth residents. In keeping with our election pledge we would look to mirror this for extra services for Croydon residents.

Alongside this we are working with the Upper Norwood Library Trust to support the process of the building and library management transferring to them. The Trust will be able to access a range of different grants and sponsorship opportunities to support the library. In addition, they have plans to use the library space flexibly to generate income.

I have confirmed to the Trust that Croydon Council will look favourably on any capital requirements that will be necessary to ensure the Trust can make the best use of the building for a flexible Library service.

I am confident that this approach coupled with funding from the local authorities will secure the library for the future.

CQ267-15

from Councillor Badsha Quadir

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Your paper at the 16th March Cabinet Meeting stated that ‘There is a risk that sufficient sponsorship might not be achieved to deliver your ‘Ambitions for Culture’ events. What steps are being taken to protect the public purse and/impact on the provision of other Council services, should this be required?’

Reply

I can confirm that arrangements for the re founding of the Summer Festival are going very well and that everyone involved has real ambition for this Town. Sadly the previous Summer Festival was cancelled by people who had no ambition for this Town of ours.

I would refer Councillor Quadir back to the Cabinet paper “Ambitious for Croydon, Ambitious for Culture”. The reference to “there is a risk” that sufficient sponsorship might not be achieved” referred specifically to the Cycle Tour Series Road Race, not culture events in general.

Nearly all of the £111k required funding indicated in the report is now secured, coming from a range of sponsorship, grant funding (LIP) and ‘in-kind’ support from our contractors. One of the prime reasons for hosting the event is to encourage more people to cycle and exercise for fun, sport or as part of their daily routine, in order to combat the rising tide of ill health resulting from increasingly inactive lifestyles. This in turn is intended to help limit the call on Council and health services and the consequences for the public purse resulting from obesity and health problems associated with sedentary lifestyles. We will be running parallel activities to further encourage people to get cycling and to get active but it is also about allowing the people of Croydon to come together to enjoy an exciting spectacle and one that will showcase Croydon across the nation and Europe.

With regard to the other cultural and leisure activities and events outlined in that report, I can confirm that these will be delivered within the budget assigned, as outlined in the report.

CQ274-15 **from Councillor Andy Stranack**

To Councillor Timothy Godfrey

With parking at the front of Fairfield Halls Closed off, how can blue badge holders get easy access to the facilities?

Reply

After years of empty Conservative promises and underinvestment in the Fairfield Halls, I am delighted that this Labour administration is transforming this cherished cultural landmark. Opening up the front of the building and improving the surrounding environment are part of a package of improvements that we have prioritised for the Fairfield Halls. In turn, this is just one part of our ambitious programme for local arts and culture following the cultural vandalism and neglect of the previous Conservative administration.

Of course, accessible parking facilities are important and 20 spaces on the forecourt are available for blue badge holders at no charge, although these spaces must be booked in advance. This can be done through the box office.

Further alternative parking includes:

- Fairfield Halls multi-storey car park (operated by NCP); there are lifts to the various levels at the part of the car park near to the law courts. The underground part of the car park can be accessed via a pedestrian ramp onto the large footway area near Park Lane close to the entrance to Fairfield Halls
- Fell Road; there are dedicated disabled bays (3 hour maximum stay) close to Katharine Street which is a reasonably short distance to the Fairfield Halls via the new surface level pedestrian crossing of Park Lane
- College Road; there are spaces available in the on-street bays which is a short distance to the Fairfield Halls
- Chatsworth Road / Friends Road area; there are parking bays and yellow lines (3 hour maximum stay for blue badge holders) with level crossing points to Fairfield Halls

CQ213-15 from Councillor Phil Thomas

To Councillor Kathy Bee

As our roads are now reverting to pot holes where do you expect to get the extra funding from to make up for the draconian cut in the roads budget for 2015/16 ?

Reply

The council's budget has been slashed by the Conservative led government and as a result the council has less to spend. I would prefer it if we did not have to make cuts in any of our services but with the continuing onslaught on local authority funding there is simply less money available.

Despite the massive cut to the council's finances we are still managing to invest to reverse your administration's failure to keep our streets clean; to create school places, to develop new housing, and continuing to invest in our highways, although at a lower level.

In order to maximise the effectiveness of the funds that we have the highways team has undertaken condition surveys of the borough and have worked up a programme to prioritise the immediate reconstruction of roads where they have failed. We have a separate programme for introducing preventative interventions such as surface treatments to seal the roads and therefore extend the life expectancy and minimise the number of potholes that may appear following adverse weather.

Officers are also working with the London Technical Advisory Group (LoTAG) to develop and share good practice, this will assist us in ensuring we maximise the benefits with the budget we have.

CQ222-15 from Councillor Jamie Audsley

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Cllr Bee, please can you outline work you are doing to support the growth of community owned energy?

Reply

The council has researched how community owned energy schemes could work and recently met with Lambeth Council to understand their role in facilitating the community led Brixton Energy solar schemes.

However, to date the council has not been involved in promoting community owned energy within the borough. In part this is because the council has had no enquiries from any community groups expressing an interest in, or seeking guidance for, such schemes. We would welcome interest in this type of project and would work to support a group wanting to develop community owned energy.

If you have any further enquiries relating to this you can contact the sustainability team at Sustainability@croydon.gov.uk.

CQ226-15 from Councillor Shafi Khan

To Councillor Kathy Bee

On Selhurst New Road, new street lighting has been in place for well over a year, yet the old lighting is still to be removed. Would it be possible to have an indication of when this will be dealt with, and is such a delay also the case in other parts of the borough?

Reply

Approximately 70% of the old street lighting is supplied by an independent cable network which is over 70 years old which is owned by UKPowerNetworks. This independent network is currently in the process of being decommissioned as part of this project and in order to do this without effecting neighbouring streets the decommission must be completed in sections. To maintain the overall integrity of this cable network whilst it is decommissioned there are strategic columns within streets that supplying electricity to other street lighting in the ward therefore, it is necessary to leave some columns remaining as these act as "feeder pillars". These feeder pillars will have stickers attached to confirm what it is and a contact number should residents have any queries.

With regards to the old street lights in Selhurst New Road these are planned to be disconnected and removed by the end of May 2015. There is a need to retain 2 of the old lights as these are needed to provide an electricity supply for adjoining roads, these will be labelled as feeder pillars. As soon as it is practically possible these feeder pillars will be removed.

CQ233-15 from Councillor Andrew Pelling**To Councillor Kathy Bee**

Ernest Taberner OBE was a most influential town clerk for the Corporation serving from 1937 to 1963. With the demolition of Taberner House could Taberner's name be added to the list of prospective appellations for street names such that Taberner's significant contribution to war time and post war Croydon can continue to be recalled?

Reply

Thank you for this suggestion the name Taberner is now on our list of potential names for new streets and buildings within the borough.

CQ234-15 from Councillor Andrew Pelling

To Councillor Kathy Bee

What reflections do you have on the proposals to alter traffic flows at the Purley Way/Croydon Road junction after the closure of the TfL consultation on its two proposed options for change?

Reply

TfL should be congratulated for running a successful consultation and allowing people to be engaged in the early stages of the process to develop designs for Fiveways. I have had some early feedback. It appears that over 800 responses were received. The consultation was running in parallel with and concluding before the technical assessment of the two options.

5 ways junction is well known as very difficult junction for pedestrians, cyclists; both the junctions covered by the consultation present significant barriers to East/West cycling to and from Croydon. I am keen to see the option that delivers the most for the people of Waddon in terms of improved public realm at Fiveways and walking and cycling being made easier, taken forward. I am looking forward to seeing the full results of the consultation and to hearing what the residents of Waddon think about the proposals.

CQ236-15 from Councillor Joy Prince

To Councillor Kathy Bee

What has been holding up completion of the street lighting programme in Waddon, and when is it likely to be finished including removing the stumps?

Reply

Approximately 70% of the old street lighting is supplied by an independent cable network which is over 70 years old which is owned by UKPowerNetworks. This independent network is currently in the process of being decommissioned as part of this project and in order to do this without effecting neighbouring streets the decommission must be completed in sections. To maintain the overall integrity of this cable network whilst it is decommissioned there are strategic columns within streets that supplying electricity to other street lighting in the ward therefore, it is necessary to leave some columns remaining as these act as "feeder pillars". These feeder pillars will have stickers attached to confirm what it is and a contact number should residents have any queries.

The delay to the roll out of the street lights and the completion of Waddon ward is due to the nature of the triple concentric main in the northern part of Croydon. UK power networks retain the responsibility for 'jointing' to this network (connecting new lights) and have so far failed to carry this out at the rate required to keep up with the delivery programme. The Council and Skanska have been working to improve the situation and are continuing to pressure UK power networks to enable a higher rate of jointing.

The current programme shows Waddon ward expected to be completed by February 2016, Council officers continue to work with Skanska to identify efficiencies and maximise the performance of the replacement teams. As the programme progresses forward ward councillors will be kept up to date via monthly communication. Working in parallel with the replacement programme is the decommissioning of the old independent cable network and it is the intention to remove all stumps by the ward completion date, however it is important to note that to maintain the integrity of the network, some stumps may need to be kept whilst adjoining streets/wards are worked on, but it is the intention for these to be removed as soon as practically possible.

CQ242-15 from Councillor Pat Ryan

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Would Cllr Bee agree with me that stronger enforcement is key to helping resolve increasing tensions between residents and parents over parking and general etiquette at school drop-off times? What steps are being taken to address these ongoing problems?

