

Council Assembly

Wednesday 27 November 2013

7.00 pm

Harris Academy Peckham, 112 Peckham Road, London SE15 5DZ

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Date: 27 November 2013

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

1. QUESTION FROM JEFF KELLAND TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT

Now that milk, coal, fruit and vegetables are no longer delivered nor night soil collected, who benefits from Devon Mansions blocks 1-21 SE1 security doors providing access via the 'trade' button for anyone between 0600 and 1000 each day? Deliverers of pizza leaflets?

RESPONSE

There is no technical reason why the door entry trades times cannot be altered to operate from 1000 - 1400. The present arrangements (0700 - 11.00) have been standard for most councils for 20+ years and it is for security reasons that the system have not been changed.

The door entry systems are installed to ensure residents' security and to extend the trades times to 1400 would leave the buildings unsecure for the busier part of the day. This would possibly allow free access to an increased number of individuals that may be loitering in the early afternoon. The unsecure system could lead to unauthorised access and increased levels of anti-social behaviour and crime, with the resultant additional complaints from residents.

It is, however, up to residents themselves what hours of operation they would wish to see in individual blocks and the access arrangements can be changed. However, the council would not consider making any changes until it had canvassed the views of every single resident in the block.

The table below shows the number of improvements that have been carried out to security doors in recent years. It includes updates following major works and new doors installation.

Year	Total
2010	1156
2011	1064
2012	972
2013	3203
Grand Total	6395

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER

PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON THE THEME

1. QUESTION FROM PRIYA PRAKASH TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC WELLBEING

Traditional high streets in Southwark need more custom, while motorists flock to hypermarkets. Setting utilisation targets for parking machines would benefit high streets.

Should the council have a target utilisation rate for paid high-street parking, which can be found by calculating the percentage utilisation based on takings for each machine?

RESPONSE

Setting utilisation rate targets for parking spaces with the aim of increasing the use of available parking will mean that more car journeys are made to our town centres, this would be contrary to our current policy of setting parking tariffs upon the basis of the need to manage local parking demand and our overall transport policies which are to encourage walking/cycling and public transport.

A recent report commissioned by London Councils (1) on the relevance of parking in the success of urban centres found that the three key issues around revitalising high streets were:

1. **A good mix of shops and services and a quality environment are some of the most important factors in attracting visitors to town centres.** Simply changing parking or accessibility is very unlikely to make a town centre more attractive.
2. **Shopkeepers consistently overestimate the share of their customers coming by car. In some cases, this is by a factor of as much as 400%.** In London, as well as other cities, the share of those accessing urban centres on foot or by public transport is much greater. Walking is the most important mode for accessing local town centres.
3. **Car drivers spend more on a single trip; walkers and bus users spend more over a week or a month.** In 2011, in London town centres, walkers spent £147 more per month than those travelling by car. Compared with 2004, spending by public transport users and walkers has risen whilst spending by car users has decreased.

Notwithstanding this, all of our off street car parks offer free evening and weekend parking.

(1) A review for London Councils

<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/policylobbying/transport/parkinginlondon/parkingurban.htm>

2. QUESTION FROM BARBARA PATTINSON TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC WELLBEING

Camberwell has scores of independent businesses struggling to survive in a setting of site specific challenges, many of which require multi agency co-operation.

Do you think the council should reinstate the role of neighbourhood co-ordinator to lead a team seeking opportunities to support and promote local businesses and community well-being?

RESPONSE

Supporting business to grow and creating thriving town centres and high streets in places like Camberwell is a big priority for the council. I am very interested in hearing about different ways in we can better support local business, particularly in these austere economic times.

I want, however, for us to learn the lessons of the past when we had teams of officers in different places not always aligned to each other. This risks diverting stretched resource into staff and administration rather than passing it directly to communities.

Through our regeneration team we have recently established programme officers who, alongside delivering projects, also ensure there is alignment of the different regeneration activity going on in places like Camberwell and Peckham. This includes working with local groups and organisations.

We are also supporting and promoting local business by investing resources directly into the local economy in areas like Camberwell. This includes building capacity in local firms and groups to work together to promote their area.

Almost £500,000 has been spent through the community restoration fund (CRF), which was set up in the wake of the 2011 disturbances, engaging over 400 businesses in different ways across the length and breadth of the borough. The cash has put direct investment into our high streets and supported networks like the Camberwell Business Network who received some £50,000 to promote Camberwell as a place to shop.

Learning from CRF, we are also developing a new town centre growth initiative of up to £600,000. The fund will provide businesses and business networks with the opportunity to work together in places like Camberwell to promote the area and further improve the high street. I would welcome ideas on how we make the most of that fund to support our independent traders, whether that is through better co-ordination or other means. More details of the fund will become available in the new year.

We've also developed a new model of community engagement that promotes community well-being from the ground up. This is about investing in capacity building and supporting stronger community organisations that take direct responsibility for the future of their areas. Further, our latest round of a £1.5m transition fund will support voluntary and community organisations, particularly those providing advice on welfare changes, to transform and provide better services for our community.

We are also making greater use of the web and on-line tools and have developed a new business portal as a one stop shop for business advice and support in the borough which will help local traders in areas all across the borough including Camberwell.

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY****(ORDINARY MEETING)****WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2013****URGENT QUESTION****1. URGENT QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI**

What is the council doing to improve cycle safety across the borough in light of the recent tragic deaths of six cyclists in London, including Richard Muzira in Camberwell on 18 November?

RESPONSE

The death of Richard Muzira in Camberwell is a terrible tragedy and my thoughts are with his family and friends.

Any death on our roads is a death too many, but with six deaths in two weeks across London, I believe that London-wide we need to look to more radical solutions to make our roads safer. That is why I have proposed a safe cycling hour, where HGVs are banned from London's roads in the morning and evening for an hour and when cyclists know that at those times they will not have to navigate the city's streets with large HGVs.

I have spoken to the Mayor's cycling adviser following Mr Muzira's death and he has committed to look at this suggestion along with other ideas about how we improve cycle safety.

I want Southwark to be the safest borough in London for cyclists and get more people on their bikes. We are already doing this, and are making changes to make cycling safer. Significant improvements are being made in the cycling infrastructure in the Borough, with over £2.2 million spent since 2010. We are the first borough to implement Trixi mirrors to improve safety for cyclists at junctions. Eight junctions have been completed and another five are expected this financial year. I have also asked officers to prioritise the junction where Mr Muzira was killed. In addition we have introduced and are introducing eleven cycle contra flows, one cut through, five cycle superhighway complementary measures and three green links. All of this is being implemented during 2012/13 and 2013/14, this includes Greendale phase 1 and 2.

Cyclists do not stop at the borough's boundaries, which is why we are closely with Transport for London (TfL) and the Mayor's officer on improvements to the strategic network. This includes:

- London grid – seven routes are identified by TfL and currently are being looked at by Southwark
- Quietways – some seven quiet cycle routes have been identified, with plans to make a decision on their suitability and priority early next year
- Working with TfL to deliver new and improved Cycle Superhighways
- Awaiting Mayor's design guidance for cycling infrastructure.

As well as physical changes, we are working to improve training and speed reduction which is key for cyclist safety. This includes:

- Making Southwark a 20 mph borough
- Offering free cyclist training to anyone that lives, works or is educated in the borough (training around 959 children and 731 adults per year). With a target to increase this by 10% by March 2014.
- Signing up to the LCC Safer Lorries Campaign
- Running Safer Urban Driver courses for drivers of HGVs
- Having a programme of HGV/Cyclist awareness days – Exchanging Places
- Having all roads Bikeability assessed – accessible via the council's website
- Being successful with £285,000 bid as part of the Cycling Schools Partnership for junction improvements, Bike it Plus Officer and seed funding in Dulwich area
- Running a programme of Dr Bikes
- Running a 'Park to Park' mass cycle ride for children
- Running a cycle loan scheme for teachers
- Running cycling clubs in schools
- Currently running cycling campaign promoting cycling and cycle safety
- Promoting cycling and cycle safety through the school travel plan process
- Running education/enforcement days with the police
- Looking at the possibility of running HGV events in secondary schools
- Looking at running bike building/maintenance classes for children and adults where participants get to keep their bikes.

