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## Questions raised during the meeting

### **Question 1: Arcade Investigations**

**Part 1 - Mr Herringsworth, resident** pointed out that there was an error on the figures reported on Page 26 of the response sheet dated 28 January 2008.

**Part 2 - P Herlihy, Community Chair**, read out a clarification recently provided: "The description 'Other Agencies' is somewhat misleading. It relates to individual compensation payments made for property interests acquired as part of the Compulsory Purchase Order ("CPO"). It would be inappropriate to detail the individual property interests acquired and the amount but should the legal department say that this information should be disclosed then I can provide you with it."

**PH** then requested on behalf of Walthamstow West Community Council, after an indicative vote, that accurate figures be presented and that a breakdown of the names of the business and the amount each received should be provided, as well as an explanation of why the information was withheld in the first place.

### **Responses: Part 1 - Maureen McDonald-Khan, Head of Property Services -**

"An administrative error occurred during the preparation of the reply for the Community Council. May I apologise for this administrative error and any inconvenience this may have caused to the Community Council members and local residents. The figure should read £295,985.93 and not £265,985.93."

### **Part 2 - Maureen McDonald-Khan, Head of Property Services -**

"Other agencies", refer to CPO compensation payable to the businesses the Council acquired at the former Arcade site, namely, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Percy Ingles. It should be noted that one of the businesses compensated was owned by a member: Cllr Gover. At the time, it was not clear whether the information was subject to a duty of confidence, or where individuals are concerned, the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. The information was withheld on that basis. I am not aware that the Council entered into any confidential agreement at the time of the payments. Further, in respect of Cllr Gover, his 2006 entry in the register of members interests specifically referred to his interest in 202 Hoe St. and that it was subject to a CPO payment which was then under negotiation.

Breakdown of figure £295,985.93. This information will be provided at the meeting on 6 October 2008.

**Question 2: PH (seconded by H O'Brien, Edward Road) – for a further response to Q15 from I Capes, Northcote Road, Question 15: Religious holidays in schools, made 28 January 2008, as follows:**

“(a) Parents and carers of children attending LBWF state schools are being inconvenienced by the Council’s long standing policy of compulsory ad hoc religious holidays. Faith school within the borough are exempt from this practice that does not happen in most other London Boroughs and in other large cities nationwide. Could the Council comment on why it imposes compulsory ad hoc religious holidays when it is not a statutory national requirement?

(b) Parents would prefer that children from families adhering to these religions be permitted to have the day off with official permission. The remaining children would attend school as normal but with lessons focused on the religious and cultural reasons why their friends are away for the day. This would also mean that the children benefiting from an authorised day off would not miss out from core curriculum work. Could the Council comment on how it views the above idea?

(c) There is a peak of demand for places in nurseries and play schemes on these ad hoc religious holidays with demands outstripping supply. Other people may be unable to afford such schemes and have no extended family support yet still have to work. Is the Council aware of the potential childcare issue, which could be viewed as an unintended consequence of the policy?

(d) We understand that the next forum to set school holidays for the academic year 2009/10 will take place in March 2008. Will the Council review this policy and seriously consider rescinding the compulsory status of these ad hoc religious holidays?”

**Response: Debbie Callender, PA to Acting Head of Services for Vulnerable Children - EduAction**

Schools are consulted year each on the setting of dates for the following academic year. The calendar is compiled by using the dates approved by the Local Government Association, consulting neighbouring boroughs on their school year setting arrangements, then applying any local factors.

We will be consulting with Waltham Forest schools in April 2008 for the 2009/10 academic year and will highlight any factors that arise as a result of applying local policies. Results of the consultation will be submitted to Cabinet in July 2008.

**The Community Council Vice-chair, Cllr. Adam Gladstone have been in communication with Cllr. Chris Robbins, Portfolio Lead for Children and**

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**Young People to clarify this statement and will give verbal feedback at the meeting on 6 October 2008.**

**Question 3: Broken Bike Rack at Blackhorse Road**

**M Keegan (Pearl Road)** would like further clarification on how the cost of £250,000 has been estimated in Q9 below.

**“Question originally raised by S Creasy, (Warner Road).** Can the Council ask Transport for London (TfL) to fix the broken bicycle racks at Blackhorse Road tube station and look into introducing additional ones?”

**Response: Gina Harkell, Principle Transport Officer**

We could replace the existing stands with Sheffield stands but we have been bidding for funding from TfL every year for the past four years for a secure bike shed here. One of our arguments is the poor condition of existing bike stands so we are loathe to put in new ones as this will reduce the strength of our argument. We think our best chance is to build the new shed with Section 106 funds as part of Blackhorse Lane regeneration. A secure shed would cost about £250,000 as it would need to be built on the embankment.”

