

# Council Assembly

Wednesday 24 March 2010

7.00 pm

Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

## Items Tabled At Meeting

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#### Tabled

The attached documents were tabled and circulated at the meeting.

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Date: 25 March 2010

## **SOUTHWARK COUNCIL**

### **COUNCIL ASSEMBLY**

#### **(ORDINARY MEETING)**

**WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH 2010**

#### **URGENT QUESTION**

#### **URGENT QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN**

Would the leader not agree that to try to force through the housing major works contract before the beginning of purdah would be dismissing the findings of the Leaseholder Valuation Tribunal and intentionally acting to undermine the wishes and interests of leaseholders in this borough?

#### **RESPONSE**

The executive has adjourned a decision until Friday so we can receive advice about the decision of the Leaseholder Valuation Tribunal. Obviously it would be premature to comment on what decision if any the executive will take until it has received that advice. Our only concern with major works contracts is to get good value for money for the council, its tenants and for leaseholders.

**SOUTHWARK COUNCIL****COUNCIL ASSEMBLY****(ORDINARY MEETING)****WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH 2010****MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME****1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL**

In 1995 Tony Blair said "If the Labour government has not raised the living standards of the poorest by the end of its time in office, it will have failed." Given the report of the National Equality Panel (January 2010) states "inequality in any dimension is wider in London than in any other region, and inequality in earnings and income has increased faster in London over the last decade than anywhere else" would it be fair to say that Labour have failed? And given that Southwark has a wide gap between rich and poor would it be fair to say Labour has particularly failed the people of Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

Yes and yes. It's a damning indictment of 13 years of Labour government that the gap between rich and poor has widened.

**2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN**

Will the leader publish a list of all of the council tower blocks and estates that he would be willing to sell to private developers in exactly the same way he intends to sell Maydew House?

**RESPONSE**

There has been no decision on Maydew House. We are currently sharing with tenants and leaseholders the information on which the council will have to make any decision about its future.

**3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBA BLANGO**

In 2006 the Liberal Democrats pledge to open three new secondary schools, in the north, centre and south of the borough – how has that commitment been fulfilled?

**RESPONSE**

I am very pleased to say that we have opened the three new secondary schools we pledged to in 2006.

- Harris Girls Academy Bermondsey opened in September 2006 and its 6<sup>th</sup> form started in September 2009.
- Walworth Academy was opened in September 2007 and moved into new accommodation this January.
- Harris Boys Academy East Dulwich opened in temporary accommodation in September 2009, and is due to move into its brand new building next to Peckham Rye for the start of the new academic year in September.

**4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD**

Why has the executive member not yet produced his plans for the allocation of money from the government to build new school classrooms?

**RESPONSE**

Our plans for investing the £12 million were clearly set out in the capital refresh report agreed by the executive in February. We have allocated £5 million to Lyndhurst School to expand to two forms of entry, £2 million to cover the cost of bulge classes, and we will be investing the remaining £5 million in expanding another local school. I am very pleased that Dulwich Village Infant School has agreed to provide a bulge class subject to planning permission.

St Anthony's have informed the council that they are willing to expand and we are currently assessing how this would help address the shortage of community places in the surrounding area.

**5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD THOMAS**

Does the leader agree that it is indefensible that after 13 years of Labour government more than 20,000 children in Southwark are still living in poverty – enough to fill 66 primary schools?

**RESPONSE**

Yes. I'd remind council assembly of Labour's promise all those years ago: "Ours is the first generation to end child poverty for ever, poverty should not be a birthright. Being poor should not be a life sentence."

Well for too many in Labour Britain it sadly still is.

**6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR OLAJUMOKE OYEWUNMI**

How has his administration fulfilled its pledge to give more powers to wardens to crack down on anti-social behaviour and street drinking? And what benefits are there for residents and businesses through a reduction in anti-social behaviour?

**RESPONSE**

Southwark community wardens were accredited by the Metropolitan Police Service in April 2009 giving them additional powers to tackle anti social behaviour and street drinking.

