

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

There are 2 questions from members of the public.

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

Councillor Gledhill, as Leader of the Council, are you and your administration fully committed to facilitating and encouraging questions from members of the public at meetings of Council Committees and meetings of Full Council?

**2. From Mrs Callender to Councillor Gledhill**

Does the Leader of the Council believe that sheltered housing in Thurrock is good value for money?

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## Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 26 July 2017

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

Two questions were submitted from members of the public.

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

Councillor Gledhill, as Leader of the Council, are you and your administration fully committed to facilitating and encouraging questions from members of the public at meetings of Council Committees and meetings of Full Council?

#### **Mayor**

Councillor Gledhill

#### **Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Mr Perrin for your question. Yes, I and my Administration are fully supportive of encouraging and facilitating public questions at Full Council and other committees, as I am sure all other groups are. In line with the procedures and guidance agreed by Full Council in its Constitution in the last 12 months 21 public questions have been received of which 4 questions were rejected. All rejections were based on repetition according to the rules of the constitution. As I have mentioned before I started to answer questions long before I became a councillor in the way that you do and it is the right think for members of the public to ask questions and I encourage that but as the Monitoring Officer said it does need to go through a process and I don't see anything until he has approved them.

#### **Mayor**

Thank you. Mr Perrin, do you have a supplementary question.

#### **Mr Perrin**

No Thank you, Mr Mayor. I am meeting with the Monitoring Officer next week.

#### **2. From Mrs Callender to Councillor Gledhill**

Does the Leader of the Council believe that sheltered housing in Thurrock is good value for money?

#### **Mayor**

Councillor Gledhill

#### **Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Mrs Callender for your question.

Yes I do. We have 1,256 tenants in our 30 sheltered complexes across the Borough and there is a waiting list of people wanting to move into sheltered accommodation when it comes free. I have regular meetings with tenants through the Tenants Excellence Panel. The feedback we receive is very positive especially for the work of the Sheltered Housing Officers this seems to be increasing. We currently employ 18 Sheltered Housing Officers this was reduced down to by half to 18 nearly by the previous administration but they are doing a fantastic job to supply the services. Following the recent consultation exercise over service charges we have developed our Sheltered Housing Improvement Plan which is responding to the comments received from tenants – Sheltered Housing Officers mobile numbers are now available to all tenants; clearer timetables when staff are available are now in all the complexes; repairs reporting arrangements have been much more improved.

### **Mayor**

Thank you. Mrs Callender, do you have a supplementary question.

### **Mrs Callender**

Well Councillor Gledhill do you consider this to be good value for money. Our warden comes about 12 o'clock each day to make phone calls to people that need them. When we have meetings she said I have logged that. To issues that we raise we never hear the outcome of them. My husband as key holder, he lets all the workmen into the complex if there is work to be done, as the warden is never there. He opens and shuts the hall. Do you consider that as a good service for us? And Councillor Gledhill you have an older persons charter.

### **Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Mrs Callender for that. Obviously, as I said the previous administration did cut down the number of sheltered housing officers which does put a strain on the services there. There shouldn't be a situation where a resident has to open up for the workmen to come in that will be addressed by the assistant director of housing directly after this meeting. And you should always receive come back from any communication you have with your sheltered housing officer. Again if this is not happening I will apologise for that and will take up with the assistant director of housing straightaway. Yes, we do have an older person's charter, everybody in the council not just the councillors should be looking to deal with that. If you have any specific problems or any specific issues please feel free to contact the council and be asked to be put through to the leader's office and we can discuss that in person.

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

The Mayor informed the Chamber that 2 questions had been received to the Leader of the Council and 5 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 Collins to Councillor Gledhill**

What steps have been taken to target-harden Thurrock's vulnerable green spaces from illegal encampments and fly tipping please?

#### **Mayor**

Councillor Gledhill

#### **Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Collins. Target hardening of all green spaces in the borough is a challenge and one that we take very seriously. There is a balance to ensure our green spaces are welcoming for our residents but to also act as a deterrent for inappropriate usage.

In order to fully target harden all sites we would need to consider erecting substantial fencing or all other methods around all of our green spaces, not only would this be very costly, it would promote the wrong appearance of Thurrock.

