

## **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There are two questions from members of the public.

### **1. From Mr Perrin to Councillor Gledhill**

Councillor Gledhill, in the light of the horrific fire which destroyed a residential block in London, can you assure Thurrock residents living in similar high rise buildings they are safe in their homes?

### **2. From Mr Brown to Councillor Tolson**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Environment please justify the sum being charged to residents of Salisbury and Kent Roads who are now being held personally responsible for rubbish left by fly-tippers.

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## **Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 28 June 2017**

### **Item 6 – Questions from Members of the Public.**

Two questions were submitted from members of the public.

#### **1. From Perrin to Councillor Gledhill**

Councillor Gledhill, in the light of the horrific fire which destroyed a residential tower block in London, can you assure Thurrock residents living in similar buildings they are safe in their homes?

#### **Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you, Mr Mayor. Obviously after giving such a long speech in regards to this I still have absolutely no problem reiterating what I've said so far.

Within 24 hours of the horrific fire at Grenfell Tower senior officer team had reviewed all of the council's Fire and alarm safety systems as well as bin shed sprinklers, the frequency of statutory Essex Fire Authority checks and the annual council checks and I am pleased to say that they were all up to date and completed before the inspection date.

On Friday 16 June staff from the Housing service hand delivered a letter and knocked on the doors of all 981 properties within the 15 tower blocks in Thurrock to re-assure residents. The council had over a 70 per cent contact rate, that's direct with the residents, and I would congratulate the Housing staff for their speed of response in carrying this reassurance action out. It really made residents feel that bit safer.

We've started meeting with tower block residents and the Fire Service also with us to outline the safety measures already in place and to pick up any specific concerns and the steps that residents can take to maximise their personal safety such as checking their own personal smoke alarms.

Thurrock high-rise blocks do not use any of the Aluminium Based Cladding which was used in the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower. Our cladding is made from a resin-based material which has the highest possible fire rating, which is type O. As a result the council has not been asked to submit any further samples to central government for testing, although as mentioned we will be carrying out our own testing through an independent company for a double assurance. The safety of our residents is paramount, and we will making sure in the coming months that all appropriate steps are being taken to ensure the continuing resilience of our stock against the kind of tragic event that happened in Grenfell Tower. We will start with the tower blocks and then we will work out to our other properties too.

#### **Mayor**

Thank you. Mr Perrin, please make sure that your supplementary question is a question, not a statement, thank you.

**Mr Perrin**

Thank you, Mr Mayor. I would like to ask you if you would indulge me in allowing me to ask two questions in my supplementary, rather than one.

**Mayor**

Unfortunately I don't want to adhere to the Constitution, so please ask your second question, please.

**Mr Perrin**

You cannot allow me to ask, in view of the seriousness of the situation, you cannot ask Members to allow me to ask two questions?

**Mayor**

If you go on with your second question, Mr Perrin, please.

**Mr Perrin**

Fine. Does the Council have any tower blocks more than 15 storeys high? I believe the fire service have no external means ie. ladders or hydraulic lifts, to rescue people trapped in their homes which are more than 15 storeys high. Councillor Gledhill, if this be true do you, like me, consider it to be a cruel act to knowingly put people in life-threatening danger by building residential tower blocks more than 15 storeys high, from which it is virtually impossible to rescue them?

**Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you, Mr Perrin. First of all, 15 storeys, no. The maximum we have is 15 storeys. Do I think it's criminally irresponsible for putting people in properties above 15 storeys? Again, no. There are other safety measures. If we look at, certainly some of the newer tower blocks that have separate fireman's access, fireman's lifts, not just the one as we experience in most of our flats in Thurrock. It's not just about whether or not the height of a building can be accessed by the fire service from the ground, it's whether or not they can actually access from within. Most fire services, sorry most fire calls, to high-rise properties are fought from within the block itself, not from the outside. So no, and that information came from the fire service today.

**Mayor**

Thank you. Thank you, Mr Perrin.

**Mr Perrin**

Thank you, Mr Mayor.

**Question 2 was withdrawn prior to the Council Meeting.**

## **Item 13 – Questions from Members**

The Mayor informed the Chamber that 4 questions had been received to the Leader of the Council and 8 questions had been received to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee had been received.

### **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

#### **1. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you, Mr Mayor, and my question is can the Leader confirm whether he intends to proceed with the proposed increase in service charges for sheltered housing tenants?

**Mayor**

Councillor Gledhill

**Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you, Mr Mayor and thank you, Councillor Gerrish for your question. Bit shocked really you're asking me whether I intend to proceed. I don't have individual Cabinet Member powers, we sit as a Cabinet, so we would all have to make that decision together.

But yes, a report will be going to the next Cabinet meeting in relation to this.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor Gerrish, do you have a supplementary question?

