

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There are 3 questions from members of the public.

1. From Mr Perrin to Councillor Johnson

Last year I asked a question regarding the protection of grass verges from being used as parking for cars etc. Since then the situation in Broxburn Drive has not changed at all, if anything it has got worse. Can you tell me why no action has been taken to protect the grass verges in Broxburn Drive?

2. From Mr Suttling to Councillor Coxshall

Mulberry Harbours played a crucial role in the preparations for the D-Day landings during World War Two. In 1994, a plaque was unveiled to commemorate Thurrock's role in helping build Mulberry Harbours, and the gardens next to this building, were name Mulberry Square to mark this. Could the Portfolio Holder explain why building a new council office is more important than protecting and honouring Thurrock's heritage and open spaces?

3. From Ms Swash to Councillor Coxshall

Could the Portfolio Holder tell me what is happening to the building in Quebec Road that was used for the Tilbury youth centre right up until January of this year?

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Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 19 June 2019

Item 6 – Questions from Members of the Public.

3 questions were submitted from members of the public.

1. Mr Perrin:

Last year I asked a question regarding the protection of grass verges from being used as parking for cars etc. Since then the situation in Broxburn Drive has not changed at all, if anything it has got worse. Can you tell me why no action has been taken to protect the grass verges in Broxburn Drive?

Mayor:

Councillor Johnson

Councillor Johnson:

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Mr Perrin for your question. Any action taken by the council is reliant on the public and local residents reporting their concerns and as far as I am aware I am not aware of any further comments in the last 12 months about Broxburn Drive but obviously may be whilst I was not here. However I do believe that following the concerns that you have raised the Housing Officers have contacted you to arrange an appointment to discuss this matter further and once that has happened they will report it back to me and we can then obviously discuss it from there. Is that the case, have they made any contact with you?

Mr Perrin:

I believe they are meeting with me tomorrow.

Mayor:

Mr Perrin do you wish to pose a supplementary question at this time.

Mr Perrin:

Thank you Mister Mayor. Councillor do you accept that these verges cannot be both grass verges and car parks they can only be successfully used as one or the other. If the council decides to allow them to be used as a car park they should then be made fit for that purpose. If they are to continue as grass verges would you agree they should be adequately protected.

Mayor:

Councillor Johnson

Councillor Johnson:

Thank you. I agree 100% Mr Perrin that they must be one thing or the other. I am sure we might be able to mix and match at some point along there but they do need to be decided what they are. I think the decision will probably go through the Environment portfolio when and if that is that is to be the case to change them but yes I agree with you that they should be one thing or the other. We will protect them if it is only going to be grass verges.

Mayor:

As Mr Suttling was unable to attend this evening to present this question Mr Caulder would be presented the question instead?

2. Mr Caulder:

Mulberry Harbours played a crucial role in the preparations for the D-Day landings during World War Two. In 1994, a plaque was unveiled to commemorate Thurrock's role in helping build Mulberry Harbours, and the gardens next to this building, were name Mulberry Square to mark this. Could the Portfolio Holder explain why building a new council office is more important than protecting and honouring Thurrock's heritage and open spaces?

Mayor:

Councillor Coxshall please respond.

Councillor Coxshall:

Thank you very much for your question. This gives me the opportunity and I am sure we will come to this item also later as this is on the agenda in the meeting. But under the current proposals you are correct that the proposals for Mulberry Square would be redeveloped. The scheme allows for vision for new gardens for ceremonial and landscaping elsewhere in the close vicinity including a public seating so we haven't lost anything. There will be more benches which will be provided in this developed new square and there will be newly landscaped areas. However the Thurrock's contribution to the D-Day landing which I have had the great honour to represent the member of parliament at which was really important to the people of Thurrock and will live on whatever happens and I welcome your views and those of Mr Suttling to achieve an enhanced public image of what Thurrock did during the D-Day landings.

Mayor:

Mr Caulder do you wish to propose a supplementary question.

Mr Caulder:

Yes please. I represent many older people in this town who have great memories of the Second World War etc also I have yet to find one who agrees with this which is now referred to as a vanity project and could Councillor Coxshall please explain to me why he thinks spending £10 million on the towns people of Thurrock hard earned money on a vanity project.

