

Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 1 March 2023

QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC

1. From Sam Byrne to Councillor M Coxshall

Sam Byrne

Councillor Coxshall, in your new era of openness and transparency and your calls at many meetings for all 49 councillors to be included in the important decisions ahead, may I please request that you allow the very important decision on the future of the Thameside Complex to be voted on, not only by the nine members of your party who sit on the Cabinet but indeed by all 49 councillors at a full council meeting.

Councillor M Coxshall

Thank you, this is an executive decision and as such to stay with the cabinet, but a cabinet serves the request of this council as it sits tonight and makes the ultimate decisions and can direct the executive if it chooses. But what you see though in my openness and transparency I don't know if you mentioned the recommendations to O&S next week, cabinet would make the decision the following week, does not include to close or sell the Thameside complex and buildings. Cabinet will be asked to submit new bids and neither bid submitted were a financially sustainable solution and can be recommended to cabinet and O&S will be looking at it next week. Members are asked to consider the recommendations and a formal consultation, and an alternative delivery of a culture options. Any decision on the future on the Thameside complex will follow that. I understand you met Mark Bradbury, the director, on Monday and you explained the concerns of your proposal and if you were able to fully address your concerns would still have an assurance authority opportunity to present alternative new proposals. I would encourage you to do that, please, and with that with the consultation. There is a clear and a lot of knowledge that you have, and I am passionate and I don't want to see that missing from the borough of Thurrock and I would like to work with you to have a financially sustainable solution to harness that energy.

Mayor

Ms Byrne would you like to pose a supplementary question.

Sam Byrne

Thank you, Mister Mayor, again in the name of openness and transparency and ahead of the local elections in May as the residents of Thurrock, your electorate, protest outside to save your Thameside for future generations of Thurrock, can I please ask every member in this chamber to rise or raise their hand to show they stand with the people of Thurrock to save your Thameside.

QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER

1. From Councillor Allen to the Leader

Councillor Allen

Following your recent approach to being both 'Open & Transparent' in all aspects of how council work takes place. Please may I request that all four Elected Tilbury Councillors be included on The Tilbury Town Fund Board to ensure full openness & transparency?

Mayor

Leader

Leader

The membership of the Town's Board, Tilbury Town's Fund Board, or any board including Grays Board is a matter of the board to decide that, in accordance with its guidance provided by the Government and its not for the leader to demand that. But I will say is that members of the board do regularly look at the composition and I will raise that as a board member at the next meeting because I think that could be well worth it as we move into the areas. But I must say there is a very large advisory board which all councillors do sit on.

Mayor

Councillor Allen do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Allen

Thank you, Mister Mayor. Leader, don't you feel that in the pursuit of both openness and transparency which we've heard quite a lot of in the last so many weeks in how Tilbury Town receives its improvements from the government funding that all councillors should be a part of how these improvements are delivered. Because leader in the past it's been a closed shop in decision making and any ideas from other elected councillors have been side-lined or cancelled out. Also, I feel that more interaction and inclusion with our local residents giving local people, the electorate, more choice or to have a say in what they would like to see happen and delivered in their town without once again cancelling them out and taking away their voice. So, leader your either open and transparent or closed and hiding something.

Mayor

Leader

Leader

It's a bit disappointing, hiding something, were not hiding something and no one is intending in hiding something. The board was set up when I was a cabinet member, I'm entitled, I sit on the board as the cabinet member for that, we have, you are entitled to as a councillor in the area, there is actually four councillors in the area at that time. I think Councillor Mayes who wasn't in this group at that time deliberately chosen from the group and he was the person who is interested in turning up at them. We tried to make a board as small and an advisory board as a larger board, there is a local residents community group sitting on there and large businesses, there was only a small composition to deliver a board, what we've seen with the boards and what the government has seen is to try and deliver these projects at pace and speed instead of giving them money to the council and making sure exactly what the problem was that this council, lets have a look 50 years ago, let's use the example of Thameside Complex was designed and I remember an am-dram society, someone in the amateur dramatics said to me when I was talking to the Thameside it was designed by officers and not by the people who used it. And that's what we don't want for Tilbury, and I've tried to make sure that and that's why there's a large advisory group with community groups, there's been a huge community engagement process. If you think that the board is inappropriately set up at this point as it goes to that, I am welcomed as I said, to do that but what I do say you know I am surprised that your vote at the last one, the capital, maybe you can correct that but obviously you voted against capital programme that spends money in Tilbury, the capital programme does include, are you saying you don't want any funding to come from this council into Tilbury because that is what you've just vote for in the capital programme.

