

APPENDIX A – WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS THAT WERE NOT PUT AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING (18th JULY 2018)

10.13 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan

Will the Mayor privatise the 3 council run nurseries?

Response

The Cabinet recently agreed to go out to consultation on the phased closure of the 3 local authority day nurseries (LADNs). The consultation will run for an extended period until Monday 10th September.

There are 3 key reasons behind the proposals: fairness, cost and quality.

These 3 day nurseries can provide day care to fewer than 100 children, of the approximately 7,000 who currently receive day-care or nursery education.

It is the local schools which pay for most of the nursery costs and they will be withdrawing their funding from September of this year. This means that the council would have to pay the full £1.66m cost.

We don't feel that it would be the right decision to cut other services to pay for the nurseries, especially when fewer than 100 children go to these nurseries in a borough where there are 22,000 under 5s.

Further, each of these places is very expensive. Our Early Years Budget has around £1,700 for every child under-5 in the borough – and yet these 3 nurseries receive a public subsidy of around £15,000 per child. We don't think this is fair.

It is proposed that the children are found places at nearby nurseries and specialist services will be developed at an 'Outstanding' Nursery School for deaf children. We will also bring forward other proposals to support the expansion of good quality child care and early years provision.

The Mayor has also pledged to a number of other targets to improve the scope and amount of under-5s provision, for example with extended days and improved premises. These matters and others will be discussed at an 'Early Years Summit' in the autumn.

We must not lose sight of the fact that the Conservative Government has dramatically slashed funding for the council, for early years, and for schools (including our 6 'Outstanding' Nursery Schools – different from LADNs). School funding is under critical threat, and our schools desperately need to be properly funded.