Councillor Coxshall:

Well I don't call it a vanity project I call it Grays town centre regeneration. Grays town regeneration is wanted by all those people, we have been voting for this over and over again since 2014 and the civic offices relocation is absolutely pivotal to this. With millions and millions, if you stay later you will hear the debate, will be spent on Grays town centre regeneration. We have been told so many times, how many questions have been here on how the Grays town centre has not been done, we can't walk down the high street, Grays south does not work right. We need to actually deliver our bit of public body to make the civic capital proud to actually to come to Grays rather than people staying away over and over again even in the last elections, I don't go to Grays, I don't go to Grays. We now have an entrance that is not in the right place because it is now opposite a brand new building so we need to try and reconfigure the entrance, we have got a registry office and we have ceremonies week in and week out for nationalising and moving people into this country and proud and have a massive ceremony which is in a room upstairs, third right get it over and done with where we could have a proper civic ceremony for those great people who actually want to get a British passport. This is all a great advantage of this and it is not a vanity project that the £10 million is coming down ...

Mayor:

I now call time on this question as the supplementary question was not in relation to the original question.

Question 3 was withdrawn and would be resubmitted to July Council.

Item 12 – Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that 1 question had been received to the Leader of the Council and 12 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 Worrall to Councillor Gledhill

Following the recent changes to the statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local Authorities can you advise what steps you have taken to ensure that the administration delivers on the recommendations and equips scrutiny to work effectively here in Thurrock?

Mayor:

Councillor Hebb on behalf of Councillor Gledhill.

Councillor Hebb:

Thank you Mister Mayor, thank you Councillor Worrall. You're probably fully aware that in May of this year, we have had some guidance from national government in terms of what good scrutiny looks like and good governance. Preliminary studies are pretty much articulating what – Councillor Worrall has said it for the benefit of the minutes. Our preliminary studies indicate that we fulfil a majority of those implications but you're not asking me about that. You're asking me what the administration is going to do to support and do something different.

We know that Corporate Overview and Scrutiny has it on its work plan, Oliver? Something that Debbie and I need to have a conversation about, in that how we need to link that discussion in. I think it's good that Corporate have taken a lead on that but equally, we need to make sure that we support collaboratively with that. I don't know if that answers your question. You know, sorry, I can speak for the next Chair but there are others around us that are ex-Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny, we know that the power of an overview and scrutiny committee and all the good it can bring. So hopefully, that brings some confidence.

Mayor:

Councillor Worrall, do you wish to ask a supplementary question?

Councillor Worrall:

Yes please, Mister Mayor.

So in the scrutiny training, they pay particular attention for the need of the Committee to be a critical friend. You know, the role of scrutiny. There should be no ums and errs, there should be no party colours and no deep gatekeepers to head off any challenges to Cabinet decisions or policies.

I think that scrutiny committees should be made to feel that they are part of the democratic process and that they are just not tick boxes and that we see a lot of this 'to note' and to...when really, we should building work plans that mean something and that we can make a real decisions. So, what I'm asking tonight is that can we have some assurance from you that following these updated scrutiny recommendations, that Cabinet members work closely with the scrutiny Chairs and are seen to work with them and give them work programmes and items that allow the scrutiny process to be real and meaningful in this democratic process rather than something that we just bring everything, you know, that meets 3 or 4 times a year to know what you're doing. Sometimes we even get stuff where we recommend and then it's not even mentioned. It's just those recommendations are completely overlooked and that's not the way to run this council so I just like to think that going forward, we can agree that we'll work closer to manage this. Thank you.

Mayor:

Councillor Worrall, I think you've asked your question. Councillor Hebb.

Councillor Hebb:

The answer in short is yes. I think there's multiple prongs of responses to that, mind you. One, as a Cabinet member, I can absolutely see the benefit of that. I look at the Fair Debt Summit, it's something of a private passion for me. Is there any reason why Oliver and I – or Oliver's predecessor, whoever that is, couldn't have worked more collaboratively on that? No is the truthful answer. Checks and balances as we have heard tonight is usually a good bed for those. The only other thing that I would say is the Chair of overview and scrutiny is that there is an unknown licence that a Chair has in those meetings to shape the work programme. I'm going to look at Karen Wheeler, if you remember me as the Chair, I used to say that if I got reports that says 'to note', I'll rip it up and put it back in the envelope and give it back which I'm sure she'll identify to. That was me in the power of the Chair. The work programme, it was in the licence for me to put what I wanted on there. But inclusively, make sure the membership was around but conversely, is there any reason why we can't do a cross collaboration? No.

