

**Questions from Members of the public that were not responded to at the meeting.**

6.3 To the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport from Dr Noah Birksted-Breen

Will Hackney Council find an appropriate way of marking Earth Overshoot Day annually, the day when humanity uses up more resources than the earth can regenerate in a year, to help educate Hackney residents about the need to focus on reducing and reusing as higher priorities than recycling?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

It was a shame you could not join us last night at our Full Council meeting, however I thank you for your question concerning Earth Overshoot Day and its relationship to educating Hackney residents about the need to focus on reducing and reusing.

As an initial point, we have a new ambitious Climate Action Plan which places significant emphasis on consumption-based emissions, advocating a transition towards a sustainable, circular economy. The plan promotes low carbon choices and actions that reduce consumption emissions by encouraging the repair and reuse of goods.

This aligns with circular economy principles such as durability, reuse, remanufacturing, and recycling, aiming to reduce borough-wide emissions from Council operations and related contracts. At the same time, Hackney is currently developing a Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan, a key manifesto commitment. This plan focuses on short to medium-term initiatives aimed at reducing emissions and incorporating social value.

Hackney's commitment to circularity spans nearly two decades. Since 2005, the Climate, Sustainability and Environment Team has been advancing circular economy schemes, delivering over 20 services and initiatives in partnership with over 15 local organisations. The ZeroWasteHackney 'Go Beyond Recycling' campaign, targets vulnerable and low-income households and successfully engages with over 5,000 residents a year, keeping nearly 2 million household items in circulation from clothes, electrical goods and more.

The borough's Reduction and Recycling Plan (RRP), endorsed by the Mayor of London, includes plans for waste reduction and increased recycling. It features initiatives such as the Library of Things and a Circular Economy Strategy, with actions to reduce waste, maximise recycling, and mitigate environmental impacts.

The Sustainability Day 2023 event, taking place during London Climate Action Week every year, focused on sustainable practices and environmental awareness, attracting approximately 800 attendees with over 30 partners on

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the day. It offered insights into sustainable living, waste prevention, and the circular economy, alongside interactive workshops and family-friendly activities.

Looking ahead, Hackney Council recognises the importance of marking Earth Overshoot Day, scheduled for 25 July next year. The Council plans to use Sustainability Day 2024, during London Climate Action Week at the end of June, to highlight the day's significance. This event will provide opportunities to engage with residents and offer practical ways to reduce collective consumption-based emissions.

Understanding that not everyone may be motivated solely by environmental messages, the Council's approach includes offering economical alternatives and accessible services, such as the Library of Things or clothes swap events. This inclusive strategy aims to make sustainability achievable for all residents, contributing to Hackney's broader mission of creating a greener sustainable and circular economy that benefits both the environment and the community.

#### **6.5 To the Mayor from Ms Sarah Thompson**

In light of the circumstances surrounding the resignation of the previous Mayor (Philip Glanville) will you as Hackney's newly elected Mayor lead by example and hold yourself and your Cabinet Members to account in a way that is open and transparent and puts the residents of Hackney first?

#### **Response from Mayor Woodley**

I am writing to thank you for your question directed to me in advance of Full Council and I regret that you weren't able to attend the meeting, which is why I am responding in writing.

Firstly, I recognise the responsibility that every elected councillor must take very seriously and as Mayor I'm certainly committed to continuing the Council's strong tradition of conducting itself openly and with transparency. I will honour the trust residents have placed in me to serve our borough and will be guided by the Nolan Principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Councillors sign up to a code of conduct and must abide by these in accordance with the public trust placed in the role, so elected members commit on all occasions to:

- act with integrity and honesty;
- act lawfully;
- treat all persons fairly and with respect;
- and lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of Councillor.

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In undertaking the role day to day, councillors commit to:

impartially exercise responsibilities in the interests of the local community;  
to not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any Person;  
to avoid conflicts of interest;  
to exercise reasonable care and diligence;  
and to ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with the local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

It's worth highlighting that we have a track record in Hackney of seeking out, listening to and responding to the views and concerns of residents and this is certainly going to continue in this administration.

For example, Hackney Council has a well established system of scrutiny, allowing residents and councillors alike to review the work of the administration and if necessary hold us to account. To share with you just a few areas of review and challenge - our Children and Young People scrutiny commission has closely examined the issue of school exclusions in Hackney. Our Health in Hackney scrutiny commission is looking at the use of digital services in GP practices and how it might affect the most vulnerable. Our Living in Hackney scrutiny commission has recently looked at issues of flooding and the role and work of Thames Water. And our Skills, Economy and Growth scrutiny commission is looking at the skills needed within our local labour market.