As a borough we are taking cycle safety seriously. All of these changes are about improving cycling and safety in the borough. However, I want, London-wide, for us to look at what more can be done and welcome that my idea for a cycle safe hour has sparked a real debate about more radical solutions.

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY)
WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2013
MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY

In the light of the recent report in "Southwark News" of the leader's views on pension fund investment, would the leader advise how many complaints have been received to date on the investment policy from our pension scheme members; and would he set out his view on whether the cost of any survey of scheme members should be met from the pension fund or from the general fund?

RESPONSE

The council, as the administering body for the pension fund, has a duty to ensure that pension fund is able to meet its commitment to those who have paid in through their working life. This has to be our primary objective as any shortfall would need to be met through the council's general fund which would impact on the services which the council provide and increase tax to the borough's residents.

Alongside this, the council also has a broader role and as part of this should consider how it acts ethically with the money it has. The challenge is how to effectively balance the two: get the rate of return required to pay the pensions, and ensure that money is being invested as ethically as possible. I welcome the cross party decision to consider this as part of the pensions advisory panel.

As I highlighted in my interview with Southwark News, there is a challenge to identify what we include under the heading "ethical investments". My interview was the start of this conversation but it is not as simple as picking off a couple of industries and banning investments in them. I believe it would be a mistake to rush something through without considering all the implications – that is why I propose a consultation as part of the work we are doing.

In response to your specific question: no complaints or enquiries from individual scheme members have been received by officers relating to the investments contained in the pension fund. Expenditure on fund matters would normally be charged to the fund unless it is deemed to relate more to service issues. Once the nature of any survey is established, we would look at how it should best be funded.

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR NEIL COYLE

What response has the leader of the council had from the House of Commons Standards Committee on his complaint against Simon Hughes for breaches of the Parliamentary Code of Conduct?

RESPONSE

The Commissioner has reported on the complaint I made about the conduct of Right Honourable Simon Hughes MP and now Mr Hughes has been forced to apologise to the House of Commons for failing to declare over £30,000 in

donations over a period of six years. The standards committee published a damning report highlighting that Mr Hughes accepted party donations from companies and then spoke about them in Parliament, while failing to declare the donations. The standards committee noted that while one breach on its own could have been easily dealt with, in Mr Hughes' case months of investigation were needed because of the number of breaches, the large value of the donations and allegations of paid advocacy.

The Liberal Democrat MP's conduct is not only embarrassing; it also falls well short of the standards people in Southwark would expect from their MP. I made this complaint to the Parliamentary Commissioner on Standards to shine a light on what the Liberal Democrat MP was doing and I welcome the decision that he breached the rules and had to apologise to the House of Commons.

I am disappointed that Liberal Democrat councillors have chosen to remain silent on this issue.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE

What steps are the council taking to regenerate and revitalise the Old Kent Road?

RESPONSE

I want the Old Kent Road to be at the heart of the borough's plans and aspirations for the future. For too long, the Old Kent Road has missed out on the opportunities afforded to other parts of the borough. The previous administration ignored the needs of the Old Kent Road and I am determined that that will change.

The council is reviewing the Southwark Plan and core strategy to prepare a new Southwark Plan. This will set out a regeneration strategy for the next 15 years and ensure that Southwark is being developed positively to regenerate, enhance and protect where needed. I want Old Kent Road to be a major part of that.

This summer, the council organised a series of walkabouts involving local residents to hear about their views of the area. This will be followed up with a consultation event early in the new year which is part of the new Southwark Plan consultation, but with a specific focus on the Old Kent Road and issues associated with health of the high street. This is also an opportunity for more detailed feedback on business, transport, housing and other issues that will enable feedback on the most appropriate way forward. In conjunction with this, the council is also starting to gather evidence which will inform the new Southwark Plan and has commissioned a study of warehousing and industrial land across the borough. This study is ongoing and is aiming to find out more about the quality of industrial and warehousing premises, the businesses which are located in our preferred industrial locations, including the Old Kent Road, and the needs of those businesses. This study will be published in the new year and will feed into a wider review of employment land planning policies that will take place as part of preparing the new Southwark Plan.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL SITU

Can the leader of the council confirm the live date for the SELCHP energy waste facilitator and explain the benefits this project will have for residents in Southwark?

RESPONSE

South East London Combined Heat and Power (SELCHP) will see heating and hot water being provided to some of our housing estates without the need to burn fossil fuels for the first time. This scheme is the first of its kind in London and only the third in the country. It has generated regional, national and international interest, and visitors from as far afield as Japan have come to talk to us about this innovative project.

Hot water from SELCHP is scheduled to enter in to the heat network feeding around 2,600 properties in the New Place Estate (Four Squares), Keetons Estate, Rouel Road Estate, Slippers Place, Abbeyfield, Pedworth Estate, Silverlock Estate, Tissington, and Silwood Estate on 11 December 2013.

This project offers substantial benefits to residents on the estates involved compared to the current arrangements including increased resilience and lower energy bills. As well as helping people with their energy bills, there are huge environmental benefits. We expect to reduce emissions by 8,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year – the equivalent to taking around 2,700 cars off Southwark roads.

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

How much has the council so far spent on legal fees in the pursuit of its appeal against the Information Commissioner's Office ruling that it must publish viability information for the Heygate Estate redevelopment? How much has it budgeted for its total spend on legal fees associated with the appeal? What resources [financial, human or other] has the project developer contributed toward this legal challenge?

RESPONSE

The council is challenging the Information Commissioner's Office ruling because we believe that planning and regeneration processes would be prejudiced if this information had to be made public. Viability information is subjected to expert analysis and scrutiny by the district valuer on behalf of the council, which ensures that we have a good understanding of the real risks and potential profits associated with a given development. We therefore believe that the balance of the public interest lies in withholding the information. This is a view shared by the Mayor of London, the Greater London Authority and the government's Department of Communities and Local Government.

The council has spent £8,650 on barristers' fees and a further £10,470 on internal legal fees in respect of the appeal to the Information Commissioner's ruling. Total spend to date is £19,120.

The further estimated costs associated with the appeal are £7,200 for internal legal fees and £31,600 barristers' fees for the five day court hearing. The total estimated cost for the appeal is £57,920 plus VAT, of which about £40,250 will be funded by Lend Lease.

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS

Can the leader of the council confirm what action is being taken to reduce the number of payday lenders opening on our high streets?

RESPONSE

I am very concerned by the growth of payday lenders, who particularly target people on low incomes and hit them with astronomical interest charges. At a time when everyone is feeling the pinch, I want to promote responsible lending such as through credit unions, rather than these legal loan sharks.

Planning laws often make it difficult for the council to stop a change in usage to a payday lender. However, local authorities can use an Article 4 Direction to help control certain uses, such as pay day loan businesses, by removing permitted development rights and requiring a planning application to be made. The proposal would then be determined in accordance with the local plan policies. It is advised that local authorities should only consider making Article 4 Directions in exceptional circumstances.

The council has taken action on this issue and planning committee approved the implementation of two Article 4 Directions with immediate effect in all of the borough's protected shopping frontages. These are the areas most affected by the clustering of betting shops, payday loan shops and pawnbrokers. These were implemented on 17 October 2013 and include withdrawing the permitted development rights for:

- Change of use from A5, A4 and A3 to A2 use
- Change of use from a range of town centres uses to A1, A2, A3 and B1 for a temporary period of two years.

