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Councillor Questions

7.8 Cllr Binnie-Lubbock to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

The Cabinet member suggested in public statements and to the scrutiny panel that motorbike parking charges will start at 6p, does he accept that that charge is for bays that don't exist and that no budget has been allocated for installing them?

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

Thank you for your question which touches on motorcycle parking. I am also conscious of the profile this issue has received amongst our residents and assure you that Cabinet and the service are doing everything to deliver results for all our residents. I also apologise that we didn't have the time to answer this question during the formal Council meeting.

As you may be aware, the prices that were proposed in the Cabinet paper last year offered heavily discounted parking for solo motorcycles parking in motorcycle bays, with charges five and ten times less respectively for ICE and electric PTWs when compared to the equivalent price for parking other ICE and electric vehicles in the same area.

In respect of where individual pricing points may be used, I understand that there are presently no solo motorcycle bays around the Homerton hospital, but as officers have previously explained, we also recognise and understand that the changes we have consulted on will lead to demand for solo motorcycle bays in parts of the borough where there has historically been no demand for them, due to free parking presently being available.

That is why, as part of our communications plan before motorcycle charging is introduced, we will ensure that riders are informed of how they can request a solo motorcycle bay to be installed where there is demand for them from riders. The cost of any new bays will be met from existing budgets.

7.9 Cllr Grace Adebayo to the Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing Needs and Homelessness

Due to the failure of the Government's policy on housing since 2010, we have seen a huge rise in homelessness which has directly affected many families in Hackney. Can the cabinet member update us on what is being done to tackle this crisis?

Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing Needs and Homelessness

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Thank you for your question and I apologise that we didn't have the time to address it during the formal Council meeting.

I agree entirely that the Housing Crisis has been driven largely by issues that the Council cannot control. Levels of homelessness in Hackney continue to grow, with approaches from households seeking assistance up by 67% on figures from 2017/18.

We have been working strenuously to alleviate and mitigate the impact of the crisis on our residents. We have had a homelessness strategy in place since 2002, which has been regularly reviewed and updated.

The latest strategy builds on our existing focus on embedding early intervention and on delivering services that are joined up, holistic, high quality and person centric.

Our ambition is to ensure that all residents have access to high quality advice and support, and that we can identify and act to resolve issues before they lead to homelessness. This includes:

- Working collaboratively with residents, giving them the information they need to make decisions around their housing options;
- Supporting residents to maximise their income through debt and welfare benefits advice and by accessing apprenticeships, other work and training opportunities in Hackney;
- Our innovative 'Safe and Together' programme that works with families who are experiencing domestic abuse to reduce risk and harm to children;
- Our Single Homeless Prevention Team, which provides advice to single adults at risk of homelessness and supports them in maintaining their existing accommodation or getting alternative accommodation.
- Our "Prevention to Private" Team that works with residents on accessing privately rented homes rather than placing them into temporary accommodation.
- Our membership of the Capital Letters scheme, a London wide procurement service that assists in sourcing affordable privately rented homes,
- Utilising Homefinder UK which provides access for residents to social tenancies elsewhere in the UK.
- Our work with partners in the London Youth Gateway consortium to identify housing solutions that meet the needs of LGBTQI+ residents who are homeless or at risk homelessness to provide advice and signposting to LGBTQI+ specific housing schemes.
- Our "Out of Hospital" Model for Homeless residents to ease pressure on the Homerton,
- Our Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme where we go into prisons to conduct homeless prevention assessments and secure support for release,
- Our Next Steps programme for asylum seekers granted leave to remain and leaving Home Office hotels who are homeless.

Additionally, the council secured £4.2 million government funding to complement our ongoing commitment to assist rough sleepers. We also

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secured more than £4 million in GLA funding for three partnerships that will give intensive support and housing homeless residents with complex needs, including dedicated support aimed at young people and ex-offenders.

The Council considers that the next few years will pose significant challenges and will place wide ranging demands on the council to meet the needs of residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

We also recognise that our future direction requires a level of flexibility to meet the challenges ahead. Tackling this crisis requires collaboration with health, criminal justice and employment sectors, other London boroughs, and people with lived experience of homelessness to prevent and reduce homelessness in Hackney.

7.10 Cllr Rathbone to the Deputy Mayor for Delivery, Inclusive Economy & Regeneration

Could the situation be clarified regarding the future of the former Thames Water depot site in Lea Bridge Road which although just over the border in Waltham Forest is of considerable interest and concern from Hackney residents, particularly in Lea Bridge ward?

Response from the Deputy Mayor for Delivery, Inclusive Economy & Regeneration

Thank you for your question at February's Full Council. As we ran out of time for questions in the meeting, I am following up with a written response.

As you are aware, in 2022 the East London Waterworks Park project group expressed interest in acquiring the Thames Water Depot site adjacent to the Lea Bridge Road in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The site is currently owned by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and managed by the Department for Education, who originally intended to build a new free school there. This proposal fell away and instead it has been used as a temporary depot facility for the renewal of London's water and sewage network.

As Mayor Woodley also noted in her response to an earlier question at Full Council, the depot land sits outside of Hackney and all matters relating to planning and regulatory decision-making therefore fall under the jurisdiction of the London Borough of Waltham Forest. However, as you say, the site is of interest to Hackney as a near neighbour. The previous Mayor of Hackney supported the East London Waterworks Park project group's proposal in principle, primarily because there was an opportunity to expand access to and enhance the open space offer in this part of the Lee Valley.

However, in January 2023, Hackney's Cabinet took the decision to support a London Councils-led project to identify a secure children's home for London (Cabinet report [here](#)). The decision was taken to respond to the local and London-wide need to provide support and accommodation for vulnerable

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children. In January of this year the Council formally received notice of the Lea Bridge Road site proposal for a secure children's home.

The London Councils proposal to build a pan London secure children's home on the site is currently under consultation and a planning application is expected to be sent to the Waltham Forest planning authority around the end of July. The proposal has also been subject to early pre-application planning advice from Waltham Forest. Hackney's Planning team has not been involved to date and will play no part in the determination process, but will be a formal consultee as the scheme progresses through the planning process. As the development site has Metropolitan Open Land status the application will require GLA approval, and it falls within the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority area so will be subject to their observations and comments as well.

By way of background, Hackney Council has always tried to ensure that children in its care and requiring secure accommodation are looked after close to family, friends and local services. Unfortunately it is often not possible to deliver on this as there is a chronic lack of local secure accommodation provision nationwide, and currently no service of this kind in London. Many of Hackney's most vulnerable children in need of secure accommodation are therefore currently sent much further afield.

As well as supporting London's most vulnerable children, the proposed service would help to alleviate this serious lack of national capacity.

Secure children's homes provide a safe environment where children can receive the specialist care, education, and support that they need. Councils place children in secure children's homes on welfare grounds when no other type of care placement can keep the child safe. Children who need a secure welfare placement are likely to:

- Have suffered a great deal of trauma in their lives
- Have unmet emotional, mental and physical health needs
- Have experienced a lot of instability
- Have missed a significant amount of education

The proposed home would provide up to 24 specialist welfare placements for highly vulnerable children with complex needs. It would also include accommodation for up to 4 children who no longer need to live within a secure environment but would need a period of extra support to help them achieve a positive transition back into the community.

As previously mentioned, the London Councils proposal is currently under consultation and anyone wishing to express their views on the proposals should submit them to London Councils at www.londonschbuild.co.uk. Hackney residents in those wards bordering the site have been included in the consultation.

I hope that this response clarifies the Council's position.