Since the adoption of these powers the warden service has carried out 429 confiscations of alcohol, 17 confiscations of tobacco products from under 16's and exercised legal powers to obtain names and addresses 146 times. They have also provided 11,500 intelligence reports to other enforcement services, many of which have contributed to civil and criminal prosecutions.

I'd also like to highlight the work of the wardens in tackling serious anti social behaviour and violence in the Peckham Town Centre in co-operation with police. This resulted in a successful application for seven anti social behaviour orders in summer 2009, resulting in a significant reduction in crime, shop theft and an increase in confidence amongst residents and businesses.

**7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN JARDINE-BROWN**

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation there are now more households in significant poverty (where household incomes were below 40% of median income) than had ever been recorded in history. How does this square with Labour's pledges to raise living standards for the poorest?

**RESPONSE**

This is one of Labour's many broken promises. They said they would abolish child poverty and failed. They said they would save Guy's Accident and Emergency – then closed it. They said they wouldn't introduce tuition fees – and did the opposite on day one.

Labour's record is a litany of broken promises and failure. For Southwark, as one of the country's most deprived boroughs, their failure to tackle poverty has a significant effect on the life chances of many of our residents. If the government had put a fraction of what they are paying in bankers' bonuses into local small businesses then everyone in Southwark would be better off.

**8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER**

In 2006 the Liberal Democrats pledged to double recycling – has this been achieved and what plans are there for further improvements to recycling over the next four years?

**RESPONSE**

In 2002, Southwark's recycling performance was woeful when just 3.6% of Southwark's waste was recycled. By 2006 we had increased recycling rates more than four times to 15%.

Veolia Environmental Services are contracted to achieve a rate of 30% in 2010-11, delivering our commitment to double recycling.

By 2014, the recycling rate will be more than ten times the rate delivered under the previous Labour administration.

**9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR BOB SKELLY**

It's been estimated Labour's failed Metronet public/private partnership schemes, has cost the taxpayer more than £400 million. What would this money have been better spent on?

**RESPONSE**

The public accounts committee estimate the Metronet public/private partnership that was forced on Londoners by Gordon Brown has cost in excess of £400 million.

Its chair, Edward Leigh MP, said: "The taxpayer has lost up to £410m as a result of the Department for Transport's inadequate management of the risks arising from the Metronet contracts for upgrading the infrastructure of the underground.

"This committee finds it unacceptable that the department ignored the warning by the National Audit Office in 2004 to avoid a hands-off approach to overseeing the upgrades."

This £400 million would have paid for the cross river tram.

**10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK**

How much so far has been raised by the Mayor's charity for Help for Heroes?

**RESPONSE**

Traditionally the Mayor announces the total raised from the charity appeal as part of his end of office outgoing speech. I certainly don't want to steal his thunder! However the Mayor tells me he has been very busy and things are progressing well.

Help for Heroes is clearly a splendid cause and I would encourage all members to support all of the Mayor's efforts to raise funds.

**11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MACKIE SHEIK**

On Monday 1 March, Nick Clegg spoke to the Salvation Army at their HQ on Newington Causeway in the inaugural Social Justice Lecture. What lessons were there for Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

There were three important lessons:

Firstly that Labour have failed. Nick Clegg said: "In 1997, when New Labour was first elected, no one would have believed it would end like this. But Labour's bright, shiny promise of a fair society has faded away. And all that remains is disappointment, hardship, and – worst of all – hopelessness." I agree.

Secondly our tax system is grossly unfair with the poorest 20% of people in the country still losing a bigger chunk of their incomes to the tax man than the richest 20% and a millionaire still pays a lower rate of tax on capital gains than their cleaner does on their wages.

Thirdly Nick Clegg highlighted the importance of a good education in lifting people out of poverty and improving their life chances and I'm delighted he came to Southwark where under the current administration education results have dramatically improved with record GCSE and primary school results.

**12. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH**

What assurances can the executive member give that Seven Islands Leisure Centre will be able to provide a full service for its users throughout 2010?