The preparation of the new Southwark Plan will also provide an opportunity to explore a more "fine grained" approach to assessing the mix of uses in our town centres and protected shopping frontages. The first stage of preparation will be an 'issues' paper, which will be published later this year for consultation.

In addition to changes in planning we are also working hard to reduce the ability of payday lenders to promote their business in the borough. We have already secured agreement from two of the council's three advertisers that they will not take adverts from payday lenders in the borough and are urging the third to also stop.

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN

What are the council's long-term plans for South Dock Marina and the boatyard?

RESPONSE

The council has committed to improving service delivery and enhancing the overall value of the marina.

Recent developments include:

- Replacement all of the pontoon decks and utilities throughout the marina
- Replacing the floating shower block
- Installation of new laundry facilities
- New lifting equipment for the boat yard which has enabled operations to become more efficient and streamlined.

There has also been a significant improvement in the operational management at the marina which has led to sustainable improvements in relationships with berth holders and local residents.

8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR REBECCA LURY

Can the Leader of the Council assure me on the Council's performance on fly-tipping against claims by some opposition members that fly-tipping in Southwark has tripled?

RESPONSE

I am sorry to inform Councillor Lury that this is another case of the Liberal Democrats making things up to talk down the borough.

The number of fly tips reported by the public has in fact remained fairly stable. For example, during 2009/10 under the previous administration, an average of 325 fly-tips were reported monthly by residents and during 2012/13, this dropped to 293 per month.

However, for the same period the figures for fly-tips proactively cleared by our street cleaning service have increased considerably owing in part to more precise reporting of fly-tips found and partly due to a greater focus on known hot spots by the cleaning service rather than there being a greater volume of fly-tips present on our streets and estates.

This means that we are clearing fly-tipping before people even have a chance to report it and we are clearing more than almost any other borough in the country. This is a fantastic achievement and something which I and the council are proud of.

Unlike the previous administration who cut the number of fly-tipping lorries, we have kept the level the same with 20 vehicles used across the cleaning service to remove commercial waste, bags left out by street sweepers and fly-tips from streets and estates

The service continues to make great strides in keeping our streets clean of fly-tipped waste. The target is to clear 97.5% of all reported fly-tips within 24 hours – so far this year, 99% of all reported fly-tips have been collected within 24 hours.

9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS

What is the leader's view on investing in residential property via the council's pension fund, with the returns from rent or sales being put back into the pension pot? Will he ask the council to look into such a policy?

RESPONSE

The council holds the pension fund in trust for the staff of the council, past and present, who have paid into the fund. If there is shortfall in fund performance, then the council has to make up this difference out of their budget.

The council will be considering investment in residential property as well as many other opportunities as part of the investment strategy review. This is currently being carried out by officers working with the fund's investment advisers

AON Hewitt; the pensions advisory panel will agree the strategy and will make recommendations to the strategic director of finance and corporate services.

However, the 'trustees' of the pension fund have a legal responsibility to the fund and to fund members to get the best rate of return on any investment that is made. This would mean that under Liberal Democrat proposals, the recipients of the funds investment would most likely have to charge market rent on any properties they build and let, to ensure the best rate of return for the fund. The consequence of this Liberal Democrat policy may not be to build affordable or social housing but instead to build houses for market rent. I strongly oppose this and instead believe that this administration's plan to build 11,000 council homes is a better way to tackle the borough's housing shortage and would urge all councillors to support this rather than Liberal Democrat plans for more market rent housing. In completing this programme, this administration will pursue the most economic and effective sources of financing. All options will be considered but not to the detriment of achieving truly affordable rents.

10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARK WILLIAMS

How is Southwark Council promoting equality and opportunity within its housing service?

RESPONSE

Southwark Council is committed to promoting equality and opportunity within our housing service. I am pleased that these efforts have been recognised in 2013 with several awards, for example, in homelessness services: Chartered Institute of Housing - Charter for Equality and Diversity; and Albert Kennedy Trust (accreditation for equality and diversity – tackling community and staff attitudes towards homophobia). I am proud that Southwark is leading the way in many aspects of equality in our housing services.

In October 2013 Southwark Council became the first local authority in London to be accredited by the Housing Diversity Network for its work to promote equality and opportunity within its housing service.

The accreditation encompasses the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Guidance and also considers the opportunity to address new inequalities, new vulnerable groups and more holistic thinking to complement community needs and business strategies and policies.

The council has improved the way we work. We are training staff in aspects of safeguarding and are identifying issues through our tenancy checks. We have improved joint working between housing and adult services, particularly in relation to the provision of support and services to older people who are just below the threshold of safeguarding but who could, without intervention, very easily end up meeting the threshold at a later stage.

Through tenancy visits, officers are able to clean up equalities profiles of tenants, where they express a preference to share this personal sensitive data with us, to complete personal information about faith, sexual orientation, and ethnicity as well as age. Officers are also working to develop a range of options for closer working between housing and children's services.

11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK

Please give an update on the trial scheme to prevent rat running through residential streets to the north of Jamaica Road? What are the Leader's views on implementing a further series of one way systems in the area around Cathay Street to reduce rat running in residential areas?

RESPONSE

The Riverside traffic management scheme was implemented in June 2013 and included measures to prevent 'rat running' from west to east through the area in response to concerns raised by local residents. To deter through traffic, Pottery Street and Wilson Grove were converted to one-way working. Other options such as physical closures were considered, but not taken forward due to concerns raised at the consultation stage. Residents were concerned that implementing such closures would restrict their own access to the area.

The measures implemented are on a trial basis and will be monitored for a period of 12 months after which time a further consultation will be carried out before a decision is made as to whether to make them permanent. Following reports of vehicles disobeying the new restrictions these have been enforced using CCTV and a number of penalty charge notices have been issued.

It is likely that a physical closure of these streets will be required in order to deter 'rat running' completely. However, based on previous consultation responses, this is unlikely to be supported unless alternative access to the area from Jamaica Road can be provided. Officers are currently working with Transport for London (TfL) on plans for cycle superhighway 4 which will run along Jamaica Road by 2015. This presents an opportunity to review access to the Riverside area from Jamaica Road and the concerns raised will be relayed to TfL accordingly.

12. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CLAIRE HICKSON

Can the leader of the council update me on the likely budget settlement from government and what impact this is likely to have on services in Southwark?

RESPONSE

The government's autumn statement is planned for 5 December 2013, and we anticipate receiving details of Southwark's settlement around 19 December. Yet again we are extremely concerned that the Liberal Democrat/Tory government will slash the funding to Southwark and do so at a higher rate than the national average. We obviously hope that this will not be the case and that government will recognise the damage that is being caused by their cumulative cuts over the last three years.

In July 2013 the government issued a consultation on the 2014/15 and 2015/16 local government finance settlement. Indicative figures for Southwark show government funding for 2014/15 of £226.5 million, £26.9 million (10.6%) less than the £253.4 million 2013/14 settlement. This is again a greater cut by the government to Southwark than the national average.

Indicative figures have also been given for 2015/16, these show a further reduction of £32.2 million (14.2%), these can be compared with the national reduction of

12.4%. Again the Liberal Democrat/Tory government are slashing funding to Southwark at a rate higher than the national average.

I am disappointed that Liberal Democrats locally are burying their heads in the sand on this. While Liberal Democrats elsewhere in the country are beginning to speak out at the impact their government's policies are having, here in Southwark they remain quiet, afraid to say anything against their political masters in the Conservative Party. Their MP voted for savage cuts to Southwark, while this Labour council has stretched every penny of value out of every pound to protect residents from the failed economic policies of Nick Clegg and George Osborne.

13. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

What percentage of invoices to the council were paid within the best practice target of 10 days in 2012/13? What is the average number of days the council takes to pay an invoice in 2012/13? Will the leader commit to pay invoices within 10 days in order to support businesses?

