

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There are 2 questions from members of the public.

1. From Ms Swash to Councillor Watkins

Could the portfolio member tell me what tests have been carried out in Tilbury in light of the dark, finely milled dust like substance that is blighting Tilbury Homes?

2. From Mr Perrin to Councillor Little

Is it a fact that children for whom the Council has a statutory responsibility under Corporate Parenting legislation, cease to be the Council's responsibility at the age of 16 as they are then classed as young adults?

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Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 28 November 2018

Item 6 – Questions from Members of the Public

There were 2 questions from members of the public.

1. From Ms Swash to Councillor Watkins

Could the Portfolio Holder tell me what tests have been carried out in Tilbury in light of the dark, finely milled dust like substance that is blighting Tilbury Homes?

Mayor

Councillor Watkins can you please respond.

Councillor Watkins

Thank you very much Madam Mayor and good evening to Ms Swash. Thank you for your question firstly and obviously appreciate why you and the residents of Tilbury would be quite rightly concerned about this.

The Council has been consulting with the Environment Agency about this for some time, tests were carried out by the Environment Agency and the results have come back and have stated that it is from iron oxide. The dust from that part of the area seems to be coming from European Metal Recycling and possibly other companies.

The Council's Public Health Team have been consulted with, or have been consulting with I should say sorry with Public Health England and its specialist about the test results from Environment Agency and have been advised that although residents will find it rightly concerning it does not pose a direct risk to health and that comes directly from the Public Health England. European Metal Recycling are regulated under the Environment Agency not the Council but we do have regular contact with the Environment Agency about this and in July of this year the Environment Agency did a review of EMR and came back with six recommendations. Three of those to name a couple to name three of those was the insulation of dust compression cannons, use of a water curtain and removal of metal piles which have a higher dust or dirt content and there were a few more on there.

What I will say is after speaking to colleagues from Public Health today and recently about this in further light I know there was obviously a bit of news last night which I believe we spoke about and as well as Councillor Allen spoke about that as well that we will be creating a steering group in relation to this whereby steering group role would be to ensure that pressure is put on the Environment Agency that they are obviously making sure that EMR are following the recommendations which the Environment Agency have said that need to be conducted and hopefully that gives a bit of light to the Tilbury residents but the Council are taking this seriously, we will get this steering

group up and running and we will make sure that we also communicate back to both Councillors and residents.

Mayor

Ms Swash do you have a further supplementary question.

Ms Swash

No but just to say thank you very much. Thank you.

2. From Mr Perrin to Councillor Little

Councillor Little, is it a fact that children, for whom the Council has statutory responsibility under Corporate Parenting legislation, cease to be the Council's responsibility at the age of 16 as they are then classed as young adults?

Mayor

Councillor Little please respond.

Councillor Little

Thank you for your question Mr Perrin and no that is not the fact.

Mayor

Mr Perrin do you have a supplementary question.

Mr Perrin

There is no doubt about your personal reputation as a Councillor who cares. This Christmas will you be the "good fairy godmother" to those "young adults" who have over the past year ceased to be the legal responsibility of the Council and, together with your 48 other "little helpers", strive to ensure that they have a roof over their heads, food on their tables and are in a safe environment over this Christmas? Let the message from this Council be "caring is not just for Christmas but for as long as needs be".

Mayor

Councillor Little

Councillor Little

Thank you Mr Perrin. Sorry I probably misunderstood because you asked is it fact that children for homes and the answer was no it was not fact. As corporate parents we have a responsibility to them until they are 18 because they are still classed as 18 and actually if they are children in my care and care leavers we actually look after them until they are 25 if they so wish. Because as you so know some children don't want to be but I think you may

have thought that this was all children within Thurrock which may come under housing but if they are corporate children then we have to look after them and we have a responsibility until they are 18 but we actually carry on until they are 25.

Mr Perrin

Madam Mayor, may I take this opportunity to wish you and all the other Councillors a very happy Christmas and a happy, healthy, prosperous new year.