Whilst target hardening every site may not be possible we have identified, vulnerable sites and ensured that they have received some form of target hardening, examples include:

- Gating order and installation of heavy duty gates at Rainbow Lane.
- CCTV installed, I am not going to say exactly where.
- Installation of heavy duty gates at Greenacres Farm (off the A13).
- Low Level Fencing at Billet Field on the A128A1014 Manorway. A bund has been introduced on the curve of the slip road high enough to stop vehicle accessing it but not interfering with the small layby provision.

Further works are planned over the next 12 to 18 months through capital works schemes to identify and protect more additional sites, including more use of camera monitoring and promotion of enforcement activity.

#### **Mayor**

Thank you. Councillor Collins, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

### **Councillor Collins**

Where target hardening is removed or damaged to gain access what action does the Council or the Police take please.

### **Councillor Gledhill**

Councillor Mister Major. A two point question, obviously one of which I can answer directly on behalf of the Council, the other one we would have to leave for the police and crime commissioner to give a full response to. However, the Council will repair as swiftly as possible once the travelling community have moved on in the case of unlawful encampment. In the case of fly-tipping the area will be removed and replaced. To give you an example of this during the election period a boat was fly-tipped by North Stifford cross walk from the Harvester to North Stifford. That involved someone moving a large amount of concrete to dump a boat. Possibly the most bizarre item of fly-tipping I have seen. The Council removed it replaced it and obviously made the area more secure. As for the Police if this is seen, or seen on CCTV, obviously the police have the ability to prosecute for criminal damage as and where criminal damage has occurred or indeed start to put in their section 61 powers to remove them for causing a disruption to the area to obtain access.

### **Mayor**

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

### **Councillor Collins**

Finally are there any other steps the Council can take or is taking to help protect our green spaces from these unlawful incursions.

### **Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Collins. Yes it doesn't always have to about the physical. We saw that Harlow introduced an order to stop a particular group of families with unlawful incursions which had a dramatic drop of incursions in their area. It was one of the many options we looked at and we are also looking at public protection orders, we are looking at changing the terms and conditions of our car parks. We are trying absolutely everything we can to stop the unlawful incursions. There will be other things that come forward from the local plan as well but this is taken very seriously and sometimes we just need to look beyond the obvious to come up with the answers the works for everybody swiftly.

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

Does the Leader support the principles in the Thurrock Council Charter for older people?

## **Mayor**

Councillor Gledhill

## **Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Gerrish. The short answer - Yes, I fully support the Charter for Older People. It was adopted unanimously by this Council after some excellent joint work between Councillors Halden and Barbara Rice. For which we thanked them at the time and continue to thank them now. We have made great strides in delivering the commitments within the Charter and one of those the one at the very bottom is that we commit to review and develop the charter with older people on a regular basis. We have all agreed there should not be such a think that a charter sits there on the wall that gathers dust. So if there are any amendments that need to be made, need to discuss this to ensure they work for the older residents but just the work how we think they are going to work.

## **Mayor**

Thank you. Councillor Gerrish, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

## **Councillor Gerrish**

Thank you Mister Mayor, I do. I think this continues to be a very good document. One of the tenants in it is that we give older people the voice and the opportunity to shape services. Mister Mayor in the last few months we have seen tory proposals to bring in the dementia tax, cut off the winter fuel allowance, break the triple lock on pensions, and raised more quickly the retirement age and the cherry on the top to hit residents in sheltered housing with a new £500 tax. Does the Leader appreciate that many of the elder residents in Thurrock feel like they are under attack from the conservative party.

## **Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Gerrish for your supplementary. Obviously I can't speak for what the party does nationally however I do remember the queen's speech but can't recall anything that you have mentioned in it. I am going to speak about what you call Tory's tenant tax. A tax is something that you levy on everybody. This is not service charging and is levelled on those that pay for those services. There are 2500 residents in council properties that are over the age of retirement that do not live in sheltered accommodation. They pay a tax that you and your party especially your deputy leader was quite happy to continue of a £100 a year to support those people in sheltered accommodation. That is not fair. That is taxation without any representation. So are they under threat. That is a point of view. Are they under threat from you and your administration and the

previous administration taken any action, no. No they weren't getting fair value across the board but they will be now.

**Mayor**

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

**Councillor Gerrish**

Thank you Mister Mayor. I am sure that will be interesting news for those residents facing these increases in charges. Could I ask what he intends to do to go out to meet with residents to understand the impact in more detail once they have had a chance to come in and see the effects they have on residents.

**Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Gerrish for your supplementary. As I have mentioned before, 70 per cent of the residents in sheltered housing accommodation are on full or partial housing benefit. Those that are on partial will get to full as this is an extra amount added as part of the housing benefit scheme so they will not be directly affected in their pockets. Everybody else is in sheltered accommodation signed an agreement that they needed the services that are supplied there. They didn't just say oh let's just move there they wanted to go there because they chose to go there. The services they receive there which they need to pay for. It's as simple as that. The fact that we never used to charge them directly for the services, we used to charge everyone indirectly those services let's get back to what I said earlier, that's a tax. We can't support that any longer. People need to pay for the service they get and get good services they pay for.

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

**1. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor B Little**

Could the Portfolio Holder provide an update for members and residents on the planned changes to traffic flow in Grays Town Centre and changing the one way section of Orsett Road into two way traffic flow?

**Mayor**

Councillor Brian Little

**Councillor Brian Little**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Potheary for your question. At its meeting of September 2015, Cabinet approved a phased

implementation programme to improve traffic flows in Grays Town Centre. This involved the implementation of a package of measures, delivered through the phases below:

Phase 1a of the Grays Town Centre Scheme consisted of:

- Widening Stanley Road between Clarence and Crown Roads to allow two-way bus movements.
- Improving the traffic signal layout at Stanley/Clarence Road junction to allow all vehicle movements.
- A left turn facility for vehicles turning onto Crown Road from the multi-storey car park.
- Relocating the bus stops and constructing new lay-bys at the northern end of Stanley Road.

This phase, Phase 1a has been implemented and is under review, with monitoring and review for this phase to be completed by September 2017. Phase 1b of the Grays Town Centre Scheme is the Bridge Road priority working upgrade, which entails the installation of traffic signal control and changes to New Road access. The design and approval of signal scheme for Phase 1b is being progressed. Implementation of this scheme is projected for November 2017. The final phase, Phase 2, well there may be other phases, of the Grays Town Centre Scheme involves Stanley Road Orsett Road junction improvements and two way provision between Stanley and Thameside theatre junctions. Phase 2 designs will commence in August 2017. Detailed proposals will be presented to Planning Transportation Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November for possible inclusion in the 2017/18 Highways Capital Programme.

### **Mayor**

Thank you. Councillor Potheary, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

### **Councillor Potheary**

Thank you Councillor Little that was a very detailed answer to what is going on, that has been really really helpful. I would just like to contradict you on one small point is that the bus laybys down Stanley Road have not happened, they are particularly crucial as the buses, yes as anyone who uses this system, is that the buses do sit there for quite a while and they unnecessarily clog up the traffic. So I don't think those have been implemented so if we could get any further information from officers for when that will be implemented, if that will be implemented as part of phase 2a or 2b that would be brilliant. Thank you. What I would like from you Councillor Little is just a bit of reassurance that this is still a top priority for the Council as you have said this was agreed September 2015 cabinet, we have had phase 1 which happened in 2016 was completed I am just a little bit concerned that there is

any kind of urgency, it does feel like there is any urgency that we need for a project like this. Grays town centre does get so chocked up and it's my residents on London Road and its other parts of the system, around that area, that are suffering so I really want a commitment from you and some kind of reassurance that yes we really want this and we are really really push for it.

**Councillor Brian Little**

Thank you Councillor Potheary. The bus layby situation, I will look into that although my words haven't got bus layby just layby. The other item you mentioned in terms of are we really going to be doing this, is there any urgency. The dates that you see in front of you or I have spoken to you about September 2017, November 2017 are not 2 or 3 years' time they are pretty immediate. I think everyone recognises that Grays town centre is a bit of a nightmare in terms of traffic going around it and it has been for a number of years and there have been a number of projects that have applied over the years one way, not one way, changing directions and other things and I think now, hopefully, with the phased introduction of a scheme and if there are things are not working with each phase of that scheme they get amended to make it better for the residents and the travellers within Grays town centre and outward. I hope and I am committed to making something work not just delivering phases.

**Mayor**

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

**Councillor Potheary**

Yes please, just a very quick one. Councillor Little I am sure you will do this but could you keep the ward members sort of apprised of the details and of all of the stages we would really really appreciate that. Thank you.

