Cabinet Member Interview –
Councillor Peter John, Leader of the Council

Budget and savings

1. Could the leader please comment on how Southwark and London’s provisional financial settlement compares to those for other councils? (Cllr A Simmons)

2. Has the council considered the implications of any changes to the index of multiple deprivation on the revenue support grant to Southwark? (Cllr M Glover)

3. How will you demonstrate that residents' views on budget savings have been taken into account in your budget setting? (Cllr T McNally)

4. What savings are you considering making in Council Communications as a part of the budget process? (Cllr L Rajan)

5. Do you intend for the cabinet to make its fair share of savings in line with what you expect from the rest of the council, by either cutting cabinet members' salaries, or cutting the number of cabinet posts? (Cllr P Noblet)

6. Following your joint letter with the leaders of Lambeth and Lewisham to all three Chief Executives about sharing council services and costs, do you think you should share a chief executive and generate a substantial saving that way? (Cllr L Rajan)

7. What progress have you made towards your stated objective of reducing the council's use of consultants? (Cllr D Hubber)

8. How are the government reductions in spending likely to impact on employment in the borough? (Cllr M Glover)

Housing

9. Could you please clarify how the funding for the new Housing Director and restructured housing department will be apportioned between the HRA and the General Fund? (Cllr T McNally)

10. Southwark's Housing Repairs Key Performance Indicators currently show satisfaction rates in excess of 90%. Can the leader of the council give us his impression of the quality of Southwark's Housing Repairs Service (Cllr G Edwards)

11. How many council homes in Southwark are not warm, not safe and not dry? What is your view of what constitutes safe? (Cllr D Hubber)

12. Is it more of a priority to make council homes 'warm, safe and dry' or 'Decent'? And will housing investment funding be committed accordingly? (Cllr D Hubber)

13. Do you welcome the announcement that local authorities no longer have to form ALMOs to get Decent Homes funding and that Southwark will be able to bid directly to government for investment in its housing stock? (Cllr T McNally)
14. Can the leader please give an update on the future for the Aylesbury estate given the disappointing PFI result? (Cllr A Simmons)

15. Can the leader of the council explain how the administration will seek to move forward the Aylesbury Estate Regeneration project following the withdrawal of £180m of central government funding for the Aylesbury PFI? (Cllr G Edwards)

16. What are the implications of the HCA’s cut in funding for the Aylesbury? (Cllr M Glover)

Education

17. Could the leader please comment on the concerns raised by London Councils that depending on the method for calculation the Pupil Premium may lead to less funding in Southwark per pupil than in the wealthiest parts of the country? (Cllr A Simmons)

18. The government has recently suggested that some Building Schools for the Future Schemes, which had previously been thought to have been protected, may only receive 60% of their funding. Can the leader of the council tell us if the cabinet has in place contingency plans for how these BSF projects will be progressed should this further cut in funding be confirmed? (Cllr G Edwards)

19. Given the government's current policy of encouraging many community schools to accept academy or free school status, can the leader of the council give further details of the action the administration is taking to communicate with schools on this issue, in particular to ensure that the views of local parents are included in any decisions on changes to local schools? (Cllr G Edwards)

20. What progress are you making towards establishing a new secondary school in Rotherhithe? (Cllr P Noblet)

21. When will you know how much offering free school meals to every school child, including children that do not live in the borough, will cost? (Cllr P Noblet)

22. Do you think that stigma is a barrier to the take up of free school meals in Southwark? (Cllr P Noblet)

23. What is the level of obesity for year 6 pupils who take up their entitled FSM? (Cllr D Hubber)

24. What are you doing to support families who send their children to schools outside the borough and who fall just outside the eligibility criteria for FSMs? (Cllr D Hubber)

25. The ex-Labour government's minimum standards on school meals allow pupils to have chips three times a week. Do you think this counts as healthy? And if not, how will you set a stipulation that is enforceable with the school meals providers that are contracted by the schools themselves? (Cllr L Rajan)