**Councillor Gerrish**

Thank you, Mr Mayor. Would the Leader accept that for some residents this will constitute a very large proportion of their income?

**Mayor**

Leader?

**Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you, Mr Mayor, and thank you Councillor Gerrish. As has already been previously outlined, 70 per cent of those people in sheltered accommodation already receive full, or mainly, housing benefit. Some of those that are on the cusp of that, with any increase that a housing benefit applicable amount, could see an increase in their housing benefit. For those that are over and above that amount they would be paying for services that they are receiving, and have been receiving for free when they should be paid for.

**Mayor**

Thank you. Councillor Gerrish, do you have a second supplementary question?

**Councillor Gerrish**

Thank you, Mr Mayor. Clearly the costs escalate across 3 years and a number of residents are very concerned about the impact that will have on their daily spending. If the increase does go ahead, what plans has the Leader put in place to monitor the impact on residents of this huge increase in costs?

**Mayor**

Councillor Gledhill.

**Councillor Gledhill**

First of all, should Cabinet decide to agree with the proposals and go forward, as you've mentioned there is a gradual increase that's been proposed. As with any other increment in charges, if you look back to obviously previous plans under your Administration, or the previous Administration sorry, to increase rent until the Government capped it, that rent increase would have gone ahead, you would have done no monitoring. What we will be doing is to ensure where people are saying they're finding it difficult, is to find out why they're finding it difficult and see whether they need to adjust what they're spending their money on to make sure they're paying for the services they are receiving.

**Mayor**

Thank you, Councillor Gledhill.

**2. From Councillor Jones to Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you. Thank you, Mr Mayor. I know that the Leader has done a very good report as far as this is concerned, but I've got two further questions so if I'm allowed to I'll... Could the Leader inform members and the residents of Thurrock what measures Thurrock Council will undertake to best safeguard Thurrock's tower blocks after witnessing the tragic fire at a West London tower block? Thank you

**Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you, Mr Mayor, and thank you Councillor Jones for this question. As mentioned before I really have no problem at all repeating what I've said so far, if it makes one more resident happier that they're living in a tower block and we're doing the maximum to make that safe. I will repeat it all night long.

Officers have reviewed existing fire regulation requirements and all of our 15 tower blocks are fully compliant. In order to give extra assurance we are working with the Essex Fire Service, to review the current fire safety arrangements and are conducting further reassurance inspections. All residents have already been written to, with a hand-delivered letter once – meetings started to take place today. I understand a total of 10 residents from the Chadwell flats attended over the two meetings in the morning and the afternoon. And Officers from the Council have met with the Fire Service to discuss other issues that have arisen. As mentioned the materials in the cladding, those blocks that are clad, have been reviewed and the government say we do not need to submit samples but we have gone the extra set and

have submitted to an outside organisation for testing. Officers have also had discussions with not only the fire service but internally to see what the costs of sprinklers if they are a recommendation would need to go in. Obviously that would need the fire service input, as they are the professionals in this so I will wait to see the outcome, not only the national report but also the outcome of my officers and those at the fire authority.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor Gledhill. Councillor Jones do you have a supplementary question.

**Councillor Jones**

Thank you very much Leader and appreciate all that the Council and officers have done to try and help to alleviate the fears that residents must have. It must have been terrible for residents in these flats witness the horrific events that were played out on the television. When the fire safety checks are carried out it has been stated that in some of these buildings it has been carried out by contractors. Can you confirm if this is carried out by our fire service and not contractors.

**Councillor Gledhill**

My understanding is that all these checks are carried out by the fire service and I can double check that for you just to make sure.

**Mayor**

Councillor Jones do you have a second supplementary question.

**Councillor Jones**

Thank you Mister Mayor. When I was on one of those committees once it was stated that we do have a fire platform ladder as Mr Perrin pointed out in his question. This was mentioned that this could be moved to Chelmsford. I was quite upset at just the thought of moving it from this area, an industrial area, can we confirm that we are to keep this fire platform in this area. Thank you.

**Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor Jones. I am the Leader of the Council, not the person in charge of the fire service. A procurement has gone through, as we know, we have put in our own submission. I am sure other areas must think if this comes to us this might help us. As I stated earlier, and this was from the fire service earlier today, most fires in high rises are fought within and out from without. They are fought from the bottom up, they go up 2 floors below and fight their way up and they fight their way down. This is mainly not done by ladder that is why there are very few in the entire country. It was a few days later than one was able to get to Grenfell Towers. Would it be nice to have one? Everyone would like one. The reality is that the way the fire service work as I say they work from the bottom up and then down.

