

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY)

WEDNESDAY 26 JANUARY 2011

MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR NORMA GIBBES

Unlike the previous administration, this council recognises the importance of Camberwell to the borough. Can the leader confirm whether there will be a consultation exercise for a new library in Camberwell and what the time frame is likely to be? Can the leader also comment on the response from Transport for London (TFL) on re-modelling Camberwell town centre?

RESPONSE

We will be considering library provision in the borough as part of a strategic review which will be commencing shortly. The current library is well used and much loved but I believe that there is still a strong case for a new library in Camberwell and we are exploring ways in which this may be delivered. We are particularly aware of the lack of space available at the current library, the particular demand for study space, for further developing existing services to children and young people and for improving access to books IT and information for local people.

Officers from the library service are working with officers from other departments to consider innovative ways of improving library provision in Camberwell.

Transport for London have awarded the council, as part of our 2011/12 funding, £200,000 to start work on a Camberwell Scheme, which will look at whether and how the junction can be remodeled. I feel that this is a good first step.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR NORMA GIBBES

Thank you Mr Mayor. I wish to thank the leader for his answer and I am sure the people of Camberwell and all who use this important gateway to the rest of the borough will be pleased to know after years of being off the Liberal Democrat/Conservative administration's radar, Camberwell is now back on this council's radar. Will the leader confirm that this council will continue to investigate and pursue all possibilities of the regeneration of Camberwell?

RESPONSE

I want thank Councillor Gibbes for her supplementary question, and yes I can; it's an issue which Councillor Colley is taking forward within her regeneration portfolio.

I was very heartened, I think it is something I mentioned at the last Camberwell community council, that when we had a conference which we supported as a council called 'Investing in Southwark', a whole section of that which was to developers and those who really had an interest in investing, bringing money into the borough; it was not just about the north of the borough, those prime positions, we had a whole section which we were talking about potential of investing in Camberwell and Peckham, because I do think it is absolutely vital to recognise our borough does not stop at the Elephant and Castle; it carries on down the Walworth Road and carries on right down to Dulwich and we want to see regeneration and investment in all parts of our borough. I think we live in one of the most exciting boroughs,

the most exciting borough in London and therefore in the country and I am very proud to go out and sell Camberwell, sell Peckham, sell every part of Southwark to those who want to come and invest and regenerate our area.

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

Please can you give a summary of the responses from the public budget consultation?

RESPONSE

A brief summary is included within the policy and resources report considered by cabinet on 25 January at paragraph 149. A longer summary, which is being given to all community councils, is available on the council's website at:

http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/2622/budget_consultation_report

This information was supplied in advance.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

Thank you very much for your answer, and I have had a look at the further detail and Councillor Livingstone also brought some detail to our community council this week, which was interesting.

I just still am a little bit concerned about the spinning and scare mongering; the cabinet report was very vague, lots of sorts of announcements keep appearing, the one I am particularly asking about this evening is the 400 jobs cuts that the leader referred to. At last council assembly you mentioned, or one of his answers was 1002 vacancies in the council at the moment so rather than scare mongering with people's jobs could he just confirm that he will be looking at those vacancies and that some of those 400 jobs cuts may at least be covered by some of those vacancies so people will not be losing that many jobs?

RESPONSE

I thank Councillor Al-Samerai for her supplementary question.

I think I have been going out of my way not to scare monger actually on the question of jobs and I am sorry if that impression has not got across to any member of this council and any member of staff, because I know how important it is that we are absolutely direct and honest with everybody who is affected by this budget, so what we have been saying or what I have been saying to staff is that at the moment whilst we anticipate 400 posts will be lost, 400 posts under the general fund budget, we are anticipating that translating to about 150 jobs, i.e. people who will have to leave being made redundant. That is 150 too many, I still accept that, but it is not as bad as the 400 figure in terms of post lost. We are looking at redeployment, we are looking at every alternative option to keep people still working for this council because we recognise if you lose a job now it is not going to be easy to go and find another one, particularly with another local authority, so we are trying to minimise and mitigate the impact of the cuts that we having to deal with, but there will be some impact. But as I say, we will be keeping it as low as possible, we think of 150 as the consequence of the general fund. I don't want anyone to scare monger about this and I don't think we in dealing with our budget have been in fairness.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON

In light of local misgivings expressed about the proposal to relocate to Camberwell Green the building currently housing the "One Stop Shop" and reopen it as the "Camberwell Pavilion"

would the leader state whether the council will proceed with the proposals and if so indicate the cost of the move and what further consultation will take place?