RESPONSE

In 2012/13, the council paid 84.77% within 10 working days.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 to Date
Percentage paid within 10 working Days	69.40%	73.20%	79.44%	84.77%	88.85%
Percentage paid within 30 days	91.12%	92.34%	94.15%	95.04%	96.05%
Average days per invoice overall	14.57	13.72	11.71	9.72	8.63

The council has standard terms and conditions embedded in contracts to pay within 28 days of the invoice date. Where appropriate every effort is made to make a payment sooner and I continue to support this policy. As the table shows, this is having an impact and since this administration took over in 2010 we are paying invoices quicker and businesses are on average getting payment six days sooner than under the previous administration.

14. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH, ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND EQUALITIES FROM COUNCILLOR FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON (BOROUGH, BANKSIDE AND WALWORTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Why is there no dedicated telephone line which handles calls from older people to the council's adult social care department?

RESPONSE

There is, in fact, a single dedicated phone line for social care information and advice in place, which is 020 7525 3324. It was brought in last year to replace 28 separate lines, which people told us they had found confusing. The new "one number" launch was promoted in Southwark Life, GP practices, hospitals and day centres. It is staffed by experts in social care, all of whom are experts in social care for older people. The phone line has taken over 20,000 calls so far, helping

residents and carers to remain living as independently as possible within their communities.

We also fund specialist advice and community support services, including Riverside, who provide advice for everyone with support needs, not just those eligible for social care. Comprehensive information on service options is also available on the council's "My Support Choices" website.

Having a single number for all adult care clients, the majority of whom are older people, is considered preferable to having a separate number just for older people, ensuring an efficient and fair approach to the provision of advice, information and support across all age groups.

15. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE (BERMONDSEY AND ROTHERHITHE COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Under the provisions of the Localism Act an application was submitted, on 7 July 2013, to the council to establish a neighbourhood forum in the Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks neighbourhood area. The regulations require the council to carry out a public consultation on the application. As all the requirements of the legislation have been met, why has this not been done?

RESPONSE

The Localism Act 2011 introduces a completely new process by which 'neighbourhood areas' are designated by the local authority and 'neighbourhood forums' are recognised as the body that will prepare a neighbourhood plan for that area.

Southwark's experience as a 'front runner' authority has shown us that this process can be helped if there is discussion between the groups seeking recognition as a neighbourhood forum and the council to set the process off in the right direction at an early stage and try to resolve issues that are likely to be contentious. To this end, officers met the prospective forum in June and July and have been giving advice about meeting the requirements of the Act. I then met the prospective forum on 30 October 2013.

We are close to concluding these discussions and expect to start consultation on the neighbourhood area next month.

16. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ROSIE SHIMELL

Further to the answer given at October's council assembly on take up of free early education provision, how many free early learning outreach officers (FTE) will be employed by the council? What tasks will they undertake in order to assist parents to take up their free entitlements? When will those officers be in place?

RESPONSE

The council is recruiting four free early learning outreach officers to promote take up of places by two, three and four year old children. They will:

- Identify children potentially eligible for a free place

- Support parents in completing application forms, where this support is required
- Check parents' eligibility
- Support parents to secure an appropriate place for their child
- Provide practical support to identified priority families to enable their children to sustain their attendance at settings.

Following interviews, four candidates have been offered posts. Subject to checks and references, it is expected that officers will be in place in December 2013.

17. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES

Of the total number of troubled families, how many has Southwark identified to date? How many have been turned around, broken down by each of the outcomes specified by government? How much funding has the council received from the government for troubled families?

RESPONSE

As of October 2013, the year 2, quarter 2 submissions in Southwark have identified 480 families eligible for the programme and we are working with all of these families. This is 44% of the total number of families identified for Southwark (1,085).

Southwark have reported turning around 105 families by July 2013. The following provides a breakdown of which national criteria the turned around families have met:

- Education and crime/anti-social behaviour: 104
- Continuous employment: 1 (note: to achieve the continuous employment criteria, a minimum of six months employment is required therefore most families were unable to achieve this in the July 2013 reporting).

The 2013/14 spending profile identifies a total income of £1,934,795; this includes the attachment fee for the target number of families, money received for turned around families (104) and management and coordinator costs.

18. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

What is the average cost of school uniforms in Southwark? What is the range of cost? What does the council do to monitor the cost?

RESPONSE

We do not monitor the cost of uniforms. Any calculations as to the cost of a school uniform cannot be entirely accurate; however, considering six randomly selected local secondary school websites shows a range of prices between £125 and £200. Of the six secondary schools viewed, the average cost is approximately £150.

This includes the costs of a blazer, tie, two pairs of shorts, jumper and trousers or skirt. It also includes sportswear. It does not include shoes or socks.

Primary schools also have uniforms, and the costs vary, but the average is £65 for trousers, skirt, shirt and sweater.

The governing body, with its parent community is responsible for establishing the uniform. Governors are committed to ensuring that the uniform is affordable. All schools have a uniform shop, where second hand uniforms can also be purchased. For families in need, the school can also assist in covering the cost of the uniform.

The school admissions code used to prohibit schools from charging excessive sums for school uniforms. Section 1.8 of the code now states "Admission authorities must ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational needs, and that other policies around school uniform or school trips do not discourage parents from applying for a place for their child".

19. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU

How many staff are employed in the council's family information service? What targets exist to monitor success rates in getting parents to take up the government's free early education offer?

RESPONSE

It is not possible to quantify the number of staff employed solely in the family information service as delivery of the family information service is shared between the call centre, data improvement team and early help service.

The Department for Education publishes annual tables for the take up of free early learning by three and four year olds by local authority areas. From 2014 this will be extended to include two year old children.

We continue to ensure that information about early education entitlement is available through the council's website, the call centre and a dedicated free phone number, to encourage a greater take up.

20. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE BOWMAN

How many Southwark looked after children are placed with foster parents outside the borough? Of those outside the borough, how many are placed further than 35 miles away from central London?

RESPONSE

There were 426 children looked after as at 31 March 2013 in foster carer placements. This was 75% of all children looked after (the remaining 25% includes those in residential care) as at 31 March 2013.

Of these children looked after placed in foster carer placements 67% were placed out of borough and of these 18% were placed over 35 miles from their home.

There are a variety of reasons why children could be fostered away from the borough – usually it is because some have very complex needs which require specialist placements which are not available nearby, while others are moved for their own personal safety. We are however aiming to recruit more foster carers in Southwark so that fewer children need to be placed outside the borough.

21. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET

How many parents have applied for a statement of special educational needs for their children in each of the last three years? Of these applicants, how many children have been refused a statement in each year? How many parents have had a statement changed in each year?

RESPONSE

We have only been keeping this data since April 2011.

Data for parental requests for statutory assessments is as follows:

	Request from parents	Request from schools / health authority	Parents’ request not agreed	Not agreed to assess in total
April 2010 to March 2011	102	172	data not held	84
April 2011 to March 2012	91	173	51	96
April 2012 to March 2013	115	212	68	168
April 2013 to date	130	155	73	136

We do not hold any data on amendments to statements. However, information from annual reviews shows that around 50% of families ask for amendments to the statement and around 70% of these requests from families are agreed. We have just over 1500 statements so on this basis the team are amending around 500 statements per year.

Cases that might be refused are those where a child is functioning above thresholds, or where there is insufficient information and more is needed to fully get a picture of the needs, provision and progress a child is making or where insufficient time has been allowed for the advice and strategies recommended by a professional to be put in place. All cases are given thorough and full consideration.

2.8% of the 0-19 population in Southwark are subject to a statement of special educational needs. This is in line with the London average and slightly higher than the average for England.

22. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES

What success has the 'Find 40 Families' scheme had in the borough?

RESPONSE

The Find 40 Families scheme was the headline for our innovative new approach to finding suitable adopters for Southwark children in need of permanent loving families and it has been very successful.

