



**CROYDON COUNCIL MEETING: MONDAY 14 OCTOBER 2013**  
**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**  
**WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Welcome to a meeting of Croydon Council. Attached are the questions from the public and the replies which will be taken at this meeting.

IF YOU HAVE ASKED A QUESTION, PLEASE MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN TO THE MEMBER OF STAFF WHO IS PRESENT IN THE PUBLIC GALLERY, THEN READ THE REPLY TO YOUR QUESTION AND INDICATE WHETHER YOU INTEND TO ASK A SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION - a roving microphone will be available for that purpose.

Public Question time is usually towards the beginning on the meeting and the process for this item is as follows:

- ◆ The questions will be taken in the order in which they were received by the Council;
- ◆ The question and the reply will be taken as read;
- ◆ The person who asked the question, if present, will then be invited to ask a supplementary question, (if they wish) to clarify a point related to the reply they have been given in the written answer. The **length and detail of such a question should be brief** and at the discretion of the Mayor, allowing for the time available and the number of other questions which need to be dealt with;
- ◆ Public question time is limited strictly to **15 minutes** - if all the questions and answers have not been reached at the end of that time, the other replies will be taken as read and there will be no further opportunity for asking supplementary questions at that meeting; and
- ◆ Questions will not be carried over to the following meeting, but it is of course in order for questioners to ask another question on the same or another topic before the next meeting.

After the public question time you are very welcome to stay for the rest of the meeting

Question Number	Question to Cabinet Member	Question From	Subject
PQ49	Thomas	Mr J Lloyd	Veolia Contract
PQ50	O'Connell	Mr A Crawley	Council tax exemptions
PQ51	Fisher	Mr W Felt	Town Hall
PQ52	Thomas	Mr P Collier	Ash trees
PQ53	Thomas	Mrs D Lyne	Wandle Park
PQ54	Pollard	Mrs S Macdonald	Academies

PQ55	Hoar	Mr J Thompson	Police numbers
PQ56	Perry	Mr M Creatura	Whitgift Centre
PQ57	Fisher	Mr M Tary	Portland Road
PQ58	Mohan	Mr A Stevensen	Youth unemployment
PQ59	D. Mead	Mr G Streeter	Ashburton Library
PQ60	D Mead	Mr A Storie	Ashburton Library
PQ61	Hoar	Mr R Canning	Travellers
PQ62	Bashford	Miss S Khan	Bernard Weatherill House
PQ63	Pollard	Mr P Sowan	Riesco items
PQ64	Thomas	Mr J Cooper	South Norwood Country Park
PQ65	Hoar	Ms A Gibney	Fly tipping
PQ66	Perry	Miss J Kentfield	Portland Road
PQ67	Hoar	Ms J Isaacs	Portland Road
PQ68	Hoar	Ms J Morley	Albert Road
PQ69	Bashford	Mrs C Rendle	Ashburton Library
PQ70	Mead D	Mr A Rendle	Ritchie Road
PQ71	Mohan	Mr A Pelling	Business Rate
PQ72	Pollard	Mrs E Simpson	School Crossing
PQ73	Pollard	Mr B Simpson	Traffic Patrols
PQ74	Pollard	Ms K Meyler	road safety
PQ75	Bashford	Mrs M Henson	Ashburton Library
PQ76	Thomas	Mrs D Edmonds	South End Road safety
PQ77	Fisher	Mr M Samuel	Electoral Registration
PQ78	Fisher	Mrs H King	Council elections
PQ79	Pollard	Ms J Prince	Victoria House

The attached replies are subject to oral amendment by the Cabinet Member or Committee Chair.

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**From Mr John Lloyd**

**Councillor Phil Thomas**

**Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services**

**Question No.**

**PQ 049–13**

VEOLIA CONTRACT.

The terms of this contract are being breached daily. Could you please tell me how much and how often has Veolia has been fined for non-compliance during this and the previous financial year? Who is responsible for checking on their work? As council tax payers we are not receiving the service we are paying for.

**Reply**

The Council has issued to Veolia Environmental Services Ltd both service rectification and service default notices during 2012/2013 and during the current financial year.

The previous levels of service failure did not reach the agreed trigger levels within the contract which would have resulted in financial deductions being imposed, so as part of the recent contract extension negotiations with Veolia, new Key Performance Indicators agreed and have now been introduced.

These new Key Performance Indicators allow for the Council to deduct agreed financial rates where specific service failures have occurred in respect of the agreed service performance standards not being achieved.

The Council has a range of officers within the Planning & Environment Department who manage the Veolia contract.

I would be grateful if you could advise me of any specific service failures where you feel Veolia Environmental Services Ltd have not provided the environmental services to the correct frequency or standard.

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**From Mr Alan Crawley**

**Councillor Steve O'Connell**

**Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance Management**

**Question No.**

**PQ 050-13**

List by each religious faith, the number of religious buildings and the number of priests or the faith equivalents who are exempt from Council Tax; what evidence has to be submitted to prove the right to those exemptions and what is the amount of Council Tax revenue lost due to those exemptions?