Mayor

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

Councillor Allen

No, I reserve my right – thank you.

Mayor

No that's the end of your question time.

2. From Councillor Byrne to the Leader

Councillor Byrne

January's Cleaner Greener elephant in the room was the totally unnecessary pink paper. Are officers and members on board with your promise of an openness and transparency going forward?

Mayor

This item fell as Councillor Byrne was not in the chamber.

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

1. From Councillor Allen to Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Allen

Please can I ask what steps you personally are willing to make to address the concerns of many Tilbury residents regarding the ongoing dirt and dust fallouts which plight the lives of many people in Tilbury and the surrounding area?

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Mister Mayor, and thank you Councillor Allen for your question. I know since you've been elected you, along with my colleague Councillor Mayes have campaigned on this issue. Councillor Mayes, portfolio holder regularly challenged the environment agency and the port health authority about the dust. However the fact of the matter is Thurrock Council is not responsible for the monitoring and reporting of dust from the ports so does have limited powers, but I do understand the concerns of Tilbury residents which is why today I asked the officers to write to the environment agency seeking further assurance that any dust or other emissions are fully monitored and that there are no health risks to the Thurrock residents and I have also asked for our website to be updated with details of how to contact the environment agency and I would encourage all residents to report any concerns.

Mayor

Councillor Allen do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Allen

Thank you. I did ask if I could show videos of supporting evidence of the dirt and dust fallouts which I've got quite a few of that have been gained by residents over the time where you can clearly see plumes of dust in certain sites in around Tilbury, Tilbury 2 but I was denied to show them, I can post them out to all members if they would like to see that but I think you should see it and what I need to put across tonight is that whenever we put complaints in regarding the dirt and dust fallouts, all we get back from officers and EAs is that it's the Sahara desert and it's the Sahara dust that we are experiencing and it is simply isn't that, you know this has been going on for some time now. So, you

know, you being the portfolio holder, Councillor Jefferies, I would like to see you challenging such people as EA and port of health to ensure that you know the health and wellbeing of the people of Tilbury is considered. I would like the portfolio holder to do more to challenge this, this dirt and dust, its not Sahara desert Mister Mayor its clearly a problem and I do think its detrimental to health so I would appreciate if you could challenge the people that regulate, please.

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Allen for your question. So as I said in my answer I have asked officers to go back to the environment agency and challenge and find out if the dust is causing or could cause harm to the residents of Thurrock. I'm sure you're aware the port health authority covers all the London ports not us, not Thurrock Council, we can challenge them, but we have to believe what they send to us but like I say I have asked officers to challenge again. Council officers to meet with the port authorities and other operators in Tilbury where there are operations that give rise to dust and we do work with them to try and implement mitigation measures, so I know previously there has been dampening down of areas to try and bring that dust under control but I'm not trying to play down on but there is an issue of dust from the Sahara, dust that has been created elsewhere, that does come into this area so that is a genuine answer but happy to meet him, happy to look at the videos and you know will ask officers to always challenge the environment agency and the port authorities when residents report concerns.

Mayor

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

Councillor Allen

Thank you, Mister Mayor. Independent testing in the past has shown that there was a serious element of one of the substances that was captured which was arsenic, now we certainly don't want to be ingesting arsenic however small the amount is now it was said that it was a small amount but if you've got prolonged exposure to such an element its certainly going to be detrimental to health and again I don't think that arsenic comes from the Sahara so I would appreciate again with your challenging the likes of EA and the port health and there will be I hope more independent testing on a wider scale too to capture the substance and again test it thoroughly to determine whether the health and wellbeing of the people of Tilbury is at risk but again I would hope that you challenge that the governmental environmental agency and finally put the health and wellbeing of people of Tilbury above big business. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Allen. I can only just repeat what I've said. It's not the responsibility of Thurrock Council, we do challenge, I find it slightly difficult to believe the environmental agency can't be classed as independent, they are independent, they are there to monitor the health and look into reports and I would just repeat if you've got evidence, if residents are concerned about dust, they need to report it straight away so that the environmental agency can look into it, can act to ensure whatever dust is there isn't a danger to the people of Thurrock and in particular, Tilbury.