Capital Programme

26. What criteria will you be using for any reprioritisation of the capital programme? (Cllr T McNally)
27. Would the leader please state when a decision will be made on the "Improving Local Retail Environments" element of the capital programme, and, if it is to be curtailed, would he set out the criteria for deciding which projects are to be cut, and whether there will be any consultation with relevant stakeholders before a final decision? (Cllr T Eckersley)

28. Councillor Livingstone stated that if primary school kitchens need upgrading or building to enable that school to provide free school meals to every pupil, the cabinet will commit capital funding to pay for this. How much will this cost and will these works take priority in the capital programme? (Cllr P Noblet)

29. Would the leader advise whether it would now be possible to sell the premises formerly occupied by the Livesey Museum and re-invest the proceeds in accordance with Sir George Livesey's bequest? If so, what plans are there to do this? (Cllr T Eckersley)

Performance of contracts

30. What steps is the leader taking to improve the performance of the call centre to a satisfactory level? (Cllr A Simmons)

31. Do you think the council gets value for money out of the contracts with Vangent and Serco, and if not, do you intend to terminate the contracts? (Cllr T McNally)

Community Councils

32. Will your cabinet continue to devolve capital funding to community councils for the Cleaner Greener Safer programme and Highways and Lighting improvements? (Cllr T McNally)

33. Do you think community councils should have more power devolved down to them, and if so, what powers should they be? (Cllr D Hubber)

Regeneration, planning and development

34. What is the council doing to reduce the inequalities between the regeneration in the North of the borough and the Nunhead, Peckham and Camberwell areas which saw much investment discussed by the previous administration but little come to fruition? (Cllr M Glover)

35. With regard to the cabinet's decision of 23 November to proceed with the construction of a swimming pool at the Elephant and Castle at council expense, would the leader please explain why the construction companies associated with the BSF LEP appear to be favoured over open competition, and would he set out the opportunity cost of building the pool on land suitable for sale for residential accommodation? (Cllr T Eckersley)

36. What have you and the cabinet members for regeneration and environment done in the past four weeks to persuade Thames Water to find alternate sites for access to their sewage tunnel? (Cllr P Noblet)

37. Do you think property developers should be allowed to get out of providing affordable housing on site in major residential planning applications? (Cllr P Noblet)
38. Do you think s106 money should be spend in the environs of the associated planning application to offset its effects on local transport, health and education demands, or should it be spent elsewhere in the borough? (Cllr T McNally)

Other

39. You have offered scrutiny the opportunity to help evaluate the free school meals and food waste recycling pilots. Can you confirm that Councillors MacDonald and Hargrove are agreeable to your commitment? (Cllr L Rajan)

40. Could the leader please outline the performance of each of the council’s departments in replying to members enquiries from April 2010 to date? (Cllr A Simmons)

41. How is the leader ensuring that staff treat members of the public in the same way that they would a member of their own family? (Cllr A Simmons)

42. In the event that the Metropolitan Police Authority were to offer funds to London councils, on the basis of matched funding from any council accepting the offer, for purposes of creating additional police numbers in the accepting borough, what would be the response of the cabinet? (Cllr T Eckersley)

43. Can the leader of the council give details of how Southwark council will be investing in, and securing funding for, sporting activities for young people in Southwark in the run up to the 2012 Olympics? (Cllr G Edwards)

44. Can the leader explain what work is being done by Southwark Council to prepare for the public sector equality duty that is due to come into force in April 2011 as part of the Equality Duty Act 2010? (Cllr L Rajan)

45. When will you be able to confirm where the replacement Bermondsey One Stop Shop will be, and how will you ensure people’s access to services is uninterrupted? (Cllr D Hubber)

46. How much money is paid annually by the Corporate Complaints Department, specifically as compensation for the delay in processing complaints, and what steps are being taken to control this? (Cllr L Rajan)

47. What help will there be for the 3,000-4,000 people who currently worship every Sunday at the Elephant & Castle leisure centre to find a new place to worship? Where do you think they will end up? (Cllr L Rajan)

48. Do you plan to continue scheduling the majority of cabinet meetings during the working day, when residents find it difficult to attend? (Cllr L Rajan)

49. What progress has the council made in cutting carbon emissions since May 2010 and what are your plans for achieving further reductions? (Cllr T McNally)