**3. From Councillor Maney to Councillor Gledhill**

Given the recent fire at Grenfell Tower in West London and the tragic loss of life which resulted from this, would the Leader comment on the fire safety

arrangements relating to the Borough's high rise accommodation and advise how these will be reviewed? In particular, given that early speculation is that replacement cladding at Grenfell Tower could have exacerbated the spread of the blaze, would the Leader confirm that the cladding replacement works undertaken some years ago to blocks in Grays Riverside and Little Thurrock Blackshots have been re-assessed in light of the tragedy and are deemed safe.

**Mayor**  
Leader

**Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor Maney. I will again say that quite happily that all of our cladding is one of the highest possible fire retardant rating type O. It is not the aluminium type cladding that was used in Grenfell Tower but more importantly the works done in both Grays and Blackshots was not the replacement of panels but placement fixings to ensure that the panels stayed on the building. This did take some time and as said we submitted our DCLG report and they have not asked for any samples from us. We are not in that 600 that are reporting every day of failing, we are well below that and we are taking our own measures to ensure the gravel resin cladding will be used is definitely 100 per cent safe along with the mineral wall insulation that was underneath.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor Gledhill. Councillor Maney do you have a supplementary question.

**Councillor Maney**

Yes thank you Mister Mayor. I do. I know the Leader said that officers are busily contacting as many of the residents of the high rise blocks as possible to assure them that that fire arrangements there are in order. But the Leader may recall that in 2011 there was a fire at Kier Hardy House, Little Thurrock, Blackshots. It was a minor fire of course compared to that fire that took hold at Grenfell Tower but one of the things that came out of that was that residents were very confused as to what they should have done. Residents didn't know if to leave their properties, stay in their properties, and clearly there was a lack of awareness about what to do in an emergency. Can I ask the Leader that in addition to reassuring residents he will do all that he can, that the Council will do all that they can, to impress upon residents what the fire safety arrangements are.

**Mayor**  
Leader

**Councillor Gledhill**

Thank Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor Maney. As of today and that will remain as such as the fire service say otherwise we operate the "Safe Put" system. Which means that if you smell smoke or if you feel heat from a fire you evacuate your property and go to the ground floor where you wait until

you are given the all clear by the fire service. If you are on a floor, on any other floor, that is not affected you stay put and wait for the fire service to tell you what to do. The last thing we need is an unorganised evacuation of 15 floors going down one flight of stairs. I had discussions with officers today and have suggested that this be put in a sign format on the front doors of every single property to a point of exit as you would see in most hotels rooms so you know exactly what to do. I am going to reiterate what the stay put process is. If you smell smoke or if you feel the heat from the fire you evacuate your property and that floor, if not you stay put. That does not mean that you stay put if you later feel the heat or the smoke. As soon as you feel the heat or the smoke, at that point you evacuate and go to the ground floor and take the advice from the fire service.

### **Mayor**

Thank you Councillor Gledhill. Councillor Maney do you have a second supplementary question.

### **Councillor Maney**

Yes thank you Mister Mayor. If the tragedy of Grenfell should tell us anything is that when we look at the age and the condition of the nation's high rise accommodation, in particularly here in Thurrock it should tell us that high rise social housing should definitely be a thing of the past. I know we have ran into some political opposition around that but quite frankly we should be bold as councillors and put that aside for the relevance of what it is and I know it would be impossible for the Council to rehouse everybody overnight who lived in a high rise property in Thurrock but would the Leader at least agree with me that it should be an aspiration, if not anything else, for this council to remove all high rise blocks of flats from the borough in the near future, well not the near future, but sometime in the future. Having been a councillor for 16 years in a ward that has high rise accommodation I have never meet anyone who wants to live in a high rise flat and they need to come down. Can you leader say that as an aspiration of his administration to remove them.

### **Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor Maney. You are quite right 981 properties in the high rise we would find it extremely difficult to the point of impossible to rehouse them all immediately. Do I feel the tower blocks in Thurrock have had their day, oh yes. Very very much so. New tower blocks are completely different, they have fire lifts for the fire service they have separate evacuation processes through multiply exit routes, through fire rated stairwells. We don't. We're talking about products from 60's and 70's that are long past their sell by date. So yes I would like to see us being aspirational, I would like to see us being at the forefront making sure that those towers have seen their day and they are eventually dropped and replaced by medium rise properties at best. We can do so much more in Thurrock, we should do so much more in Thurrock. We should put the politics of the past saying that this one person really loves staying here. It's not about one person in a block of flats which is terrible thing to say it's about everybody. Not just the ones currently in those flats but those ones that end up moving into those flats decades to come unless we start taking the action now.