Reply

There are a number of ways in which to address parking etiquette around school. Currently there are over 70 primary schools within the borough and it is not possible to enforce all schools every day. However this is a priority for officers within our parking enforcement teams during this time period and if there are any concerns at a particular school then some concentrated enforcement can take place over a short period to address this. The presence of the CCTV vehicle on a rota basis is in place to enforce and act as a deterrent for the school clearway and safety of children can help with this.

A more long term solution is to work with the schools with regards to their travel plan to minimise the number of parents/guardians that drive to schools. I would encourage all councillors to raise the profile of travel planning with the schools in their wards if they have concerns about parking at drop off and pickup time.

CQ247-15 **from Councillor Jan Buttinger**

To Councillor Kathy Bee

We have a considerable number of winter damaged road sections in Kenley.

How does the system for repairs work?

Is there a rolling programme or do only the reported sections of roads get repaired?

Are there certain criteria to meet before repairs are made and are there still some emergency repairs carried out within 24 hours?

Detailed information on this matter would be very helpful for us to pass onto our residents.

Reply

The Highways inspectors inspect all highways within the borough on a rolling programme with roads currently being inspected on a maximum frequency of every 6 months with the exception of district centres which are inspected on a monthly basis.

Carriageway defects are assessed against industry standard intervention levels which determines response times, these can be 2hours, 24 hours, 7 days, 28 days or planned works. We also respond to reports received from the public and deal with these as they arise as well as dealing with defects that we come across on an ad hoc basis.

In addition to this the Council also has a forward works programme, this programme is established using condition data gathered during the year and roads are prioritised based on condition

Details about how to report road defects can be found by following the link below to the council website;

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/transportandstreets/rhps/highwayres>

CQ251-15 from Councillor Chris Wright

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Will the Cabinet Member please consider relaxing the embargo for parking two wheels on the pavement in Closes where access is difficult and a majority of residents of the Close are in favour?

Reply

The Council is committed to preserve footways for their intended use by pedestrians, including wheel chair users and those with push chairs. However, there are some roads in the Borough where it is accepted that due to the narrow width and high demand in parking, footway parking can help residents and exemptions to the footway parking ban have been put in place with signs and lines indicating where footway parking can take place. There are other roads with similar circumstances where enforcement of the footway parking ban has been suspended. In these roads we are actively introducing signed schemes where feasible or re-commencing enforcement once residents have been informed and reasonable notice has been given.

Cul-de-sacs would be treated in the same way as these are also used by pedestrians who may otherwise be forced to walk into the carriageway to avoid an obstructive vehicle and be placed at risk. It is important that exemptions to the footway parking ban are only granted where the carriageway is particularly narrow and where footways are sufficiently wide to introduce marked bays for parking with a minimum of 1.2 metres retained for pedestrians. Relaxing the embargo for enforcement in cul-de-sacs (where residents agree) could result in obstruction of the footway and an inconsistent footway parking policy causing driver confusion.

CQ253-15 from Councillor Vidhi Mohan

To Councillor Kathy Bee

As the Cabinet Member responsible for the environment, can you assure residents of Norbury Avenue that there will not be any more felling of mature trees on the land adjacent to Norbury station, and that this vital community amenity will be preserved?

Reply

The piece of land in question is privately owned and therefore not managed by the Council. There was an area Tree Preservation Order (TPO) put in place on this piece of land in 1989. However not all trees within the area are preserved by the TPO, it only protects the trees specified within that area, at the time of making the order. As a result any new, self-sewn or planted trees that grew after the order was made would not be protected and therefore not covered by the aforementioned TPO.

Whilst I sympathise with residents and their fellow neighbours, if the trees are not preserved the council cannot stop the owner removing them if they wished to do so. I have spoken with one of the Council's tree officer's who carried out a site visit prior to the felling taking place, where he confirmed that the land owner could remove the tree's in questions as none were covered by the TPO. He has since carried out a visit and confirmed that no trees covered by the TPO were removed.

CQ254-15 from Councillor Vidhi Mohan

To Councillor Kathy Bee

Can the Cabinet Member give me an update on how the public consultation on introducing 20mph zones is progressing? What proportion of residents have responded to your online consultation to date?

Reply

The public consultation for the 20 mph proposal is yet to start, it is due to commence on the 13th May 2015. In the 2-3 days prior to the start of the consultation the council will attach street notices throughout the consultation area.

The street notices will provide information which will direct interested residents/businesses to a web page, which will contain detailed proposal information and a map of the area being considered for the 20mph proposal. The map itself will show which roads are being considered for the 20mph and which roads will remain at 30mph.

The web page will also contain an on-line questionnaire for residents/businesses in the consultation area to fill out electronically.

The consultation starts on 13 May and concludes on 24th June following which the results will be analysed and reported to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment who will then decide whether or not to proceed to the next step which will be the advertising of the necessary Traffic Management Orders. This is a further opportunity for anyone wishing to respond to the proposal to be able to do so with reasoning. This is also known as a Statutory Consultation .

Following the Statutory consultation and the consideration of any objections, the Cabinet Member will decide whether or not the scheme can be implemented.

CQ221-15 from Councillor Jamie Audsley

To Councillor Mark Watson

Cllr Watson, in light of young people from London being stopped in Turkey on suspicion of joining Islamic State, how are you working with the borough's Muslim community to support the positive integration of young people into society?

Reply

The council is committed to developing stronger communities where people from different backgrounds can get on together well together and the establishment of the stronger communities' partnership board will ensure community cohesion and integration is a priority. As the Cabinet Member responsible for safety, justice and communities I am committed to putting in place ways of encouraging this to happen including working directly with the Muslim community. The council also has a full programme of community engagement which includes meeting representatives of the Muslim community to discuss issues as well as planning of interfaith events to mark Eid.

Council officers work closely with PC Ali Malik from the Metropolitan Police on the preventing radicalisation by engaging with residents, Mosques, community groups, colleges, schools on this issue. For example, work has been carried out with students at Croydon College for the last few years on the subject of hate crime, covering all aspects including religion/faith based hate crime and the need to report it if the problem is going to be tackled. Another example of work with young people involves a presentation to the primary school head teachers' breakfast meeting about work that is being done, on the Prevent agenda. The presentation discussed current risks, and promotes a positive image of Islam as a religion of peace, for the head teachers to take back to their schools. It is hoped that this presentation will also be given to secondary head teachers.

Schools work to support the positive integration of young people in to society through the personal, social, health and emotional curriculum and through RE. The RE curriculum in schools is agreed by the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), whose membership broadly reflects the considerable religious diversity of the local community. The committee has good contacts with Faiths Together in Croydon and the South London Interfaith group. The Council's SACRE Adviser has good links with different faith communities in the Borough and contributes to the work of the Council on promoting community cohesion.

CQ223-15 from Councillor Robert Canning**To Councillor Mark Watson**

How did Croydon's Labour Council mark St Patrick's Day on 17 March and how did this compare to the previous Conservative Council's commemoration of St Patrick's Day?

Reply

St Patrick's Day is an important event in the calendar of the Irish community in Croydon. This year, for the first time in 8 years the Irish flag was flown over the Town Hall where a ceremony was also held to recognise the contribution made by Croydon's Irish community.

CQ245-15 **from Councillor Richard Chatterjee**

To Councillor Mark Watson

Could the Cabinet Member please say how the Council is proactively working with the Met Police to increase the number of Contact Points?

Reply

It is a shame that the Conservative Mayor of London chose to close so many police stations across Croydon.

As a consequence of that decision, the Council has been working with the Police to explore the provision of contact points and, in particular, to improve access around the London Road. I am pleased to say that the Police are now trialling an additional contact point in the reception area of Croydon University hospital. The police will continue to monitor footfall and community reaction at contact points to ensure that they provide the most effective service provision possible.

CQ246-15 **from Councillor Richard Chatterjee**

To Councillor Mark Watson

Can the Cabinet Member advise me what action is being taken to address People Trafficking particularly into Prostitution?

Reply

The Council and its partners have taken a range of actions to address people trafficking, in particular:

- Croydon Council has integrated the National Referral Mechanism for referral of suspected cases of human trafficking to the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) and the process is detailed within the Croydon adult & child trafficking protocols. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 sets out a new statutory obligation for first responder organisations such as local authorities & police to report suspected cases of human trafficking to the UKHTC.
- Over 800 Croydon practitioners have attended multi-agency awareness raising events over the past year which have been organised by Croydon Council & facilitated by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). These events raise awareness of the indicators that a person may be a victim of human trafficking with practitioners and provide information on what to do if they suspect that somebody may be a victim.
- Croydon Community Against Trafficking (CCAT) are a charity organisation which has worked closely with Croydon Council & Police in order to identify properties where victims trafficked for the purposes of prostitution may be located.

This work is co-ordinated through the multi-agency Prevention of Modern Slavery in Croydon sub-group, which reports to both the Adult & Children's Safeguarding Boards.

CQ248-15 **from Councillor Luke Clancy**

To Councillor Mark Watson

The fear and actuality of Traveller Incursion remains unacceptably high. What is the Cabinet Member doing about it?

Reply

Illegal encampments have been an issue in Croydon and many other local authority areas for a number of years. The legislation governing those illegal encampments can be vague and un-helpful but that hasn't stopped us taking swift and firm action whenever such an encampment occurs.

The enforcement officers carry out the legally required initial inspections within 24 hours in all cases (normally within 2 hours during weekday hours), serve notices on illegal encampments to leave within 72 hours in all cases after those assessments have been carried out and bring in bailiffs to remove illegal groups immediately upon any breach of a request or court order to leave. Each group is served a notice that states that their activities may be subject to overt and covert surveillance to prevent fly-tipping.