Mayor

Thank you Mr Perrin and hope you have a happy Christmas too.

Item 14 – Questions from Members

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 were 5 questions to the Leader and 9 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

1. From Councillor Shinnick to Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Shinnick

Thank you Madam Mayor, could the Leader please update the chambers on the progress with dealing with serious anti-social behaviour issues on the flower estate in Ockendon

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor.

Officers and Police are addressing the residents' concerns in relation to the anti-social behaviour on the Flowers Estate and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those residents for attending the monthly residents meeting and having the confidence to report to either the Council or the Police with the problems they are experiencing.

The housing anti-social behavioural team regularly patrol the area out of hours in particular focusing on youth nuisance and in response to concerns of drug dealing in the vicinity. I am pleased to advise that the closure order been placed on one property in Copper Beach Road, and another property has been served a notice accordingly. The Estates team have carried out site visits to address concerns raised in relation to entry to Canterbury Parade and I am pleased to confirm the security doors are now in full working order at both ends of the block, and the anti-climb paint has been reapplied to rear walls and garages where necessary.

Community safety inspector has assured me that the community policing team have increased the frequency of patrols in the area and in the area of greatest concern and working closely with partners from the Council to identify individuals involved to enable them to take appropriate enforcement action.

The engagement of local business and engagement with local resident forms continues to ensure we understand fully the concerns and the appropriate action is taken to remedy them.

On top of this I have met with the Police and indeed I have met with Councillor Jefferies who wrote to the Police way back early in November and to reiterate from that the Police did set up their patrols in the area that resulted in seven stop and searches and resulted in drugs and knives being seized. One person is issued with a community resolution order and has to appear in court. Six community protection orders has been issued with individuals banned from Canterbury Parade, Ockendon Wreck, Brandon Groves and Broxburn Drive; all being in a group of 3 or more and as mentioned Police operations having increased in the area both in uniform and plain clothes. However as always both the Police and Council can only act on the intelligence received from the Community as I said.

I would like to thank the residents of Ockendon for coming forward with this and would ask them to do so continuously. I will continue to urge and encourage residents to report anti-social behaviour and criminal matters to the Police or anonymously to Crimestoppers where there are concerns and for concerns relating to the Council such as broken doors and broken security doors, need for CCTV, or things that relate to housing tenants especially to come to us and continue working a close partnership that we have seen, not only in Canterbury parade, but also across Brandon Groves and the Flowers Estate.

Mayor

Very succinct Councillor Gledhill, would you like to pose a supplementary Councillor Shinnick?

Councillor Shinnick

No that's alright, thank you.

2. From Councillor Spillman to Councillor Gledhill

Mayor

Thank you, we now move on to question 2 Councillor Spillman would you like to read out your question.

Councillor Spillman

Thank you Madam Mayor. Does the Leader of the Council agree with me on whether there are potential benefits to further developing our service user focused approach through more use of qualitative approaches to the assessment of the standard of customer service being provided by departments within Thurrock Council?

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill, please respond.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor and Councillor Spillman for this.

I wrote this earlier as my voice was going to say the short answer is yes. Anything that would help improve customer services is always something that should be investigated. As you know customer services strategy was approved by Cabinet in April 2017 following consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was aimed at creating a customer focused culture by the right operation procedure and infrastructure to deliver consistent high quality customer service by measuring customer satisfaction, embracing change and technology and striving for continuous improvement.

The action plan was developed and meant that 400 staff went through training, there is obviously refurbishment of the reception area that is already taking place, and a future one to take place as earlier discussed. The Council retained the customer contact association globe standard accreditation which independently assesses what we do and includes listening to calls, but in addition to this, services have a mechanism for received regular calls for customer feedback including, for example, an option satisfaction survey after each call to the Council contact centre.