**4. From Councillor Liddiard to Councillor MacPherson**

The derelict changing rooms on the Daisyfield, St. Chads Road, Tilbury, has attracted children during the day and substance abusers after dark. Although railings surround the building, it is not secure. Residents fear accidents and needle infections. Can the Portfolio Holder tell me what can be done and when?

**Mayor**

Councillor MacPherson

**Councillor MacPherson**

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you for your question Councillor Liddiard. I assuming these are the reports which have been made through Housing as I have checked with the police safety partnership and they have not had any reports of anti social behaviour in this specific area. I know I haven't received anything either and I would, as you know, more than happy to meet you on site and we can look how we can move this forward. As you have heard from the leader this evening anti social behaviour is a blight in our borough and we are determined to do what we can working with our community safety partners to get this sorted. Will be more than happy to meet you on site Councillor Liddiard to see how we can move this forward together.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor MacPherson. Councillor Liddiard do you have a supplementary question.

**Councillor Liddiard**

In the event of an accident and the Council is proved at fault can you tell me who would be accountable.

**Councillor MacPherson**

It would depend on what time of accident we are talking about it talks a lot about the needles and I am aware that the children are going onto the roofs and jumping off and things like this. We have got to protect it, we have got to protect our residents I know that unfortunately sometimes youths don't seem to see the best way of behaving on derelict sites and that is what we need to address.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor MacPherson. Councillor Liddiard do you have a second supplementary question.

**Councillor Liddiard**

No thank you.

## **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO CABINET MEMBERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND MEMBERS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON A JOINT COMMITTEE**

### **1. From Councillor Cherry to Councillor Tolson**

During the Great British Spring Clean I was told by all residents I met that there was a lack of strategically placed bins across the borough. I understand the Council only have 400 bins currently in use. Can the Portfolio Holder inform me if this is true and whether there are plans to introduce more bins into Thurrock?

**Mayor**

Councillor Tolson.

**Councillor Tolson**

Thank you Mister Mayor. There are over 500 litter bins across the borough with a further 50 being released over the next 6 months. As and when the dog bins perish in our parks we are replacing them with dual purposes bins and I notice that this was a question which was put in in March and the environmental service is very much a reaction service and if you are suggesting that you were wanting a bin in a certain place would it not have been a good idea to ask for one in the interim.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor MacPherson. Councillor Cherry do you have a supplementary question.

**Councillor Cherry**

Thank you Mister Mayor. I find that response a bit off putting really I have asked for bins from the council that is why I am asking this question again here today. The waste bin outside Herringham school that disappeared, we used to have bins outside Coalhouse fort they have disappeared, and I was told in respect of Herringham School that they didn't need to have a bin there anymore so when I talk about strategically placed bins it's at those locations like outside schools where we can encourage children to use the bins. It's like outside bus stops where people loiter, where if there was a bin they could put the rubbish in it instead of throwing on the floor. You said I should have asked for bins, I have asked for bins, when will those bins appear.

**Councillor Tolson**

I don't believe I have seen an email for specifically for a bin that you have requested on public land. However I did have one removed myself from Stanford Le Hope recreation ground that wasn't a problem and I had a resident that contacted me I meet with her and couldn't see a problem with what she was asking and the head of service agreed and the bin was placed there.

**Mayor**

Thank you, Councillor Cherry, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

**Councillor Cherry**

Just defend myself for asking for bins, I have asked for bins outside Herringham school as explained. I have also been promised bins for Wickham field which is project that has been worked on, a lot of money spent. I have given other dog walkers litter pickers and I have been promised bins for them to use but where are the bins. Thank you.

**Councillor Tolson**

I can't understand the difficulty with you having a bin it is a simple service request and I know the ground staff have done a fantastic job of Wickham field and I believe at one point you were going to do a press release which I was thrilled about because our grounds department work extremely hard. If it is so difficult for you to get a bin or bins for your area please just email me.

**2. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor MacPherson**

In recent months I have received an increasing number of complaints about serious and ongoing antisocial and criminal behaviour underneath the Sheffield/Derby Road Bridge in Grays. This is having a serious impact on the residents of Darnley Road and users of the Crown Road car park. Will the Portfolio Holder commit to fencing off the area?

**Mayor**

Councillor MacPherson.

**Councillor MacPherson**

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor Potheary for your question. Again I haven't received any reports with regards to this which I am quite alarmed about and I have also spoken to the Police regards this and they haven't received any anti-social behaviour.

**Councillor Potheary**

Yes, yes I think I have put stuff in but I think it went to Transport under the car park remit. I have been in contact with the neighbouring police team about the issue and local residents tell me they are consistently calling 101 about the issue and I know I definitely spoke to the police who promised me some patrols which seem to have had a bit of an impact but obviously this is an on-going issue with the Police not able to keep patrolling the area with the resources they have got. Can we get it fenced off.