In addition in any case where there is evidence that the group have been involved in fly-tipping these groups are monitored around the clock 24 hours a day through overt surveillance by a security firm. So far, this has prevented any significant fly tipping from groups this year and is a method we intend to employ throughout the peak summer season.

It is worth bearing in mind that most groups do not actually leave any mess or significant waste but we will prosecute offenders and proactively enquire about waste carrying and transfer licences to ensure compliance.

In addition, where any weaknesses have been identified in terms of illegal incursions we will address them where possible and strengthen any areas we believe to be susceptible to illegal encampments.

Conduit Lane, Lloyd Park, Northborough Recreation Ground, Sunken Road, Imperial Way and Lysander Road have all been identified in the last year as susceptible to incursions and we have spent a great deal of time and effort in planning and then making changes to these areas such as newer, tougher height barriers, concrete barriers and bunds in order to deter and reduce the number of illegal incursions.

Whilst we are making changes, there will no doubt be areas that are still discovered to be accessible by the more determined groups and if and when they are, we will also look to making them more secure to prevent repeat incursions.

CQ258-15 **from Councillor Tim Pollard**

To Councillor Mark Watson

On February 24, Lincoln made history by becoming the first city in the UK to ban public consumption of legal highs and all shops selling them have recently been closed after being served with community protection notices by police and city council enforcement officers. What does Croydon plan to do about so-called Legal Highs?

Reply

There are currently no issues reported to the Council or the Police regarding the use of Legal Highs in the Borough. The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), which was used by Lincoln to ban their use, can only be implemented where there is clear evidence that certain anti-social behaviours are taking place. The Council are currently preparing to consult on a PSPO within the town centre in Croydon and have considered the inclusion of legal highs within the conditions but there is currently insufficient evidence to include it at the moment. However, if Legal Highs do become an issue the Council and Police will take the necessary steps to consult on whether we should ban their use.

CQ264-15 **from Councillor Mario Creatura**

To Councillor Mark Watson

Could the Cabinet Member please detail the changes in the number of police officers working in Croydon for the years 2010 through to 2015?

Reply

This data is held by the Metropolitan Police; I suggest in future the Councillor makes this request directly to them. Alternatively he could ask the GLA member for Croydon, a member of his own party.

While the Conservative Mayor of London has reduced both the number of police officers and police stations in Croydon, I am delighted that this administration has kept its word and fully funded additional officers for New Addington.

For completeness, the figures that the Councillor has requested are as follows:

Year	Police Officer Strength
Mar-10	747
Mar-11	730
Mar-12	670
Mar-13	623
Mar-14	704
Mar-15	741

CQ268-15

from Councillor Steve O'Connell

To Councillor Mark Watson

Are you able to confirm the sustainability of the funding for the extra police officers for New Addington and are there plans to purchase more for other parts of the Borough?

Reply

The Council has agreed to fund additional officers in New Addington, which was a manifesto pledge of this administration and put in place in direct response to feedback from local residents. The Council have signed a three year contract, which will expire in March 2018. The contract will be regularly reviewed to ensure value for money but it is currently the Councils intention to continue with this arrangement beyond the life of the existing contract. There are currently no plans to purchase additional police officers anywhere else in the Borough.

CQ269-15

from Councillor Steve O'Connell

To Councillor Mark Watson

New Legislation has given the Council more and different powers to manage Town Centres. Can the Cabinet Member update me on progress and timelines?

Reply

The ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014 was launched on 20 October 2014, which reduced the number of tools available to tackle ASB from 19 to 6 with a view to simplifying the legal processes. The reforms also aimed to put victims at the heart of the response to anti-social behaviour (ASB) & to give professionals the flexibility required to deal with any given situation.

The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) is intended to deal with a nuisance or problem in a particular area (e.g. Town Centre) that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life, by imposing conditions on the use of that area which apply to everyone. It has been designed to ensure that the law abiding majority can use and enjoy public spaces, safe from ASB. A breach is a criminal offence and can be dealt with by way of a FPN or punishable by fine upon conviction (max £1000, or £500 for failure to hand over alcohol).

The Safer Croydon Partnership are proposing 7 conditions covering a range of behaviours from begging to excessive noise within the town centre; we anticipate the town centre PSPO will be in place before the summer months, which is traditionally the peak season for anti-social behaviour.

The other piece of legislation that is useful for managing town centres is the use of Dispersal orders which can be used to ask those committing or likely to commit anti-social behaviour, crime or disorder to leave an area for up to 48 hours.

The number of people dispersed by the Police in the Town Centre using this legislation up till February 2015 is 65.

CQ270-15 from Councillor Steve O'Connell

To Councillor Mark Watson

Can the Cabinet Member give me a breakdown of FPN's issued by his Enforcement Officers by offence and location and also confirm whether there has been any successful Court Actions against FlyTipping?

Reply

In just under a year there have been over 600 FPNs issued by the enforcement officers. In the table below I have provided a breakdown of the FPNs issued by month and type. Those FPNs have been for offences across the borough.

I have also provided a breakdown of those cases that have gone to court for prosecution, where the offender had failed to pay the FPN. All prosecutions were for the technical offence of fly tipping but all cases were dealt with at court as littering.

In addition there have been 3 standalone prosecutions for fly tipping by our enforcement team. In one case the court fine was £6500 and in another the fine was £300 both for fly tipping.

In the third case there has been a guilty plea entered but sentencing is not due until 16th April.

Month	Number issued	Littering	Spitting	Urinating	Dog fouling	Trade Waste (£300)	Prosecuted
May	30	29		1			
Jun	73	73					
July	70	70					
Aug	56	56					
Sept	56	56					3
Oct	38	38					3
Nov	2	2					
Dec	1	1					1
Jan	74	71	2	1			
Feb	106	100	5		1		
Mar	105	100	1	2		2	
Total	611	596	8	4	1	2	7

	£100	Fine	Address: Bygrove, New Addington, CR0 9DJ	Details of Offence: Littering in Bygrove, New Addington, CR0 9DJ (09/09/2014)
	£150	Costs		
	£20	Victim Surcharge		
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cardboard packaging and mattress obstructing

				a domestic food waste bin
	£35	Fine	Address: Elmside, New Addington, CR0 9DW	Details of Offence: Littering in Elmside, New Addington, CR0 9DT (08/10/2014) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large deposit of household waste on a grass verge in Elmside, New Addington
	£50	Costs		
	£20	Victim Surcharge		
	£200	Fine	Address: Central Parade, New Addington, CR0 0JL	Details of Offence: Littering in Central Parade, New Addington, CR0 0JB on two separate occasions (14/10/2014 & 14/12/2014) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 black refuse sacks deposited on the public footpath Black refuse sack deposited on the public footpath
	£30	Victim Surcharge		
	£300	Fine		
	£150	Costs		
	£200	Fine	Address: Woodside Green, London, SE25 5EU	Details of Offence: Littering in Woodside Green, SE25 5EU (01/09/2014) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black refuse sack deposited on the public footpath by a street litter bin
	£150	Costs		
	£20	Victim Surcharge		
	£200	Fine	Address: Portland Road, South Norwood, SE25 4PQ	Details of Offence: Littering in Portland Road, SE25 4UF (14/09/2014) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orange refuse sack deposited on the public footpath
	£150	Costs		
	£20	Victim Surcharge		

	£200	Fine	Address: Dunley Drive, New Addington, CR0 0RD	Details of Offence: Littering in Frimley Close, New Addington, CR0 0RX (24/10/2014)
	£150	Costs		
	£20	Victim Surcharge		
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black refuse sack found amongst a large flytip in the garage area of Frimley Close *Just to clarify it is not assumed the entire flytip is the responsibility of this one person, but it's a good example of dumped waste encouraging others to add to an existing problem

CQ220-15 from Councillor Jamie Audsley

To Councillor Tony Letts

Cllr Letts, please can you provide an update on the development of the "jobs brokerage" and how you plan to integrate this work with existing infrastructure in the town?

Reply

We have had overwhelming support from our partners and also our residents for developing the proposed brokerage service as detailed in the 'Employability, jobs and skills; Local jobs for local people' report which was approved by Cabinet on 15 December 2014. The brokerage service pulls together the work to deliver a number of important priorities to ensure that our residents have the required skills, competences and attitude to compete successfully for the 16,000 job opportunities which will be created in the borough over the next five years.

Taking into account the level of forthcoming regeneration in Croydon, the brokerage service will address identified issues in terms of an insufficient employability focus in the curriculum in schools, the variable quality and breadth of careers advice for young people leaving school and disjointed and varied quality employability support for those out of work or in low-paid jobs.

The brokerage service will cover the following three main elements:

- Co-ordinate services delivered by partners to create the best possible referral and support mechanism for local people into employment.
- Work with employers to develop a clear pipeline of job opportunities which need to be filled and support residents to ensure that they are prepared for these roles through employability training, CV development, mock interviews and relationship building between employers and applicants.
- Provide to employers 3 job ready applicants for every vacancy created across the Borough.

Currently council officers are working up different options for all aspects of the brokerage service to ensure we deliver a sustainable service offering high-quality provision as part of the overall offer to support our residents into employment.

CQ243-15 from Councillor David Wood

To Councillor Toni Letts

Will Cllr Letts agree to seek to include a category recognising the contribution of black and minority ethnic-run businesses at the next Croydon Business Awards?

Reply

Croydon is rightly proud of the major contribution that BAME led businesses have made in the borough and will continue to make in the years to come, not least because of the substantial boost given to employment and the economy.