Mayor:

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

Councillor Worrall:

No I'm fine thank you, I trust them. Or I'll be back.

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

1. From Councillor Fish to Councillor Watkins

Grays Riversides can experience significant traffic congestion. Can the local air quality be monitored for impact on air quality from such congestion and to inform any necessary options for improvements?

Mayor:

Councillor Watkins, please respond to the question.

Councillor Watkins:

Thank you very much Mister Mayor, thank you Councillor Fish for your question this evening as well.

I would also like to add a highly important question. I know we've got one very similar about a different pass coming up shortly. And it is something that I would like to add, is very much on the forefront of my mind in regarding air quality across the entirety of Thurrock. So equally, I can understand the concerns which residents of Grays Riverside and also the entirety of Thurrock have got regarding this.

Regarding Grays Riverside itself, air testing across the borough has been taken previously and there was a report that went to Cleaner, Greener back in February this year which outlined some of the work which had happened from the initial air quality work which had taken place off the back of the work done in 2017.

Currently, the Council do tests in base on possible pollutants in the air, more based on tackling transport emissions currently and then they'll do models on how that testing will look and what outcomes need to come off the back of that which is through the AQMA.

However, I'm not averse to testing, I just believe that you need to make sure that if we are going to be doing testing, that we get it right. And that the outcomes off the back of that are also going to have an impact on the area. So what I can announce this evening, is that we are going to be reopening the previous air strategy to see what more can be done and what the council can do to tackle new issues such as the dust issue in Tilbury. If any issues like that occur moving forward, things like making sure like the Lower Thames Crossing are included. The government has announced plans which could affect us through the A127 which also needs to be included in this as well.

And I would also like it to play a part in towards this new government vision, which, well I believe is going to become law now, but by 2050, the country will have no net emissions and I would like to see Thurrock play a massive part in

that moving forward. We've only got 30 years, that's not long. As I say, Mister Mayor, we are not averse to doing testing, we're going to be reopening the strategy first of all, see more of what we can do, what needs to be done, moving forward.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Watkins. Councillor Fish, do you wish to ask a supplementary question?

Councillor Fish:

Yes Mister Mayor, thank you. So you're re-opening the strategy, can you give me some sort of timescale as to when you can come up with some conclusions and some constructive ideas moving forward?

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Fish. Councillor Watkins.

Councillor Watkins:

Thank you Councillor Fish for your supplementary. At this point in time, I'm not going to give any timescales because it's not right to do so but what I will give is the guarantee, also in the spirit of what Councillor Worrall has just mentioned, in which I try to do, as the Portfolio Holder for Environment, that all policies and options will be coming forward to Cleaner, Greener, beforehand, before any decision Cabinet makes.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Watkins, Councillor Fish do you wish to pose a second supplementary?

Councillor Fish:

Yes please Mister Mayor. As part of the strategy, will you be looking at low emission zones?

Mayor:

Councillor Watkins.

Councillor Watkins:

Thank you Mister Mayor, thank you Councillor Fish for your supplementary.

Yes, we will be looking at every possible option and I don't want this to just be looking at transport stuff as well. I also think it needs to look at something very indigenous for a full clean air strategy across this borough.

2. From Councillor Okunade to Councillor Halden

How is the Portfolio Holder ensuring Thurrock's service provision for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is fit for purpose, especially in giving proactive and proper support to children, young people and their families?

Mayor:

Councillor Halden, please respond to the question.

Councillor Halden:

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Okunade for your question. Well, like I said last year when I announced that I was going to be announcing parents and teachers to come forward and talk to me, I'm quite aware of the fact that there are problems, with the way that certain parts of our SEND service function. When parents are told that they are going to get a phone call in a couple of days, that phone call happens in a couple of weeks, that's not ok. When a care plan is written, and there is no oversight as to whether or not that care plan has been correctly delivered, that is not ok. When we send out letters that are signed 'yours sincerely, Thurrock Council', without a named point of contact, that is not ok.