**Councillor MacPherson**

Thank you for that clarification I do appreciate that. One of the most important things is that we work on is intelligence so if residents are reporting it I would highly recommend going through to email 101 as I am aware of the telephone problems that 101 have had. I will reiterate that if they keep reporting the issues what we can do is build up this intelligence to make sure we do get those patrols and things like that. I am sure you are aware of the community environment development fund which is being launched which I would urge residents to get together, this is the sort of thing that is going to stop anti-social behaviour this is going to make a positive impact on the community and

I would urge the community to go onto our web site [www.thurrock.gov.uk/cedf](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/cedf). Thank you.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor MacPherson. Councillor Potheary do you have a second supplementary question.

**Councillor Potheary**

Yes it's just in relation to CEDF is that the only complication I can see with the quite frankly wonderful CEDF is that the land underneath the bridge is currently car parking space so I know you are not responsible for car parking which is why this went originally, I am surprised this came to you. Are residents in a position to bid for money to do something on a piece of land that the Council owns and currently generates a speculative income from. If that makes sense?

**Councillor MacPherson**

Can I have a look at that and come back to you. Thank you.

**3. From Councillor Watkins to Councillor Tolson**

Please can the Portfolio Holder provide an update on Clean It, Cut It, Fill It.

**Mayor**

Councillor Tolson.

**Councillor Tolson**

Thank you Mister Mayor. What a difference a year makes. This time last year the spear head had only just been repaired three months after it should have done its first cut in the borough. That meant that a lot of the parks had extremely long grass and it was difficult to catch up. At one point we had no street sweeping service, no barrow beats, so what was we going to do about it. We put together a pilot that was very successful and after that we decided it was so successful that we would increase the revenue budget by a million pounds to allow Clean It Cut It Fill It to continue. Where are we now? We have increased staffing but only about 9 posts so we are having to be more efficient. We are still down about 50 posts in the service and this is challenging. The extremely warm weather has meant that the grass has grown really quickly this year, early on in the season. Grounds maintenance team over winter since October have carried out winter pruning maintenance of 29 sites, close to 32 thousand tonnes of green waste was removed as a result of this work. The remaining sites will be done over the winter time.

**Mayor**

Thank your Councillor Tolson. Councillor Watkins do you have a supplementary question.

**Councillor Watkins**

I would like to thank the portfolio holder for a response and thank the council for the initiative of Clean It Cut It Fill It last year and making sure the cleaning of the borough again following years of neglect which we saw from the

previous administration. Obviously there was a lot of work that had to go into it and more work is going into it. Can the portfolio holder please confirm the next steps with Clean It Cut It Fill It.

**Councillor Tolson**

Hopefully more of the same we will be getting more efficient and slicker and we hope to have better communication and have in-cab systems in our fleet, we are procuring fleet for the environment department and the horticultural department at the moment. Part of the efficiency of the borough we have also taking the CA site in house now and we are going to make some changes up there and hopefully it will be used as this is one of the busiest sites in Essex. The enforcement with the fixed penalty notices will be going out to tender shortly and we have just increased the A13 cleaning from 3 to 4 times this year and they have just finished 8 days cleaning.

**Mayor**

Thank your Councillor Tolson. Councillor Watkins do you have a second supplementary question.

**Councillor Watkins**

No thank you.

**4. From Councillor Watkins to Councillor Tolson**

Please can the Portfolio Holder provide an update on the progress of the bin change collection.

**Mayor**

Councillor Tolson

**Councillor Tolson**

Route Optimisation commenced on the 8 May and there have been minor teething issues with the service when considering that 80 per cent households in the borough have been affected. Residents have been very cooperative and responded well to change and presenting their bins on the appropriate day. Six weeks into change we are reviewing the rounds and making minor tweaks to ensure efficient and effective services and we have noted a minority of residents have experienced a disruption to the service and we are putting in place mechanisms to ensure that these are resolved. The recent hot weather has caused some operational challenges but would have happened regardless of route optimisation. Basically we have an older fleet which we are in the process of procuring. Now we considering the service to be working on a business as usual basis and I would just like to say with the route optimisation whilst there are a lot of processes going on in the back office that would mean nothing without the hard working team on the ground and it has been extremely hot and they are out there all day and it has been remarkable temperatures so well done to them.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor Tolson. Councillor Watkins do you have a second supplementary question.

**Councillor Watkins**

I echo again to a fantastic response we have seen across the borough and I think I have not received any complaints in my ward with regards to this service change so that is fantastic to see. In relation to the Council we are always looking to try to get our residents to re-cycle more and it's an on-going issue to stop the bins from being contaminated. When we had the signage changes when we gave out signage in relation to the bin changes I did comment on the fact that it could have commented more on what residents can and can't recycle and how to find out more information about that. So with that can you please look into finding out what signage we implement perhaps on the bins, what signage we can deliver to residents and how we can engage with residents to try and improve the recycle rates we see. Thank you.