**Reply**

Priests and other religious equivalents are not exempt from the payment of council tax; the only exemption linked to religion is Class H, which is where a property is unoccupied and held for a minister of religion – ie where a property is usually occupied by a minister of religion. The evidence required is a signed declaration from the place of religion with the date that the property became unoccupied and confirmation that it is being kept for a minister of religion.

There are currently 5 properties in Croydon in receipt of this exemption as listed below; all are Christian:

1. First Flr Coach House Coloma Convent, 92 Upper Shirley Road, Croydon, CR0 5HA
2. St George's House, Barrow Road, Croydon, CR0 4EZ
3. The Lodge, 94 Upper Shirley Road, Croydon, Shirley, CR0 5HA
4. St Georges Vicarage, Elstan Way, Croydon, Shirley, CR0 7PR
5. Vicarage R/O St Johns Church, Upper Selsdon Road, South Croydon, Selsdon, CR2 8DD

The annual charge for these 5 properties for the current financial year totals £9,501.63, however this is not lost revenue as exemptions are accounted for within the council tax base and associated grant funding from central government.

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**From Mr William Felt**

**Councillor Mike Fisher**

**Leader of the Council**

**Question No.**

**PQ 051–13**

Could the Leader of the Council confirm that there are no plans to convert the Grade II-Listed Town Hall Building and the Clockwork Tower into alternative uses, including (but not limited to a hotel, private apartments or conference centre?

## **Reply**

Thank you for your question.

I am very happy to confirm that there are no plans to turn the town hall into a hotel, apartments or a conference centre. In fact, that's quite the opposite of what we are doing, which is making even more use of the space in the town hall for the Council's own accommodation needs. We have recently moved the adult education service, CALAT into the lower ground floor of the town hall and we are now refurbishing other areas so that we can make even more use of the building.

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**From Mr Peter Collier**

**Councillor Phil Thomas**

**Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services**

**Question No.**

**PQ 052–13**

Following up my question on Ash Tree die back in January. Is it still the case so far this year that no Chalara Fraxinea has been found in any of Croydon's Ash Trees.

**Reply**

The trees and Woodland section have informed me that they are, currently, not aware of any outbreaks. However, during the month of September, representatives from the Forestry Commission were in Croydon looking for outbreaks of Ash Dieback (Chalara fraxinea) as part of a survey being carried out throughout the U.K. The results of the survey should be available later in the year.

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**From Mrs Diana Lyne**

**Councillor Phil Thomas**

**Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services**

**Question No.**

**PQ 053–13**

What was the cost to council tax payers of the Wandle Park relaunch organised by external company White Label on July 6? As the people footing the bill we have a right to know under the Freedom of Information Act.

**Reply**

The budget for the event was £19,000 with £6,000 raised through sponsorship. White Label was tasked with paying for all production costs (including their time and any necessary security) from this sum.

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**From Ms Sylvia Macdonald**

**Councillor Tim Pollard**

**Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning**

**Question No.**

**PQ 054–13**

When the academies were introduced in Croydon there was a lot of controversy. Can Cllr Pollard explain whether they have worked?

**Reply**

At Key Stage 4 (GCSE) pupil results have improved in the vast majority of schools that have become Academies since the date of their conversion. The improvement has been particularly marked in schools previously judged to be failing that have been sponsored by another school, trust or Academy chain.

The majority of schools at primary level that have converted to Academy status have done so more recently. As a result there has been less time for the full impact of the additional capacity brought to these schools to be demonstrated. However, where the arrangements have been in place for some time, such as at Oasis Academy Shirley Park, there has been a significant improvement in outcomes for pupils. More primary schools have also converted to Academy status through choice and were already high performing schools. Other schools have benefitted from the expertise these converter Academies as they have subsequently become sponsors themselves.

The Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 results for Croydon Academy Schools compared against the local and national averages to the end of the academic year 2012-2013 were as follows:-

Croydon Secondary Academy Schools 2008-2013	Academy Status Date	5+ A*-C GCSE including English & Mathematics (%)					
		2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Addington High	01/06/13	49	46	35	38	37	33
Harris Academy Purley	01/09/09	75	63	61	47	33	25
Harris Academy South Norwood	01/09/07	76	80	75	60	43	30
Harris City Academy Crystal Palace	01/09/07	83	99	95	88	82	78
Norbury Manor Business and Enterprise College for Girls	01/01/12	66	62	68	61	53	35
Oasis Academy Coulsdon	01/09/08	63	67	49	37	44	31

Oasis Academy Shirley Park	01/09/09	64	66	51	46	26	59
Riddlesdown Collegiate	01/06/12	67	59	69	66	66	48
Shirley High Performing Arts College	01/01/12	63	72	71	60	61	60
St Joseph's College	01/06/12	65	65	67	64	63	52
The Quest Academy	01/09/10	63	46	41	23	28	40
Woodcote High	01/06/12	81	69	68	65	62	59
<b>National unvalidated 2013</b>			59.0	58.4	55.3	50.9	48.4
<b>Croydon unvalidated 2013</b>		67.6	62.2	61	54.4	51.9	47.6