However, I feel, like you, there is room for improvement here and I will tell you, where not only with just telephone calls, but when people exit here. The number of times when I'm outside I hear people say, "hold on they just said this", and it suddenly dawns on them they may not have got the service they want. I also feel there is a huge place for mystery shopping, I use to be a mystery shopper myself and I know what organisations are like and when they get this, they really value it and it can change the way the whole organisation can operate and that's the kind of thing I welcome cross party approach to be able to do, this is not trying to catch officers out or anything like that. This is

about making sure our services are fit for purpose now and fit for purpose for the future and not one of our residents are left behind.

Mayor

Councillor Spillman, would you like to propose a supplementary question.

Councillor Spillman

Yes, very brief, I can completely agree the amount of qualitative assessment we do is just not enough, there is so many vulnerable people come through this Council and we don't even ask how their experience was, how they felt about the service they got and I think it is not beyond the wit of this Council or beyond the financial limits of this Council to start doing that work because it would improve services across the board. Does the Leader believe that it would be worth considering placing the responsibilities for this assessment in one of the fine voluntary organisations we have in Thurrock.

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Spillman for your excellent follow up question there.

I would like to say, it is really great to help the vulnerable but to be honest it is not just vulnerable that are coming through here and feeling that sometimes they don't get the service they feel they deserve. Equally, I had a number of emails that say that actually they had some really good service, thank you very much for getting the issue resolved. Yes, should there be money made available, yes I think there should, it is money well spent.

Every time someone walks around out of here, doesn't get good services you can guarantee they will tell 10 people and 10 people will tell 10 people and then it will be all over social media and we will be slammed just for that one poor service. When 10 people come in with good service they won't tell anybody they will just assume they got the service they deserve. Should it go out to one of our fine voluntary services, if this was to become something we did it would obviously have to go through the tendering process but I would actively encourage those CVS and CAB and so on to be able to bid for that, because this is money that they can use to improve not only our service but theirs so again not only is it money well spent, it's money doubly well spent.

Mayor

No further questions. We now move on to questions 3. Councillor Spillman can you please read out your question on page 81 of the agenda.

3. Councillor Spillman

Can I just say that these sentences are the monitoring Officers fault and not mine, I had punctuation in mine! Can the Leader of the Council please explain what steps were taken prior to the increases being proposed by Cabinet and agreed by full Council to assess the impact of his administration Council tax rises on consumer spending local business and the welfare of low income working households and disabled people in Thurrock.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor, and thank you Councillor Spillman and thank you the Monitoring Officer for making such a very long question. Indeed I noticed some punctuation there so very well done. As you are aware, Councillor, there is no requirement for a billing authority to undertake impact assessment with regards to increasing Council tax and the impact on residents can be completely different depending on the circumstances of the individual resident. However, in line with our Constitution, Cabinet asked the cross party Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the Council tax level at their meeting on 23 January 2018. The information provided demonstrated not just the increase for each band but the average impact on each household once various reductions such as single person discount and a local Council tax scheme were taken into consideration.

That Committee did not – sorry, despite the committee not ‘erring’ against the proposed 2.99% increase for 2018/19, Cabinet meeting on 7 February decided to ignore that recommendation and reduce the level of increase to 1.99%. The recommended level for Council tax was therefore 1% lower than the average of any other local authority. A quick check of the general funding increase for those that are on the LCTS or indeed other discounts the full impact on average was £4.75 per week, sorry £4.75 a year or 10p a week for the amount that went to the general fund.

We must, of course, remember that the Police also increase their proportion of Council tax by £1 per month and the coming weeks will see the impact of extra Police hitting the streets and there was also a 3% increase in Council tax to increase the amount of money spent on adults social care. So I am sure the extra £1.9 million raised locally for this will have a massive positive impact on those that receive support from the adults social care team. Whilst this administration of the process been maximising income from a number of sources it is important to remember that Council tax forms stays a stable platform that counts the finances and we still remain the lowest Council tax in Essex and one of the industry authorities in the country. This has always been the case since I have been a Councillor, and this has helped to achieve by 4 years of previous colligation government grant and Councils like Thurrock extra money to ensure 0% increase in Council tax in the past.