**RESPONSE**

I am grateful for this very timely question as only last week we announced the first phase of refurbishment works to Seven Islands Leisure Centre, an investment of £250,000 into modernising the gym facilities. Plans for the next phase, bringing the children's swimming pool back into use and improving the changing rooms are well underway and we are awaiting the outcome of a bid to the government's free swimming capital fund, which will be match funded by the council. Over the last two years we have made real progress in modernising our leisure centres at Dulwich, Camberwell, Surrey Docks and now Seven Islands.

Thanks to excellent contract negotiations by our leisure & wellbeing team, Fusion Lifestyle, which operates the leisure centre for Southwark Council, is funding the first phase investment at Seven Islands. The gym closed temporarily on 17 March for the works to take place. The refurbished gym will feature a range of top specification equipment for cardiovascular and resistance exercise programmes. As well as treadmills with MP3 docks and Freeview

television, there are cardiovascular machines suitable for disabled users, bikes, cross training, rowing machines and a free weights area.

During the brief closure members of the Seven Islands Centre will be able to use all of the other Southwark leisure facilities. The closest is the new gym at Surrey Docks Watersports Centre which is approximately eight minutes walk from Seven Islands and has recently been transformed following a £2.39 million investment by Southwark Council.

The new facilities will bring Seven Islands gym firmly into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We aim to be open on Thursday 1 April, ready for the Easter weekend and I hope to begin work on the wet side later this year.

**13. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM JANE SALMON**

Could the executive member outline the progress made towards refurbishing or replacing all of Southwark's leisure centres and upgrade them to 21st century standards.

**RESPONSE**

The £2.39 million refurbishment of Surrey Docks Watersports Centre was completed in February and the centre officially re-opened on the 11<sup>th</sup> of that month. The building is completely transformed and now offers standards comparable with the best in the private sector. The centre boasts state of the art changing facilities for all users as well as a new sixty station gym, dance and spin studios and a club room for training and relaxation.

The watersports programme is thriving and a whole new group of customers have been introduced to the centre. In the first month of operation, about four hundred people have joined up. Anecdotal reports suggest that a high proportion of these new customers, who were first interested in conventional leisure activities such as the gym, dance and spin classes or yoga are now also considering involvement in watersports at the centre, either for themselves or their children.

The refurbishment of Dulwich Leisure Centre has a budget of £6.4 million and is on target for delivery. The first phase (the new entrance, pool, wet-change, cafe and exercise/dance studios) will open to the public in the summer of this year. The second phase will commence immediately afterwards and the whole building will be re-commissioned by early 2011.

The refurbishment works at Camberwell Leisure Centre has a budget of £4.4 million. Works to the centre have now commenced and is on target for completion towards the end of this year. In addition to a new entrance, pool, gym, cafe and changing rooms the centre will also host a facility specifically for young people for recreation and training.

Both Dulwich and Camberwell will have their historical features restored as part of the investment programme and Southwark will be one of the few boroughs in the country to have two thriving Victorian swimming pools.

The first phase of investment in Seven Islands Leisure Centre commenced on 17 March, with £250,000 invested in refurbishing the gym. We are awaiting the outcome of a bid to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Free Swimming Capital Fund for £500,000. If this is successful then a £650,000 project (including match funding from Southwark) will commence to re-open the training pool and refurbish the wet side changing rooms.

Finally, planning permission has now been obtained for the refurbishment of the Southwark Park Athletics Complex. We are now in the process of making external funding bids to match the council's contribution of £1.1 million. The whole project will have a budget in excess of

£5 million and will include a new track suitable for able bodied and wheel chair athletes as well as offering a pavilion and gym that complies with the Disability Discrimination Act. New games pitches and areas for field athletics will also be included at the site. If successful it will form part of Southwark's 2012 legacy along with all the other projects listed above.

The council is committed to providing a new leisure centre at the Elephant and Castle and proposals will be brought to the Executive in June.

**14. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE**

How much has the council paid out in "performance related pay for senior managers at the top two tiers" (written response to members question 17, council assembly 27/01/2010) since 2006?

**RESPONSE**

Figures below are for three years; 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2009. As performance related pay (PRP) is paid a year in arrears, figures for 2009-10 are unavailable.