Croydon Primary Academy Schools 2009-2013	Academy Status Date	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
		Reading, writing & maths L4+ combined (%)	English & Maths L4+ combined (%)			
Applegarth Academy	01/04/2013	69	63	66	*	59
Ark Oval Primary Academy	01/09/2011	71	70	63	58	54
David Livingstone Primary	01/08/2011	83	100	86	100	48
Ecclesbourne Primary	01/04/2011	74	67	69	34	51
Gonville Academy	01/05/2011	88	78	80	83	76
Oasis Academy Byron Primary	01/09/2012	74	75	74	80	88
Oasis Academy Shirley Park	01/09/2009	64	78	39	47	55
St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary	01/07/2012	94	100	75	61	65
St James the Great RC Primary	01/04/2012	80	84	87	90	81
St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary	01/09/2012	67	89	84	93	80
The Aerodrome Primary	01/12/2012	72	86	66	65	63
West Thornton Primary	01/06/2011	92	91	93	*	93
Whitehorse Manor Junior	01/04/2011	93	90	67	*	90
<b>National</b>		75	79	75	74	72

<b>unvalidated 2013</b>					
<b>Croydon unvalidated 2013</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>73</b>

\*Boycotted Tests

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**From Mr James Thompson**

**Councillor Simon Hoar**

**Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection**

**Question No.**

**PQ 055–13**

Earlier this year, Boris Johnson promised Croydon that we'd be getting 117 more police officers on the streets before 2015. Can Cllr Hoar provide an update on how that is coming along?

**Reply**

Since July 2013, Croydon Police have had 53 Probationary Constables join them and approximately 10 other substantive Constables have transferred from other Boroughs.

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**From Mr Mario Creatura**

**Councillor Jason Perry**

**Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Transport**

**Question No.**

**PQ 056–13**

Can Councillor Perry please provide an update on the status of the Westfield/Hammerson development of the Whitgift Centre?

**Reply**

The Council is currently considering an application made by the Croydon Partnership (Westfield & Hammerson) for a redevelopment of the Whitgift Centre as a predominantly retail scheme with a significant leisure element and 400 – 600 residential units on the Wellesley Road frontage. The application is complex, being a parameter based outline application accompanied by an Environmental Assessment. Work on assessing this is very advanced and we anticipate being in a position to report it to Strategic Planning Committee shortly.

A large strategic application such as this will also be considered by the London Mayor. This happens after the Council has considered it. We have worked very closely with officers at the GLA on this project.

It will also be necessary for the Council to consider whether it will use its powers to compulsorily purchase the land necessary to deliver the project. Preliminary work has started on this, but a decision on whether the Council will use its powers is not likely to be taken until the planning position is progressed.

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**From Mr Mustafa Tary**

**Councillor Mike Fisher**

**Leader of the Council**

**Question No. PQ 057–13**

Over the summer, Gavin Barwell MP knocked on over 5,000 doors in South Norwood and Woodside, where I live. He recently commented in the local papers that he was going to lobby the Council to make a concerted effort to focus on improving Portland Road for residents. Has his lobbying worked?

### **Reply**

Thank you for your question regarding public realm improvements in South Norwood. I am pleased to inform you that the diligence of your local Conservative MP, Gavin Barwell is not in vain. This Conservative administration's commitment to regenerating Croydon's district centres is reflected in the public realm improvements already undertaken at district centres such as Addiscombe, Coulsdon and Upper Norwood. We are now working to secure similar improvements in South Norwood with work to repave areas of footway in High Street due to start in March 2014.

Plans to undertake more extensive public realm improvement works in South Norwood during 2014/15 are dependent on the outcome of a funding bid to the Greater London Authority.

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**From Mr Andrew Stevensen**

**Councillor Vidhi Mohan  
Cabinet Member for Communities and Economic Development**

**Question No.**

**PQ 058–13**

Can Cllr Mohan please provide an update on the state of youth unemployment in the Borough? As someone who was born and has lived in the north of the Borough for much of my life, I know that unemployment is a problem and wonder what steps the Council are taking to tackle this.

**Reply**

I'm very pleased to be able to say that this is an area in which we are making strong progress under difficult circumstances. Focusing on 18 to 24-yr olds; there are a third fewer claiming job-seekers allowance at the end of August 2013 than at the same time the previous year.