**Councillor Brian Little**

Thank you for that. I think it would be useful if we do anything similar like we have done with the road widening to get this out to quite a lot of people as there are quite a lot of users who do not live locally so we can start to spread something like that about. I take your point, I will do that.

**2. From Councillor Liddiard to Councillor Halden**

Can the Portfolio Holder give reasons why the Purfleet Health hub is gaining priority whilst Tilbury was seen as having the worst health issues?

**Mayor**

Councillor Halden

## **Councillor Halden**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Liddiard. Well it isn't, the Tilbury Medical Centre bring in new better bigger new medical facilities to Tilbury has never been closer obviously we had several years where between the CCG and the Council there was discussion of an estate plan and then a discussion of health hubs which simply never occurred, there were never any planning applications written, there were never any capital plans written, there were never any designs written, there was nothing. Over the course of this month, both I and Councillor Coxshall have attended the planning transportation and regeneration committee as well as the health and wellbeing overview and scrutiny committee presenting our paper that went to this month's cabinet which is to procure the design team for the very first hub. That very first hub is Tilbury so you can't possibly say that any area is getting priority over Tilbury as myself and Councillor Coxshall went to great personal lengths to present our paper to overview and scrutiny before it eventually went to cabinet, passed cabinet which kicks off the process of procuring the design team that will hopefully eventually see us spend between 10 and 20 million pounds in the heart of Tilbury to build the new medical facilities that we need. Councillor Coxshall has said on a number of occasions, I don't need prompting from the portfolio holder for regeneration, he has said on occasions that Tilbury requires some love, you can buy an awful lot of love as I understand with 10 and 20 million pounds. We said we are going to do it. We are going to do it and what I would say to Councillor Liddiard is if, I am not particularly sure why you are concerned that Councillor Gerrish's ward has gazumped you. If you are concerned about the process that is going on in Tilbury or in deed if any other member is concerned about the process going on in Purfleet or other areas I am more than happy to meet you to discuss these issues.

## **Mayor**

Thank you. Councillor Liddiard, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

## **Councillor Liddiard**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Halden for your reply. Would you say you are getting towards a formal legal agreement yet or is it sort of imminent or this year?

## **Councillor Halden**

Well as the report is set out there are a number of processes and risks that we need to mitigate. The point of procuring the design team is making sure we do three things. Firstly of all that we build a building that is future proof ie that just doesn't suit the current demography of Tilbury or Grays or Corringham or Purfleet. It is going to fit the future demand. It will also make sure that the design is in keeping with what the CCG and what other health partners want to do with us to ensure that we have the revenue streams that

go into those buildings that will keep them going and that is when we can have those exciting conversations about what type of community facilities are hosted. That work is ongoing. The reality is that we started from a poor base because for years this council has spoken about health hubs and for years it had moved beyond rhetoric but we have finally got a paper together. It has been passed. A design team is being procured and I would hope to have something very concrete for you certainly this side of Christmas.

**Mayor**

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

**Councillor Liddiard**

No thank you Mister Mayor.

**3. From Councillor Pothecary to Councillor Watkins**

In recent weeks, I have been contacted by a number of residents of private flats in Grays Riverside who have experienced an extremely poor communal recycling collection since Easter. As the former Portfolio Holder highlighted at last Full Council, boosting recycling rates is very important. The residents have been working hard to recycle and are now concerned that flats may no longer receive this service. Can the new Portfolio Holder for Environment please put their minds at rest and confirm that communal recycling collections have not been abandoned?

**Mayor**

Councillor Watkins welcome on board.

**Councillor Watkins**

Thank Mister Mayor and thank you councillor for your question which I will happily answer. You are quite right the former portfolio holder who I would like to put on record bit an amazing job in the last year whilst she was serving for us, she did an amazing job clearing up the mess which was obviously left for her when she came here in 2016. And you are quite right she did say the environments rates are important and they are very important something that we shall be working on. It is very interesting when you look at extra recycling rates and what they done over the recent years. When you go back to 2010 when the then Conservative administration actioned the three bin system the recycling rates went up to 44.52 per cent but then they fell under the Labour administration in 2015 to 37.90 per cent that is quite a big drop despite the three bin system still remained and weekly bin collections remained as well, so very interesting to see but you are quite right the recycling numbers are not where they need to be and more will be done and yes I will be actioning that. In regards to communal recycling the collections continue across the borough and also in Grays Riverside as well. There have been issues in the past with