2006-07	£81,742
2007-08	£111,786
2008-09	£79,049
Total PRP paid	£272,578

As a member of, and previous chair of the audit and governance committee, Councillor Livingstone has had numerous opportunities to look at this scheme, set up by the previous Labour administration in 1999.

**15. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER**

What ratio of members of staff to desks does the council require on each floor of the Tooley Street building to secure the efficiency savings that the executive have promised year after year? What are the current ratios of desk occupancy by floor?

**RESPONSE**

The ratio assumed for the Tooley Street business case, and for subsequent efficiency planning, was an average of 8 desks to 10 staff.

Experience of occupying Tooley Street has shown that lower desk to staff ratios than 8:10 can be achieved comfortably. Therefore, we are now identifying additional teams to move into Tooley Street which will allow us to reduce costs even further.

**16. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE ZULETA**

In 2006 the Liberal Democrats promised to 'Keep council tax low – less than the London average' – how has he fulfilled that manifesto commitment?

**RESPONSE**

Southwark's council tax has moved from being one of the highest, to one of the lowest in London during the last eight years. Since 2006, we have kept council tax increases below



the rate of inflation, and we have frozen council tax on three occasions. I believe that council tax is an unfair and regressive tax, not based on the ability to pay, and particularly in times of economic hardship it is vital that we keep increases to a minimum to protect the most vulnerable people in our community.

**17. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI**

By how much did tenants' rents and service charges rise in Southwark this year and how does this compare with Lambeth?

**RESPONSE**

Rent will go up by 1.33%, about £1.00 a week for most tenants, the minimum allowed by the government. Service charges have been frozen.

In contrast, in Lambeth, rent will increase by 3.14% (about £2.60 per week) to pay for the disastrous performance of Lambeth Homes, their privatised housing service. In addition, I am appalled to say that service charges have soared by 8% on average, nearly three times the rate of inflation.

**18. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER**

Given that more than half of all low income households are now paying full council tax, much higher than a decade ago, what measures is the council taking to make sure the tax burden doesn't hit those least able to pay?

**RESPONSE**

Since the beginning of this administration, we have kept council tax increases below inflation, and have indeed frozen it on three occasions in order to protect those least able to pay.

**19. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE**

The Care Quality Commission's Independence, Wellbeing and Choice Report makes 18 recommendations for Southwark's adult social care services. Which of these does the executive member not intend to take action on?

**RESPONSE**

I would like to make it clear that although we were not able to agree the report with the Care Quality Commission, and we continue to disagree with some of the content, assertions and judgements in the report, that has not stopped us working hard to progress the recommendations identified in the report.

To that end an action plan was drawn up following the inspection and we have made significant progress delivering against these recommendations. I have received appropriate briefings from senior officers regarding our progress against these recommendations.

The council has sought independent professional evaluation of the Care Quality Commission's findings regarding the performance and judgements of Southwark Health and Social Care and is undertaking an assessment and improvement programme to look at how best to develop future service provision and provide services that are tailored to people's needs.

Some examples of the progress we have made include:

- Making safeguarding training part of the induction programme for all council staff
- Resolving safeguarding cases more quickly
- Issuing personal budgets, with 508 people taking the chance to control their own care funds and design the service right for them. We expect to meet the government target on this by the end of the year with 17% of people with personal budgets or direct payments
- Appointing an independent chair of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board

We are also in dialogue and working with CQC and the Department of Health on the next annual performance assessment (APA).

**20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR ADE LASAKI**

With the proportion of people living in relative poverty in the UK almost twice that of the Netherlands, and one-and-half times that of France, what challenges does this bring to the provision of health and social care?

**RESPONSE**

As a former chair of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny committee I am sure you will have read NHS Southwark's 5 year Strategic Plan which was published yesterday.

The plan notes that in Southwark, "There is a high level of ethnic diversity with 63% percent of people being white, 26% black (of which 16% are of African origin). Amongst younger people, 68% of school pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The black population is more concentrated in Peckham, Camberwell Green, Faraday and Chaucer wards of the borough, which are also amongst the most deprived.