Last year we recruited 19 adopters and this year we have 38 potential adopters being assessed. We are particularly pleased that nearly half of these potential adopters are black and minority ethnic. Last year we adopted 20 children. In the first half of this year 15 children were adopted and we are on track to have between 30 and 35 children adopted.

Southwark's success in this area has been picked up by the specialist press and it has been put forward for a Local Government Association award.

23. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL

What steps is the council taking to enhance and better recognise the role of school governors in the borough?

RESPONSE

The council held a very successful celebration evening on Thursday 14 November to honour and recognise the contribution of school governors who have served for ten years or longer and to present them with an award. This was very much appreciated by all those who attended this event and it is planned to organise further events for governors in future years.

Unlike some other councils, Southwark has retained its professional governor support service providing a clerking service, a comprehensive and core governor training service and advice and support for governors. These services are highly valued as evidenced by the positive evaluations received and by the high level of buy back by schools.

Mentoring support is provided for new chairs of governors where required and steps are taken to strengthen governing bodies when this is deemed necessary. Governors are also provided with a termly bulletin which provides information on the latest legislation and developments in governance and articles written by a range of specialists from children's services. In addition the governor development team provides support for the independent Southwark Governors Association which is a forum for governors to receive information and put forward their views.

24. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON

Can the cabinet member confirm what proportion of young people in Southwark are staying on in education or training post 16 years old and how this compares to the London and national average?

RESPONSE

Participation of 16-17 year olds recorded in education and training, June 2013.

The Department for Education recently published participation data for all of the local authorities in England. The figures show that Southwark has performed excellently in comparison to both London and England. This is in terms of both increasing participation and reducing the number of "not knows".

Participation of 16-17 year olds recorded in education and training	
National	88.4%
London	91.3%
Southwark	93.9%

This is an improvement of 5.2% for Southwark as opposed to a national improvement of only 1.1%.

Southwark has the lowest number of 16-17 year olds that are not in education, employment or training in London.

Current activity not known to the local authority	
National	4.0%
London	4.6%
Southwark	3.2%

This represents a drop of 4% for Southwark (last year 7.2%) as opposed to a drop of only 0.9% nationally.

25. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ROWENNA DAVIS

Can the cabinet member reassure me that this administration will not follow the lead of the Liberal Democrats and restrict free school meals to the youngest children?

RESPONSE

This administration has committed to provide free, healthy school meals to all primary school children in the borough and we have delivered on this promise, with over 21,000 primary school pupils in Southwark now being offered a daily free school dinner. Providing free school meals for all increases educational attainment, improves children's diets and makes a massive financial difference to families who are currently facing the biggest cost of living crisis in a generation.

While I am pleased that the Liberal Democrats nationally have followed Southwark Labour's lead by introducing free school meals to the youngest children, their proposal would mean that in Southwark 11,694 children in years three to six will lose out on a free meal unless the council continues to fund them. We are committed to continue this funding, but despite the Liberal Democrats' embarrassing U-turn on this issue, over the past few years they have consistently made new spending commitments which rely on savings from scrapping free healthy school meals. This leaves a huge credibility gap in the Liberal Democrats' plans, leading people to question whether they can really be trusted to protect this essential service.

26. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR SUNIL CHOPRA

Can the cabinet member update me on the work the council has done to clear up after the recent storm?

RESPONSE

The parks, wardens and sustainable services teams led local efforts to respond to the high winds that affected London between 27 and 28 October this year. Thankfully, the impact of the storm on Southwark was manageable with most service areas including our refuse, recycling and cleaning departments able to run as normal.

After the storm some emergency work was immediately required, and with the passing of the storm our focus has been on dealing with the most dangerous trees, including those causing an obstruction, and keeping roads clear of stray branches, leaves and debris caused by the strong winds. At the end of the clear up, we reported 171 fallen trees, 73 fallen branches and 312 incidents including leanings or dangerous trees.

Initially our efforts were focused on identifying the trees that represented the highest safety risk such as blocked roads and footpaths and trees on property (cars and houses). All such trees were initially made safe and then removed as resources allowed.

Only one major open space had to be closed: Nunhead Cemetery (which is now open again) and all other parks remained open.

We are still receiving a few reports of trees falling that are related to the storm where the wind has weakened them. These are being dealt with through our normal emergency call out service.

Once more, I am filled with great pride to be able to report back to council assembly on the dedication and effectiveness that our staff have yet again shown in responding to an emergency.

27. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN HAYES

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the cycling to school partnership in Dulwich and Herne Hill?

RESPONSE

I am delighted that we have been successful in our application for £285,000 of funding from Transport for London (TfL) to deliver the Cycling to School Partnership in 2013/14 in Dulwich and Herne Hill. We now have the investment we need to strengthen our grass roots cycling outreach at our local schools.

With the extension of the 20mph speed limit into East Dulwich Grove and Lordship Lane as well as across the borough, we are continuing with our commitment to improve road safety for all road users. The grant will help to improve the otherwise potentially dangerous junction at East Dulwich Grove and Townley Road. We will be engaging with 11 local schools to promote and encourage more cycling, through the recruitment of a Bike It Plus officer, who will work with schools to increase the levels of walking, scooting and cycling proficiency, which should in turn reduce congestion in the area and at the schools' gates and provide other health and environmental benefits.

Work at the junction will start in the summer of 2014, during the school holidays, and will include an extension of the footway, removal of the staggered crossing and the installation of trixi mirrors which help to improve the visibility of cyclists for larger vehicles turning left.

We also have some funding to work with the schools partnership to identify other key interventions which will support cycling.

Throughout this process we will continue to work closely with the Dulwich Young Cyclists organisation to help them fulfill their ambition to make Dulwich an exemplar area for cycling to school.

28. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR NORMA GIBBES

Can the cabinet member confirm what actions have been taken by the council to ensure the borough is prepared for any poor weather conditions, including snow, this winter?

RESPONSE

Following a review of the last winter season the winter service plan (published on our website), our winter plan, has been updated to reflect our planned response to winter weather conditions. As well as a reaction to snow we have detailed plans for precautionary treatments to roads susceptible to ice and frosty conditions, transport hubs, hospitals and health centres, emergency service locations, areas of high footfall, school access roads and critical areas of housing estates.

This year we have three new gritters available on standby, all of which are fitted with the latest in GPS, salt distribution and measurement technology. We have, through using some additional depot space, been able to purchase more salt than ever before and have over 1,200 tonnes in stock available for immediate use. All of the borough's 185 salt bins, the position of which are mapped on our website, have been cleaned and refilled. There are also bagged stocks of salt stored on housing estates across the borough. Southwark cleaning services are fully prepared with salt and hand gritters to salt and clear footpaths and housing estates as and when required.

Coordination and planning meetings between officers in emergency planning, parks, funeral services, South Dock Marina and housing have taken place with roles and responsibilities allocated. A coordination meeting has also taken place between the winter service officers of Southwark, Transport for London and our neighbouring boroughs.

As in previous years we again have access to a forecasting service which provides twice daily updates reflecting road and air temperatures and weather conditions specifically for the north, central and south of the borough.

As part of the council's approach to enable residents to help themselves, officers will be distributing free 5kg bags of salt to members of the public at shopping areas across the borough, on 30 November and 7 December. As part of this self help effort, guidance and frequently asked questions will also be provided.

29. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR DAN GARFIELD

How far have plans progressed to secure heritage lottery funding for Burgess Park?

RESPONSE

An application will be submitted for a 'Heritage Grant' of £2 million to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) by 2 December to deliver the 'Bridge to the Future' project which will be assessed by the HLF London committee with a view to making a decision in March 2014.