So, the recent Ofsted inspection has concurred with that concern. You'll know as Chair, we've already tabled at Committee, the Statement of Action Plan that we are going to take forward but as I've said in my portfolio speech, what is important for me is that we don't just become obsessed with ticking off boxes on what's put in front of us answering the concerns that Ofsted have had. We need to set out a long term vision of outstanding and that it's more than the work that we have done over the last 3 years. Establishing inclusion units in schools so we don't have to send our children to pupil referral units. We can keep their mainstream education where possible. Investing more in mental health. Investing more in sports to allow better physical activity in school and essentially ensuring that when we do things like intervene on a dedicated school grant as we did on the £2.5 million, earlier this year, we ensure that the high needs block remain strong and stable and continue to function for the most vulnerable young people. So we need to carry on what we're doing, yes answer the Ofsted concerns to make sure it's technically 'fit for purpose' as a legal definition but our ambition is much more than 'fit for purpose' and that's why we started these exercises last year.

Mayor:

Councillor Okunade, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Okunade:

Yes Mister Mayor. Councillor Halden, I understand what you have said about getting the parents to talk to you about what the issues are and then you've

rightly admitted that in your report this is an issue you have been concerned about, SEND service for some time. The question is, why haven't you increased the capacity of the team to ensure the EHC plans were completed and by the March 2018 deadline?

Mayor:

Councillor Halden, do you wish to respond?

Councillor Halden:

Yes thank you Mister Mayor. I don't know if it was in an earlier draft and perhaps it didn't make my cut when I was trying to make the report a little bit lighter but we did outline that we did increase capacity in the team and...yes it is in there. The care plans are now delivering 94% of all plans within 20 weeks which is significantly above the national average so we did increase the capacity in the team about 6 months ago and it is clearly bearing fruit. 94% of plans within a 20 week period. That 94% is pretty close to 100 and 20 weeks ..

Mayor:

Ok Councillor Halden. Councillor Okunade, do you wish to propose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Okunade:

Yes Mister Mayor. Talking about the EHC plan that you increased the capacity on which is now 90 something percent, we have to think about the quality of it. I mean, this inspection has actually highlighted that, if I read from it 'that it has not worked out and quality was not assured'. I personally have been a mother for a SEND child, but I'm grown up now but that's the beginning of everything. You have to have everything right in paper, it used to be a statement, you have to have everything right in paper, so you know the type of support your child is having and any delay in intervention or support is delaying a child's development. So I'd just like to ask as my supplementary question is to assure, how can you assure all members here that you are now very confident, I put very confident, yeah, about the SEND service Thurrock Council is providing? Please can you assure us that you're very confident about the SEND service you're providing, that would be nice, thank you.

Mayor:

Thank you. Councillor Halden, can you be concise in your response, we've got quite a few questions.

Councillor Halden:

Yes Mister Mayor. We've had a very long debate this evening about the importance of children's safeguarding is so if you'd actually like me to give proper answers to serious questions...

Mayor:

I do want you to give a proper answer, I just want you to be concise.

Councillor Halden:

Well you could have one or the other really. What I would say is, you've asked me to provide you with confidence, I can provide you with confidence that when we had our Ofsted inspection, they didn't tell us anything we didn't already know. From our own self-evaluation, we knew what the weaknesses were. Now, there are extreme strengths in our SEND service e.g. our pupils with plans, our meeting the expected development of education, they should do. So they are not academically suffering compared to some of their peers.

But we know, where we do a deep dive on some of the plans, some of them are not followed up with schools so we don't know if the plans are fully enacted so we're in a situation where our young people are making a progress as they should but we don't know if that's because of the plan we put in place or whether or not it's because the school has just done a great job with that child and our plan was an absolute irrelevance. So that is what we've got to focus on, making sure that plans written are not just of good quality but making sure that how they are enacted in schools is of a high quality and that we can actually evidence our intervention. Because if we can't evidence our intervention, it may be a case of we need to give out fewer plans and focus on other wraparound support. So I can give you the confidence that we are aware of that issue, we are going after that issue and as soon as we have more information, we will return to your committee.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Halden.

3. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Maney

Mayor:

Councillor Gerrish as Councillor Maney has sent his apologies his evening would you like to resubmit your question or receive a written response?

Councillor Gerrish:

Thank you Mister Mayor, I'll take a written response please.

4. From Councillor Allen to Councillor Watkins

Can the Portfolio Holder please confirm the guidance he gave in his response to the question regarding the dust plaguing Tilbury from a member of the public on the 28 November 2018?

Mayor:

Councillor Watkins.

Councillor Watkins:

Thank you very much Mister Mayor, thank you Councillor Allen for your question. I'd just to put down for the record as well, thanks to yourself and Councillor Mayes as well for the work you are continuing to do in Tilbury with this particular issue. I think the comments made back in November has been highly publicised over the last few months and this is in response to the question submitted by Ms Swash and then the response which I then gave back to that question.