contaminated waste which is perhaps the reason why sometimes bin collections have not been for recycling as you will be aware of. But I can confirm tonight that one of the first things I did as I entered into the portfolio I spoke to the team, I spoke to comms as well said that we need to talk to residents, work how we are going to communicate with them, how we can get recycling rates up, let us find out what they need to see, what information do they need to get to understand and what goes into recycling bins, what doesn't go into recycling bins, lets contamination down because fundamentally if we can get contamination down we are actually improving the service and saving money. People may not realise this but it costs a lot of money for contaminated waste for the borough so if we can get that down we are saving a lot of money and improving the service. And I would ask on the record that please could residents follow what is available to them please use the recycling bins is to put the correct stuff in the recycling bins as well. Thank you.

### **Mayor**

Thank you. Councillor Potheary, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

### **Councillor Potheary**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Watkins. I am sure we all enjoyed the slight deviation through history but I am glad you got to my question at the end. So what we have is a situation that in fact since Easter, between Easter and now these flats have received a very very poor service it has been particular acute in Bridge Court on Bridge Road but I have also received complaints from people in flats in Curzon Drive and areas around that area. My residents and, sorry but I pre-empted slightly you on this, but my residents and their management company staff who have been on the ground maintain that there was no contamination when the bins were not collection. Indeed one of my residents, called Bob, actually sorted through to make sure there wasn't any contamination. He actually takes this on himself and I have residents here in the public gallery tonight who are trying to make sure the bins are not contaminated. It hasn't been an isolated incident which is giving me some concern. It is not the contamination these were just missed. Could I ask you to just have a look into why this might actually have happened rather than falling back on the idea of contamination which I don't think is actually correct.

### **Councillor Watkins**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor for your question. Obviously I will take that back to the team and send me those details as well I would be happy to reply back to you and meet with some of your residents to go through those issues that you are experiencing. I would like to thank those residents as well if they are going through those bins and checking for recycling, fantastic and that is good work and a good example for the rest of the borough as well. Thank you. Again as I say we will look into this and I

would reiterate though as well a further point that a lot of the time when bins are collected for recycling bins is due to contamination waste and if it is deemed that there is constantly a high contamination waste in certain bins then sometimes you will see the refuse trucks pick those up as unfortunately there is no point in trying to send it to the depot in order to send it for recycling as it will just be rejected and sent to refuse anyway so this could be the reason why. In relation to the possible issues that you are experiencing it may be related to individual problems with reoptimisation, reoptimisation which is a massive thing that has gone across the borough and can happily say as well that we are getting collection rates of over 99 per cent which is fantastic to see we are stepping in the right direction with a lot more to do. But again I will take your concerns on board and speak to me afterwards.

### **Mayor**

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

### **Councillor Potheary**

Thank you Councillor Watkins that is really reassuring and I think reoptimisation may have placed a bit of a part in this and I am not criticising reoptimisation. Ok so my question is a further question that one of my residents asked me to ask which is about the process of those bins which are contaminated because my residents were told that their bins were contaminated and they contacted the council to complain that they had either hadn't been emptied or they had been emptied into the general waste. No notices had been left, no leaflets, no communication and my understanding was that normally if a bins, recycling bins were contaminated some sort of notice is put on that bin. So I just want to double check that firstly if that policy is still in play which I am hoping it is and also can we double check if it is actually being done.

### **Councillor Watkins**

Thank you Mister Mayor and that you again Councillor for your supplementary I am quite happy to take that and find out what is happening with that as I don't know off the top of my head unfortunately. But this very much to the case that bins which are contaminated would have a notice on them and as said in my opening statement that in relation to recycling rates and in relation to what people are recycling, not recycling and contamination we will be working on a new comms strategy to consider we will be working with residents to find out what information they need to get from the council in order to improve recycling and understand what they need to do better.

#### **4. From Councillor Collins to Councillor Watkins**

Can the new Portfolio Holder tell me what the his programme is for the next 12 months of the Cut It, Clean It, Fill It campaign in Thurrock.

## **Mayor**

Councillor Watkins.