Not having a specific award category for BAME businesses, represents a more inclusive approach to celebrating business. In considering your question for any future awards, the views of the businesses themselves will need to be garnered.

We are however ensuring that promotion of the awards is far reaching to give all businesses the opportunity to showcase their uniqueness.

CQ244-15 from Councillor David Wood

To Councillor Toni Letts

For many parts of our borough, including Selhurst, SME businesses run by BME owners are the backbone of the local economy, providing job opportunities for many who might otherwise struggle to enter the job market. Please could Cllr Letts outline what support is currently being offered to encourage more residents, especially women and those from minority ethnic communities, to consider starting businesses?

Reply

The Council offers wide ranging business support to encourage start-ups across the borough that includes free and impartial information, advice and guidance from Council staff, website (<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/business/support/business>) and with free business advisors through many granted funded projects. This also includes access to funding for social enterprise and commercial organisations by way of grants and commercial loans such as Croydon Enterprise Loan Fund and SE-Assist; low-cost test trading opportunities and guidance via meanwhile use toolkits and Pop-Up Shops/Hubs; and signposting to the wide range of support available through other office accommodation and business support intermediaries.

While the Council does not directly target women and BME communities, we ensure that through the Council and delivery partners' multiple channels of communication (online, local press, networks) that business support is widely promoted to all residents in Croydon. Increasingly this will be tailored to the business and retail needs of district centre high streets as part of the Croydon Promise. An example of this is the Enterprise Hub based at Croydon Voluntary Action, a Council funded project that forms part of the West Croydon Investment Programme in Broad Green. This has successfully supported 43% women and 76% BAME delegates out of 55 to start up; and supported 79% BME and 52% women owned businesses (out of 101), over the last year.

CQ249-15 **from Councillor Susan Winborn**

To Councillor Toni Letts

Can the Cabinet Member confirm how she is working with employers across the Borough to encourage them to create more apprenticeships and achieve a more skilled workforce?

Reply

The creation of more apprenticeships and the associated development of a skilled workforce in Croydon are key priorities for this Council and a number of measures have been put in place to bring this about. Examples can be demonstrated through the Council's planning system which mandates that developers must provide an employment and training strategy. Also existing and newly tendered council contracts require social value outcomes including the creation of apprenticeships for Croydon residents as determined through the Value Croydon Framework.

During Apprenticeship Week last month the Council sponsored events to champion and celebrate Apprenticeships. Croydon also held its first Apprenticeship Graduation Ceremony celebrating with over 30 borough apprentices, employers and family. This proved to be a popular celebration for Croydon Apprentices achieving stages level 2, 3 and 4 of their apprenticeship. We aspire to repeat the event next year encouraging even more apprentices to take part.

The Council has and will also continue to actively engage and encourage employers on the subject of apprenticeships by running targeted events and supporting John Ruskin and Croydon Colleges apprenticeship delivery.

CQ250-15 from Councillor Susan Winborn

To Councillor Toni Letts

Would the Cabinet Member please detail the total JSA count for the London Borough of Croydon since October 2014 and also detail the JSA count for 18-24 year olds also from October 2014.

Reply

You will see from the spread sheet below that the total JSA count was falling steadily from October to December 2014. However, January and February 2015 figures registered a slight increase settling at 4,868.

In the case of the 18- 24 year olds JSA count, the claim rate fell steadily to January 2015 partly as a result of seasonal employment over the Christmas period. The claimant rate creaped back up in February but still below November's level.

Croydon JSA Count				Croydon 18- 24 Yr Olds JSA Count			
mth /year		number		mth /year		number	
2014				2014			
October		5,285		October		1,200	
November		5,050		November		1,130	
December		4,810		December		990	
2015				2015			
January		4,895		January		995	
February		4,865		February		1,035	

CQ266-15

from Councillor Mario Creatura

To Councillor Toni Letts

Could the Cabinet Member please update the Council on the progress of the Croydon Partnership development? When does she expect the result of the CPO to be announced, and assuming this does not result in an impediment to the scheme, when will construction formally begin and be completed?

Reply

Following the completion of the Compulsory Purchase Order Inquiry the Inspector has advised that he will issue his decision in mid to late May. This will then be considered by the Secretary of State who is expected to issue a decision in September 2015.

Assuming the decision is positive, construction is planned to start in early 2016 and the new centre would open in September 2019. Work has already commenced to ensure local businesses and residents have the best opportunity to benefit from jobs and contracts to support the local economy.

CQ187-15 **from Councillor Michael Neal**

To Councillor Stuart Collins

What are you doing to sort out the constant problems of Travelers leaving fly tipping in our Borough?

They are Messing with Croydon and showing your Administration as all smoke and mirrors.

Reply

Illegal encampments have been an issue in Croydon and many other local authority areas for a number of years. The previous Administration had eight years to put a plan in place but did not do so. I'm aware that you wrote to the Conservative Secretary of State, Eric Pickles, who refused to help on this important local issue.

In sharp contrast, within less than a year this Labour administration has put a plan in place.

The legislation governing those illegal encampments can be vague and un-helpful but that hasn't stopped us taking swift and firm action whenever such an encampment occurs.

The enforcement officers carry out the legally required initial inspections within 24 hours in all cases (normally within 2 hours during weekday hours), serve notices on illegal encampments to leave within 72 hours in all cases after those assessments have been carried out and bring in bailiffs to remove illegal groups immediately upon any breach of a request or court order to leave. Each group is served a notice that states that their activities may be subject to overt and covert surveillance to prevent fly-tipping.

In addition, I have directed that in any case where there is evidence that the group have been involved in fly-tipping that these groups are monitored around the clock 24 hours a day through overt surveillance by a security firm. So far, this has prevented any significant fly tipping from groups this year and is a method we intend to employ throughout the peak summer season.

I have personally attended a Local Government Travellers conference to gain a better understanding of the issues they face and to see how Councils can build a better relationship with travellers to avoid any potential fly tips, I have also personally visited travellers on site to discuss issues.

It is worth bearing in mind that most groups do not actually leave any mess or significant waste but we will prosecute offenders and proactively enquire about waste carrying and transfer licences to ensure compliance.

We have also obtained a seizure warrant against one vehicle seen fly tipping on Purley Way Playing fields last year as part of one of the rogue groups of travellers. We will also employ this tactic again this year if necessary.

It is worth noting that this fresh approach saw Travellers leave Purley Way last week and no fly tipping occurred, because both the Council & the travellers treated each other with respect.

CQ189-15

from Councillor Sara Bashford

To Councillor Stuart Collins

The Cabinet Member stated in the budget that £744k has been set aside for the Don't Mess with Croydon campaign. He has also talked about his Eyes and Ears enforcement team, can he please tell me if all the cost for this team and the work they do will come from the £744k or will this project be cross funded by the Housing Revenue Account.

If it is to be part funded by the HRA how will it be re-charged to ensure that HRA funds are only used for housing tenants benefit as they are supposed to be.

Reply

This administration was keen to get to grips with the issue of fly-tipping and the state of our streets and to that end made available an additional £500k on top of the existing budgets for our first year in office. That extra funding was able to bring in additional fly tip removal vehicles, improvements in enforcement, some preventative measures for our parks and open spaces and developing our 'Don't mess with Croydon: Take Pride' campaign that has been really successful.

The Eyes and Ears initiative is an integral part of the Council's approach to establish a single enforcement service to further develop joint working and information sharing between teams and enable a consistent approach to all aspects of enforcement activity supported by better IT. The single enforcement team is just one part of Eyes and Ears, with the other aim being to ensure that all parts of the Council and our contractors take a lead in reporting issues such as fly tips, defective lights or roads immediately and direct to the relevant service to ensure they are dealt with quickly.

Eyes and Ears will also look to reconfigure the Neighbourhood Warden service, where the majority of the roles within this service will transfer to the Area Enforcement teams, to support the single, unified enforcement service. Any remaining roles will transfer to the People Dept to ensure the focus on providing early intervention and preventative support to vulnerable groups on our estates is retained.

There is no intention to change the HRA funding arrangements for this service.

CQ201-15 **from Councillor Margaret Bird**

To Councillor Stuart Collins

Could the Cabinet member tell me when Coulsdon East residents can expect to receive and be able to use the green wheelie bins for all of their recycling?

Reply

The council is exploring the option to change the type of receptacle used for the storage of dry recyclable materials which would involve changing to a co-mingled wheeled recycling bin as opposed to the existing recycling boxes in use.

Details of any proposed roll out of such a service change will be communicated to all residents and Elected Members in a timely fashion, as the introduction of a co-mingled bin is likely to be phased in across the borough from the autumn this year.

CQ212-15 from Councillor Phil Thomas

To Councillor Stuart Collins

One of your first big announcements was to agree 3 extra vehicles for picking up fly tipping. As there was no money in the 2015/16 budget for this, when will these lorries cease to exist?

Reply

The 3 additional vehicles to pick up fly-tips were only ever meant to be in place up until the end of March this year.

However the council are in discussions with Veolia in respect of the introduction of a new 'village' style approach to the delivery of essential front-line services such as street cleaning, refuse collection and fly-tip removals, whereby areas will have a dedicated team of operatives providing a more localised service.

As part of those discussions the council will be working with Veolia to retain as many of the existing vehicles used on the collection of fly-tipped material where currently over 80% of reported fly tips continue to be removed within 48 hours and often within 24 hours. This is in marked contrast to the performance of the previous administration where the target was to remove within 72 hours.