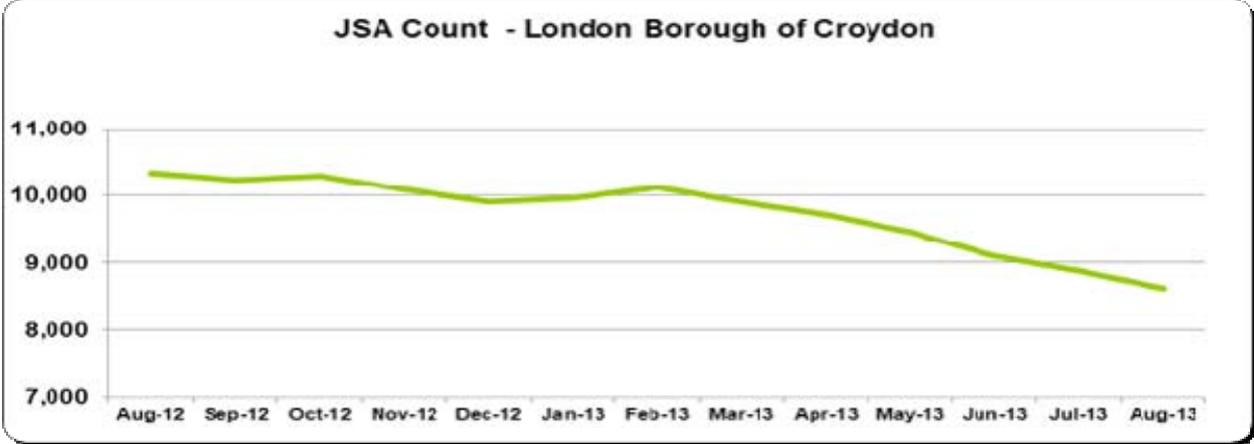
This area has seen sustained focus from the Council as a whole and for me as the Cabinet Member personally. Reducing youth unemployment is a key priority. By working in partnership with employment and training agencies through the Croydon Skills and Employment Strategy Group (CSESG) the Council has facilitated a number of initiatives to make a difference to the levels of youth unemployment in the borough.

The Croydon Skills and Employment Strategy (CSES) 2013-2018 identifies four objectives, two of which specifically relate to supporting young people into employment. These are:

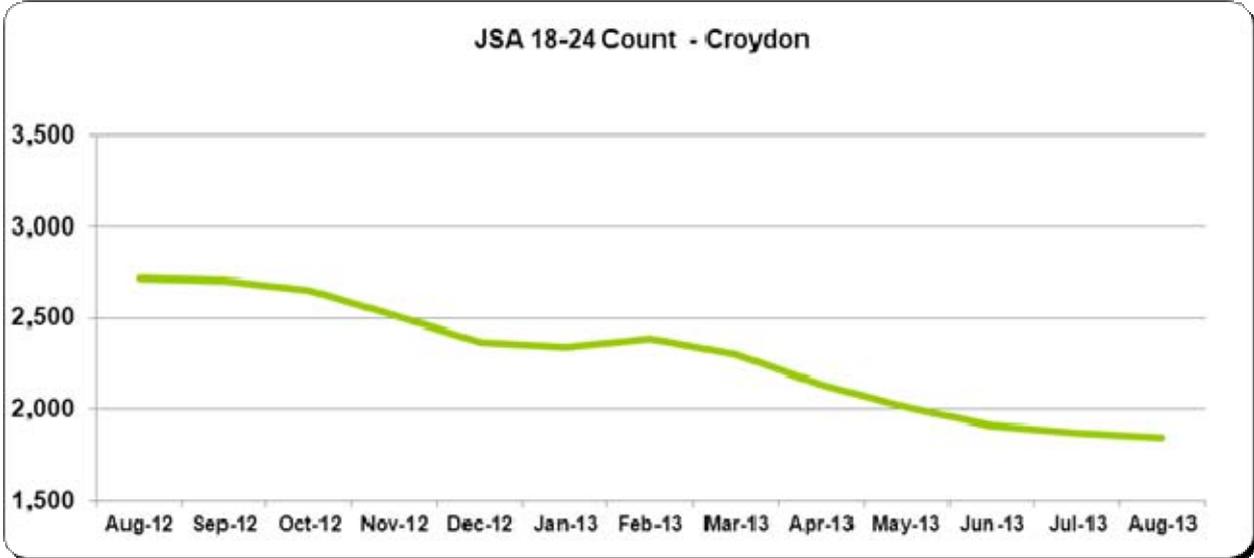
- Support Croydon residents to develop the right skills to secure employment through the following interventions:
  - Delivery of apprenticeships
  - Delivery of vocational training
  - Support volunteering
  - Deliver pre-employment training.
- Support young people to be employment ready through the following measures:
  - Making the transition from school to work
  - Promotion of enterprise awareness and work experience.

The CSES has been effective in delivering these objectives through participation and collaboration of its members. This has led to a number of training and employment initiatives in the borough designed to work with young people not in employment, education or training, to reduce the number of JSA claimants in the borough, to promote apprenticeships and to improve the employability of young people.

It is encouraging to see that Croydon's labour market trends are moving in the right direction in terms of job seekers claimant rate. In Croydon, over the last 12 months the official JSA claimant numbers have been decreasing consistently and in August 2013 the number was 8,620, which represents 3.6% of the working age population. This represents a decrease of 16.6% on a year earlier.



The JSA claimant count for 18-24 year olds also fell consistently over the same period and stood at 1,845 in August 2013, which is a decrease of 870 (32%) on a year earlier.



The 'Pathways to Employment' approach recently approved by Cabinet reaffirms the Council commitment to make the creation of jobs and removal of barriers for employers to recruit local people an utmost priority for the next five years. The 'Pathways to employment' approach will focus on Croydon residents benefitting from jobs resulting from all regeneration and economic development activities in the borough.

The Cabinet paper detailing the 'Pathway to employment' approach can be found on the following link:

<https://secure.croydon.gov.uk/akscroydon/images/att2636.pdf>

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**From Mr Gareth Streeter**

**Councillor Dudley Mead**

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing**

**Question No.**

**PQ 059–13**

Can Cllr Dudley Mead please explain the recent history behind the Ashburton Library site?