"Southwark's level of deprivation has improved in recent years but still remains the 9th most deprived London Borough (26th nationally). .. The Index of Well Being for children in Southwark is amongst the worst in the country - 348th out of 354 local authorities. .. there is a higher prevalence of hypertension and diabetes in populations of African origin, resulting in a higher risk of developing chronic kidney disease, a significant element of the Southwark population ... "

Alarminglly however, I note from page 22 of the report that Southwark NHS say, "Our income and expenditure are both £493m in 2009/10. Expenditure is forecast to increase to £653m by 2013/14 due to increases in activity and costs. We expect expenditure will increase as a result of the following:

- Population increases
- Underlying acute activity growth
- Implementation of Health Care for London Strategic Pathways
- Revenue costs of Polysystems
- Creation of Risk Reserve (1%)
- Contractual Commitments

Our anticipated allocation will be £558m by 2013/14. A gross funding gap of £95m. "

So there we have it. In one of the poorest places in the country with poor health outcomes that adversely impact upon our BME communities, our local NHS is faced with cutting nearly £100 million over the next 4 years.

**21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES GURLING**

Given the high numbers of Southwark residents in low paid employment, how did the withdrawal of the 10p tax rate impact on those with very low incomes and what impact does poverty have on local peoples' health?

**RESPONSE**

The Labour-dominated Treasury Committee said that households without children or anyone over the age of 65 on under £18,500 a year would lose out if the 10p tax rate was withdrawn, leaving those on low incomes on average £120 worse off. This shocking decision was made despite the fact that links between poverty and ill health are well documented.

There is noticeably higher ill health (for example diseases affecting the heart and circulatory diseases, some cancers and accidents) in deprived areas. Poverty and low income can also lead to reduced access to services, narrower economic and social expectations, disempowerment and social exclusion.

Poorer people tend to live in poorer quality housing and may experience ill health such as asthma and other respiratory conditions associated with poor ventilation, damp and mould; fuel poverty may lead to inadequate heating and increased circulatory problems and potential hypothermia; overcrowded housing is associated with increased risks of home accidents and poorer environments for infants.

Families on low incomes have more limited access to good quality food and generally have poorer eating habits. There are fewer fruit and vegetables in the adult diet and less food rich in dietary fibre. The diet of children from low income families often has less fruit and cereals and more inappropriate weaning foods such as crisps, sweets and soft drinks. Poor nutrition is associated with adult and childhood obesity and with poor dental health amongst children. Obesity is a risk factor for circulatory diseases, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. Poor maternal nutrition is associated with lower birth weight babies and higher infant mortality.

Unemployment and poor working conditions have been clearly linked to poor physical and mental health. Socio-economic disadvantage is also a significant risk factor in the probability of a child developing a mental health problem.

On this basis the impact of the withdrawal of the 10p tax rate will have a disproportionate impact on residents in a borough like Southwark and Labour has shown that despite their rhetoric they have failed to protect and stand up for the poorest members of our community.

In contrast the Liberal Democrats are committed to changing the tax system so no one pays any income tax on the first £10,000 they earn cutting most people's tax by £700.

**22. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MCGOVERN**

How many people does the executive member anticipate will not have been given the Freedom Pass they are entitled to by the deadline at the end of March?

**RESPONSE**

As I am sure Councillor McGovern is aware, the council is not responsible for issuing Freedom Passes, London Councils is.

People entitled to Freedom Passes have to apply through the Post Office, if they are over sixty years of age. Only people who are under sixty apply to the council. We then issue a letter of authorisation that they take to the Post Office to file their application. 3200 people are automatically eligible.

A further 2400 people require an assessment to judge their eligibility for a pass. To date, 1,900 of these have applied to us for their letter of authorisation, leaving around 500 people yet to apply. We have sent at least three reminders to each of these people, and every day we are receiving more applications.

**23. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED**

When will a steering group consisting of residents (similar to the Aylesbury Regeneration Group – and as promised by Councillor Stanton at the last Walworth Community Council meeting) be set up to work on the regeneration of the Elephant and Castle?