Mayor

Councillor Spillman do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Spillman

I do, Madam Mayor. I know we have broken down per person what the changes, but there is as was. I spoke to the relevant officer in the Council and was informed that, no there isn't actually any impact study at all on what these increases are having on some of the poorest people in our borough, on disabled people, on working families, that are just managing and on businesses.

Now I'd hoped I mean in the last 2 years we've raised Council tax not just yourself, but with Police and crime addition as well. We've raised Council tax nearly 10% and yet we've not done any significant study of the impact of that on the most vulnerable people in our society and on businesses, don't you think it's about time we did start looking into that because this is the biggest decision we make in full Council, in Budget Council and we don't have all the evidence we need on the impact on it.

Mayor:

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill:

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Spillman for your question.

As I said, the Local Government Finance Act, there is no actual requirement for us to do anything in that. In the past we've had a fairness commission to look at benefits changing around. Of course, there is overview and scrutiny that could quite easily commission that kind of work with the exception, obviously today, with the Vice-Chair of overview and scrutiny sitting in the Conservative benches until week after next I am sure. This is all something that the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of overview and scrutiny could easily put forward and indeed I would welcome this, just to see not only what the impact is on money going out and obviously also the impact on what is happening. Because with Clean It, Cut It, Fill It, eventually spits out and all the other programmes we put in place, we see a much cleaner street which benefits everybody. The Police, as I say there are extra Police being on the streets in the next couple of weeks and the Council tax had been raised last year. £1.9 million going extra into adult social care last year or this year alone.

All of this will have an impact on those residents as well so we can't just look at it on what's the impact of it with the money going out it's also the impact it's going to have with how their money is being spent on them on services they receive and how that's impacting on their ability to live well in Thurrock.

Mayor

Councillor Spillman do you have a second supplementary?

Councillor Spillman:

No.

4. From Councillor Jefferies to Councillor Gledhill

Mayor:

Councillor Jefferies, can you please ask your question

Councillor Jefferies:

Thank you Madam Mayor. Can the Leader outline the Councils approach to whistleblowing allegations and what the outcomes have been.

Councillor Gledhill:

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Jefferies for your question.

All whistleblowing allegations are taken seriously; the initial primary concern is always the protection and welfare of the whistleblower to ensure that they are not exposed to any detriment because of their whistleblowing. The initial steps for any whistleblowing allegations are; is this whistleblowing activity? Is it a protective disclosure? What steps need to be taken next? Avoiding the risk of any detriment to the whistleblower and consideration for the welfare and protection as I have stated. What is being done about the allegations? When the outcome of some of these recently have been a dismissal of staff, successful prosecution after the investigation into counter fraud and the investigation department and obtaining reassurance and changes to safety at work issues. So not just improving the safety of our staff but also residents alike.

It is worth noting that Ernst & Young, our external auditors reported 'we have reviewed the annual governance statement and can confirm it is consistent with other information from our audit of the financial statements and we have no other matters to report in relation to the whistleblowing'. This means that as there were no adverse comment as that comes under as part of that statement. Our external auditors are quite happy with the process that we have done and the way the outcomes are being dealt with. To be honest, as long as I have been a Councillor, I think we have had the same whistleblowing procedure every year that financial statement comes back and I am still quite some convinced with what we are doing is the right thing Madam Mayor.

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies do you have a supplementary question.

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you Madam Mayor. So with regards to the report at Cabinet with regards to the whistleblowing allegations concerning child safety issues could you explain to the chamber what has happened and the outcomes please.

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

I have to be mindful of what I say in relation to this Madam Mayor but thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Jefferies for your supplementary.