**Councillor Tolson**

Yes now that the route optimisation has got to back to normal basically it was a huge task, 2000 bins per week collected we are now going to concentrate on recycling as it is now good enough and it hasn't been good enough for some years. It costs more to dispose of a tonne of non-recyclables than it does recyclables. And if we could just up it by one per cent, approximately, per annum that's £35,000 saved and the more it goes up the more money we can save. So there are a range of initiatives, now that the optimisation is through we want to engage with people. It is not a difficult system we have a really easy clean container system and we want the borough cleaner as possible with a full list on the web site of things that are recyclable. Thank you

**5. Councillor J Kent to Councillor Tolson**

Can the Portfolio Holder explain why residents of Kent Road and Salisbury Road, in Grays, were threatened with a bill of £57.02p - and potential court action - for clearing the fly tipping at the rear of their homes?

**Mayor**

Councillor Tolson

**Councillor Tolson**

Thank you Mister Mayor. Yes this is a strange one this one because it appears to cross portfolios and that the person that wrote the letter does not fall under my head of service and it is actually a public health letter that has gone out and that is not under my remit. But I will answer the question. Letters received by residents in Grays asking them to pay to clear fly tipping in an alleyway was sent prematurely and we have already apologised to residents for any inconvenience or any stress these letters may have caused. It is important that were we make a mistake we identify it, apologise and take action. The Council is responsible for clearing fly-tips on public land and highways and we spend around £120,000 each year doing so. Land owners are responsible for clearing their land and unadopted areas some such as alleyways are the responsibility of surrounding land owners. When piles of rubbish could become a threat to public health steps must be taken. We are reviewing the options available to the council to support land owners to address fly tips in alleyways and I have asked officers to complete this review

before the end of the month and that last sentence that officer is not in my department either.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor Tolson. Councillor Kent do you have a supplementary question.

**Councillor Kent**

The charge of £57.02p that has gone in the region of 90 residents comes to a total of £5200. Officers have told us that the cost of clearing the rubbish would be about £660. The remaining £4500 is an admin charge, could the portfolio holder tell us how that admin charge is made up.

**Councillor Tolson**

What strikes me with this is that somebody has complained, somebody's life is blighted and they are sick to death of seeing all that filth and rubbish in that back access. Now they may not be living there, they may be close by, but they are aggrieved enough to complain because they want something done about it. So can I say how this letter made up this sum no there is an admin charge it doesn't fall under me.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor Tolson. Councillor Kent do you have a second supplementary question.

**Councillor Kent**

Yes I think the portfolio holder is right, I think the residents are sick and tired of seeing all that filth and rubbish outside their back doors. Mister Mayor I wrote to the leader of the council on the 20 June following the apology that was issued and that I said in there that it strikes me that the council should go beyond the simple apology, although that is, and make amends by arranging to clear the rubbish at no cost to the council. Mister Mayor I have no response to that letter whatsoever so I will ask the same question to the portfolio holder now. For the sake of £660 will she just arrange to the rubbish cleared and allow the residents to get on without being sick and tired of seeing all the filth and rubbish outside their back gate.

**Councillor Tolson**

No I will not be setting a precedence. When it was a smaller problem and when the former administration were in power a smaller problem may have been more easily dealt with and a stronger behaviour and attitude to the problem at the time may have meant that residents that were putting it there would learn that it was the wrong thing to do. Because we do have a collection service, three items for £30. Modern life is changing, for some, it could be a planning issue we may have inherited and life has changed. Will I be paying for it. No.

**6. Councillor J Kent to Councillor Coxshall**

When does the Portfolio Holder expect the council to receive the first planning application in respect of the Purfleet Regeneration scheme?

**Mayor**

Councillor Coxshall

**Councillor Coxshall**

I have no news on the planning application at all for Purfleet. Purfleet Regeneration is the council's development partner and as such they have the company to submit planning applications. I have no power to compel with them to deliver on their promises, their verbal promises from last year that they will do it by the end of Christmas this year or by the end of May this year. We are stilling waiting. The only power I have is the embarrassment, with embarrassment, and I have used that on numerous occasions. Even in this chamber again to a previous question from here to get this moving in the last 9 months. Sadly under the terms of the development agreement which was signed by the last administration, not us, that the planning applications can be submitted anytime up to February 2018. So we still have some time to go to wait for PCRL. The only power I do have is the power to remove land which we did use to construct the new Purfleet school, Harris Riverside, which is now going forward and will have a planning application in September this year I hope to move forward its open using the Mayflower Academy and the doors will open in the new school in Purfleet senior school which is well overdue in September 2019 regardless of the planning application for the larger project. And being no doubt to deliver the new health buildings which Purfleet needs we will do the same again in this administration to ensure that gets delivered separately.