**RESPONSE**

As part of the ambitious regeneration of the area it is vital that the council establishes a body which can both help feed in local ideas and provide up to date information for local people.

As both the leader and I told Walworth community council last month, before a group is established the regeneration agreement needs to be fully completed with Lend Lease – which will happen in June this year – and the masterplan for the area, including a site for the new leisure centre will need to be published.

Once both of these have happened I am committed to working with local councillors, local groups and local residents to agree the most effective forum for these issues to be discussed, based on the excellent examples already established as part of the regeneration schemes at Canada Water and on the Aylesbury Estate.

**24. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON**

It appears that Southwark failed to renew its registration of the website designed to provide information to local residents and others about the Elephant and Castle regeneration ([www.elephantandcastle.org.uk](http://www.elephantandcastle.org.uk)), meaning that it ceased to exist in February. What does say about the council's commitment to keeping the public informed about this regeneration?

**RESPONSE**

Councillor Seaton has been misinformed as a quick web search would show. The website he mentioned is up and running.

**25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PIDGEON**

Transport for London are planning up to 82 weekend and early evening closures for the Northern Line. What impact will these have on businesses and residents who live near the Northern Line tube stations in Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

If the botched upgrade of the Jubilee Line is any indication of what is in store for residents and businesses who rely on the Northern Line then they could well be in for 18 months of frustration and anger.

The local business community has already raised concerns over the impact of these works in a number of forums and the council is working with them to lobby Transport for London for appropriate minimisation of works and mitigation of impacts.

**26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR WILMA NELSON**

How many new affordable homes have been built or made available over the last four years?

**RESPONSE**

The provision of more affordable housing, especially properties with 3 or more bedrooms is crucial to this administration's vision for improving housing for Southwark residents. The number of new affordable homes completed in Southwark in the last four complete years and the most recent projection for the current year are laid out in the table below. The affordable total for each year is made up of rented properties and intermediate properties. The intermediate category includes the homes delivered through the range of low cost home ownership products available e.g. shared ownership, and also properties built for intermediate rent.

<b>Number of new homes completed</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Rented</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Total</b>
2005-06	412	129	<b>541</b>
2006-07	445	417	<b>862</b>
2007-08	397	378	<b>775</b>
2008-09	232	247	<b>479</b>
2009-10	412	238	<b>650</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>1409</b>	<b>3307</b>

As part of our commitment, in the four full years since 2005 there have therefore been 2657 new affordable homes built in the borough, with a further 650 projected for this year.

In addition, since April 2005 a further 64 major voids (void properties requiring more than £10,000 of works - generally long term) have been repaired and brought back into use under the major voids programme. There have also been 44 major voids converted back into 4 bed plus family homes, and 3 extensions to the properties of existing council tenants who have been overcrowded.

Over the period 2005-06 – 2008-09, 461 family sized council properties were released through under-occupiers moving to smaller homes through the 'small is beautiful' campaign.

**27. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR JELIL LADIPO**

What are the next steps on the Elephant and Castle regeneration?

**RESPONSE**

I'm very pleased to report the significant progress on the commercial terms of the regeneration agreement with Lend Lease. It is now 95% completed, and although we would have wanted to have the agreement signed this month it is essential that we get the fine detail right on such a long term agreement, and ensure value for money for Southwark's council tax payers.

All documentation will be completed in good time for the executive to consider and agree the regeneration agreement in early June – the earliest date for a meeting of the council's executive.

Ongoing discussions between the council, Lend Lease and St Modwen regarding the shopping centre have also been positive, and if an agreement can be reached by June on the shopping centre then this issue can also be considered by the executive alongside the main regeneration agreement.

However, if no agreement with St Modwen can be reached by the beginning of June, the executive is clear that the regeneration agreement will still be brought to the June meeting of the executive for consideration.

**28. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH**

Could the executive member give details of precisely what development will take place in the Peckham Rye Central Area in 2010-11 according to the current plans of the Liberal Democrat and Conservative administration, and how the council plans to pay for this development?