In regards to the children services whistleblowing allegation, the day after the receipt of this anonymous letter on the 4 September 2018, the Monitoring Officer discussed possible methodology assessment of the Chief Executive, Director of HR, Deputy Head of Law and Governance safe guarding. It was agreed that some of the allegations were by definition of qualifying protective disclosure and further to the Monitoring Officer's lines of enquiry, it was referred to an external independent safeguarding expert, enquiries with the LGA public concern at work and acknowledged expert, and it was agreed to instruct Miss Judith Knight an experienced barrister since 1991 with specialist knowledge in the field of social care and local government and a former Head of Legal Services, I understand which included litigation and child protection. She was afforded full access to the relevant documents and any assistance she required in looking through her investigation.

Ofsted were kept fully informed of the above approach and monitored its progress through every stage. Inevitably with such an investigation, it contained sensitive personal data of individuals. Private briefings have been given at governance group and obviously the statement outcome was brought to Cabinet. Further detailed briefing of the inspections, questions and answer sessions have been scheduled with Group Leaders and I am glad to say we have had full attendance there this evening and that will not be a one off meeting. That will be ongoing to allow enough time to read the information that was provided and that includes me to be able to come to some answers and to hopefully have all their fears allayed.

It is good to hear that Council has received written confirmation from Ofsted that the governing body appointed to investigate a child safety matter and that they are satisfied that the appropriate investigation has been undertaken and that no further action is required. Ofsted have also confirmed that they are closing down this whistleblowing referral to them and noted the Council intends to progress the learning outcomes for such an investigation as normal practice and I also understand that the local safeguarding board is now to do a review of this particular case which we welcome.

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies do you wish to pose a second supplementary question.

Councillor Jefferies

You mention that some of the information cannot be disclosed to Members does that include you and why would that be.

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor. As I say, I have received the appropriate briefings governance group in connection with the public report and the report that was brought to Cabinet for public transparency in other correspondence such as Ofsted who recently published letter after they positively focused on the inspection of children's services in September 2018.

As mentioned, part of the Group Leaders and Portfolio Holder meeting today and as I have said they will continue. I must be clear that the information that comes into the Council's possession isn't always sharable and the need to know principles established in common law laid down by Regina v. Barns Borough Council ex parte coughlan makes it very clear that you should get the information to be able to undertake your role. Legally privileged information remains exactly that it cannot be shared however it is clear to me that the fact that Ofsted has seen the full report and have closed down and said that they are also satisfied that there is nothing being held back from Members.

The information supplied to Members included barristers findings, the reason for those findings, the recommendations and learnings outcomes and in deed the only information held back are the details that would put the Council at risk of a £16 million fine for personal data breach and personal information relating to certain officers or individual names associated with the case and other information that could be deemed to be contempt of court should be disclosed in an incorrect manner. This also applies to me as it does to every single Member and as I say there is an ongoing set of meetings with the Leader of the opposition, chair of overview and scrutiny in relation to a pack that was handed out today at the same time. Thank you.

5. Councillor J Kent

Has the Leader of the Council read the full report into whistleblowing allegations carried out by an Independent barrister?

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor. I won't take up too much time by repeating exactly what I have just said to Councillor Jefferies but as the Leader of the opposition knows I have not been privy to the whole report, I will not be privy to the whole report, and as outlined that the common law document laid down in the Regina v. Barns Borough Council ex parte Coughlan would only mean get that I need to know to be able to continue to be able to do my role effectively.

The information is in oversupply tonight and welcome the fact that every Member said exactly the same we need time to read the reports we have got, it is not the full report, as we will not get the full report as outlined and hopefully as mentioned at the end of the meetings we will end up in a situation where hopefully everybody is happy that the Council has acted appropriately, continues to act appropriately and that we will continue to put safeguarding children at the forefront.