2. From Councillor Byrne to Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Byrne

The day after January's full council, you put out propaganda claiming the opposition voted in favour of ULEZ, was there an actual vote on ULEZ charges or did we vote for our preferred option on the two motions presented?

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Byrne for your question. I have to say I was rather surprised that this question had been allowed. I put forward the ULEZ motion as a ward councillor for Ockendon not as a portfolio holder and I was not aware that members could ask portfolio holder questions about their activities as a ward councillor rather they should be about their responsibilities as the cabinet member. This puts to bed, I believe, the notion that we, the cabinet, decide on what questions are allowed. Having said that the motion we vote on at last council was to oppose the ULEZ charge, something which most residents in my ward oppose. Indeed, more residents in the borough oppose. My letter to residents simply pointed out that the Independent Labour councillors voted with their sister party, the Thurrock Labour party, in not supporting the motion opposing ULEZ. Will the councillor now admit he voted the wrong way and unlike the real independence. So will you admit you made a mistake and condemn the ULEZ charge. A charge that will cost residents in Thurrock, which you claim to represent hundreds of pounds a year or does he need to get permission from this group leader, Councillor Kent.

Mayor

Councillor Byrne do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Byrne

Let's have another go, can you show me in the minutes where we actually voted, I voted to talk to the Mayor of London you voted to send a stiff letter, was there an actual vote on ULEZ. It's the same question did we vote on ULEZ.

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Councillor Byrne, for your supplementary question and this man here for getting you elected I think but I would hold it against him. The point of the motion was to send a clear message to the Labour Mayor of London that we don't want ULEZ charge being imposed on outer London because they will have an impact on the residents in Thurrock, the residents that we represent, you voted against that motion, you voted against that motion but you voted in favour of the motion from your sister party, yes it was political, we weren't being political we wanted to protect the Thurrock residents that will get this £60 a week charge. We talked this evening a lot about being political but that was political previously yes, we were thinking of residents so I challenge you again, will you admit, you got it wrong, and you should have voted in favour of residents and not in favour of ULEZ and a £60 a week charge to residents.

Mayor

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

Councillor Byrne

If you want to clear it up do it now, with no inner agenda, all 49, we go through all named, Matthew can sort it, the Mayor can approve it and actually ask the question are you for or against ULEZ coming onto the doorstep of Thurrock.

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Councillor Byrne for your question. Just a little bit of advice perhaps you might want to meet with the monitoring officer to learn how democracy within this chamber works. Once you've done that, I suggest you put a motion forward to full council just like I did and ask members to support it or not

support it. You've had three opportunities now, three opportunities to say that you condemn the ULEZ charge, you failed on each occasion, we are opposed to it, you're in favour of it, the residents in your ward will have their say very shortly and I hope they are listening to this debate this evening.

3. From Councillor Worrall to Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Worrall

Following several public apologies and restarts of the waste collection services can the cabinet member for environmental services advise when residents will get the full service that they pay for?

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Worrall for your question. Councillor Worrall is right there have been several apologies and restarts to the bin service and I am pleased to say that for the general waste that's the green and grey bins and the recycling the blue bins we are now providing services that our residents would expect. Missed bins are being collected the next day, complaints blocked access are being resolved and crews are being listened to when they have difficulties in collecting bins and they have the solution to the problem. This has been made possible by tough action we've taken replacing the office of management team at all levels. However, the garden waste service is still failing this is largely part to poor management of the service last year, failure to manage sickness levels, holiday requests resulting in too many people being absent at the same time and a failure to recruit enough staff and to reduce our dependency on agency. This is despite being told by me to reduce the number of agency staff so that we employed local people. With poor management comes poor morale amongst our hard-working bin crews, it will take time to change the culture, but I am confident that we have the right team in place, we have a rolling advert to recruit both drivers and loaders, we've recruited four drivers and 12 loaders since the 1 January, and we've reduced the number of agency staff to just over 21% down from 25% still too high. But I hope it get it down, I'm confident with these changes and more to come we will see a huge improvement in the service.