CQ225-15 from Councillor Shafi Khan**To Councillor Stuart Collins**

It is pleasing to note the improvements in rubbish collection and dealing with litter in recent months, however we would all agree there is still some progress to be made. As a starting point, would Cllr Collins consider placing bins at bus stops as a matter of course? There remain some bus stops in Selhurst which do not have this facility

Reply

I am happy to consider requests for the installation of street litter bins at specific bus stops and if Elected Members can please forward me details of locations these will be explored by officers to assess their suitability.

CQ230-15 from Councillor Wayne Trakas-Lawlor

To Councillor Stuart Collins

There has been marked improvement in removing reports of fly tipping on Whitworth Road, Selhurst Road and all roads surrounding area. Big challenges still remain, no thanks to the huge cuts that this administration inherited.

Can the Cabinet Member assure my constituents, that where a case is made for weekly bin collections, this will be seriously considered, or consider an alternative?

Reply

We continue to remove reported fly-tips within 48 hours over 80% of the time and in most cases much quicker than that.

I can confirm that we will continue to review over the next year our services such as the frequency of landfill collections. Part of that on-going review will be to explore whether there is a need in specific roads to change the frequency of collections.

CQ240-15 from Councillor Andrew Rendle**To Councillor Stuart Collins**

Recently I met on site with officers and a member of MORA to discuss cleaning up Long Lane Woods. How will this administration support the amazing green spaces we have in Ashburton?

Reply

The council has in the past engaged in clean ups of our parks, open spaces and woods in conjunction with community based groups and is always keen to work with Friends Groups to agree any local community clean ups of identified areas.

We are more than happy to explore similar arrangements in Ashburton Park and any area local people wish to discuss with their Cllrs and the Council.

CQ228-15 from Councillor Matthew Kyeremeh

To Councillor Simon Hall

How successful has the Council been with Council tax payers paying by direct debit?
How does this method of payment compare with other methods available to them?

Reply

We have over recent years seen an increase in the % of customers that pay by direct debits moving from 60% in 2012 to 71% in 2014.15.

Direct Debit is the easiest way for customers to pay and by far the cheapest way for the authority to collect monies. Statistics show those on Direct Debit are much more likely to pay and to stay up to date, but we are conscious some of our residents do not have bank accounts that provide that facility and therefore our financial inclusion approach includes providing further facilities which will allow more residents to access appropriate banking services.

To encourage take up:

- We now offers four payment dates throughout the month for direct debit where cash payment is due only on the 5th of the month
- At final notice (this is where more than one reminder and partial payment is received) if customers are willing to set up a direct debit a summons can be avoided
- Each year a direct debit competition draw is promoted where one customer wins their council tax paid for the year.
- In addition to this the direct debit on line form set up was introduced in 2013/14

CQ229-15 from Councillor Matthew Kyeremeh

To Councillor Simon Hall

Can the Cabinet Member confirm if Croydon residents are patronising digital services available to them? How do we compare with other London boroughs?

Reply

There are currently 77,500 customers registered with a MyAccount, which represents, on average, half of all the borough's households, assuming one account per household.

With 41 services now available online, 75% of weekly transactions are completed by returning customers, who are continuing to access a range of services. On average we have 30,000 visitors each week to the MyAccount website.

A survey completed in 2014, indicated 9 out of 10 Croydon residents would continue to use the service and 9 out of 10 residents would recommend the website to family and friends.

Based on discussions with other London boroughs, we believe that Croydon is very well placed and we have seen other local authorities wanting to visit us to find out more about our app. As part of our Digital and Enabling Projects, other Croydon Challenge projects and our review of communications, we are looking to extend digital far further

CQ231-15 from Councillor Wayne Trakas-Lawlor

To Councillor Simon Hall

The effect of the Bedroom Tax has brought anxiety and worry to some of the most vulnerable people in our society, who are being penalised while tax cuts are given to many people earning in excess of £150,000. How much has the administration of the Bedroom Tax cost Croydon since its implementation?

Reply

A dedicated team of officers from a cross section of departments were co-located to enable the Council to develop a customer focused approach to the welfare reforms (including the bedroom tax) which have been defined by central government. When the team was originally set up in April 2013 grant funding was available to meet the costs as the council was one of five authorities nationally to go live with the benefit cap. From April 2014 the cost of additional staff to the council is estimated to be over £230,000 per year.

The council have provided various information, advice and offers of support to all 3,543 tenants identified as being affected by under occupancy and have in fact directly engaged with 2,958 of those.

In engaging with residents we have assisted over 900 households in finding an additional £20 per week through budgeting advice to help meet the difference, 90 households are now working, 23 households received additional benefits such disability living allowance, personal independence payment that entitlement they previously that they would not have been aware of.

There is no doubt that, despite the excellent work from this dedicated team, there have been significant adverse consequences on some of the most vulnerable in our borough, at the same time as the wealthiest have seen tax cuts.

CQ255-15 **from Councillor Jason Cummings**

To Councillor Simon Hall

Please provide an update on the inyear departmental spends versus budget and the expected year end out-turn.

Reply

We reported to Cabinet on the 17th February that the expected revenue outturn against budget for 2014/15 was an overspend of £1.253m. This has been reduced significantly from earlier in the financial year and represents an overspend of less than 0.5% of the council's budget.

The final outturn for the year will be presented to General Purposes and Audit Committee on the 24th June alongside the draft accounts.

CQ256-15 from Councillor Jason Cummings

To Councillor Simon Hall

Can you detail the original earmarked reserve value of the Administrations Priorities budget, what has already been spent and on what and the intended use of the remaining funds?

Reply

The earmarked reserve value is £2.886m as reported to cabinet in July 2014. The stated intention was to support the delivery of this administration's priorities alongside the revenue and capital budget.

To date, some £1.9m of this reserve has been allocated to specific initiatives.

The principal allocations are;-

- . Clean & Green / Don't Mess with Croydon (£744k)
- . Measures to mitigate travellers in parks and open spaces (£266k)
- . Fairness Commission (£200k)
- . Festivals (£150k)
- . Upper Norwood Joint Library (£133k)
- . New Addington initiatives (£140k)

In addition, this fund has been used to deliver on;-

- . CCTV Queens Gardens
- . Webcasting for cabinet and council
- . Free Swimming
- . Reversal of Arnhem saving
- . Cycling
- . Play Streets
- . School Crossing Patrols
- . Ashburton Park initial works
- . Pilot on one hour free parking in district centres
- . Fieldway Family Centre

We will continue to use this reserve to further our ambitions for this borough over the next 12 months.

CQ257-15 from Councillor Jason Cummings

To Councillor Simon Hall

What is the current council tax collection performance for this year and what is the year end position expected to be?

Reply

Council Tax collection rate for 2014.15 has been confirmed at 96.5% which is the highest ever on record and I would like to thank officers on this excellent and important achievement.

This is particularly positive as Croydon has the 3rd largest value to collect across London, the 10th largest nationally whilst also coping with the ongoing pressure due to the reductions to council tax benefit imposed by the Conservative led government and the challenges of a growing council tax base.

The council's approach continues to reflect focussing on identifying those that will not pay, whilst supporting those experiencing genuine difficulties in making payment.

Financial Year	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
CTAX In Year	95.35%	95.58%	95.92%	96.12%	96.22%	96.07%	96.48%
Amount to collect	£154,454,127	£157,715,983	£158,887,388	£159,990,273	£161,136,389	£171,259,371	174,361,231.95

I am also pleased to report that the collection of National Non-Domestic Rates has also improved under a Labour administration.

	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012.13	2013.14	2014.15
NNDR In Year	97.31%	96.54%	97.22%	97.38%	98.20%	97.94%	98.38%

CQ191-15 **from Councillor Yvette Hopley**

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

More than half of council tax will soon be spent on caring for vulnerable children and adults, creating a huge squeeze on non-statutory services. New analysis published by the LGA states that for every £1 of council tax collected by councils in 2019/20, 60p will be spent on caring for the elderly and vulnerable. Coupled with this pressure it is noted that by that time over 50% of those living in the borough will be over 50 years old.

Could you please outline what your long terms plans are for dealing with this significant change and pressure?

Reply

A natural consequence of the Conservative led Government's decisions to cut 40% of local government grant, to not fully fund the better care fund, to implement damaging welfare reforms and to abjectly fail to deliver fairer funding for Croydon is that the proportion of council tax we spend on the elderly and vulnerable has increased.

Despite this, we are working to deal with this demand growth and budget pressure through our approach to transforming services, as managed through our 'Croydon Challenge' approach and our design of the People Department. Through Croydon Challenge we are working across services to position services to transform in order to cope with the demand and budget situation that we face over the next few years. Our approach includes the following:

1. Empowering communities

We are seeking to maximize the potential from existing council investment in 'preventative' community based services and to work closely with the voluntary sector and communities to encourage self-sufficient approaches which encourage people to develop their own support systems. This approach goes beyond those in contact with social care, and is being delivered on a partnership basis with the CCG. Our aim is to reduce people needing services and target people currently accessing statutory services who would benefit from local community services, therefore reducing their need for statutory services. An example of our approach is a project which is being part-funded by DCLG, to develop an innovative community-based approach to delivering meals to the most vulnerable. Support for Carers is another example of this approach, as appropriate support for Carers in a timely way will enable them to continue to care for longer.

The operating model of the new People Department highlights the significance of community empowerment. We are developing a model based on the 'Asset-Based Community Development' approach, for example further developing the role of 'community navigators' in supporting local communities in targeted project areas, such as high-needs client groups/geographical areas. i.e. for 0-5 yrs., and older single males where the impact of social isolation is highest.