I will continue to be open, honest and transparent with the residents of Hackney of the challenges we face with our budget, and the ever increasing need to do more with less. And I expect my cabinet and councillor colleagues to continue our practice of engaging with residents in a meaningful way, not only through formal processes of statutory consultations, but through attending walkabouts with officers, holding surgeries, engaging with community groups and very soon taking myself and the Interim Chief Executive on short tours introducing the highlights and challenges of their wards directly to us.

I hope I have assured you of how seriously I take these responsibilities and commitments having been elected as your new Mayor, and I look forward to leading by example in the conduct of this administration.

#### **6.6 To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation from Laura Summerfield**

Can the Cabinet Member for housing please advise of its work over the last year to better support the housing needs of Hackney's Gypsy and Traveller community?

#### **Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation**

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Thank you for your question concerning work to support the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population in Hackney over the last year. I regret that you were not able to attend the meeting in person and am therefore happy to follow up in writing.

Hackney Council has long supported the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. Here in Hackney we are proud to have a community of over 800 Gypsies, Roma and travellers.

Some Irish Travelling communities migrated to Britain as long ago as the 13th century, and Roma Gypsies in the 15th. In this time, traveller communities have played a significant role in Britain's history in the development of national institutions, and the construction of our national identity.

Unfortunately Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people are often forgotten. And if they are not forgotten, then they are often being marginalised and maligned. For us in Hackney, that is unacceptable. We are a borough of sanctuary and it is important that we reiterate our total commitment and support for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community.

We are determined to demonstrate that support in practice, and will be reviewing and looking at our whole strategic housing approach for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people as part of developing a new Housing Strategy for Hackney in the next year.

Hackney currently has 27 pitches across five Traveller sites in the borough, which are managed and maintained by the Hackney Traveller Service. The service also provides a holistic support service to families living both on sites and in brick and mortar accommodation, working closely with Health, Education and independent Agencies.

In terms of new sites, although Bartrip Street had been earmarked for a new Gypsy, Roma and Traveller site, our investigations revealed this site would not be right or suitable to use.

Hackney Council has therefore found an alternative potential site that we can use. We have secured funding from the GLA to undertake some initial site investigations. We are currently procuring surveyors and engineers to undertake this work with the aim that they report back early next year.

We have to undertake the site investigations first - to test for things like pollution and noise - before we are able to say that the site is suitable for building pitches. Funding will also need to be identified for any new development.

Assuming a positive response from site investigations then we will be able to move into identifying and naming the site and begin formal consultation with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community.

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It is difficult at this point to provide precise timescales but, on average, it takes between one and two years, from beginning to end, to build a new Gypsy, Roma and Traveller site of around 8 or 9 pitches in size. We will keep everyone informed of progress made and the Council will give public notice of the formal consultation if the current site under investigation proves suitable.

I would be happy to provide written updates about this work in future, and on our wider work to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in the borough.

6.8 To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation from Ifeoma Mkpuru

Hackney Council dissolved Hackney Homes in March 2016. Please can the Cabinet Member explain why seven years on there are still Council run estates with old Hackney Homes branding?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation

Thank you for your question regarding the Hackney Homes-branded signs on some of the Council's managed estates. I regret that you were not able to attend the meeting in person and am therefore happy to follow up in writing.

In 2016, the Council made the determination to close its Arms Length Management Company (ALMO) - Hackney Homes, and to bring management of our Council homes back under the council's direct management in order to better serve our residents and provide a higher quality more efficient service.

We acknowledge that the old Hackney Homes branding still exists on some of our signs but we are confident that this does not detract from our ability to deliver a quality housing service. At the time, it was decided that the existing signs were in good condition and provided the necessary information, and therefore only to replace them as and when needed.

This is in line with our commitment to providing value for money for our residents, and the expenditure saved has been used to support the essential functions of our housing services.

We take pride in the appearance and maintenance of our estates and will replace signs as and when they become degraded. What really matters to our residents is good housing, an efficient repairs system, and ultimately a warm, safe, comfortable home; and I would be glad to advise further on all the work we are doing to keep making this a reality.