**Reply**

The Council entered into a contract with a PFI provider in 2004, under a Labour Administration for the construction of a new school at Ashburton. This agreement included the transfer of the old library building and following the completion of the new building the library closed in 2006 and relocated to the new Oasis Academy building. The initial proposals considered the use of the old library as part of the school complex but they subsequently decided not to include it within the final development. This Conservative administration therefore took steps to take the building back into the Council's ownership as it had become badly vandalised and fallen into disrepair. The transfer back to the Council was completed in October 2010.

The Council continued its dialogue with the school to explore the use of the building as a sixth form centre but this was finally rejected in November 2012 as not being tenable. Consideration has therefore been given to the wider community use of the premises. Given the poor condition in which the building was inherited, it was considered best to try and let the building on a long lease. The property was therefore marketed both within Croydon and through the wider property press over the summer and the Council are currently reviewing the level of interest arising from this process, with the aim to see if the building can be appropriately renovated and utilised by a community group at the earliest opportunity.

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**From Mr Alan Storie**

**Councillor Dudley Mead**

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing**

**Question No.**

**PQ 060–13**

Why did the council not clean the debris, filth and dead pigeon inside Old Ashburton Library before letting an estate agent show prospectus purchaser round the building?

**Reply**

As the building has been severely vandalised , much of the damage being caused prior to the Council taking back ownership of the site, it was decided that clearance of the debris prior to marketing would be expensive and would not significantly enhance the disposal prospects. It was not considered that the condition represented a safety risk and all viewings were accompanied and carefully conducted by the Council's property advisors, Lambert Smith Hampton. Those viewing the property were also made aware of the condition of the building prior to carrying out an inspection.

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**From Mr Robert Canning**

**Councillor Simon Hoar**

**Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection**

**Question No.**

**PQ 061–13**

What steps are being taken to provide a long-term solution to the problems caused by traveller camps in Waddon ward?

**Reply**

Croydon has experienced a number of traveller encampments in Waddon during the last few months. In response the Council and Police have recently engaged with a number of businesses on Imperial Way to gain their views and ideas about what should be done. We will continue to engage with them so that they are aware of what we are able to do and to keep up to date with the action that we are taking.

The Council is exploring a number of options such as preventative measures at particular locations to deter illegal encampments from establishing i.e. soil bunds and gates together with more robust legal proceedings against travellers that are persistently setting up illegal encampments in the Borough.

Around Imperial Way we already have agreement to install height barriers and bollards at one end, which should be installed in the next few weeks. We are also exploring similar measures at the other end of Imperial Way although no decision has yet to be made on these and will require consultation before they are agreed and implemented.

A number of other options are also being considered including parking restrictions and other highways alterations that will make it more difficult or less desirable for encampments to be set up in this particular location.

The Council has also been exploring the potential for using injunctions against travellers who are persistently setting up encampments, which would provide a longer term solution to particular groups. Evidence has been gathered against a number of families and is ready to be submitted to the Courts.

The Council is unable to prevent all illegal encampments and has to act within the boundaries of the law when dealing with them. We are confident that the action we are taking should make a difference to the numbers of encampments in this particular ward, so thank you for raising this issue and allowing me to highlight the work done by the Council to address travellers encampments so that you can pass this on when out speaking to Waddon residents over the coming months.

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**From Miss Sophie Khan**

**Councillor Sara Bashford**

**Cabinet Member for Corporate and Voluntary Services**

**Question No.**

**PQ 062–13**

Can Cllr Bashford please give the Council an update on the move to Bernard Weatherill House?

## **Reply**

The moves to Bernard Weatherill House are on programme and on budget. Moves have been occurring every weekend since 6<sup>th</sup> September and by 14 October all moves will be completed with all services relocated to the new building. To date there has been no disruption to services. A total of 75 services from the council, along with staff from the Met Police, NHS, Jobcentre plus, Croydon Credit Union and Citizens Advice Bureau will be located in BWH. The changes will see 11 council buildings across the borough close, with all services coming under one roof at BWH. Leaving Taberner House and other buildings around the borough and moving to a 'one stop shop' of council services will save taxpayers more than £2m a year from the costs of running separate buildings.

Access Croydon moved successfully from Taberner House to Bernard Weatherill House and was up and running on time on 30 September to welcome customers and offer them an improved customer experience.

Residents are able to use the full range of facilities in Access Croydon, such as the self-service kiosks offering quicker access to more services; the printers, scanners and photocopiers for easier document management; the children's play area for families to wait in; the face-to-face consultation wheels for direct contact with officers.

Teams have settled well into the building and staff are using the flexible workspace to help deliver an improved level of service. Staff feedback has been positive both about the move and the building facilities. For information, the cycle facilities have proved very popular to help promote sustainable travel and staff are also making good use of the improved meeting spaces available.

Community space within the annex and first floor meeting room suite will be opened up outside of office hours for community usage within the next month.