2. People Department 'Gateway'

The operating model for the Council's new People Department has at the heart of its operating model a more joined up approach to assessing the needs of families and which provides a more joined up response across services. As part of phase one of delivery of this approach, we are focussing on joining up services that focus on housing need, welfare support and support for accessing employment and training. We are working to provide a more joined up response to targeted families, as early as possible, thus promoting personal resilience and financial sustainability. The impact of this will be to enable families to experience less stress and to make less demand on costly, specialist services.

3. Developing a different approach to services for Children in Need

'Children in need' are those who are becoming vulnerable to the extent that they may require a children's social care assessment, but their needs are not so extreme as to require a Child Protection Plan or care proceedings. So this cohort of children could be perceived as being on a continuum at the high end of our 'early help' processes, rather than the beginning of services provided by statutory social workers. Currently work with children in need is provided by children's social care: we are considering our model of providing services to this group, and exploring a multi-disciplinary approach to such children in order to both manage demand on children's social care services, and to provide a more cost-effective response.

4. Outcomes based commissioning for the over 65s

Further to the September 2015 Cabinet report, the council is working in close partnership with Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to develop an ambitious Outcomes-based commissioning programme for Croydon's over 65s. Through the Council and the CCG jointly commissioning the whole budget for people of this age-group, the aim is to bring together providers of health and social care into a "provider alliance". This will allow the "system" to become more flexible so that we can focus on the outcomes that matter to people, incentivising the whole-system to strengthen our approach to prevention. By giving greater attention to prevention and helping people to maintain their health and well-being, we expect to see demand pressures from an aging population being more effectively contained.

CQ192-15 from Councillor Yvette Hopley

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

Our Market Position Statement states that “people should experience seamless service delivery and increased independence with active joined up case-management”. Please could you outline how you intend to monitor activity and performance relating to the Better Care Fund for 2016/17? This data will be required by Government

Reply

It is a shame that the Conservative led government has failed to fully fund the better care fund – a view shared by the LGA and London Councils. However, as with the Conservative led 40% funding cuts to local government grant, we continue to deliver innovative services locally in spite of the Government’s failings.

For 2015/16 the Croydon Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan will meet a number of national conditions which aim to encourage greater integration between health and social care with the express intention of delivering seamless service delivery and increased independence for people using services. The specific conditions are:

- 7 day working in health and social care to support patients being discharged and prevent unnecessary admissions at weekends;
- Better data sharing between health and social care, based on the NHS number;
- A joint approach to assessments and care planning;
- That where funding is used for integrated packages of care, there will be an accountable professional;

There are 5 national metrics that have been set to measure progress of BCF and which will be reported on a quarterly basis to NHS England:

- Reduction of avoidable emergency admissions to hospital;
- Reduction of delayed transfer of care from hospital;
- Demonstration of the effectiveness of reablement;
- Reduction in permanent admissions to residential and nursing homes;
- Increase patient and service-user experience;

The Better Care Fund Executive Group, constituted from senior management representatives from Croydon Council and Croydon CCG, will have responsibility for the ongoing management and performance monitoring of the BCF; ensuring that seamless service delivery and increased independence is delivered. The co-chairs of the BCF board are the Executive Director of the Council’s People Department and the Chief Officer of the CCG. Monitoring activity and performance is a key function of the board.

The Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board has oversight of performance and the Croydon Better Care Fund Executive Group will provide regular performance reports to the Board.

The national arrangements for the BCF in 2016/17 have not yet been announced but it is reasonable to assume that the current performance regime relating to national conditions and performance will be similar.

Both the Market Position Statement and the Better Care Fund (specifically relating to integration, partnership and cooperation) also come under the auspices of Croydon Care Act Programme and linkages and progress will also be monitored through that scheme of work in both 2015/16 and 2016/17.

CQ193-15

from Councillor Yvette Hopley

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

Since taking on the role of Public Health and a number of contracts how many of those contracts have been redesigned to take on board new initiatives which will ultimately deliver better outcomes?

Reply

The Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of all Public Health contracts and has been working with service providers to develop and redesign services within the existing contracts. In addition, the Council has developed an outcome focused recommissioning programme. Whilst some elements of the programme have already been delivered, the majority of projects will be undertaken during 2015/16. The programme has grouped contracts into thematic areas to take a holistic whole system approach to reviewing service areas, looking at outcomes, priority areas and contract spend.

Sexual health services

Sexual health is the biggest theme in terms of budget, bringing together contracts worth over £5m per annum. The main services under this theme are Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) and contraception and sexual health (CASH) services. The new provision will align the main service elements into a single whole system contract and will ensure that all associated contracts are integrated with the core service. A focus on specific and targeted prevention work will be developed to shift provision from more expensive acute services into community settings, ensuring services are easily accessible from the areas of greatest need. There will also be an increase in self-care provision through increased use of digital technologies and development of more robust pathways into other relevant care and health support (e.g. substance misuse, mental health, lifestyle services) to improve wellbeing and reduce need for clinical services.

Drug and alcohol services

A new outcome focused and integrated drug and alcohol engagement, treatment and recovery service for adults and young people was recommissioned during 2014, with a new contract in place commencing in October 2014. Phase two involves the development of a framework for providers to deliver rehabilitation and detox services, as part of the framework agreement for adult residential and nursing care placements. Another phase two project will consider a new approach to delivery of substance replacement therapies through both GPs and Pharmacies.

Adult integrated lifestyles services

The NHS Health Checks service model has been redesigned to introduce:

- A web based system for managing provider reporting
- Introduction of opportunistic NHS Health Checks
- A recruitment drive for new providers
- Procurement of a community outreach service to promote uptake in harder to reach groups

In addition the introduction of a new adult weight management service gives an additional referral pathway for patients who have been identified as at risk during their

NHS Health Check. The Council has also redesigned the exercise on referral service to focus on information, advice and motivational interviewing to support access to a range of services focused on the individual's priorities for change. Smoking cessation services were redesigned immediately prior to transfer and the Council has ensured the effective implementation of the payment by results model.

Longer term plans bring together a range of health and wellbeing activities and contracts including; smoking cessation, physical activity, healthy weight and NHS health checks (mandated service). It is often the case that client groups overlap across these areas especially in our most hard to reach groups. Therefore a single model of delivery and point of access will not only allow a more efficient process but also offer a better and more holistic service to our residents. This programme will develop an integrated model in the form of a one stop shop for all of the services above.

Children's public health services

Currently this area encompasses school nursing, the national child measurement programme, healthy school support, weight management interventions and a broad range of information, advice and guidance around healthy choices for young people. Since transfer, the majority of these services have been redesigned and/or recommissioned, focusing on improving health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people. The longer term strategy for these contracts will consider a holistic and outcome focused approach, potentially replicating the integrated lifestyles model for children and young people.

It is worth noting that local authorities will be taking responsibility for services for 0-5 year olds from October 2015. This will primarily be the health visitor service which is currently funded and delivered by NHS England. Funding will be passed over alongside responsibility for these services. The longer term strategy for these contracts is part of the Best Start programme.

CQ197-15 from Councillor Margaret Mead

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

Will the Cabinet Member join me in welcoming the excellent news that Croydon University Hospital has been successful in their bid and to have a brand new Accident and Emergency Unit and to thank all those who contributed to the submission of the bid and those who supported this much looked forward to development? The new unit will be larger, brighter, purpose built, with more privacy for patients, in a more open plan style better for clinicians and staff and improving safety and care for all who attend.

Will the Cabinet Member also join with me in supporting all the staff who will be working in the temporary building during the re-building to keep Accident and Emergency services open for the duration of these works?

Reply

As with the Leader of the Council's answer to CQ260, the Council very much welcomes the news that staff at Croydon University Hospital have secured funding for a new accident and emergency unit. However, it is a great shame that the Conservative led government has waited until virtually the last day of their five years' in office to deliver this funding. We are still yet to have any confirmation of funding for other services at the hospital and the local CCG remains damagingly underfunded. This has led to waiting lists being at an all-time high and accident and emergency services under severe pressure.

The NHS is not safe in the hands of the Conservative party.

At a local level, Croydon Council will continue to work in partnership with the Commissioner NHS Croydon CCG and Croydon University Hospital to support them through this period of redevelopment.

CQ199-15 from Councillor Margaret Mead

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

People with mental health disorders have given feedback saying they have greatly benefited from the early intervention programmes by attending Talking Therapies. Given the improved outcomes can the Cabinet Member give details of the investment in Talking Therapies in Croydon?

Reply

Improving Talking Therapies has been a key focus for Croydon CCG and the Council during 2014-15: this has been reflected by an increase in investment within 14/15 which has been followed through into 15/16. This has facilitated both an expansion of the service but also enabled a widening of the service options within the talking therapies services.

There is one main provider of Talking Therapies providing therapy which is IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) compliant. In addition there are also several voluntary sector organisations that are commissioned to provide talking therapies.

The CCG has significantly increased investment in IAPT services over the last year and plans to invest further to improve access.

The CCG and council funding of voluntary sector 'talking therapies' also includes bereavement counselling. There has also been a continuation of funding from the health grant for an innovative pilot IAPT service for people with long-term (physical) conditions which has received very positive feedback.

People wishing to access talking therapies are able to self-refer to ALL the services available, so in addition to the increased capacity this has meant that people can access these services much more quickly, and be confident of doing so more than they were able to do so in previous years .

In broad terms there has been almost a doubling of the number of people now accessing talking therapies than a year ago. There is good feedback from the community being received in relation to the commitment given to talking therapies by both the CCG and the LA.

CQ203-15 **from Councillor Susan Winborn**

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

Can the Cabinet Member please give the detailed information in the 2013/14 Council's annual statutory return to the Department of Health regarding completion of carers' assessments? Can you confirm if there are any carers waiting for an assessment?