**RESPONSE**

The proposed development within the Peckham Rye Park Central Area is the building of a new One O'clock Club and play area. As agreed at the Nunhead & Peckham Rye community council meeting of 22 July 2009 CGS funding of £215,000 plus £100,000 of playbuilder funding will be used to:

- Build a new One O'clock club
- Develop a new children's play area
- Develop a longer term plan for the central area and the Homestall Road site.

Children's Services have applied for a further £300,000 Sure Start funding to supplement funding for the One O'clock club and we will know by the end of April 2010 if this is successful. Either way the new One O'Clock club will be delivered by March 2011. The new play area will be completed by November 2010 with consultation due to begin in April 2010.

**29. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN**

In 1999 the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair said in a speech at the Toynbee Hall "And I will set out our historic aim that ours is the first generation to end child poverty for ever, and it will take a generation, poverty should not be a birthright. Being poor should not be a life sentence. We need to break the cycle of disadvantage so that children born into poverty are not condemned to social exclusion and deprivation. It is a 20 year mission but I believe it can be done." He also pledged to halve child poverty by 2010 as an interim measure. How successful has Labour been in achieving this and what impact has it had on Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

As can be gathered from the report of Harriet Harman's own National Equality Panel Labour has failed dismally to meet the former PM's grandiloquent vision. Labour hasn't halved child poverty by 2010, nor ended the cycle of disadvantage and as many children are living in poverty now as there were in 1997.

The impact of this failure on Southwark, as one of the country's most deprived boroughs, has been huge. Labour's command and control of local spending has driven out local initiative and their ludicrous restrictions on what the council can spend on housing has meant many more children growing up in poor housing than is either desirable or necessary. The council's report, Once and For All, written by the LGIU, shows how the council – at no cost to the exchequer – could refinance its debt and provide the quality of homes Southwark tenants deserve. I hope the new government will look at it more sympathetically than the old one.

**30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE**

Could the executive member for environment confirm that there currently is a three week waiting time for cremations? If this is the case could he please confirm how this situation arose which is forcing bereaved families to arrange services in other boroughs so that their loved ones can be laid to rest?

**RESPONSE**

I am happy to put Councillor Hargrove's mind at rest; there is currently no waiting list for the crematoria.

**31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR GORDON NARDELL**

2010 has so far seen two cyclists fatally injured in collisions with lorries on Southwark's roads, highlighting the threat that HGVs pose to cyclists. What measures does the executive member for environment propose to take to improve the safety of cyclists on those roads under Southwark Council's control?

**RESPONSE**

The council very much regrets the deaths of the cyclists. We work very hard to ensure the safety of cyclists on Southwark roads.

The council currently undertakes training and advice programmes focussed on cyclist safety and a number particularly aimed at HGV drivers on cyclist awareness. For example, our road safety team have also recently rolled out a new programme of training to refuse vehicle drivers and bus drivers which aims to increase their awareness of cyclists on the road.

**32. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER**

The road surface on East Street is still a hazard for stall holders on the market and shoppers, despite repeated assurances that it will be properly improved. When will East Street be resurfaced?

**RESPONSE**

I am pleased to let you know that a further £250,000 of funding has been allocated to East Street from the local implementation plan in addition to the £100,000 already allocated from the councils' highways improvement scheme.

Walworth community council has a budget of £100,000 for road repairs and £350,000 for cleaner, greener, safer projects and there is money available from Transport for London. East Street will be resurfaced when the local community council makes it a priority.

**33. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY**

Would the executive member for the environment please outline the steps he, or other executive members, have taken to make common cause with other London boroughs concerned about the threat to through running northwards beyond Blackfriars of trains using the Thameslink Wimbledon loop; and would he give his views about the detriment to passengers using this service from Herne Hill and Elephant and Castle that termination at Blackfriars would cause, with particular reference to Crossrail.

**RESPONSE**

Following the consideration by the executive on 23 March of January's council assembly motion on this issue the council will contact other interested London boroughs to discuss how we can influence the drawing up of future timetables to ensure that residents across Southwark benefit from both changes to Thameslink and the construction of Crossrail.