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**From Mr Paul Sowan**

**Councillor Tim Pollard**

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning.**

**Question No.**

**PQ 063–13**

What were the dates and circumstances of the theft of 39 pieces from the originally 650 item in the Riesco Collection of Chinese ceramics as received by the Council in 1964 and fate of the further 89 pieces unaccounted for in the Leader's letter to me dated 25 July 2013.

**Reply**

As has been advised to Mr Sowan unfortunately, despite considerable research by officers it would appear that there are some gaps in the records held by the Council. These gaps relate to records from some time ago and pre-date the knowledge and employment of the present team. Consequently it would appear we do not hold and are therefore unable to provide the details being requested.

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**From Mr Jason Cooper**

**Councillor Phil Thomas**

**Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services**

**Question No.**

**PQ 064–13**

What are the council plans and strategy for ensuring the enhancement and longevity of South Norwood Country Park?

**Reply**

Current improvement plans are being put into place as part of the Parks to Be Proud of investment programme. Over the past few months park users have been able to see work underway to install a new pitch & putt golf/refresh kiosk with improved seating and picnic tables.

The park is staffed by two full time countryside wardens and furthermore the golf and play areas are staffed by a full time ranger. Over the next four months the final arrangements will be put into place for the borough grounds maintenance, ranger and warden services to be provided by one contractor; staffing levels will be retained at SNCP and our commitment to nature conservation and environmental education guaranteed. The new service provider is also committed to developing the use of volunteers for the site.

The Greenspaces Division is currently drafting the next site management plan for South Norwood Country Park and Local Nature Reserve for the period 2014-19 that will be primarily focussed on nature conservation and community access.

We anticipate that the official launch of the enhanced facilities in the spring will generate a renewed interest for those who already know the park and draw in a new audience visiting for the first time. It is our aim to increase community participation with direct volunteering and engagement in a parks user forum. We actively encourage practical volunteering to enhance the work of the staff: this includes work placements, schools volunteers' projects and 'Big Challenge' events. This work raises the profile of the park and develops a new generation of advocates and ambassadors to make this a community park for the future.

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**From Ms Anne Gibney**

**Councillor Simon Hoar**

**Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection**

**Question No.**

**PQ 065–13**

I am increasingly concerned at the fly tipping in and around Belfast Road area. Not only that but hearing many instances of crime/vandalism against people in the Country Park and surrounding areas. In addition, street lighting is abysmal. What is being done about this?

**Reply**

The Council's Area Enforcement Team has been very active around Belfast Road area recently. This includes frequent patrols to try and identify who is responsible for the illegal dumping of waste and to arrange clean ups of the area as necessary. The team have been going through any household waste and issuing fixed penalty notices to anyone identified as having dumped illegally. We will continue to focus on this area and engage with residents and traders to remind them of their responsibilities to keep the area clean and tidy. The Council is also in the process of purchasing additional CCTV cameras so when these are received we will be considering Belfast Rd as one of the areas for deployment.

The issues regarding criminal damage have been passed on to the local Neighbourhood Police team with a request they investigate the vandalism and crime around the Country Park.

The new street lighting installation in Belfast Road and surrounding streets in Woodside is programmed to commence July 2014. In the meantime the existing street lighting continues to be maintained. Any defects can be reported via the Councils "Report It" online.

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**From Ms Janice Kentfield**

**Councillor Jason Perry**

**Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Planning**

**Question No.**

**PQ 066–13**

Can you please tell me why there's been a lot of development in SE25, doctors can't cope, Portland medical centre never has appointments. Why's there been no investment in Portland Rd business wise, no more fast food or barbers. What's being done regarding security in the country park?

**Reply**

There has been a lot of development throughout Croydon borough and elsewhere in London, not just in the SE25 area. There is a need for more housing across London which adds to development in general and which can add pressures to existing medical centres. The provision of General Practitioner doctor practices is a matter for the Clinical Commissioning Group.

The area along Portland Road has a number of successful business parades, where a variety of businesses deliver high-quality goods and services valued and well-used by the local community. The service sector, including barbers, hairdressers and fast food shops usually responds to local demand and if such demand exists these businesses will continue to trade. They also provide employment to their owners and the people working in them.

The Council is already supporting the businesses along Portland Road (e.g. business loans through the Croydon enterprise loan fund, time limited free parking, borough-wide networking opportunities, etc.) and will continue to do so as part of the delivery of the 5 year Economic Development Plan, which can be found on the following link:

<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/economicdevelopment/economicstrategy/ecodevplan>

In reply to the security issue raised regarding South Norwood Country Park, the park has a staffed presence by both Countryside Wardens and Park Rangers. The service is currently going through a tendering process and as part of the requirements to staff the visitors centre, the new cabin will also be staffed. In addition the park is also patrolled by safer Neighbourhood teams the police also carryout patrols on a frequent basis.

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**From Ms Juanita Isaacs**

**Councillor Simon Hoar**

**Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection**

**Question No.**

**PQ 067–13**

What is being done to improve fly tipping and general litter in South Norwood, and Portland Road in particular?