Mayor

Councillor J Kent do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor J Kent

Madam Mayor, as the Leader of the Council said, today at 5 o'clock, Group Leaders and the Chair of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee were given a precis of the report. There wasn't time to properly read that and other documents that we were given. So will we be given the opportunity to read those documents in a closed room and leave the documents there when we leave? I believe that I do need to see and to read the whole report to get the kind of assurance and comfort that I want. I understand that parts of that might need to be redacted. Will the Leader of the Council undertake to make the full report available to Group Leaders and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny?

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor. As the Leader of the Opposition is fully aware it is not in my gift to say which documents and what documents cannot be given out into the public domain. I am sure if he could show good reason to the Monitoring Officer and the Monitoring Officer should need to take advice in relation to this and thinks that Councillor Kent is entitled to those documents all being that the redacted ones as he has outlined; then I am sure the Monitoring Officer will do that and I would welcome that accordingly.

However, in the discussions that I have had with both the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Executive, I feel that the information that has been given out at the moment satisfies me not just because it has been given to me by 2 officers but also that Ofsted have made it very clear that they feel there is no more information or nothing more required otherwise that what we are doing at the moment. Ofsted are those that set by the government to ensure that our children are protected, if they say everything is fine and what we have is right I am happy with that. But as mentioned should it change I am more than happy to see that.

Mayor

Councillor J Kent, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question.

Councillor J Kent

Madam Mayor with the brief time that we had to peruse the documents this evening, there were areas of clear concern that were flagged up and as the Leader of the Council has already said this evening, there is a further review now underway. In a response to Councillor Jefferies earlier, he spoke about the opposition Group Leaders and the Chair of Scrutiny having their fears allayed. Madam Mayor, does the Leader of the Council have any concerns remaining over this.

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Kent for your excellent question. You are quite right we did have a brief time to look at them, when I say we, all of us. Not just you, not just the overview and scrutiny Chair or indeed the Leader of the Thurrock Independent, but all of us had exactly the same amount of time to read this.

Do I have fears from what you have raised in that meeting? I have concerns that information that is coming from overview and scrutiny, for instance, is not getting passed up to the point where overview and scrutiny gets the reports that are either asked or entitled or indeed, if there is a problem that the Chairs are being briefed enough time to understand before the information goes out to the public that there is reason that things are being redacted or on there or indeed need to be followed up in full.

It really is a concern because I put value on overview and scrutiny that is why I always insist that Chairs and Vice Chairs of overview and scrutiny are not those of the Administration. Certainly when we are at the point of only 22 Members. With regards to the whistleblowing allegations which we must remember is about whistleblowing allegations, those whistleblowing allegations in my opinion have been fully looked at but not only internally,

externally. Not only fully looked at once, but twice. All be it on the second time slightly more and I am happy not only have officers made clear that basically everything we have done or everything that could have been done has been done.

The information in regards to the independent report that has been given to me also makes it clear that, as I have said 3 or 4 times tonight now. Ofsted have also said there is nothing further that they feel that they need to investigate. They are the professionals in this so when I have a professional telling me that we have done everything that we need to do in relation to these whistleblowing allegations then yes I am happy but as said I do have concerns as Councillor Kent and indeed as Councillor Spillman raised tonight in relation to communications. And I'm not going to leave Councillor Okunade out she also raised some concerns which again are being addressed. Thank you.

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

1. Councillor Anderson withdrew his question and requested a written response.
2. **From Councillor Rigby to Councillor Halden**

Please can the Portfolio Holder for Education and Health update the chamber on the progress to deliver new Medical Centres in the borough?

Mayor

We just have a minute left Councillor Halden, can you be as brief as possible please with your answer. Thank you.

Councillor Halden

Thank you Madam Mayor. Great progress is being made. Shortly we will be in a position which we can share with scrutiny the plans for a redesigned Thurrock hospital better utilising that space. Plans have already gone forward to Cabinet to redesign a bus route to ensure that people can flow to the new medical centres.