## **Councillor Watkins**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor for your question. I can't talk about the Fill It part of it but I am happy to talk about the Clean It and Cut It part of it. I think we can all agree Clean It Cut It Fill It has been a highly successful programme which this administration undertook to clean up the years of neglect that we saw under the former administration. The Leader tonight has already mentioned some of the numbers just for clarification I will go back through that we have seen in April we have cut over one thousand hectares of grass from park spaces to green spaces our teams have collected over 31 tonnes of rubbish, we have filled over two thousand pot holes and from litter picking we have actually picked up to 22 thousand bags of litter which is an incredible number actually when you think about it. This is just a small example of the amount of work carried out and what the additional investment we put in has brought to this borough. Over the years, obviously over the last year, this has come on leaps and bounds but there is more to do and more will be done. I really do look forward to working with Keep Britain Tidy which will be going on this year in order to find out they will be analysing our own works, but sometimes its wrong to mark your own homework, and they will be telling us their good expert advice on what we can do to make things better and will be taking this advice on board and look forward to working with them. In the year we have been moving towards a new electronic scheduling system for those that don't know this will provide a greater transparency for residents across the borough, basically they will know when their grass will be cut, which is something that we should have had a long time ago and I am really looking forward to this coming in. If there are any changes to the services at that point of time will be notified as well so residents can keep a constant eye on when they will see their local grass will be cut. Additional training will be provided for staff and I will also be asking the team as what additional training and qualifications can our staffs has as well to make their daily lives a little bit easier and better. As you already know we are replacing the waste vehicles in the New Year with a seven million pound investment. We will also be looking at what equipment needs to be replaced across environmental team and also we will be looking at what street signs need replacing and cleaning as well. Alongside the parks the parks review which was discussed at the previous and former cleaner greener and safer community. As you already know that review is already going through and I will be doing a little bit more of that as well. I want to be working with schools, resident community groups to get an understanding as to what they need in our parks including as well sport provisions so I will be working with Councillor Halden with that as well. As I have already mentioned we will be continuing to improve enforcement across the borough maintaining a zero tolerance to littering, fly-tipping and breaking of the PSPO orders and will be working with our teams on further target hardening to prevent unauthorised encampments and fly-tipping cross the borough. And Clean It Cut It Fill It will be involving to not only will we be just cleaning our streets we will also be looking at cleaning

the air. It is a priority of mine to work with other cabinet colleagues to clean up this borough's air and help tackle rising air pollution. Clean It Cut It Fill It continues to show this is an administration which is making positive moves for Thurrock which is an administration which is investing into our services and make sure we have a clean and tidy borough. There is a lot to do, more to improve but this is a main priority of mine to get it done.

### **Mayor**

Thank you. Councillor Collins, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

### **Councillor Collins**

I have Mister Mayor. At the moment across the borough there are a lot of our litter bins that may be construed as being in the wrong place, or in the need of repair or tender loving care. Have your considered what can be done about this please.

### **Councillor Watkins**

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor for your supplementary. You are quite right and this is something that I am happy to announce that we are looking at based on a ward by ward basis which I have conducted which does not have the most glamorous name unfortunately which will be the street bin review. What we will be doing is looking at what the strategic location of the bins are, the types of bins they are, the conditions these bins are in and what current needs they have in that area. We will then follow up following from the feedback what we need to do next. The reason I have requested this is to fundamental help improve the service and to help residents experiences when walking down the streets. I have seen it across the borough many times when we have a bin next to another bin. No reason why that bin is there just that there are two bins together or it can be seen as the opposite in which is completely ruined and one bin replaced by the bin right next to it but that former bin has not been removed. This is something that we will be looking at. Again as I say as part of that review we will be looking at where we need those bins as well, strategic places where we are missing bins where the litter is quite high go in to see what can be done there. This review is showing proactive nature of this administration and hopefully what you see from me it is a desire and willingness to change the service for the better. Additionally to this we will be having the big-belly-bins coming in the new year which are really really good and was at the LGA a couple of weeks ago basically they are going to have solar powers and have the ability to have Wi-Fi in the future as well. They tell us when they need to cleared so that our teams can clear them as we know they are full. You may find this boring but this will help improve everyone, but will be coming in the New Year, in a few weeks' time and these will be strategically placed across the borough.

## **5. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Watkins**

Will the new Cabinet Member for Environment outline his priorities for the Portfolio?

**Mayor**

Councillor Watkins.