The main aims of the project are to:

1. Restore the "Bridge to Nowhere", giving it context within the history of the area
2. Highlight key historical features such as the walls and bridges in Surrey Canal and Glengall Basin
3. Revamp Chumleigh Gardens buildings and accommodate a park heritage/archive centre and facilities for horticultural and conservation training
4. Implement new biodiverse heritage planting
5. Install historical markers across the park revealing the layers of history
6. Deliver live theatre and spoken word performances, concerts, workshops, and creative activities
7. Create volunteer opportunities.

The bid has been informed by the adopted long term vision for the park and also has significant community support including from the Friends of Burgess Park, Walworth Society, 1st Place and users of the park.

The overall project value is £2.7 million, £2 million will come from the HLF and the remainder will be match funding. This will consist of section 106 funding and a

small amount of 'in kind' funding (which is non cash match funding) which will come from staff and volunteer time to deliver the project.

We hope that the bid will be successful; further to a decision on the outcome of our application, detailed design work will be carried out next year and subject to further HLF approvals works will commence in 2015.

30. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

Considering the 2008 Transport Research Laboratories research "The effectiveness of speed indicator devices on reducing speeds in London" found that speed indication devices on average reduce traffic speeds by 1.4mph and their 2000 report "the effects of drivers' speed on the frequency of road accidents" concluded that 1mph reduction in average speed reduced crashes by 5.6%, why have officers banned speed indication devices, blocking their deployment?

RESPONSE

Historically Southwark have implemented speed indication devices (SIDs) at fixed sites with limited speed reduction results and had notable maintenance issues.

The 2008 Transport Research Laboratory – 'The effectiveness of speed indication devices on reducing vehicle speeds in London' did find that SIDs on average reduce speeds by 1.4 miles per hour, however, the report also highlighted:

- The SID was most effective in the first week with significant reduction in effectiveness during week two
- SIDs should remain at each site for at least two weeks but no longer than three weeks
- Once the SID is removed there is little or no residual effect on vehicles speeds
- They should be moved regularly with a reasonable gap before returning in order that drivers forget about the previous installation.

Given that for SIDs to be effective they are required to be re-sited every 2 to 3 weeks, require electrical connections and often have to be erected on their own pole due to their size, this appears to create significant street clutter and there is a significant administrative burden and revenue cost in arranging the regular moving and reinstallation. Officers are therefore unconvinced that fixed SIDs are a cost effective speed reduction tool, unless regularly moved. There is also significant revenue cost associated with their installation and monitoring; costs which would also need to be covered by any bid made towards their use.

31. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR GEOFFREY THORNTON

Please provide a detailed breakdown of the council's capital and revenue spending on cycling in each of the last three financial years (2011/12; 2012/13 and 2013/14 to date)?

RESPONSE

We have considered funding spent on cycling from the following sources; Transport for London, council and section 106 for both environment and planning and broken that down by revenue and capital as requested.

We cannot guarantee that this is the full extent of funding spent on cycling as other departments may have spent funding on cycling schemes. It is also very difficult to assess the exact amount spent on cycling, especially as some cycling elements are delivered as part of wider projects.

Transport Planning	Financial Year		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 to date
Revenue	£201,367	£174,265	£199,191
Capital	£358,006	£989,513	£19,989
Total	£559,373	£1,163,778	£219,180

Environment	Financial Year		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 to date
Revenue	£0	£0	£0
Capital	£11,855	£207,889	£34,100
Total	£11,855	£207,889	£34,100

Combined	Financial Year		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 to date
Revenue	£201,367	£174,265	£199,191
Capital	£369,861	£1,197,402	£54,089
Total	£571,228	£1,371,667	£253,280

Combined and rounded	Financial Year		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 to date
Revenue	£201,000	£174,000	£199,000
Capital	£370,000	£1,197,000	£54,000
Total	£570,000	£1,372,000	£253,000

32. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR NICK STANTON

How many streetlights are currently broken in Southwark? How many of these have been broken for more than 3 months? What is the average time to fix a broken street light?

RESPONSE

At the time of writing, 149 (0.87%) of the borough's 17,052 street lights are out of lighting. Of the 149 which are out of lighting 12 (0.07%) have been broken for more than three months, five of which require a repair by UK Power Networks and seven require delivery of a component.

The average time to fix a broken street light as at the end of October is 4.08 days.

It should however be noted that breakdowns fluctuate throughout the year, e.g. the figure for June was 2.82 days, whereas the figure for July was 5.04 days.

The trend in the variance in percentage of lights working is 0.03% across three full financial years and likely to improve very slightly this year.

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Average percentage of street lights working as planned	99.61 %	99.59 %	99.58 %
Average number of days taken to repair street lighting faults	2.94 days	3.67 days	3.26 days

33. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR ROBIN CROOKSHANK-HILTON

Now that the Barbara Hepworth replacement sculpture has been awarded for Dulwich Park, please provide a price comparison of all four artworks shortlisted for the project. How much insurance money remains left over from the previous statue, and what will this money be used for?

RESPONSE

The Hepworth insurance money was ring-fenced for the new Dulwich art commission. All four shortlisted artists were given the same budget to work within, as is best practice for public art competitions. The artworks would need to be deliverable within the budget and this was made clear throughout, both to the public and to the artists. It is commercially sensitive to provide any further breakdown in detail regarding how the artists were to utilise that budget and particularly now that a final commission has been chosen.

Now that we have reached the final stage of the project there are other associated costs to the sculpture being commissioned such as a public engagement programme, launch and communications all of these had funding allocated to them at the outset of the project as agreed by the steering group. In addition to this there are some responses that we are awaiting that will impact on the use of certain areas of the budget which were forecast, for example we are awaiting a response from our insurers. Therefore we cannot yet comment upon whether or not there will be any budget remaining at this stage

34. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GETTLESON

When will the signage be amended on Kipling Street? Will the cabinet member consider not issuing any more fines until the signage has been amended and will he consider annulling the fines already issued?

RESPONSE

The signs at Kipling Street were changed from no motor vehicle access signs to no entry except pedal cyclists signs on 30 October 2013. Enforcement has restarted as of 17 November 2013, with warning notices being issued to vehicles driving in contravention.

35. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS

Can the cabinet member give an update on the progress of the new annual tenancy checks?

RESPONSE

The housing operations team has been set a challenging performance target to visit 100% of our tenants this year.

Performance in 2013/14 has been encouraging so far. At the end of October 2013, 56% of our tenancy visits had been carried out. Officers are achieving this level of success working with colleagues across the council to maximise opportunities for joint visits, such as with our gas contractors.

If officers suspect illegal occupation they take swift action. To September 2013, 69 properties have been recovered thanks to intelligence referred to the special investigation team from resident officers and 55 properties have been recovered by the actions of resident officers alone. In addition prevention measures have stopped illegal/fraudulent activity in 30 cases so far this year.

So far in 2013/14 we estimate at least an increase of 300 referrals to colleagues in maintenance and compliance as a direct result of tenancy visits, including six referrals to our disrepair team.

134 hoarding cases have also been identified. Once he or she is located, officers of the social care and environmental health departments work in unison to clear the property as quickly as possible. We work with the tenant to ensure a long term positive outcome.

156 flags relating to vulnerability of the tenant have been added to our systems, ensuring we know and take into account the needs of our tenants.

Before the welfare reform changes became live earlier this year 3,300 tenancy visits were prioritised for those who were going to be affected by the size criteria. 300 tenancy visits were prioritised for those affected by the benefit cap. Officers continue to work with colleagues in housing options to provide support to those affected by welfare reform.

36. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR RENATA HAMVAS

Can the cabinet member outline the detail of the new lettings policy?

RESPONSE

Our new lettings policy has been drafted following extensive consultation with local stakeholders including residents groups, housing associations, the Citizens Advice Bureau and other voluntary sector groups.

It aims to be clear and easy to understand and incorporates best practice from other local authority schemes nationally and deals with some anomalies in the existing scheme.