Mayor

Councillor Worrall do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Worrall

Of course, I want to talk about brown bins. My brown bin has been at the end of my drive for four weeks and it's still there today, its bin day today still there. Spoke to the bin men and said brown bin and no they only had a team out

yesterday there weren't one out for today. So, this is across the borough there is residents in my ward I'll take you there tomorrow they've still got their turkey carcass in their brown bin its nearly easter, it's not good enough and I know you've said sorry, I know you've said you're going to put it right. So, when can these residents, you know like, got lots of little cul de sacs, they're tod the ring up and say the bins had not been collected, black bins, green bins whatever leave them out to this time next week we'll pick them up again, little, tiny cul de sacs can't leave their bins out for a week. Ok. Councillor Massey's ward is a nightmare if you were to go on there for bin collections every single week, sometimes three, four, five, six weeks there black and green bins are not getting picked up, brown bins, brown bins are terrible you know they are the worst bins, when can we expect to see, were paying for it we talked about council tax tonight, when can we have a proper bin collection and when can that resident expect their turkey giblets to be picked up.

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Mister Mayor. I agree, I agree entirely. The brown bid service is rubbish were not collecting brown bins, it's appalling yes absolutely appalling, agree. But I've just given you reasons why the brown bin service is so poor. We don't have enough crews, that's both drivers and loaders to be able to provide that service to the level that we want to be able to do so. We've prioritised the green and blue bins, the general waste and the recycling and as I've said that is now performing well. As for leaving bins out for a week, I hope residents aren't being told that, the way the system, then I'm appalled if they are being told to do that and I will take that up with officers tomorrow morning and they can take that up with a call centre because that's not what they should be being told. The way the system works is that if your bin is missed on the day of collection, we come back the next day to collect those bins. Now with the green and blue bins that is now happening. It hasn't in the past it is now happening that service it has improved still improving and is where we want it to be, the brown bins however, were not collecting we shouldn't be promising to collect them the next day because we can't guarantee that because we just simply can't. I agree it is frustrating, it has been frustrating for a long time. I'm very frustrated that's why I've just told the reasons why it's happening, trust me, I've been doing this for a long long time and I am, we're trying to get it right, we've got it right with the green and blue bins sadly we still haven't got there with the brown bins but we are working on them, when we've got the crews the service will be more regular but at the moment what we're trying to do on a daily basis is collect as many brown bins as possible. If they're not collected, they shouldn't be left out, people should move them back in and then wait for the next collection and agree cul de sacs, you can't have bins piling up.

Mayor

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

Councillor Worrall

Yes, thank you. I don't live in a cul de sac and mine's staying right at the end of my drive until you can get it next week but I do need to cut my grass as it is nice out there and its full up so it will have to go into the black bin now. So I've spoken to bin men you know, stopped and spoke to them and they told me that they spend, they got two days coming in on a Saturday a little while ago and that you did a brown bin round-up, you know pretty much collected a lot of the bins and mine that must have been a month ago, because that's when mine got collected and thought yippee we've got brown bin collection again as you had said put your brown bins out, you haven't put a press release out to say don't put your brown bins out and we've stopped again, so there's the confusion, but you must have done something as Grays are still getting, Councillor Potheary has still got her Christmas tree in it, so you haven't done a full round anywhere so just looking at the bin collection and I read a paper that said its up for renewal, the contract and the renewals you know we do need to get on top of this and I spoke to the bin men and they said if they spoke to us we could tell them but they're refusing to speak to the men that could put this right. When or if can you promise the residents that your going to get it right, your going to make sure that you are going to get this right, you know, you must have the same problems on the doors for your re-election because I'm getting them so you must be getting them, can you tell me whether the bin collections are going to say two weekly or is that something that you know are now looking at, are we going to two week collections, we was, we wasn't, we was well now we've got to find some money are we going to stay with weekly or are we going to two weekly.

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Worrall. I talk to bin men regularly in fact on Tuesday I did a whole round with them in the orange suit, I was out loading the bins onto the back of the lorry talking to the bin crews to find out what they were thinking. No, I didn't actually come down your road as I would have had great pleasure in emptying your bin for you, I didn't, I was in a different part of the borough. As regards grass cutting, I'm glad you mentioned that because I'm pleased to say that we've actually started cutting grass earlier in the borough. Our guys are out cutting grass at the moment earlier than they've ever been. So yes, can I give an assurance. Yes, I am working hard to make sure we get this situation resolved. We have resolved the green and the blue bins. They are now being collected on a regular basis, if they are not collected on the day of collection, we go back the next day and we collect them. Brown bin service isn't working, I admit that, I've said that yet what we do do is when you've got sufficient crews they go out and it may well be that its Councillor Kerin day to have his bins collected so he gets his brown bin collected the next day when it's your turn to get your bin collected, we don't