**Reply**

The Council's Area Enforcement Team has been very active around South Norwood and Portland Road area recently. This includes frequent patrols to try and identify who is responsible for the illegal dumping of waste and to arrange clean ups of the area as necessary. We believe that some of the waste is being generated by shops along the Portland Road so we have been visiting them to ensure that they have appropriate trade waste agreements in place. Anyone that is found not to be complying with this agreement can be fined or prosecuted. The team have also been going through any household waste and issuing fixed penalty notices to anyone identified as having dumped illegally. We will continue to focus on this area and engage with residents and traders to remind them of their responsibilities to keep the area clean and tidy.

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**From Ms Janet Morley**

**Councillor Simon Hoar**

**Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection**

**Question No.**

**PQ 068–13**

Flytipping on Albert Road has increased alarmingly. The rubbish is not only unsightly, but often a danger to both public, public health and road traffic. Given there are no longer Streetscene Officers, what future measures will the Council take to address this problem?

**Reply**

The Streetscene service was replaced with the Area Enforcement team 18 months ago. These area based teams are performing many of the same functions as the Streetscene service but have a much more focussed role around enforcement. Fly tipping is still intended to be removed within 72 hours of it being reported to the Council and there is a programme of engagement with residents to find the most appropriate solutions to the storage of waste and education on acceptable waste disposal, including recycling. If these actions are not successful then the team will look to enforce against the people that are responsible.

Tactics include going through rubbish to try to find identifiable information, regular patrols and, in some circumstances, CCTV and late night surveillance.

The Council is currently undertaking a restructure that will increase the number of permanent officers available to deal with fly tipping. In the meantime, we will be temporarily increasing capacity until the restructure is in place, investing in additional CCTV cameras and putting in place a programme of preventative measures such as alley gates and additional bins.

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**From Mrs Caroline Rendle**

**Councillor Phil Thomas**

**Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services**

**Question No.**

**PQ 069–13**

I the first meeting of the Friends of Ashburton Park, everyone wanted to see the old library building back in community use so will the council release the names of all community groups or charities who bid for the leasehold so the Friends can work with them to make this happen.

**Reply**

Whilst we appreciate the sentiments of the Friends of Ashburton Park, as this was a competitive informal tender and we are still in discussion with the parties concerned, release of such details could be prejudicial at this stage. We are therefore unable to provide the requested information.

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**From Mr Andrew Rendle**

**Councillor Dudley Mead**

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing**

**Question No.**

**PQ 070–13**

Why have the residents of Ritchie Road in Ashburton had to put up with scaffolding in front of their houses, trampled gardens and no front doors for months & months? What is the council doing to fix the issue and when will residents see all the work completed.

**Reply**

This is a large over-cladding project to upgrade the insulation of Council owned properties and improve warmth and energy costs for tenants.

Scaffolding has been erected and subsequently removed to all of the Council owned properties in the road with the exception of the front elevation scaffolding to No17 and No30-55 Ritchie Road. The reason for the delay is due to the colour, texture and method of application of the yellow stock brick effect to the Victorian properties specifically in this part of the road. Therefore the scaffolding has had to be kept up for much longer than originally intended whilst a technical solution was found to the colour matching of the walls. Residents were kept informed of these delays although we do recognise the inconvenience they have experienced.

The front elevation scaffolding will continue to be struck as the front elevations are completed and have been checked as satisfactory.

No properties have been without their front doors during these works. Additional secondary porch doors are being installed as part of this project to some properties. The frames for these doors have been installed and the door will be fitted following the striking of the scaffolding to enable the clear opening of these doors.

Any damage caused by these works will be assessed by Council officers and made good by the contractor on completion.

The Council is working to ensure all works are fully completed as quickly as possible. We anticipate all works including site clearance to be completed by the end of November 2013 (subject to weather conditions).

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**From Mr Andrew Pelling**

**Councillor Vidhi Mohan**

**Cabinet Member for Communities and Economic Development**

**Question No.**

**PQ 071–13**

Further to PQ 004-13 and PQ 042-13 please detail the number of applications approved for the Croydon Business Rate Relief Scheme within the originally designated area since the answer given to PQ 042-13 on July 1.

**Reply**

Five formal applications for the Croydon Business Rate Relief Scheme have been approved within the originally designated area. The anticipated benefits from their relocation to the Croydon New Town (CNT) area include 80 safeguarded jobs, along with 94 new jobs created.

Three further formal applications outside the originally designated area have been approved. Benefits include 44 safeguarded jobs, along with 33 new jobs created.

3 additional companies within the current pipeline have indicated a strong interest in the scheme (2 of them fall within the originally designated area). Other applicants were either ineligible, or else decided not to continue with their applications. The extended scheme has also generated a significant number of enquiries from many businesses and we expect to see this trend remain over the coming months, with its continued promotion.

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**From Mrs Esther Simpson**

**Councillor Tim Pollard**

**Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning**

**Question No.**

**PQ 072–13**

I would like to inform the council that I and some other parents of children at Woodside School conducted our own traffic audit of the two crossings at our school. Our figures proved that there is a strong case for crossing patrols. Why therefore do your figures differ so greatly?

**Reply**

A count is a snapshot – and different figures will be found on different days. The count undertaken by council officers carefully followed national guidance in counting numbers of children and traffic. The results were put into a spreadsheet, following a national formula based on risk and mitigation, and therefore provided an objective result.