I know concerns have been expressed regarding the reports that there is a cost viability issue with the integrated medical centres, this is not the case. There is a statement of fact to be made as because of the call in of the decision of the STP regarding Orsett Hospital, we cannot properly go through the process of saying how much revenue will go to each medical centre to repay the cost of borrowing because we can't predicate the decision on services decanting from Orsett into the medical centres because that decision is paused, this is a unwelcomed pause, but not a show stopper. And I would just say for the members of the public who are expecting us to deliver on £70 million of new health estate it is very disappointing that the decision about

Orsett was published in June and it has taken to the 5 December for the scrutiny committee to do its job and actually call it in.

Mayor

Thank you Councillor Halden. That is the end of question time I will now go through the questions that have been submitted but not been able to be posed this evening. I will ask if you would wish to withdraw the question or if you want a written response.

3. Councillor Okunade requested a written response.
4. Councillor Shinnick requested a written response.
5. Councillor Smith requested a written response.
6. Councillor Fletcher withdrew his question.
7. Councillor Fletcher requested a written response.
8. Councillor J Kent withdrew his question.
9. Councillor J Kent requested a written response.

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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 5 questions to the Leader and 9 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE LEADER

1. From Councillor Shinnick to Councillor Gledhill

Could the Leader please update the Chamber on progress with dealing with Serious ASB issues on the Flowers Estate in Ockendon.

2. From Councillor Spillman to Councillor Gledhill

Does the Leader of the Council agree with me on whether there are potential benefits to further developing our service user focused approach through more use of qualitative approaches to the assessment of the standard of customer service being provided by departments within Thurrock Council.

3. From Councillor Spillman to Councillor Gledhill

Can the Leader of the Council please explain what steps were taken, prior to the increases being proposed by Cabinet and agreed by Full Council, to assess the impact his administration's council tax rises on consumer spending, local business and the welfare of low-income working households and disabled people in Thurrock?

4. From Councillor Jefferies to Councillor Gledhill

Can the Leader outline the Council's approach to whistleblowing allegations and what the outcomes have been?

5. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Gledhill

Has the Leader of the Council read the full report into whistle blowing allegations carried out by an Independent barrister?

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

1. From Councillor Anderson to Councillor Halden

Can the Portfolio Holder for Education and Health update the chamber on children centre provision?

2. From Councillor Rigby to Councillor Halden

Please can the Portfolio Holder for Education and Health update the chamber on the progress to deliver new Medical Centres in the Borough.

3. From Councillor Okunade to Councillor Halden

Can the Portfolio Holder for Health and Education tell us what the Council is doing to protect the health and wellbeing of our Tilbury residents from the hazardous air pollution?

4. From Councillor Shinnick to Councillor Watkins

Can the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways please provide an update on the Flowers Estate with regard to the maintenance of flower beds, grass cutting and fly tipping.

5. From Councillor Smith to Councillor Watkins

With the impending closure of the car park at the 'rec' in Aveley and Council having leased alternative parking to the rear of the Post Office in the High Street would the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways advise what measures are in place to enforce anti-social parking in the access road adjacent the Post Office.

6. From Councillor Fletcher to Councillor Watkins

I have been asked about the new HGV weight restrictions proposed for Ockendon and other parts of the borough. I have continued to chase this and I now understand that the earliest we may see these new restrictions put out to consultation is now December. Would the Portfolio Holder please explain why this enforcement measure has been delayed?

7. From Councillor Fletcher to Councillor Johnson

Many Council tenants in Ockendon have expressed concern at the Council's 'like for like' policy, which appears in some cases to justify inconsistent or even ineffective repairs. Would the Portfolio Holder commit to setting out a consistent principle for repairs to Council property, based not on 'like for like' but on 'fitness for purpose'?

8. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Johnson

Would the Portfolio Holder explain the reasons for changing the access to Doug Siddons Court?

9. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Johnson

Can the Portfolio Holder explain why only 12.2% of households at risk of homelessness approaching the Council for assistance are accepted as homeless?

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