have enough crews in to be able to do the brown bin collection. Sadly, we clearly haven't been able to get to Councillor Pothecary's Christmas tree or giblets, but I'm hoping that we will finally get around and collect them and if I can go out and do another round with them, with the guys, I promise I will come and collect your bins. I can't give you a time frame afraid on that's going to happen all I can say is that were working hard to recruit drivers, to recruit loaders to make sure we've got sufficient staff.

4. From Councillor Pearce to Councillor Spillman

Councillor Pearce

Tenants of the Airey houses in Central Avenue, and Love Lane, Aveley, were decanted from their properties whilst essential works were completed by the council. They were told that they would be out of their homes for a matter of weeks, but after more than 12 months they are yet to return as works are still ongoing. Does the Portfolio Holder agree this is both unacceptable and unfair and what is being done to ensure the works are now completed?

Mayor

Councillor Spillman

Councillor Spillman

Thank you for that question, Councillor Pearce and firstly I would like to apologise for the inconvenience to those residents, obviously having to leave your home for such a great length of time this is not ideal. We've obviously decanted them into suitable alternative accommodation but it's not their home and we shouldn't pretend it is. Now these properties are particularly difficult, they're actually classified as defective under 1985 Housing Act due to their structure, if you see a picture of these homes, you just, it's hard to fathom how anyone would have come to the conclusion that we should be building in that way, they were prefabs only meant to be up 10 or 30 years and have been up a lot longer. The other problem that we had was when we tried to underpin them there were further complications and there was a level of underpinning that wasn't foreseen. Further to that the new PAS 2035 regulations happened halfway through the project which had meant that the energy efficiency requirements have changed substantially but the main problem which we've got is that when we stripped back these properties, we found that the concrete lintels actually go into neighbouring properties. Now if these properties were all in the same areas as a block, we would have knocked them down and rebuilt them. But the problem is that they're attached to properties that have been brought and owned by people and this means that we are now in a legal negotiation to try and get some party wall agreements and is, as you know anything about the sort of disputes, they can take much longer than we would like so yes, it is very difficult. I would like to add we are doing everything we can to progress this, and I've asked officers if they could assist you and do a site visit and if I'm available I would also very much like to attend that with you. We've been in regular consultation with the residents but consultation although

you know the right to do keeping them up to date is not the same as taking them back to their homes that they live in but yes these are really really problematic homes. If it was possible, we would knock them down and rebuild them and provide these tenants with new homes but as I say because they have got owner occupied properties next to them, that's not possible. But most importantly I would like to apologise to those residents because it's not their fault it's just a series of technical and legal problems that have led to this situation.

Mayor

Councillor Pearce do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Pearce

Thank you, Mister Mayor and thank you for that answer. However, could the portfolio holder ensure that the ward councillors are updated by officers about progress in these homes as previously stated in the future and also, I would like the site visit. If you could be there as well, right, also considering these families have been inconvenienced for 15 months, that's a long time, are you prepared to offer them a token of compensation to the tenants, recognising the distress, the lengthy process that its caused and also it's not just those that had to be moved out its those that are living next door still listening to the drilling, the banging, everything, the loud talking it's been going on 7 or 5 days week, early in the morning to quite late at night, so could something be happening quite soon please.

Mayor

Councillor Spillman

Councillor Spillman

Yes of course, we need to continue consultation with ward members, I mean looking at the pictures I don't understand how they were, where they were, you know, the energy efficiency in these properties must have been absolutely horrendous so god knows what sort of bills they were paying. I mean, there is just this thing, the walls are liberally just thin concrete rows that you could literally punch through, I mean these were built in most bizarre manner and I can assure you that you know no one is building like that anymore but yes, I'll be more than happy to attend a visit with you. It might even be good to bring some of the residents to that site visit as well. In terms of compensation, I can't stand here today as portfolio and say that were going to offer compensation that would be an ongoing discussion. But a discussion I am willing to listen to so not a problem at all.

Mayor

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

Councillor Pearce

Just to ask the portfolio not just Aveley but is there other homes like this in the rest of the borough as well that might need attention and if so, perhaps a whole lot need coming down.