**34. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD**

A scrutiny sub-committee recently heard shocking evidence from tenants of the continued failings of the dysfunctional repairs service. These include homes left without power for four weeks, prospective tenants being asked to take possession of flats which are in unsanitary condition, workmen regularly turning up without tools and contractors over specifying for simple repairs. Is the executive member for housing prepared to continue to assert that the repairs service is providing an acceptable service to Southwark residents?

**RESPONSE**

The repairs service in Southwark has significantly improved in the last 4 years. In particular, tenants can now order repairs and book an appointment. The response times for repairs are in the top quartile for London as measured by Homemark. There are over 200,000 repairs carried out every year and although we do not always get every repair right, the performance indicators show significant improvement. In fact, satisfaction with our repairs service is now over 90%. There are no records of properties with a loss of power for over four weeks and we treat all such situations with the highest priority.

**35. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CITIZENSHIP, EQUALITIES & COMMUNITIES FROM COUNCILLOR TAYO SITU**

Will the executive member for citizenship, equalities and communities join me in condemning the decision by Conservative Mayor Boris Johnson to cut funding for Black History Month events from £132,000 to just £10,000? Will she commit to continued funding from Southwark Council for Black History Month?

**RESPONSE**



The Mayor of London reassures me that he values the vast wealth of cultural, religious and ethnic richness that Londoners of African-Caribbean descent bring to our cosmopolitan city, and is unequivocal in his commitment to ensuring BME communities are able to fully participate in and contribute to life in the capital.

Supporters of the previous Mayor have made a number of inaccurate statements about the budget for Black History Month. The London Mayor will continue to support the month and will hold a large annual event in City Hall. However City Hall have decided not to hold a series of workshops throughout the month as they believe they competed rather than complemented events and campaigns held at the borough level and elsewhere.

Whilst Black History Month is a significant event, the Greater London Authority and local authorities recognise that Black History and the contribution of BME communities to London life needs to be recognised all year round and through all cultural and community services. This is a key principle of Southwark's equalities and diversity policy and is integral to our cultural and community services. Similarly, the Mayor of London is committing funding to a broad range of new initiatives which are inclusive of and feature Black History and BME communities, such as the Story of London, and financial support to the development of the Black Cultural Archives, which represent a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the role of the BME community in London's history.

Through efficient management of resources in my department the commitment to funding for Southwark's Black History Month will remain at the same level as previously - £30,000. This is the highest level of funding that any London borough commits to Black History Month. This contrasts with Lambeth where Black History Month has no dedicated budget attached to it and no grants or other funding are available to voluntary organisations.

**36. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES**

Can the executive member detail the funding arrangements of the Aylesbury Community Reassurance project over the last year and then explain the funding arrangements for 2010-11 and 2011-12?

**RESPONSE**

The funding for the community reassurance project in 2009-10 is £300,000 from the Aylesbury Creation Trust. In addition the Police funding for dedicated Police officers and PCSO's is £400,000. The National Offender Management Service funds a dedicated Probation Officer which amounts to £50,000. The funding for the Police, Probation and elements of the project team such as the dedicated resettlement workers will continue in 2010-11 and will remain under the title of the Southwark Diamond Initiative.

We are currently in dialogue with the London Criminal Justice Partnership to negotiate 2011-12 and beyond. An evaluation of the first year of the Diamond Team will be published by the London Criminal Justice Partnership in April 2010.

Housing management and community safety and enforcement are working together to establish a dedicated Aylesbury management team. The team will provide a number of officers with generic skills, with specialist services brought in to focus on key issues as they arise. In addition the team will be supported by visible reassurance patrols by warden's officers in the late evening and weekends. These officers will be dedicated to the estate. Recruitment for the manager of the team is currently underway.

**37. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY**

Recent statistics show that violent crime in Southwark is back on the rise. Is the executive member concerned that police cuts and CCTV cuts will only add to this trend and the fear of violent crime?

**RESPONSE**

I have been assured by the Borough Commander that none of the Mayor of London's policing cuts will see a reduction in police officers in Southwark. I am also pleased that the CCTV Strategy recently adopted will help us to make the best possible use of the borough's CCTV to reduce crime and fear of crime.