Reply

For the 2013/14 reporting period, the Council submitted the following information as part of its statutory return to the Department of Health.

Number of Carers that received an Assessment or Review during the financial year: 1318 carers
Number of Carers declining an assessment during the financial year: 23 carers

We **do not** hold waiting lists of carers who have requested an assessment. If a carer contacts the council asking for a carer's assessment, this is allocated to a care manager or social worker to undertake, not held on a waiting list.

We are anticipating that an increased number of carers will ask for an assessment following implementation of the Care Act this month, and so commissioners have been negotiating with the Carers Centre to undertake assessments of carers on behalf of the council, in addition to the carers assessments undertaken by social workers and care managers. We are not expecting the Carers Centre to hold a waiting list but we will monitor the volume of referrals from carers for an assessment from the Carers Centre or from the Council and keep this under review.

CQ227-15 from Councillor Matthew Kyeremeh

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

How much improvement has the Croydon University Hospital made during the period Labour has been in control in Croydon?

Reply

Croydon University Hospital is part of Croydon Health Services NHS Trust. Since May 2014 improvements at CUH include:

1. Care of the Elderly wards:

- Increased staffing levels.
- Completion of converting 2 care of-the-elderly wards into dementia-friendly zones.
- 4 day reduction in the average length of stay of patients.

2. Emergency Care:

- Approval of business case for a new Emergency Department (£21m).
- Acute Physicians working in the emergency department from 8am to 11pm Monday to Friday.
- Appointed 2 more consultants in Emergency Medicine (total of 8 A&E consultants from May 2015).

3. Imaging:

- New £1m interventional radiology suite commissioned April 2015.

4. Referral to treat:

- Reduced waiting times for planned care (outpatient appointments and surgical operations) and achieved 2014/15 waiting times performance targets.

5. Met healthcare infection control targets with only 15 patients contracting c-difficile and no hospital acquired MRSA cases since May 2014.

6. Degree of electronic patient records - first hospital in the UK to achieve HIMISS level 6 (level 7 is paper less).

CQ265-15 **from Councillor Mario Creatura**

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

Could the Cabinet Member please detail any meetings she has had recently with Croydon Health Services focusing specifically on staff engagement?

Reply

It is part of my role to be in ongoing discussions with a range of senior people across Croydon Health Services.

CQ271-15 from Councillor Susan Bennett

To Councillor Louisa Woodley

Whilst the extra funding for mental health services in Croydon is to be welcomed, I understand that the grant to the Alzheimers Society has been cut, this will have a detrimental effect on their work in the community and have a knock on effect to other voluntary groups which support carers.

I am sure Cllr Woodley understands the importance of carers and there should not be any reduction in services for them, could this cut please be revisited?

Reply

Thank you for your question. This funding decision was in the 2014/15 budget set by the previous Conservative administration. To that end, you will need to ask the former Cabinet Member, Councillor Margaret Mead, why the funding was cut.

However, I could not agree with you more on the importance of carers and, in partnership with Croydon CCG, we have been working with a range of stakeholders through the Mental Health Older Adult Service Redesign Project, which proposed service changes to deliver Croydon's Dementia Strategy, and will inform future commissioning decisions for Mental Health Older Adult Services.

CQ188-15 from Councillor Sara Bashford

To Councillor Alison Butler

Can the Cabinet Member please tell me how much money is in the budget to implement the Private Landlord Licensing scheme and how much is the budget to investigate and enforce breaches. Can she also please tell me what team of staff will be doing this work and how many the team will increase by?

Reply

I would refer Councillor Bashford to the paper presented to Cabinet on 16 March, which contains full details of the budgetary assumptions, the highlights of which are:

Expenditure type	Estimated total for 5 years	Annualised costs
Staff costs – enforcement and inspection	£6.610m	£1.322m
Staff costs - administration	£3.450m	£0.690m
ASB/Noise team costs	£2.570m	£0.514m
IT costs	£0.650m	£0.130m
Corporate overheads	£2.100m	£0.420m
Legal costs	£0.260m	£0.052m
Total	£15.640m	£3.128m

It is proposed that a new team be formed to deal with all aspects of selective licensing, this will contain at least 8 new enforcement staff (the current proposal is for 4 environmental health officers and 4 enforcement officers) plus ancillary officers who will carry out office-based investigations. The final make-up of this new team is yet to be finalised.

CQ195-15 from Councillor Dudley Mead

To Councillor Alison Butler

At the last Council meeting only 2 of the 41 new council properties under construction as at May 2014 had been completed. Are the other 39 finished yet?

Reply

A total of 18 new council homes, across 7 sites, were fully completed by the end of March 2015. A further 44 council homes on 9 sites are nearly completed and it is expected that all of these will be ready for handover between now and the end of June 2015. Therefore, by early summer, a total of 62 new council homes will have been completed and occupied by families in need.

In addition to these 62 homes, we will commence work on a new programme of council house building for which funding is fully committed, through the HRA, Right to Buy receipts and affordable housing grant provided by the GLA. This will deliver a further 100 homes, across 17 sites, for completion by 2018.

However, we are not content with maintaining historic levels of housing delivery and intend to significantly extend the council new build programme in future years. A review of all council-owned sites (housing and non-housing land) has been undertaken, and over 40 sites have been identified as suitable for new housing development on under-utilised or vacant land. Together these sites have the potential to deliver a programme of over 400 good quality new homes, of which more than three quarters will be affordable homes. As part of our Ambitious for Croydon programme, we are working up a funding and delivery model which will ensure that these homes are developed quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively, providing a significant increase in new council housing delivery over the next few years.

CQ196-15 from Councillor Dudley Mead

To Councillor Alison Butler

What survey results have you had in respect of the Landlord Licencing scheme from local agents who are members of the NLA (National Landlords' Association)

Reply

From the responses to the consultation questionnaire, which asked landlords and agents 'are you a member of the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme or other recognised landlord body', 28% of respondents (213) replied 'yes' and 72% (548) replied 'no'. We cannot say which of the respondents who answered 'yes' are members of the NLA or of other bodies, nor can we separate out how those landlords who are members of a recognised body answered the other questions on the questionnaire compared to those who are not members of a recognised body.

We did receive a separate, written response from the NLA themselves which included a total of 51 points and which can be found in full in appendix 1 to the report to the 16 March cabinet meeting.

CQ202-15 **from Councillor Margaret Bird**

To Councillor Alison Butler

Residents in Coulsdon East who are opposing planning applications, are not being advised of sometimes considerable delays to the published decision dates. Could the cabinet member tell me why decision dates on planning applications are being regularly delayed?

Reply

Once a decision on a planning application is issued, residents who engaged as part of the planning application process are informed of the outcome of the planning application process. There are some situations when there are delays between resolving to grant planning permission and the issuing of the decision notice, whilst associated S.106 legal agreements are being drafted and finalised, but residents are advised once the legal agreement has been finalised and the eventual decision issued.

If there are issues relating to specific cases, the Development Management Service will investigate further and resolve any outstanding issues.

CQ209-15 from Councillor Helen Pollard

To Councillor Alison Butler

Can the Cabinet Member tell me the cost (administration plus any other costs) of minor planning applications that are processed by officers under delegated powers, and also the cost of similar minor planning applications that are taken before the Planning Committee?

Reply

Monitoring and analysis of unit costs per application was undertaken by the Planning Service around 3 years ago (alongside benchmarking with other similar authorities). Whilst the analysis did not specifically refer to minor applications, it did highlight that the average cost to draft and process planning reports via Planning Committee was £1,700 per case compared to the costs of drafting and finalising delegated reports (£132 per application). Delegated processes require more limited engagement with senior managers with a requirement for more limited administrative processing – thereby reducing costs overall.

It is most likely that the costs of reporting minor applications via Planning Committee is significantly less than the average cost specified above – as this sample included complex and major planning applications. Further work is required to properly understand the cost variations between application types we will be reviewing this matter going forward.

CQ210-15 from Councillor Helen Pollard

To Councillor Alison Butler

What steps has the current administration taken to expedite the footbridge from Cherry Orchard Road to East Croydon and on to Wellesley Road? Would the Cabinet Member agree that this would be of huge benefit to residents of Croydon, especially those in Addiscombe and that this project should be completed as soon as possible?

Reply

I am extremely disappointed that the previous administration failed to secure an imminent way forward on this issue when granting planning permission for major developments adjacent to the station, instead leaving the town a hostage to fortune relying on private developers bringing schemes forward.

This administration agrees that a permanent extension of the footbridge into Cherry Orchard Road would be of huge benefit to the residents of Croydon. The East Croydon masterplan identifies this link bridge as a priority objective to improve east-west routes across the town.

Despite the failure of the previous administration , officers have been working with Network Rail over recent months in order to produce up to date cost estimates for both a permanent and a temporary bridge link. These costs will inform how the council then decides to commit to help deliver the new connection with Network Rail.

CQ211-15 from Councillor Helen Pollard

To Councillor Alison Butler

Can the Cabinet Member tell me how the new Selective Licensing Scheme will identify rogue landlords who don't register and whose tenants are too scared to report them?