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**From Mr Ben Simpson**

**Councillor Tim Pollard**

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning**

**Question No.**

**PQ 073–13**

After losing our traffic patrol staff at Woodside School can we expect any other improvements to crossing safety or traffic calming for the safety of our children?

**Reply**

The Council will be investigating possible measures to consider road safety at those sites where the school crossing patrol services have been removed. In addition, the council receives funding to provide road safety improvements in response to requests from schools through their School Travel Plan. Local residents can contact Council Officers to investigate any specific request for pedestrian crossing improvements across the borough.

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**From Ms Kim Meyler**

**Councillor Tim Pollard**

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning**

**Question No.**

**PQ 074–13**

What budget does the Council have for improving crossing safety on busy roads like Morland Rd?

**Reply**

The Council has a budget of £100,000 for 2013/14 to provide road safety improvements in response to requests from schools through their School Travel Plan.

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**From Mrs Maddie Henson**

**Councillor Sara Bashford**

**Cabinet Member for Corporate and Voluntary Services.**

**Question No.**

**PQ 075–13**

Now the consultation process has closed, could the council provide a full list of those parties who have expressed an interest in the Ashburton library building.

**Reply**

As this was a competitive informal tender and we are still in discussion with the parties concerned, release of such details could be prejudicial at this stage and therefore we are unable to provide the requested information.

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**From Mrs Deborah Edmonds**

**Councillor Phil Thomas**

**Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services**

**Question No.**

**PQ 076–13**

How does the council think that it has in any way improved motorists safety, by installing traffic lights, especially around the South End area, that have blinds, slits, slats or slots, that actually obscure the amber and green phases?

**Reply**

Traffic lights are introduced, controlled and maintained by Transport for London (TfL). TfL inform us that the louvers on traffic signals are provided where there are two separate facilities in close proximity and where there is the possibility that motorists could look through the first facility and see the signals for another facility. This could then lead to motorists travelling through the first junction when it is not safe to do so. To prevent this from happening, the louvers are designed as a safety feature, so that only that traffic close by can see the traffic lights, thus preventing the see through problem from other facilities. I will, however, ask our engineers to contact TfL to check that these louvers are required and are correctly aligned.

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**From Mr Mark Samuel**

**Councillor Mike Fisher**

**Leader of the Council**

**Question No.**

**PQ 077–13**

Will the leader explain on what statutory grounds and in which circumstances, the conservative party is empowered or obliged to forward details of members of the public to the Electoral Registration Officer?

**Reply**

I thank Mr Samuel for his question.

The Electoral Registration Officer has a duty under Section 9a of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013), to maintain the electoral register, and to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that all those eligible are registered on it.

In the course of our daily involvement with the community, if we come across residents that are eligible, but do not appear to be on the electoral register, we suggest they apply to the electoral registration officer for the required application forms.

On occasion, residents request assistance in applying for the relevant forms and we pass that request directly to the electoral office.

We do this as a public duty and to help ensure all those that have the right to vote at elections are included on the electoral register.

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**From Mrs Holly King**

**Councillor Mike Fisher**

**Leader of the Council**

**Question No.**

**PQ 078–13**

Has the leader bothered to consult with his opposite number, in the event of a balanced and a politically correct council being elected next year, with for example, 10 other, 30 labour, 30 conservative and of course, no liberal democrats members?

**Reply**

Thank you for your question.

No I haven't held discussions with the opposition leader regarding a potentially hung Council in 2014. To be honest, I don't feel that I need to. I have every confidence that people right across Croydon are fed up of hearing Labour's non-stop running down of Croydon and non-stop scaremongering.

I'm confident that the people of Croydon will remember when Labour said that we are building two incinerators in Waddon – we haven't built one. I'm confident people will remember how Labour said the new Council Offices would lead to a hike in Council Tax – it hasn't added one penny onto bills. I'm confident people will remember that at the last budget meeting of this Council, the Labour group demanded extra expenditure that would have added 10% onto Council Tax bills and didn't have a single idea how they would fund it other than to rob the purses and wallets of hard working tax payers in Croydon.

And that is what I am really confident people will remember – what happened the last time Labour were in office in Croydon. They doubled Council Tax with average rises of over 9% and still managed to leave the Council all but bankrupt.

Since 2006, this Conservative administration has rebuilt this Council, getting it back into sound health while still improving services. Crime, homelessness, unemployment all on the way down while we are providing care to more vulnerable people than ever before and delivering school places for record numbers of children.

We are not complacent, there are huge challenges for us still to face, but I am confident that in 2014 the people of Croydon will remember just how much damage the last Labour administration did to Croydon.

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**From Ms Joy Prince**

**Councillor Tim Pollard**

**Deputy Leader and cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning**

**Question No.**

**PQ 079–13**

What will happen to the educational services currently provided at Victoria House if it is converted to a mainstream school?

**Reply**

The Victoria House Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is transferring to a new site, Hazelglen in Sanderstead, from April 2014, releasing space for additional primary school places at Victoria House. The investment in the new site at Hazelglen will offer a significant improvement to the learning environment for pupils attending the PRU.