When the council is made aware of the dust issue, council did rightly take the advice from the relevant experts, Public Health England, Environment Agency and the London Port Health Authority. The advice that was given to us by Public Health England at the time stated the dust was annoying but not believed to be a direct risk to health. We were then given advice on what the dust was believed to be and what that was believed to contain and where that dust was potentially coming from. It was us assuming from that, that the advice which we were given that testing had been carried out to form their response. Which then formed my response to Ms Swash back in November 2018.

Following this as well, I would just like to add and raise, it's been raised many times by myself, to both elected members and to Ms Swash, both in the Chamber and outside the Chamber as well, that the Steering Group was created to both work with the internal agencies of this council but also the agencies who work at the Port of Tilbury to get the relevant testing done. Which, once the Steering Group was made, we then found out that the statement from Public Health England which again I know has been mentioned in the press recently was potentially incorrect because they had not committed to any testing previously thus their response was a bit confusing hence this is why the council's position continues to be and will be to get the Environment Health Agency and the London Port Health Authority to be doing this dust testing issue. Obviously, I have written to Ms Swash since the meeting of November 2018 to further answer questions both in regards to what was mentioned at that evening and also further follow up questions from that as well. And as I've already alluded to this evening, we are reopening the air quality so that it can also look at issues like Tilbury dust issue and also any other issue that could arise in future years.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Watkins. Councillor Allen, do you wish to propose a supplementary question?

Councillor Allen:

Yes please Mister Mayor. As the whole of the Chamber might not be aware, we are having quite a big test done on this dust which is soon to take place. I'd just like to know from Councillor Watkins, will he fully support the findings once they're made public?

Mayor:

Councillor Watkins.

Councillor Watkins:

Thank you Mister Mayor, thank you Councillor Allen for your supplementary. It will be wrong of me just too out rightly say yes or no till that testing is fully done. And that I receive the right expert advice from people like Roger Harris, Ian Wake and other members of this council which we can also use. What I would like to say is that I fully support the work that you and Councillor Mayes are doing in regards to this independent testing. I personally believe that this is a great use and steer for us in our negotiations in working with the Environment Agency to get this formal testing done because at the end of the day, the Environment Agency might not like the results that come out of it and then, I, for one can't predict what they're going to say but I hope that whatever comes out from the independent testing which you are committing to but that they will then follow up with their own testing from this which either back up what your testing has said or say it otherwise. We'll be using that for our Steering Group as well.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Watkins. Councillor Allen, do you wish to propose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Allen:

Thank you Mister Mayor, I don't wish to grill Councillor Watkins any further in the Chamber tonight. I'm sure I'll have many more chances to do so in the coming days, weeks and months, thank you.

5. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor Maney

Mayor:

Councillor Potheary as Councillor Maney has sent his apologies his evening would you like to resubmit your question or receive a written response?

Councillor Potheary:

Request a written response.

6. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor Johnson

Does the Portfolio Holder for Housing believe that the service charges council tenants and leaseholders pay deliver value for money?

Mayor:

Councillor Johnson.

Councillor Johnson:

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Potheary for your question. All services and works delivered on behalf of the council are procured in line with the Council's Constitution to ensure value for money is achieved with leaseholders being formally consulted as part of the procurement process in line with Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act. Tenant's service charges are paid as part of their rent. Residents are charged only for the services provided and we work hard to ensure that the charges are reasonable and represent value for money. There is a clear service charge settings policy developed in consultation with tenants as set out in the Housing Act and leasehold services charges are applied as prescribed in the leases and as defined by legislation. In accordance with the terms of our leases the service charges are reviewed annually to ensure the charges reflect the costs of the services provided. So in short, the answer to your question Councillor, yes I do believe the service the council tenants and leaseholders pay do deliver value for money.

Mayor:

Councillor Potheary, do you wish to propose a supplementary question?

Councillor Potheary:

Yes please Mister Mayor. Thank you for your response Councillor Johnson. I'm really interested in the phrase you used which is 'service charges should only be for the services provided'. I feel you might know where I might be going with this but in my own ward, for a period of over 4 weeks, the front entry system of 9 Lockley House was completely out of action. This is an entry system that my residents are billed for on an itemised basis as a service provided for them. It wasn't provided for a month. We've also had situations at the Echoes where a lift was out of action for even longer than that where it's –

Mayor:

Councillor Potheary, have you got a question?