Mayor

Councillor Spillman

Councillor Spillman

Yes, there are the whole reason why this project started was because we sought a survey of all of these properties. There were other properties some in Belhus and there are others obviously non-traditional properties along in Tebet Road as well. So, there are a number of these prefab structures that are just bizarre and are a real challenge. If they are in one group again just knock them down and rebuild them but it's just so problematic when you've got an owner occupier next door because you're damaging their property and they have to have a lot of legal reassurances. There has to be all sorts of different text, lawyers, surveyors and it's just becoming difficult but it's not acceptable for those residents and let's not pretend it is.

5. From Councillor Pearce to Councillor M Coxshall

Councillor Pearce

Residents of the Hall Estate are suffering as a consequence HGV movement to and from the new school development site in Love Lane, which in itself is not needed. Mud and debris are being strewn on residential roads, HGVs appear to be accessing the site outside of permitted hours and driving along inappropriate routes, asking residents to move their vehicles in the early hours on one such occasion so that they could pass. What action can the council take to address these issues with the developer?

Mayor

Councillor M Coxshall

Councillor M Coxshall

It sounds truly terrible, and I know your passionate and some of the conservative councillors there have been passionate about not making sure an opposition and making sure that they keep their green and pleasant land around Aveley, and I understand that, and I understand the passion around the school and how you wanted a school but not in that place and planning is now moving forward. There is a need for builders to actually abide by the residents be conscientious about the residents and the mess of the road and I will come down with you shortly within the next week to see this myself and make sure that the planning team, we can put in a planning enforcement in, there is a

enforcement against that. You do know as a long serving councillor here in Aveley and across Thurrock how the development management team will regularly attend to make sure that their residents are protected.

Mayor

Councillor Pearce do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Pearce

Thank you, Mister Mayor and thank you for your answer. Many of the issues I have referred to in my question have already been reported to the planning enforcement, but their response is yet to be forthcoming. I have escalated the matter to you as leader of the council. Would the leader please use his position to ensure that I have received the full written update from the planning enforcement department explaining what steps have been taken to ensure the development complies with these planning obligations because to me they are taking the micky again. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor M Coxshall

Councillor M Coxshall

We have had this numerous times across the area and it may not be this site and there might not be developers but as we have issues in planning development and that and be of no doubt the planning enforcement team will take action of any infringements and I will come down with you and visit the site to see what is there and we will do an action plan to talk to the planning officers accordingly. Thank you.

Mayor

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

Councillor Pearce

Just to ask how soon is possible, thank you.

Mayor

Councillor M Coxshall

Councillor M Coxshall

Let's say next week.

6. From Councillor P Arnold to Councillor Maney

Councillor P Arnold

With the proposed introduction of parking permit charges, will the Portfolio Holder confirm, that the monies raised, will be ring fenced for increasing enforcement and for consultations within other areas of South Ockendon, that may wish to have permit parking. For example, the Peartree Estate. Also, that the residents on the Flowers Estate, who will now have to pay these charges, will get an opportunity to decide if they wish the parking scheme to continue or not?

Mayor

Councillor Maney

Councillor Maney

Thank you, Mister Mayor and thank you, Councillor Arnold for your question. Mister Mayor the revenue generated from the new modest charges will be used to help fund the existing schemes which have become difficult to sustain on a cost neutral basis following increased service and maintenance costs. It's unlikely therefore that this new revenue stream can be used to fund additional permit parking areas at this time. I do. However, agree that the parking of the public parking arrangements in Ockendon should be reviewed as there are some roads which continue to suffer from commuter parking. It is clear that Ockendon has not been given the same attention as other communities in Thurrock with rail stations. I can advise that I have had conversations with officers over how this can be addressed, and we continue to explore all options. I do agree in principle that permit parking arrangements should be extended if there is a case for this or residents agree. In terms of residents in Thurrock who already live in a PPA, I do believe they should have a say on the schemes. To this end, I have asked the service to undertake an engagement exercise, and this is currently being designed. Mister Mayor it is worth bearing in mind however that the consultation with residents prior to the introduction of the schemes did make clear that the annual cost and charging arrangements would be reviewed annually. There was never a commitment that the schemes would be free of charge for ever more. The proposed charges will also be considerably less than those levied by other neighbouring local authorities, meaning residents will continue to receive a good deal. Thank you, Mister Mayor.

