

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY)

WEDNESDAY 26 JANUARY 2010

URGENT QUESTIONS

1. URGENT QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

Please could the leader give an update about the fire at Brawne House and the current position.

RESPONSE

The causes of the fire are still under investigation and we are co-operating fully with the fire brigade.

Of the damaged flats, 59 residents chose to remain in their homes, 1 is staying with relatives and 8 were in temporary accommodation. As at 25 January, of the 9 displaced households, 2 had returned home. We are working toward completing all outstanding repairs by the end of the week, and will be redecorating those flats where there has been damage caused by smoke or water.

Emergency payments have been made to those who lost belongings in the fire - £200 over the weekend, and provision is being made for another £300 to be paid this week.

Surgeries have been held daily for residents, and daily contact is being made with all residents displaced by the fire.

Counselling services have been offered to all residents and those wanting to take up this opportunity have been given a freephone telephone number to call.

A public meeting has been arranged for the evening of 27 January, where officers and the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management will be available to brief residents.

2. URGENT QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON

Would the leader comment on whether an amnesty is to be offered to unauthorised occupants of council dwellings, and set out any proposed changes to responsibilities or processes for checking that council tenanted dwellings are occupied by the authorised tenants?

RESPONSE

Because there is such a shortage of council housing in Southwark, housing officers are currently drawing up new proposals to crack down on illegal occupancy to ensure that our homes go to those genuinely in need. We are also currently waiting to see what the government's proposals in this area will be.