Councillor Potheary:

Yes I do, I promise I have. And, for example, on Seabrooke Rise, you'll be aware that where residents were without a TV aerial –

Mayor:

Is that a question or another statement?

Councillor Potheary:

No, no, no I'm coming to my question, I promise. As tenants and leaseholders are billed for these as individual items and it's based on the service that is allegedly provided, will they be reimbursed when they are not in fact provided for significant periods of time?

Mayor:

Councillor Johnson.

Councillor Johnson:

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor for your supplementary. If a service isn't being provided and someone is being charged for it, I, like yourself would expect to get some refund. It's certainly something that I would sit down and speak to the Officers about. There may be some legal issues in there that as I'm not a legal person, I may not know about. But I will certainly sit down and speak with them and if we apply logic rather than politics, I would expect to get a refund if I'm paying for a service that I don't get.

Mayor:

Councillor Potheary, do you wish to pose a second supplementary?

Councillor Potheary:

Yes please Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor Johnson, I think that's very sensible given the stated policy and would reflect the policy decisions that this administration has made around service charges. So I'll await your response from conversations with Officers eagerly.

My second supplementary question is about how we can actually get leaseholders and tenants more involved in the setting of service charges. I know that there are certain statutory consultation methods that are used but actually the feedback that I get day in, day out with people just saying these charges keep going up every year, and they're going up, going up.

We don't feel that we're getting a service that is equivalent. They feel there is a lack of transparency, they feel they that there isn't value for money and they feel that when they complain, they're kind of brushed off. Is there a way that

we can actually get leaseholders and tenants much more involved in the setting of those charges and the evaluation on whether or not they are value for money?

Mayor:

Councillor Johnson.

Councillor Johnson:

Thank you very much Councillor for your supplementary. Once again, I think I have to refrain from giving any answer because of the legalities that are in there but I have a paper here in front of me that will be coming to Council quite soon about the Thurrock resident engagement so within the last 18 months, there've been a number of events that's been put on and we've been working with the Tenants Excellence Panel for the past, I think, 15 years.

So yes, these things are being put out more to the residents and we are trying to listen to more of their input. However, as I've said, on a legal basis, whether they can be involved in the settings of those charges, that's something I have to take advice on as well. But I would like to make it clear that there's no profit made in the charges that come back to the Council. We don't make a profit out of that, they are only charged what we are charged. I hope that helps.

7. From Councillor Redsell to Councillor Halden

The residents of Woodside welcome the potential expansion of Treetops School, but not the additional traffic this will cause on local roads around Woodside. Will education work with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) so that a permanent means of access can be considered and therefore divert traffic away from residential roads?

Mayor:

Councillor Halden.

Councillor Halden:

Thank you Mister Mayor, thank you Councillor Redsell for your question. Clearly, the £20 million that we're going to spend building Treetops 2 is money that has to be spent directly on the school and not on associated infrastructure works. However, directly opposite the site, we're spending an additional £20 million to deliver the new Orsett Heath Academy. What I've asked Officers to look at in the pre-application stage, is it possible to look at the two schemes in conjunction to see if an infrastructure solution between the two schemes can be found. And we're working on that at the moment and in conversations with the ESFA, what I would say is that, quite clearly, new schools will mean new children, will mean increased traffic, that's the way of the world wherever you build a school.

We want to do as much as we can to alleviate the road situations for local residents while saying at the same time that it's an amazing thing that we are delivering a brand new special needs school in your ward which is something that I know you very much welcome.

Mayor:

Councillor Redsell, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Redsell:

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor Halden. I'd just like to ask that you help to keep the dialogue open between education and highways just for their residents and schools of Blackshots, Little Thurrock. Thank you.

Mayor:

Councillor Halden.

Councillor Halden:

I certainly will but I understand that you probably meet with them more often than I do.

8. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Maney

Mayor:

Councillor J Kent as Councillor Maney has sent his apologies his evening would you like to resubmit your question or receive a written response?

Councillor J Kent:

Request question to be resubmitted.

9. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Coxshall

As part of the planning consent for the new development on the former Treetops School site in Grays a parcel of land was to be transferred to the Land Trust and a Management Strategy agreed for the woodland area to make it available for public access via a walkway and viewing platform. This land does not appear to have been transferred and the viewing platform is now vandalised on a regular basis and residents are subjected to constant anti-social behaviour on this unprotected land. Can the Portfolio Holder explain why the land transfer has not taken place and set out the steps he intends to take to ensure it now happens quickly?

Mayor:

Councillor Coxshall

Councillor Coxshall:

Thank you very much. The Council relinquished its freehold interest in the Former Treetops School site in 2016 so the land was sold to Keepmoat. Keepmoat had planning consent on there in 2016 and is subject a section 106 agreement. You are quite right in accordance with the section 106 agreement the woodland area is due to be transferred to the Land Trust for future management. At this time the land has not been transferred to the Land Trust but does remain the responsibility of Keepmoat not this council. The officers have written to Keepmoat to remind them of their section 106 obligations and responsibility in the mean time until it is transferred.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Coxshall. Councillor Kent do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor J Kent:

Mister Mayor the mission statement for the Dell says that the Dell is somewhere the local community can enjoy quiet, recreation and wildlife conservation. It is anything but quiet. People there are putting up with drug taking, vandalism on a regular basis. The viewing platform is regularly vandalised. I am afraid I have to repeat the question. Mister Mayor what is the Portfolio Holder going to do to enforce the section 106 agreement that this authority insisted upon.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor. Councillor Coxshall can you be as brief as possible due to finish the item shortly.

Councillor Coxshall:

It is going to be very brief. The Officers have written to Keepmoat to remind them of their responsibilities.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Coxshall.

The Mayor called time on questions:

Question 10 - Councillor Fletcher requested a written response.

Question 11 - Councillor Akinbohun requested a written response.

Question 12 - Councillor Muldowney 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 is 1 question to the Leader and 12 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 Worrall to Councillor Gledhill

Following the recent changes to the statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local Authorities can you advise what steps you have taken to ensure that the administration delivers on the recommendations and equips scrutiny to work effectively here in Thurrock.

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

1. From Councillor Fish to Councillor Watkins

Grays Riversides can experience significant traffic congestion. Can the local air quality be monitored for impact on air quality from such congestion and to inform any necessary options for improvements?

2. From Councillor Okunade to Councillor Halden

How is the Portfolio Holder ensuring Thurrock's service provision for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is fit for purpose, especially in giving proactive and proper support to children, young people and their families?

3. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Maney

What work will be undertaken in this municipal year to mitigate HGV journeys along London Road in West Thurrock and South Stifford ward?

4. From Councillor Allen to Councillor Watkins

Can the Portfolio Holder please confirm the guidance he gave in his response to the question regarding the dust plaguing Tilbury from a member of the public on the 28 November 2018?

5. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor Maney

Could the Portfolio Holder please provide an update on plans to reconfigure traffic flow through Grays town centre?

6. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor Johnson

Does the Portfolio Holder for Housing believe that the service charges council tenants and leaseholders pay deliver value for money?

7. From Councillor Redsell to Councillor Halden

The residents of Woodside welcome the potential expansion of Treetops School, but not the additional traffic this will cause on local roads around Woodside. Will education work with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) so that a permanent means of access can be considered and therefore divert traffic away from residential roads?

8. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Maney

What is the reason for the delay to the implementation of the Zone H resident parking zone?

9. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Coxshall

As part of the planning consent for the new development on the former Treetops School site in Grays a parcel of land was to be transferred to the Land Trust and a Management Strategy agreed for the woodland area to make it available for public access via a walkway and viewing platform. This land does not appear to have been transferred and the viewing platform is now vandalised on a regular basis and residents are subjected to constant anti-social behaviour on this unprotected land. Can the Portfolio Holder explain why the land transfer has not taken place and set out the steps he intends to take to ensure it now happens quickly?

10. From Councillor Fletcher to Councillor Johnson

Can I enlist Councillor Johnson's support to make robust, fit-for-purpose fencing as seen at the lower end of Broxburn Drive the standard across the borough and to ensure the 'like for like' argument is not used to keep other tenants in the Iron Age?

11. From Councillor Akinbohun to Councillor Little

Those young adults about to leave care, how many are waiting for suitable accommodation?

12. From Councillor Muldowney to Councillor Watkins

The play equipment in Chadwell St Mary's parks is inadequate, old and deteriorating. Will the Council commit money to invest in new play equipment for Chadwell's parks?

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