**Mayor**

Thank your Councillor Coxshall. Councillor Kent do you have a supplementary question.

**Councillor Kent**

Clearly Mister Mayor that is disappointing. When I asked questions about this back in March the portfolio holder said that clearly the big part of the Purfleet regeneration scheme was the proposals for the tv and film studies he also said that he had been given a guarantee that there would be a full business case for those tv and film studies here by the end of May. I understand that this hasn't happened either. Can you give us an update on that one.

**Councillor Coxshall**

We are still waiting.

**Mayor**

Thank your Councillor Coxshall. Councillor Kent do you have a second supplementary question.

**Councillor Kent**

Mister Mayor I don't want to over dramatize this but there is a real feeling in Purfleet that this scheme is now dead in the water. Is the view of the portfolio holder.

**Councillor Coxshall**

No. It has to happen. As I have said the development agreement which we are bound by and signed by the last administration means that they have until February 2018 to deliver that so their guarantees to us verbally continuously or in writing we still have to wait for the PCRL and their development partners to move forward. There is no doubt we are pressuring this continuously from the council and in embarrassment. Thank you for the question.

**7. From Councillor Okunade to Councillor B Little**

The roads in Tilbury are in a poor condition. Can the Portfolio Holder tell us his plans to improve them?

**Mayor**

Councillor Little

**Councillor Little**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Okunade for your question. For the 2017/18 financial year, Thurrock has been awarded £481,000 from the national productivity investment fund which will be used to patch 24 roads across the borough including Feenan Highway, Parkside and Hume Avenue in Tilbury. This is over and above the works delivered from the £1,594,000 of basic highways maintenance grant funding allocated to carriageway maintenance in the Highways and Transport 2017/18 capital programme which includes funding for maintenance works on Dock Road, Ferry Road and Calcullta Road. As new developments come forward, particularly those likely to generate significant additional HGV traffic, the council will seek to secure funding to mitigate the wear and tear on local roads and will also seek to maximise all opportunities to further grant funding from central government.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor Little. Councillor Okunade do you have a supplementary question.

**Councillor Okunade**

Thank you Councillor Little for the first response. Doing my ward tour with the chief executive in April and Lyn was able to see that the majority of the roads were ugly and they are not the roads that you mention (Dunlop, Church Road, Roach Gaylor, Adelaide) they are really really ugly road and residents are not happy. So I just want to ask if the portfolio holder can prioritise Tilbury in this schedule.

**Councillor Little**

I would like to prioritise a lot of areas unfortunately we have a programme, the programme, I think, was sent to everybody a few months ago so you should already be aware of the areas that would be covered by the programme. If you wish to change those within your own area I am sure we could look at accommodating that. Thank you.

**Mayor**

Thank your Councillor Little. Councillor Okunade do you have a second supplementary question.

**Councillor Okunade**

Can I just ask when will the Tilbury be done please.

**Councillor Little**

It will be done this financial year.

**8. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor B Little**

Can the Portfolio Holder update the chamber on progress on HGV mitigation measures across the borough?

**Mayor**

Councillor Little

**Councillor Little**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor for your questions. HGC have a central role to play in supporting the economic vibrancy of the borough but they need to be discouraged from any unnecessary incursions into residential areas from inappropriate parking and from the anti-social behaviour. As part of the transport capital programme the council has closed laybys on the A13, the A128 and the Stifford South Road, Ockendon. Aveley High Street, Stifford Road, a width restriction, bus lane, will be implemented on site. A road closure scheduled for the 21/22 June for re-surfacing. The traffic regulation order has been sealed and will come into effect in July. Camera installation is scheduled for completion by September. On London Road, South Stifford, works are being progressed to update the bus lane and traffic island. The island works are complete and the traffic regulation order is being sealed and will come into effect in July. Camera installation will be completed by September. The High Road, North Stifford, the bus lane and island are being upgraded to allow camera enforcements, the traffic regulation order is currently being sealed and will come into effect in July. Works should be complete by September. At Rectory Road, Towers Road junction in Little Thurrock a left hand turn ban is being introduced. The traffic regulation order is currently being sealed and works will be undertaken this month. A one way routing system for Cement Block Cottages and Towers Road in Little Thurrock is currently under investigation with consultations with local stakeholders in August. At this point I do need to say that this administration last year took stock of very inadequate provision made by the previous administration over the last few years. So we are playing catch up at the moment. The feasibility work is also scheduled later this week for a width restriction at Rectory Road/Daneholes roundabout; a width restriction and weight limit change at London Road, West Thurrock; a width restriction and weight limit at The Green, Stanford Le Hope; width restriction and weight limit changes at London Road, Purfleet; weight limit and prescribed routing review of Horndon, Orsett and Bulphan. The transport development team will also be engaging with community and industry stakeholders to develop a freight and logistics strategy for Thurrock. It is proposed that an outline draft will be brought to Planning Transport and Regeneration overview and scrutiny committee in November. The parking enforcement team went out on Monday 19 June to enforce against HGV parking in conjunction with the police, 67 PCNs were paid as a result of three HGVs being clamped. A further enforcement evening