**Councillor Watkins**

Thank you Mister Mayor, I will try and be as brief as I can. I won't reiterate the points we have already made this evening so you can already understand some of the service implementation changes we are going to be making. The main service change which we will be making across the next year and my main priorities is to actually change the environmental service plan, its strategies and some of its policies which were updated in 2011 and before that. So I and the team and my counter colleagues will be going to see what more could be done. I have already highlighted that air pollution is going to be under that banner and will also be a strategy and policy going forward for green energy and green strategy for the borough for the council itself which is something that is incredible important we need to make sure we are ready for 21<sup>st</sup> century and we are ready for going forward. We will also be looking at municipal waste strategy, fees and charges and commercialisation as well. So there is a lot that will fall under that Clean It Cut It Fill It and everything else that corresponds with that will fall under that and more of that will come out.

**Mayor**

Thank you. Councillor Gerrish, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

**Councillor Gerrish**

Thank you Mister Mayor. I will welcome firstly Councillor Watkins into his new role and it is clear that he will be bringing some enthusiasm into that role and look forward to working with him. Environment is clearly crucial to Thurrock and where we can work constructively together and we will aim to do that as we have tried to do so far. Mister Mayor, last year three major environment KPIs were missed on the proportion of household waste recycled, on the cleanliness of our streets and the percentage of bins emptied on time. Mister Mayor what does the portfolio holder see himself doing differently from the previous portfolio holder to address those issues.

**Councillor Watkins**

Thank you Mister Mayor. Actually I would like to say that the former portfolio holder did an amazing job and is grossly unfair so I would like to see those comments taken back actually. I have already stated tonight that I will be working with the teams to improve the KPIs and recycling rates as an example. I have already said where we are failing where it is not good enough and we will do better. As already mentioned that in the last two weeks and I

can give you the numbers if you like. The week 16 of the municipal year, 18 July, we had a collection rate of 99.7 per cent, week 17, 23 July we had a collection rate of 99.3 per cent. So 99 per cent is incredible high and I am sure it is much higher than we ever saw under your administration.

**Mayor**

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

**Councillor Gerrish**

Thank you Mister Mayor. I am slightly surprised by that if he is making such strong progress I wonder if he can tell us why the direction of travel for cleanliness in the borough in the administration's own corporate report is that it is getting worse not better.

**Councillor Watkins**

Thank you Mister Mayor. Well the truth of the matter is that we don't hide behind stats like your administration did. The first thing we got rid of was the green amber red model which if you look at your performance reports which we were doing this afternoon most were amber so actually most of them were failing under your administration as well. As I have already highlighted tonight there has been a vast improvements made to the service in the last year and there are more changes going to be made. Waste service are going to be replaced, we are looking at replacing equipment. If we go back to a year ago I believe we only had one working tractor thanks to your administration. The former portfolio holder came in and sorted that out so of course would be badly on KPIs in that scenario because we did not have the grass cutting equipment there because you cut it.

## QUESTION TIME

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

There are 2 questions to the Leader and 5 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

**1. From Councillor Collins to Councillor Gledhill**

What steps have been taken to target-harden Thurrock's vulnerable green spaces from illegal encampments and fly tipping please?

**2. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Gledhill**

Does the Leader support the principles in the Thurrock Council Charter for older people?

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

**1. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor B Little**

Could the Portfolio Holder provide an update for members and residents on the planned changes to traffic flow in Grays Town Centre and changing the one way section of Orsett Road into two way traffic flow?

**2. From Councillor Liddiard to Councillor Halden**

Can the Portfolio Holder give reasons why the Purfleet Health hub is gaining priority whilst Tilbury was seen as having the worst health issues?

**3. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor Watkins**

In recent weeks, I have been contacted by a number of residents of private flats in Grays Riverside who have experienced an extremely poor communal recycling collection since Easter. As the former Portfolio Holder highlighted at last Full Council, boosting recycling rates is very important. The residents have been working hard to recycle and are now concerned that flats may no longer receive this service. Can the new Portfolio Holder for Environment please put their minds at rest and confirm that communal recycling collections have not been abandoned?

**4. From Councillor Collins to Councillor Watkins**

Can the new Portfolio Holder tell me what the his programme is for the next 12 months of the Cut It, Clean It, Fill It campaign in Thurrock.

**5. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Watkins**

Will the new Cabinet Member for Environment outline his priorities for the Portfolio?