Mayor

Councillor Arnold do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor P Arnold

Yes please, Mister Mayor. Will the portfolio holder also confirm that the consultation will start as soon as practically as possible so that residents can have their say.

Mayor

Councillor Maney

Councillor Maney

Thank you, Mister Mayor. I think it has to start as soon as possible because of course the charges have been approved and I think it's only right that residents have a say on that before they come into play so yes I'm committed to getting this up and running as quickly as possible finding out what it is residents want, what they think of the scheme, can they be improved, it is important to know what they want and of course ward councillors will be included in that exercise. Thank you, Mister Mayor.

Mayor

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

Councillor P Arnold

No thank you, Mister Mayor.

7. From Councillor G Coxshall to Councillor Maney

Councillor G Coxshall

One of the cruellest consequences of the proposed ULEZ expansion will be that Thurrock residents with non-compliant vehicles will incur the charge when attending Corbetts Tey Crematorium and/or Upminster Cemetery. Will the Portfolio Holder make representations to the Mayor of London and seek a dispensation for such residents?

Mayor

Councillor Maney

Councillor Maney

Thank you, Mister Mayor, the council's response to the ULEZ consultation identified a number of concerns regarding the lack of consideration afforded to neighbouring boroughs, including the impact that the zone's expansion would have upon residents in Thurrock. Our view of the impact of Labour's new tax has been poorly considered. The omission of a dispensation for those visiting

the crematorium and cemeteries, an example of the concerns already raised in our response. Since we debated the ULEZ extension at the last full council the transport team has had further dialogue with TFL and was due to meet with representatives yesterday, but the terms of the meeting had been narrowly defined. It seemed the mayor of London only wishes to engage on this matter when it is in TFL interests and not when neighbouring boroughs or concerned parties wish to highlight their own needs. Nonetheless, we will take the opportunity to press Thurrock's concerns. That said, the council has still to receive any reply to its consultation response and request for further information. The leader of the council wrote to the mayor directly last month stating this council's opposition to the ULEZ extension and similarly received no substantive reply to the points he raised. In respect of people driving to cemeteries in the expanded zone TFL's position is that those affected by the new tax may be able to access grants under the scrappage scheme. What it fails to recognise however is that such funding is not available to residents outside of London. As we now, Corbetts Tey is relatively remote for many Thurrock residents and can only be accessed by private vehicle. Your right, therefore, Councillor Coxshall to highlight how this will unfairly hit many residents including those in Belhus. Even in the face of the London mayor's refusal to engage in his contempt for those immediately outside of the zone I can assure you that the Council Authority, Conservatives will continue to press the case for all residents who will be unfairly hit by the ULEZ expansion. This includes those travelling to Corbetts Tey crematorium and Upminster cemetery

Mayor

Councillor Coxshall do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor G Coxshall

Thank you, Mister Mayor, thank you Councillor Maney for your response. I am somewhat pleased and disappointed I should say perhaps I am pleased that we are speaking with our commitment following the motion at the last full council into opposing this charge and the effect it will have on our residents. I'm just disappointed the mayor is yet to respond and think it's some semantics. Really the question is, can the portfolio holder, I know you had the meeting yesterday, can you please provide me with an update from officers on how that meeting went because it's just so disappointing that the London mayor has failed to engage with a neighbouring borough.

Mayor

Councillor Maney

Councillor Maney

Thank you, Mister Mayor. You know Labour and Independent Labour they just will not come out against their mayor. It is shameful, give the mayor time, people don't have time, they're worried, do they need to buy a new car, can they afford to buy a new car, how they're going to get to the graves of their

relatives untaxed. These are all the things they need to know, and we know you're not on this side, you're on the side of the London mayor, these are real questions. Like I said earlier go on the doorsteps and these are the things that people are raising. They are concerned about being taxed off the road by the London mayor. Somebody you and the independent Labour party have supported, so the answer is yes if we ever get a reply, were not the only ones, other local authorities have been ignored as well, as I said the London mayor isn't interested. All I can assure you is that us on this side of the chamber will fight to the last to see off this new tax and residents need to know they are complicit, they are in the mayor's pocket, thank you Mister Mayor.

Questions 8, 9 and 10 were not heard due to the timing of this item.