Reply

We already have a wealth of information which identifies privately rented properties and private landlords, including landlords who, on their behaviour to date, have been identified as 'rogue'. It is accepted that it may be challenging to track down those landlords who are determined to avoid us, however selective licensing, when it becomes a mandatory requirement, will introduce new legal penalties for landlords who fail to comply of a fine of up to £20,000 and we intend to use these new powers to the full. Landlords who are prosecuted for failing to licence but then do apply for a licence will only be granted a licence for 12 months (rather than 5 years) and will need to re-apply, and pay the full fee again, every 12 months for the life of the scheme, which would mean such a landlord could end up paying £3,750 in licence fees. Other new penalties which may be imposed on landlords who are prosecuted for failing to apply for a licence is the facility for the tenants (who pay their own rent) or ourselves (if tenants are in receipt of benefits) to apply for a 'rent repayment order' which would mean that the landlord would have to repay part or all of the rents he had received during a period of up to 12 months when the property was unlicensed. Ultimately, if a landlord still fails to apply for a licence we may take over the management of the property. These new powers will be a significant incentive for landlords to comply.

In addition to these incentives, additional officers will be proactively looking for tenanted properties which we have not received a licence application for, using predictive tools from the data we already have and close working with partners such as the fire brigade and police. I am confident that all these measures will enable us to track down even the most elusive of landlords.

CQ215-15 from Councillor Chris Wright

To Councillor Alison Butler

Would the Cabinet Member say that her house building philosophy is one of the Council needing to be brave and build in places where people might not want us to build?

Reply

It is recognised across London that there is a massive shortage of homes that are available and affordable to the capital's growing population. We take very seriously the vital role that we have in this borough, working with the Mayor, private developers, housing associations and investors, in rising to the challenge of providing additional homes to meet the needs of local residents and to contribute to meeting London's wider housing needs.

In September last year, this Council set out its Growth Plan for the borough, which included the ambition to accelerate the delivery of new homes to enable 9,500 new housing starts over the following five years. This is an average of 1,900 homes a year, higher than the proposed London Housing plan target of 1,435 homes and nearly double the number of homes we have delivered on average over the last five years.

Our growth plan for housing includes a range of interventions and investments needed to double our housing delivery rate. We recognise that critical to this is a pragmatic approach which focuses resources on those sites that are most suitable and deliverable and emphasises long-term sustainability and viability. Our approach therefore includes:

- A much stronger role for the Council in enabling key sites across the borough to come forward within a shorter timeframe, through actively enabling land assembly, investing in 'stalled schemes', and forming partnerships with landowners, developers and housing associations;
- Establishing a Revolving Investment Fund to enable the Council to take a direct role in the funding of development and to support key projects that support our growth ambitions;
- Setting up a Development Company to enable the Council to directly deliver residential and mixed use schemes, which will include homes for sale and for rent, as well as affordable homes;
- Reviewing all council land assets to explore the potential for developing new housing on land that is under-utilised or no longer needed for its current use, which will be delivered through an enhanced council new build programme;
- Reviewing all of our council housing estates to identify which might benefit from a programme of estate renewal including investment in new housing alongside improvements to the existing housing and environment;

- Considering potential acquisition of sites, in some cases through the use of CPO powers, where this is the most effective means of unlocking and driving forward housing development on empty sites.

Given the scale of the challenge, business as usual is not an option; the Council needs to be brave, imaginative and resourceful and that is the approach we are taking.

CQ216-15 **from Councillor Chris Wright**

To Councillor Alison Butler

Could the Cabinet Member please provide me with the number of planning applications in the last 9 months listing the number decided by delegated powers and those decided by the Planning Committee.?

Reply

In the last 9 months (1st July 2014 – 31st March 2015) the Local Planning Authority has determined 3020 applications. The number of decisions taken at each decision level are as follows:

Delegated Powers	2,989 Applications
Planning Committee	31 applications.

CQ224-15 from Councillor Robert Canning

To Councillor Alison Butler

What requirements exist in the planning process for the provision of adequate storage facilities for bins and recycling boxes when planning permission is sought to turn a single household property in to flats or in to a house in multiple occupation?

Reply

Development is required to comply with policies contained within the development plan and the relevant policy that relates to recycling and the storage of waste (Saved Policy UD15) advises that new development and the conversion of properties will only be permitted if it provides temporary storage space for refuse which is generated by the development and which is adequately screened and conveniently located. The Council would expect developers converting houses into flats to comply with this requirement and planning conditions will be attached to such planning permissions to deliver such provision. There are certain situations where HMOs do not require planning permission (where no more than 6 residents reside within an HMO) and in such cases, the local planning has no basis to require alternative refuse storage and recycling arrangements.

Similarly, where proposals for new residential accommodation come forward without requiring a planning application (in other words by way of permitted development) the Council has no planning control over the provision of refuse storage arrangements.

CQ238-15 from Councillor Joy Prince**To Councillor Alison Butler**

What is the Council's estimate of the number of privately-rented properties in Croydon which, in 2015, still do not have inside toilet?

Reply

Officers in the housing standards and enforcement team, who regularly visit private sector tenants in their homes, cannot recall the last time they encountered a property which did not have an inside toilet, therefore my estimate would be 'very low or none'. However, if the Councillor is aware of any such properties, please do let us know so that officers can investigate.

CQ241-15 from Councillor Andrew Rendle

To Councillor Alison Butler

The re-development of central Croydon is to be welcomed. However in Ashburton we want to keep our successful thriving district centres. Will the cabinet member pledge to visit some of the businesses on The Lower Addiscombe Road with me to see how our small local businesses are vital to Ashburton's economy and close community feel?

Reply

The redevelopment of Croydon Town Centre that is now coming to fruition is indeed welcome progress for Croydon and we are ensuring that the benefits can be felt across the borough.

Our new Place department and district regeneration team is a statement of the Administration's aspiration to support our local district centres. Indeed we are looking to conduct business and partner surveys across a range of areas to garner a real understanding of how we can best support them and assist the vitality and prosperity of our districts.

To give an example of our emerging approach, the recent Thornton Heath walkabout involved a range of local residents, businesses and communities coming together to highlight challenges and opportunities within the area. The next stage is a follow up business survey over the next 2 months to formalise an action plan to support growth in the area. This approach is providing a template for replication across our districts.

With regard to district centres I would be delighted to accept your offer to visit some of the businesses on Lower Addiscombe Road. Local retailers, restaurants, solicitors and accountants for example, located in and around high streets and local district centres, are absolutely vital to the economy and wellbeing of the area.

CQ259-15 **from Councillor Tim Pollard**

To Councillor Alison Butler

How much rise in the average administration fees charged by managing agents to their landlords are you expecting as a result of the introduction of the borough-wide selective licensing scheme?

Reply

I am proud that this Labour Council is on the side of local residents and is working with landlords, residents and tenants across the borough to deliver better housing services to meet the needs of local people.

The introduction of the scheme should not result in any increase in administration fees charged by managing agents, although this is of course outside our control. The licence application process will be online and should take around 20 minutes to complete. It will only need to be done once per property during the 5 year period of the scheme. Landlords will be able to complete the process themselves.

With regards to the proposed inspection of each property by the council, this will entail a single inspection during the 5 year period, unless significant issues are discovered. It will be arranged to coincide with one of the managing agent's regular inspections, which they should be carrying out frequently as part of their duties. Obtaining and presenting annual safety certificates on request, is something that managing agents should already be doing.

The scheme will not place any significant additional duties on good landlords, or good managing agents.

CQ261-15 **from Councillor Jason Perry**

To Councillor Alison Butler

Following the excellent news that the Government has given £7million to Croydon to support the Growth Zone, how does the Council intend to spend this money?

Reply

The development Infrastructure funding study (DIFS) identifies a range of infrastructure requirements to deliver the potential 9,500 houses and 23,500 jobs in the Croydon Metropolitan Centre. This ranges from enhancements of the tram network, road improvements and power through to schools, health provision and public realm.

This funding from the Treasury will assist us to borrow the requisite funding to ensure that we deliver holistic and sustainable regeneration.

CQ262-15 **from Councillor Jason Perry**

To Councillor Alison Butler

The Cabinet Member recently agreed to review her decision to remove Member referral rights to Planning Committee. Would she please advise how this review is going and whether she intends to consult with Resident Associations, as many have shown a keen interest in this issue?

Reply

The review remains on-going. The number of planning applications received per annum and the resources available to determine them in a timely and robust manner might potentially influence the form and extent of Planning Committee engagement prompted by Member referral requests. However, we are looking to find the best possible outcome for local residents. The Council is looking at new and inventive ways on how we can consult and raise issues with all our residents, including the 75,000 households now registered on Croydon's My Account.

CQ263-15 **from Councillor Jason Perry**

To Councillor Alison Butler

Would the Cabinet Member please detail how she intends to support and protect the many conservation areas across the borough?

Reply

Croydon's designated conservation areas are a valuable part of Croydon's built heritage and are protected by national planning policy as well as the policies in Croydon's local plan. The Council is undertaking a project to ensure that Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (CAAMPs) are in place for Croydon's 21 conservation areas. These supplementary planning documents (SPDs) clearly appraise and define what makes each conservation area special, sets out the threats to that character, and sets out guidance on how each conservation area can be preserved and enhanced. These CAAMPs are supported by a Conservation Area General Guidance SPD which provides planning guidance applicable to all of Croydon's conservation areas.

These policies and guidance documents provide a robust framework on which to encourage those applying for planning consent to base their proposals, to inform pre-application processes, to inform planning decisions and to inform enforcement cases. The guidance is also useful for those who can make changes in conservation areas that do not require planning consent, but who are encouraged to do so in a sympathetic manner.

In addition the CAAMPs can be used by the Council and others as evidence to apply for external funding for projects that could enhance the area and to support and guide improvements made to the public realm.

Using the evidence provided by the CAAMPs, the Council may decide to implement Article 4 Directions to remove certain permitted development rights in conservation areas if this would help preserve their special character.