The principles of the proposed housing allocations scheme are as follows:

- A five year local residency qualification before a customer can join the housing register.
- Housing priority for applicants leaving the armed forces.
- Applicants may not be allowed to join the housing register if they have behaved poorly e.g. have rent arrears, a history of nuisance and annoyance or other anti-social behaviour.
- Applicants will not be allowed to join the housing register if they have deliberately worsened their own housing circumstances.
- Housing applications will be made by customers on-line, with or without assistance from officers.
- Anti-fraud checks will be carried out on all new applications and all offers for alternative accommodation.
- If an applicant fails to bid for alternative accommodation in a 12 month rolling programme they will be removed from the housing register.
- If a customer refuses three reasonable offers of alternative accommodation, they will be demoted to band 4 for their housing priority.
- Additional priority will be given to working households.
- Additional priority will be given to applicants that make a voluntary community contribution in Southwark.
- Under-occupiers affected by the spare room subsidy will be awarded the highest priority on the housing register.
- Tenants who have not complied with the terms of their tenancy agreement will be placed into band 4.
- Tenants who fail the pre-tenancy transfer inspection and where the property does not meet the lettable standard will not be placed onto the housing register.
- Southwark Council tenants who have a clear rent account, have not caused anti-social behaviour or nuisance and annoyance will be placed into band 2.
- Customers discharged from hospital will be placed into band 1, if the applicant's home no longer meets their housing needs.
- Applicants who undertake fostering and adoption will be placed into band 2.
- Homeless families will be placed into band 3.
- Homeless families re-housed into the private rented sector will also be placed into band 3.

- The four priority needs bands remain.

37. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS BROWN

Can the cabinet member list the new measures introduced to assist leaseholders?

RESPONSE

The homeowner improvement plan consists of a variety of measures which are aimed at the homeowners of former right to buy properties, and which will either directly improve the service they receive from the council or address other issues related to home ownership. Some of the measures have already been introduced and others are in preparation.

1. The introduction of technical officers for communal repairs. These repairs are a major source of concern for leaseholders. By taking sole responsibility for delivering communal repairs the new team can ensure that a better communal repairs service is provided aimed at delivering homeowners' priorities such as: pre and post inspection; coding of expenditure; identification of insurable perils; clear specifications and consultation.
2. The continuing development of a facility for viewing service charge invoices, statements and breakdowns online. The ability to view 'real time' repairs information will particularly assist homeowners in conjunction with the technical officer posts noted above.
3. An increase of funding to enable an expansion of the existing Citizens Advice Bureau-run advice service for homeowners across the borough, increasing homeowners' opportunities to obtain independent advice.
4. The funding of an independently run resource and information centre for homeowners, backed by the Homeowners' Council and Leaseholder Association of Southwark 2000, and is again in line with the council's policy of enabling homeowner access to independent advice.
5. A review of the current arrears and collections process to ensure that the council's communications are 'customer focused'. This has already been largely completed, with input from elected members, council officers and homeowner representatives, and a report is due to be issued shortly.
6. A re-write and update of the homeowners' guide, a document provided to all homeowners to advise them of their rights and responsibilities, to take account of recent legislative and administrative changes.

The improvement plan also features three key policy items:

- a) The first is a commitment to investigate and develop a one-time offer to homeowners of a lease on fixed service charge terms, giving both homeowners and the council a degree of financial certainty in the future.
- b) The second is a refresh of the buy back policy, providing funds to purchase back properties from homeowners who are no longer able to afford owner occupation.

- c) The last is a policy of offering leaseholders in certain blocks where all flats have been sold the opportunity to purchase the freehold at a discount.

Taken together these measures should address a number of long standing issues raised by homeowners and will result in substantially improved services to them.

38. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR KEVIN AHERN

Can the cabinet member inform the assembly of how many illegal sub-lets have been identified and recovered?

RESPONSE

To demonstrate how serious we regard the issue of illegal sub-lets an ambitious target of recovering 500 properties has been set for 2013-14. This is as a result of the success of 2012-13 where 322 properties were recovered.

By the end of October 2013, the department has recovered 210 properties. The specialist team dealing with tenancy fraud received over 700 allegations of subletting since April 2013. Resident services officers reported in October 2013 162 known cases of unauthorised occupancy.

The special investigations team has seen a marked increase in the number of referrals and good leads received in the last six months due to:

- Increased promotion of the central team's hotline and inbox by presentations to area forums, tenant management organisations and the customer contact centre.
- Right to buy: there are in excess of 1,000 right to buy applications currently being processed due to the increase in discount available which is now £100,000. The special investigations team is reviewing all applications awaiting completion to ensure that they are genuine and as a result three properties have been recovered and eight fraudulent right to buy applications have been stopped.
- Increase in resident services officers identifying suspected non-occupation and illegal occupation through planned tenancy check visits and estate blitzes out of hours.

The table below shows the trend of recovery since 2009/10:

	Number of properties recovered
2013-2014	210*
2012-2013	322
2011-2012	200
2010-2011	199
2009-2010	98

* To October 2013.

39. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PODDY CLARK

What is the council's policy on repairs to council homes affected by leaks from neighbouring leasehold properties? As the landlord, what specific steps does the council take to hold the leaseholder responsible for damages to its properties? Will the cabinet member commit to repair all ceilings damaged by leaks from neighbouring leasehold properties?

RESPONSE

There is not one uniform process or procedure as each case needs to be managed on an individual basis and no procedure can cover every eventuality. Equally a set procedure would remove any element of discretion.

Primarily, the lease is the fundamental tool for enforcement and control of leaks being caused within a leasehold property.

In regards to repairing all damage caused to council homes by leaks from neighbouring leasehold properties, we will take the relevant action for each case, following the appropriate procedures outlined above, which may include enforcement action.

40. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

How many applications have been made for arbitration in each of the last three years (2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14)? Of those cases heard by arbitration, what number of cases failed to receive a written judgement within 30 days of the hearing? What is the longest length of time a case has remained open before arbitration in each of the last three years?

RESPONSE

	Applications received
2010-2011	167
2011-2012	115
2012-2013	108
2013-2014	58 (to date)

The number of cases which failed to receive a written judgment with 30 days of the hearing is not currently being recorded. The service will begin recording the time it takes to issue a written judgement following a tribunal hearing from this month. However written judgments rarely take longer than 30 days to be issued and if they do, all parties to the hearing will be kept informed of the likelihood of delay and be provided with an explanation.

What is the longest length of time a case has remained open before arbitration in each of the last three years?

The service began measuring time taken for arbitration from April this year. There is a target to schedule the first hearing within 30 working days of receipt in 90% of all new cases. The half yearly figures to October show that 100% of new cases met this target.

41. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR WILMA NELSON

Of the 7,330 leaseholders who were asked to pay additional service charges in the latest rebalancing, what was the largest amount invoiced? Of the 4,815 leaseholders who received a credit note, what was the largest amount refunded? What was the largest difference between the estimated service charge and final service charge?

RESPONSE

The largest amount invoiced is £4,381.00, the largest amount refunded was £1,083.17 and the largest difference between the estimated service charge and final service charge is £4,381.00.

42. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL BUKOLA

What incidents of data loss or other data breaches has the council reported to the Information Commissioner's Office in the past two years? For each case, please give a description of the data affected including how many records were affected.

RESPONSE

In the past two years one data breach was reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The breach reported involved the loss of a bag containing a data listing which included a list of 982 Southwark clients. Southwark self reported to the ICO, fully investigated the breach and reported the outcome of our internal investigation to the ICO who chose to take no further action.

43. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR TIM MCNALLY

How many a) formal disciplinary notices and b) dismissals have been issued to council staff in the past 12 months for misuse of social media and internet and for what reason in each case?

RESPONSE

- a) None.
- b) None.

44. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

How much has the council spent on bailiffs in each of the last three financial years (2011/12; 2012/13 and 2013/14 to date)? How many times have bailiffs been used in each of these years (broken down by reason for intervention)?

RESPONSE

The council has a framework contract for bailiff services with four providers. The framework relates to services provided for parking, council tax and business rates

debts. Fees in relation to collection for the outstanding amounts are payable by the debtors and there is no handling/contract fee payable by the council.

Council tax

	Instructed (value)	Liability orders
2013/14	£8,921,319.69	11,304
2012/13	£10,497,571.81	14,301
2011/12	£23,461,346.06	32,880

Business rates

	Instructed (value)	Liability orders
2013/14	£4,197,615.11	865
2012/13	£10,391,163.61	2,203
2011/12	£9,637,172.14	1,753

Parking (penalty charge notices)

	Penalty charge notices
2013/14	5,766
2012/13	14,727
2011/12	14,080

45. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

Of the total, what number of freedom of information (FOI) requests does the council issue a final response to within the statutory time limit of 20 working days? For what percentage of responses was an extension period requested? How many complaints has the council received about its handling of FOI requests in each of the last three years?

RESPONSE

Of the total, what number of freedom of information (FOI) requests does the council issue a final response to within the statutory time limit of 20 working days?

2011/12 – 961 out of 1,656
2012/13 – 1,071 out of 1,556.

These figures represent the cases where a final response was issued within 20 working days of receipt of the request, but do not take account of any cases where the clock was stopped (for example, where clarification of the request is sought). Including those cases where the clock was stopped but where the final response was still issued within 20 working days overall brings the totals to 991 and 1,091 for 2011/12 and 2012/13 respectively.

For what percentage of responses was an extension period requested?

2011/12 – 1.8%

2012/13 – 2.5%.

How many complaints has the council received about its handling of FOI requests in each of the last three years? (N.B. answer provided for previous two years as per 'notes' above)

Taking both requests for an internal review of an FOI response and stage 1 complaints:

	Internal review request	Stage 1 complaint
2011/12	52	6
2012/13	50	4

All responses are subject to resources being available and other priorities being dealt with by service managers required to complete or coordinate any response.

FOI requests come from many different sources ranging from interested residents and local businesses to commercial enterprises seeking commercial information. The council is required to respond to all FOI requests on the same basis.

46. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT AND VOLUNTEERING FROM COUNCILLOR NICK DOLEZAL

Following the success of the recent awards presentation at Canada Water library for the Olympic programmes, what are the council's plans for 2014 to ensure we sustain our Olympic legacy?

RESPONSE

The young people's celebration event was a wonderful celebration, with the presence of a representative from the Brazilian Embassy in attendance. We exchanged flags and gave our best wishes to Brazil, host country of the Olympics in 2017.

The council's plan for 2014 started in 2011. We have invested £2 million in Olympic legacy projects which will benefit local people and contribute to improved health and well being in the borough. Most of these are now completed and in use. Completed projects include:

- Camberwell Leisure Centre Jubilee Hall
- Herne Hill velodrome
- Burgess Park BMX track
- Homestall Road grass pitches
- Trinity games area in Camberwell
- The Bethwin playground.

The Peckham Rye project is in phase two of completion and will include the re-provision of changing rooms is part of a wider programme of improvements to the park which will be delivered over the next year.

Work on Southwark Park athletics track has commenced and a bid to the capital programme for funding to upgrade and bring the pavilion back into use is being submitted as part of the capital refresh report in January. This will ensure our legacy will go on way beyond 2014 and continue the work of the Olympic Legacy

Board to coordinate the council's work supporting volunteers working with the sport development team and ongoing work with young people.

The sport and physical activity strategy sets out an action plan to tackle inactivity and focus work with women, girls and people with disabilities and work to ensure as wide an access as possible through sport activity available in Southwark through the 'Get Active' website.

47. QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF PLANNING COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBO BLANGO

How many planning applications have been a) approved and b) refused by the council's three planning committees since 1 January 2012, broken down by ward and type of application?

RESPONSE

The three committees which are referred to in the question were set up in May 2012, so I am providing details from this date.

A summary of the information is provided below:

* Note the following abbreviations: CAC- conservation area consent, REG3- council's own application, FUL- full planning application and LBC- listed building consent.

Decision Issued Date	Decision	Application Type	Committee Name	Ward
07/06/2012	Granted	REG3*	Planning committee	Peckham Rye
16/07/2012	Granted	FUL*	Planning sub-committee B	Village
16/07/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Village
23/07/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Camberwell
23/07/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Cathedrals
23/07/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Peckham Rye
23/07/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Dulwich
23/07/2012	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Grange
01/08/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Peckham
14/08/2012	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Chaucer
14/09/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Riverside
14/09/2012	Granted	REG3	Planning sub-committee B	Peckham Rye
14/09/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Village
14/09/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-	Village

Decision Issued Date	Decision	Application Type	Committee Name	Ward
			committee B	
14/09/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Village
26/10/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
26/10/2012	Granted	REG3	Planning sub-committee B	Peckham Rye
07/11/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	Cathedrals
18/12/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
17/01/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Cathedrals
23/01/2013	Granted	CAC*	Planning sub-committee A	Riverside
23/01/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	College
31/01/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	Village
31/01/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	Village
05/02/2013	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Rotherhithe
13/02/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	East Dulwich
13/02/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Peckham Rye
13/02/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
13/02/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning sub-committee B	College
13/02/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning sub-committee B	The Lane
04/03/2013	Granted	LBC*	Planning committee	Riverside
27/03/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	E. Walworth
28/03/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning committee	S. Camberwell
05/04/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning committee	Grange
15/04/2013	Granted	LBC	Planning committee	Village
15/04/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning committee	Village
29/04/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Village
29/04/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Brunswick Park
29/04/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning sub-	Brunswick Park

Decision Issued Date	Decision	Application Type	Committee Name	Ward
			committee A	
17/05/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
21/05/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Grange
24/05/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Cathedrals
13/06/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	The Lane
13/06/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	College
13/06/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Village
14/06/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning sub-committee A	Village
25/06/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	S. Camberwell
28/06/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	Camberwell G
09/07/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	Brunswick Park
09/07/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning committee	Brunswick Park
11/07/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Cathedrals
11/07/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Cathedrals
11/07/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Cathedrals
12/07/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
12/07/2013	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Grange
12/07/2013	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Rotherhithe
29/07/2013	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee	Peckham Rye
07/08/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning sub-committee A	Faraday
08/08/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Cathedrals
08/08/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Cathedrals
19/09/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning committee	Nunhead
19/09/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning committee	Nunhead
02/10/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Village
02/10/2013	Granted	LBC	Planning sub-committee A	Village

Decision Issued Date	Decision	Application Type	Committee Name	Ward
14/10/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	E. Walworth
14/10/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Brunswick Park
25/10/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
25/10/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	S. Camberwell
15/11/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning sub-committee A	Peckham Rye
20/11/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Cathedrals

Southwark has among the highest number of planning applications for local authorities in England and one of the highest proportions of major applications. We maintain delivery of an efficient system with 75% of applications being dealt with within target times including 75% of major applications being dealt with on target time. This is particularly important with changes that allow for applicants to be refunded their application fees for delayed decisions and sanctions that take the planning function away from the local authority and give decision making power to the planning inspectorate if performance on planning decisions for major applications falls below a certain level.

Since the inception of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 there have been eight refusals issued by members which have been appealed. Of the five refusals appealed from the community councils, four were allowed and only one dismissed; and of the three refusals appealed from the planning sub-committees, two were allowed and one dismissed. Whilst these samples are small and therefore it is difficult to discern clear trends, the figures do show that inspectors have allowed more appeals than they have refused arising from member decisions since the inception of the NPPF, which may reflect the emphasis in the NPPF on a presumption in favour of sustainable development.