**Further response: Gina Harkell, Principle Transport Officer**

The £250,000 was an estimate made by about six railway officials who visited Blackhorse Road station about three years ago. Given the lack of space for the bike shed outside the station it was felt that building on the railway embankment would be the only way of providing a large enough site. At present about 40+ bikes are regularly parked at the station. The only space large enough to accommodate such numbers is parallel to the station entrance along its embankment alongside the eastbound platform. We cannot develop a more accurate estimate until works are undertaken to assess costs and no money has so far been forthcoming from Transport for London or from a Section 106 Planning Agreement to fund such a study.

I am sure we will get funding in the end but we have been bidding for the past three years and so far not been successful. One of the reasons for this is that we have secure bike sheds at the other three underground stations in the borough and TfL might want to give other councils a fair share of the money available. We may have more success getting developers to pay out of Section 106 funding as part of planning agreements but no such planning agreement has been drawn up as yet. I will keep you informed of any developments.

**Question 4: New housing in the Borough**

**J Harvey (Douglas Avenue)** said he is very worried that all the businesses are driven out of the Borough to make way for the houses and flats, making this a very poor borough.

**Response: Anne Bonsor, Head of Regeneration and Environment -**

The borough has a strong need to accommodate the population growth that is predicted over the next 20 years of up to 14,000 people in the borough as well as meeting the needs of the existing population who are living longer as well as the large numbers of people in need of social housing. Population growth is a major issue for London as a whole and Waltham Forest is not unique in

looking at how it can meet population growth demands. This is why everywhere you go in London you will see new homes being built. In addition, the borough needs to make provision for local employment and all of this need to be done in the context of a borough where we have very limited space to grow in. This is why we have been developing Interim Planning Policy Frameworks for our key regeneration areas such as Blackhorse Lane and Walthamstow town centre because these indicate where housing and employment sites should go as part of the development of local sustainable communities. The work that is currently being done to develop a Local Development Framework for the whole of the borough continues this work and information on this is available on the council website (<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/environment.htm> ). We agree with you that it is very important to develop sustainable communities and that local employment has a role to play in that development. In Blackhorse Lane for example there are plans for the development of a new business park. One final point is the position of the borough in relation to central London and the City and the London Stansted growth corridor in particular. Residents in the borough benefit from the good public transport connections into London and up the M11 corridor where they are able to take advantage of the many job opportunities in the sub region. The final solution to business opportunities and employment lies in a balance between the local and sub regional.

**Question 5: Conversion of houses: flats**

The Community Chair asked for clarification, if the Council was making it difficult for properties to be converted into flats.

**Response: Ian Ansell, Section Manager DC Team A/B**

The Council has recently completed a consultation on a new house conversion policy which seeks to limit the number of family houses being lost to flats in order to protect the stock of houses and maintain sustainable and balanced communities.

This policy does not however apply to the conversion of shop units which will continue to be assessed against current development plan policies which seek to retain a supply of business premises, particularly in established commercial areas. It is recognised however that the amount of business floor space in the Borough exceeds demand and where it is accepted in policy terms that commercial floor space is no longer required, residential use is often seen as the preferred alternative, particularly in the light of the high demand for housing in Greater London.

**Question 6: Number of Planning Officers to enforce Law**

**K Lord** asked how many planning officers the Council has employed to enforce this law.

**Response: Kevin Herring, Section Manager - Development Management**

If the resident is referring to our Enforcement Section which deals with breaches of Planning regulations. At present we have an Enforcement Co

Ordinator and three Enforcement Officers - all these personnel investigate breaches of planning control.

**Response: Ian Ansell, Section Manager DC Team A/B**

It must be emphasised that this is a change of planning policy, not a change in the law, and no increase in staff resources is envisaged as a direct result.

**Question 7: Pressures of Banbury Park and St Andrews Redevelopments**

**D Allen** raised concerns that the Banbury Park and St Andrews redevelopments had led to the closure of local school and the two new big housing projects would put pressure on schools that still existed.

**Response: Judith Carlson, Regeneration Manager -**

**1. Closure of local schools:** there has been no reduction of capacity in local schools.

**1.1 Hillyfield Primary:** Edward Redhead Infant and Edward Redhead Junior schools closed on 31 August 2003- they were amalgamated and opened as a brand new all-through primary on 1 September 2003- Hillyfield. The capacity of Hillyfield Primary School is for 630 pupils which is the same capacity of the combined Edward Redhead Infants and Edward Redhead Junior Schools.