is planned which will again target HGVs that have a number of outstanding unpaid fines against them.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor Little. Councillor Gerrish do you have a supplementary question.

**Councillor Gerrish**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Brian Little for that update. It is a little surprising that he says that the previous administration weren't doing anything as a number of the schemes he quoted had been worked up whilst we were at the tail end of our administration. Residents on London Road, South Stifford, west of the Devonshire Road junction and I note his comments on the width restriction to the east of the Devonshire Road junction which I think is looking good and well underway but those residents to the west of that junction along that stretch of London Road have been waiting a long time for better enforcement or deterrent measures, what message could he give them on when that might be delivered.

**Councillor Little**

We have looked at different scenarios and whether we can enforce certain areas and enforce restrictions. Some of the details of the 13 or 14 plans we had did not come to fruition and would be readdressed and relooked at again.

**Mayor**

Thank you Councillor Little. Councillor Gerrish do you have a second supplementary question.

**Councillor Gerrish**

When will you be reviewing those plans for that stretch of London Road.

**Councillor Little**

In the next 2 months.

## QUESTION TIME

**Questions from Members to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees or Members appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee in accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.**

There are 4 questions to the Leader and 8 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

**1. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Gledhill**

Can the Leader confirm whether he intends to proceed with the proposed increase in service charges for sheltered housing tenants?

**2. From Councillor Jones to Councillor Gledhill**

Could the Leader inform members and the residents of Thurrock what measures Thurrock Council will undertake to best safeguard Thurrock's tower blocks after witnessing the tragic fire at a West London tower block?

**3. From Councillor Maney to Councillor Gledhill**

Given the recent fire at Grenfell Tower in West London and the tragic loss of life which resulted from this, would the Leader comment on the fire safety arrangements relating to the Borough's high rise accommodation and advise how these will be reviewed? In particular, given that early speculation is that replacement cladding at Grenfell Tower could have exacerbated the spread of the blaze, would the Leader confirm that the cladding replacement works undertaken some years ago to blocks in Grays Riverside and Little Thurrock Blackshots have been re-assessed in light of the tragedy and are deemed safe?

**4. From Councillor Liddiard to Councillor Gledhill**

The derelict changing rooms on the Daisyfield, St. Chads Road, Tilbury, has attracted children during the day and substance abusers after dark. Although railings surround the building, it is not secure. Residents fear accidents and needle infections. Can the Portfolio Holder tell me what can be done and when?

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO CABINET MEMBERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND MEMBERS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON A JOINT COMMITTEE**

**1. From Councillor Cherry to Councillor Tolson**

During the Great British Spring Clean I was told by all residents I met that there was a lack of strategically placed bins across the borough. I understand the Council only have 400 bins currently in use. Can the Portfolio Holder inform me if this is true and whether there are plans to introduce more bins into Thurrock?

**2. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor MacPherson**

In recent months I have received an increasing number of complaints about serious and ongoing antisocial and criminal behaviour underneath the Sherfield/Derby Road Bridge in Grays. This is having a serious impact on the residents of Darnley Road and users of the Crown Road car park. Will the Portfolio Holder commit to fencing off the area?

**3. From Councillor Watkins to Councillor Tolson**

Please can the Portfolio Holder provide an update on Clean It, Cut It, Fill It.

**4. From Councillor Watkins to Councillor Tolson**

Please can the Portfolio Holder provide an update on the progress of the bin change collection.

**5. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Tolson**

Can the Portfolio Holder explain why residents of Kent Road and Salisbury Road, in Grays, were threatened with a bill of £57.02p - and potential court action - for clearing the fly tipping at the rear of their homes?

**6. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Coxshall**

When does the Portfolio Holder expect the council to receive the first planning application in respect of the Purfleet Regeneration scheme?

**7. From Councillor Okunade to Councillor B Little**

The roads in Tilbury are in a poor condition. Can the Portfolio Holder tell us his plans to improve them?

**8. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor B Little**

Can the Portfolio Holder update the chamber on progress on HGV mitigation measures across the borough?