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The following are transcripts of questions submitted by residents on Help Forms provided at the meeting:

**Query 1:**

**P Tan** (Morland Road) 1) "Why does the Council take so long to develop the old shopping site? Taxpayers' money is used to pay for the security which could have been saved if development went ahead as planned. How much has been spent on this security over the years? "

2) "Since the closure of St James Street Library building, how much has been spent on ad hoc management to look after the place? How about securing this cost and allow the community to make use of the building? These are many benefits to the residents."

3) "Why is the Council selling off buildings and assets when the economy is low and the same for their market value? It is not a wise move if the Council insist to sell off those assets. What is the latest about the selling of Pool & Track and also the St James Street Library building?"

4) "The Council is not taking the views of the residents, for example £2,500 for a community notice board (which obtained only one residents' vote). Why spend this and why residents do not think it is wise spending? Waste of time voting by residents."

**Response: Paul Humphreys, Head of Asset Management**

1) The Council has been concerned to ensure that an appropriate form of development takes place in the Town Centre - one that contributes to the regeneration of Walthamstow. Members of the Community Council will I'm sure be aware of the financial and property market problems that have now been with us for a while and will not be surprised to hear that very few if any retailers are signing up for new space, and that house builders are equally reluctant. On the appointment of St Modwen as development partner two years ago the Council has not spent any money on security as this was passed to the developer.

2) The method of security for this type of building involves "live in" guardians. In some buildings this costs the Council nothing other than the ongoing rates and some utility costs. At Coppermill Lane the cost of security is approx £100 per month. A range of options, including community uses and disposal are still being considered.

3) The ex St James Library in Coppermill Lane is dealt with above.

Whenever the Council has a property asset that is surplus it always considers re-use first. However, many of the buildings that become surplus have very high maintenance and running costs, have poor accessibility and are not

suitable for the delivery of the high quality services the Council strives to deliver. Each asset would be considered on its merits as to whether it could be disposed of, if no other service use is identified, and a decision would be made whether an asset should be sold or held for future sale. At present the assets being disposed of are generally housing development sites that will be developed by Housing Association partners to which the Council be given nomination rights in addition to any capital receipt. This not only raises much needed capital, but helps the Council meet its affordable housing targets and reduces numbers in temporary accommodation.

No decision has been made to sell Pool and Track. Cabinet has asked that the inclusion of a new leisure centre be considered in any development of the Arcade site, and if this is possible then consideration will have to be given to how this would be funded. At no time has it been suggested that the Track would be closed.

**Response: Dawn Polis, Community Councils Manager**

4) The proposals for funding come to Community Councils via residents, councillors and voluntary and community groups. The proposal for a community notice board was based on an identified local need.

As you are aware the decision making regarding the allocation of funds is made by councillors at the meeting. They are given details of all of the proposed projects at least three weeks in advance of the meeting. This ensures that they have time to consider the merits of each one. However as well as considering the benefits of each project within their ward and Community Council area they also want their decision making to be informed by the views of the residents who attend Community Council meetings. Therefore a vote is undertaken to provide councillors with an indication of residents' preferred options.

**Query 2:**

**J Wright** (Chewton Road) 1) "What is the cost of having the former St James Street Library building 'protected by occupation' since summer 2008, including the cost of conversion to make it habitable?"

2) "Why was permission for this change of use never put to a planning meeting?"

**Response: Paul Humphreys, Head of Asset Management**

1) This was answered in the previous response.

2) This is short term security and does not need planning permission as it is not a change of use.

**Query 3:**

**F Anagnostou** (Roberts Road) "Having seen two healthy trees, providing much-needed greenery and birdsong from birds, cut down in our street (with no fore-warning) can we be sure A) no more trees will be cut down without residents being provided evidence that this is essential and B) more trees will be planted to replace the two which were cut down?"

The two trees that have been cut down were completely healthy. When we rang up, the Council said initially it was pruning, then Bob Belam told us that they has been cut down because they were 'sick' or 'dangerous'. Bob Belam also said a new company had been contracted to carry out such work. One would almost think that this new company had to justify its contract by cutting down (any) trees. Where is the evidence that the trees were 'sick'?"

This question and comments was answered by Cllr Reardon and Cllr Smith: **Cllr Reardon** replied that each contractor was under the instruction of warning residents in advance.