**1.2 Walthamstow Academy:** McEntee Secondary School was closed on 31 August 2006 to be replaced by Walthamstow Academy on 1 September 2006. Both McEntee and Walthamstow Academy were 6FE, so there was no change to the existing capacity with the replacement of McEntee by the Academy.

**2. Pressure on Local Schools:** We are experiencing some pressure on primary school places in the area due to a sharp rise in the birth rate and increased levels of migration into the borough. We are currently exploring ways to increase capacity in primary schools to meet the demand. The rising primary rolls are likely to create pressure on secondary schools within the next 5 years and additional demands will be created as major housing schemes are completed. We currently anticipate that an additional 420 primary and 300 secondary school places will be required for children from new developments across the Blackhorse Lane area. We intend to provide the additional secondary places in an expanded Willowfield School. Options for increasing capacity in primary schools are still under consideration.

Further information can be obtained from the Council's published Strategy for Change see: primary schools: <http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/wf-primary-strategy-change.pdf> 14-19: <http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/14-19-edu-ythsupportplan-2008-10.pdf>.

Secondary schools: Building Schools for the Future Strategy for Change due to be published shortly

**Question 8: Waltham Forest Track**

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**M Wasserman (Penrhyn Avenue)** said: "I am concerned about the Council's suggestion of moving the Waltham Forest track to the Peter May sport field. I personally do not have any interest in sport, but when my daughter was younger she made good use of the track and for a while I accompanied her.

I believe the Council has an obligation to provide such facilities for its citizens and if they move it to the Peter May site, which, as Councillor Belam (a local councillor) says, is not on a main bus route. Not only it will be more difficult for youngsters to reach it from all parts of the Borough, but what will happen if the owners of the site decide they no longer wish to have it on the premises? It will then be another amenity taken away from us.

Furthermore, is there a hidden agenda here? Does the Council really intend to dispose of the track to build houses on it? In the current climate, surely we should be maintaining any asset which can be used by the young people in the Borough. I often see television news reports of what other boroughs are doing to provide safe environments to nurture their talents and keep them off the streets. I believe Waltham Forest track should be improved and kept at its present location."

**Response: Joyce Guthrie, Interim Head of Sport and Leisure.**

In May 2008, the Council agreed to explore options for the replacement of Cathall Leisure Centre, Waltham Forest Pool and Track and Leyton Leisure Lagoon in order to upgrade sporting facilities in the Borough to meet the future needs of the community. The issue raised by the resident is one of the options currently being explored as part of the wider strategic review into how facilities should be provided in the future and no decisions have yet been made as to locations. Whatever the outcome, the council is committed to retaining an athletics track. Moreover, the council will endeavour to ensure no existing sport or leisure facility is removed before a replacement is available.

**Question 9: Refurbishment of Lloyds Park and William Morris**

**N Caulfield** raised the issue surrounding the £6.1 million Lottery Fund to refurbish Lloyd Park and William Morris. He asked the following questions:

- a) Why residents were not advised that the theatre would be demolished;
- b) If demolished, what would be the plan for a new one?

**Response: Nick Burton, Head of Green Spaces - Environment & Regeneration**

A) Those consulted on the plans for the park will have known that it was proposed that theatre be demolished but this would have included only a sample of the population or people that chose to come to our consultation sessions.

B) Below is an outline of the proposals contained within the master plan which has received Lottery approval subject to detailed plans being drawn up.

Following the demolition of the theatre the island will be landscaped to include the following:

**Theatrical events will take place in either an outdoor theatre or in a marquee,** in the park either on the island or elsewhere depending on the requirements.

**Bridge from the Historic Gardens**

Restore the bridge and its associated ornate railings. Install new gates that can secure the island at night.

**Central Axial Path**

Continue the central axis from the Historic Garden onto the island by introducing a new path.

**Flexible Performance and Outdoor Entertainment Space**

Create an outdoor entertainment space divided by the axial path.

**Mown Grass Paths**

To provide attractive walks on the island.

**Bridge from Winns Terrace**

Restore the bridge and its associated railings. Install gates that can secure the island at night.

**Path (from Winns Terrace bridge)**

Extend the path to link to the new central axial path on the island. This will be the main vehicular route onto the island for delivery and maintenance vehicles.

**Moat Edge Treatment and Ecology**

Introduce marginal vegetation to the moat and control the numbers of Canada Geese.

**Island Planting and Interpretative Space**

Establish naturalistic planting with seating and a dense shrub layer dividing the two areas. Introduce interpretative material where the main footpaths meet.

**Tree Clearance and Tree Planting**

Remove selected trees to enable the establishment of under storey planting and introduce new tree planting favouring native species.

**New Bridge**

Provide a new bridge to the north of the island to link the key activity areas in the park.