**Cllr Smith** added that he had raised concerns about the lack of trees in the area to the Mayor of London's office.

**Response: Colin Lawrence, Arboriculture Manager**

Three trees were removed from Roberts Road as part of the Ward Tree Works Programme. One tree was decayed, the other leaning and decayed and one was dead. Residents would have been informed of this before works commenced but invariably some people say they have been missed. A firm of professional Arboriculture Consultants surveyed the trees in question and advised on the condition of the trees, the contractor who removed them was only following their recommendations.

Three replacement trees had already been added to our replacement planting list for replacement this planting season if funds allow.

The Mayor of London isn't the correct place to address a lack of trees in Waltham Forest. The Mayor of London has however identified north Leyton as an area deficient in trees and has provided a grant to plant 100 trees in that area. However, we are planting trees in roads where trees have been requested and a number of them are in E17. However, there are insufficient funds for further planting this planting season November to March 2009/10.

**Query 4:**

**I Capes** (Northcote Road) "Why is there only one council officer in the Planning Enforcement section to tackle illegal permanent letting agency signs?"

Letting signs may not be displayed on a property for more than 14 days after being let to tenants (Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Act 2007 & 1999). The London Borough of Waltham Forest is blighted by these signs in many streets. One council officer is totally insufficient to have any impact on this widespread visual clutter. Neighbouring boroughs are far more pro-active in tackling the issue – Newham, Islington, Tower Hamlets; Aylesbury seem models of best practice outside of the capital."

**Response: Gareth Jones - Head of Enforcement - Environment and Regeneration**

Current resources dictate that we only have a limited resource to apply to enforcing this activity. In the past we have not had any officer dedicated to this

activity, which is why we are currently blighted with 'Let By' and 'Sold By' signs. We are currently reviewing the way we handle these boards and there is likely to be further change in the new year in order to deal with them more effectively although the final decisions on this have not yet been taken

**Query 5:**

**Query D Allen** also raised the issue of discarded Let signs in Palmerston Road.

**Response: Gareth Jones - Head of Enforcement - Environment and Regeneration**

If they have been discarded onto the highway they need to be reported to Waltham Forest Direct in order that they can be cleared. If we can relate them to a particular premises we may be able to deal with the occupiers by way of Fixed Penalty Notice if we have sufficient evidence

**Query 6:**

**P Samuels** (Chestnut Avenue North) "I would like other non-disabled persons to be ticketed for parking in the disabled bay. Courtesy disabled parking bay is not enforceable. I am a Blue Badge holder but need to park outside of the house. What needs to happen to make the disabled bay enforceable?"

**Response: Steve Leftwich,**

The following are required:

- Traffic Management Order
- Current Marking to be removed
- New bay laid that conforms to Department for Transport directives
- Post & sign erected

The cost to do this would be around £5,000. Members have recently reviewed the current policy of laying courtesy bays. The decision was that the policy would remain as it is.

**Query 7:**

**J Campbell-Palmer** (Mayfield Road) "When will Higham Hill Childrens' Play area be cleaned up and the mildew removed. I have not seen this cleaned up in ten years – only the odd coat of paint."

**Response: Public Realm Department**

Higham Hill Recreation Ground, including the playground, should be cleaned three times per week. However, it is prone to out of hours anti-social behaviour which means there is often litter in there in the morning.

The play equipment has been painted occasionally when funds have allowed. Kier attends and cleans the play area, but if anyone is still dissatisfied with the Higham Hill Recreational Ground this can be logged through Waltham Forest Direct. However, both the under 7's and the under 12's play areas are due to receive a complete overhaul by the end of March 2010.

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**Query 8:**

(Lawrence Avenue) complained about the poor quality of the recycling service provided by Verdant.

**Response: Andy Lyons, Environment Manager - Greenspace**

Lawrence Avenue E17 is scheduled for recycling collections every Tuesday, via kerbside sort [black box collection]. There are 85 properties in Lawrence Avenue

Having examined service request information for the last 12 months, there have been 32 reported recycling missed collections. This is out of 4420 scheduled collections. Over the course of the year there were 15 properties affected. The remaining 70 properties have had no reported problems

Of the missed collections, there was a cluster of 7 in April 2009 which I am advised was associated with building / scaffolding work.

Also over the course of the year, a manager for Verdant, the recycling provider, has visited Lawrence Avenue on 4 occasions to address recycling issues.

In December 2009, we introduced a system whereby information from the recycling crews' report sheets is used more effectively by Verdant and shared with Waltham Forest Direct and the Client and Waste Strategy Teams. This is expected to reduce reported missed collections and provide quality information to deal with customer calls and to assist residents in recycling.