RESPONSE

We first made our plans for a Camberwell Pavilion public last autumn and consulted with a small group of stakeholders including the Camberwell Society. Since that time the Camberwell Society has stated that it is opposed to the proposal. I continue to believe that the concept of a Camberwell Pavilion does have some merit and we will be consulting with the wider community over the next few months.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON

Thank you Mr Mayor; I always have a supplemental for the leader. I thank him for his answer, which again is not quite an answer, but he may already know that the Camberwell Pavilion is commonly known among parts of Camberwell as the Camberwell Porta-cabin. Now although it may be time for Camberwell – something I heartily agree with, is he prepared to consider the option that perhaps the one stop shop should not be moved to Camberwell if people do not want it, it should be sold off and the money reinvested in Camberwell as an alternative to planting it in the middle of the green?

RESPONSE

I hope I have made clear in my answer, perhaps I failed, I am sorry Councillor Robinson, we will look at all options for the Camberwell Pavilion idea and the Bermondsey One Stop Shop. I think that the issue is that it has minimal value if it is sold on the open market but it could potentially have great value to the people of Camberwell.

We have been talking about the regeneration of Camberwell and our thinking was this would be a very quick and deliverable sign that we are serious about regenerating Camberwell by bringing a new library and a new public meeting space to the heart of Camberwell. Now if the people of Camberwell don't want it I am not going to force it on them, but I do think that its fair that we consult a little wider than we have thus far. I know that the Camberwell Society does not like the prospect, thinks it an ugly building. I think we can make it a much more attractive building but I think it is important that we consult and see whether people would welcome if this is a potentially new library in preference to the library facility which is not very good quite frankly, what we have got currently on Camberwell Church Street, not as a long term solution but we think we can get 10 to 15 years more use out of this if it was moved. So that's where we are at; we are not going to force anything on the people of Camberwell. As a resident of Camberwell I will listen to Councillor Robinson as much as every other resident who has an interest in this.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS

Do you think that the cabinet has kept to its election pledge to have the most open budget process in the council's history?

RESPONSE

Yes I do. In the autumn we set out the principles which would guide our budget decisions, so that our method was open to all and our approach transparent.

Since then we have visited each community council twice, and will visit each a further time. Each community council has, through those visits from cabinet members, had the opportunity to discuss with cabinet the severity of the council's budget challenge and indicate their priorities for where savings should be made. As well as community councils we have taken this discussion out to many other community groups and council employees.

These conversations have made a genuine impact on our decisions, and I want to thank everyone who has taken the time to get involved.

We have for the first time offered overview and scrutiny the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the budget, and this will take place on 31 January.

Before cabinet recommends a budget to council assembly local groups impacted by the budget recommendations will have the opportunity to make representations to us at our 8 February cabinet meeting.

I believe that, taken together, these measures have not only met our manifesto commitment but also begun to change the council culture, so that it is implicitly more open and transparent. I fully intend that this move towards ever-greater transparency will continue over the course of this administration.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS

I thank the leader for his response. In the interest of openness, will he give a commitment to following the same kind of open approach to the budget consultation that we have seen this year in future years of this administration?

RESPONSE

Yes I can. I think it has been a very worthwhile exercise trying to involve as many members of the public, as many interest groups as possible, as many in the community as we can in this budget process. I think there are things we have learned about the process as we have gone along which perhaps can be tightened and improved. At the moment we are still learning as we are dealing with the draft budget, and I think there are ways in which we can improve that. In the next couple of day we are going to be publishing a budget guide, a plain English guide for the budget if you will, which sets out quite clearly what the implications are of the very difficult choices that we are having to make because of the government cuts, but now I think it is useful and people have appreciated being consulted and it is something which I think any administration should carry on doing in the future and certainly this administration will do in future years.

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PODDY CLARK

Will the leader reduce the level of pay of the chief executive by 5%, as suggested by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government?

RESPONSE

I am not going to discuss any individual officer's pay or conditions of employment in a council assembly meeting.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PODDY CLARK

Thank you Mr Mayor. I thank the leader for his answer and it's a very specific answer which I respect. I want to make it quite clear and assure the chief executive that I meant no reflection of her undeniable dedication and enthusiasm of her job in Southwark. However I do want to remind the leader of a conversation that we had on 11 October last year when we were at the appointments committee and I pointed out to you in the paperwork the extra package of benefits that applied to senior officers. You did actually assure me that you had not been aware of it before the meeting and that you were going to look into it and so I would like to ask you on this occasion to revisit that question and give us a reply? Thank you.

RESPONSE

Well I want to thank Councillor Clark. Certainly we shall; every aspect and every area of spending which this council undertakes is having to be reviewed as a consequence of these unprecedented cuts from the government and that includes all senior pay and packages and bonuses and things like that, and I would hope and expect that everybody at this time would try and make their contribution to ensuring that front line services continue to benefit the people of this borough. So the short answer is yes I will.

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL MITCHELL

Does the leader of the council share my concern about suggestions that the existing very successful community councils are under threat? Does he agree with me that creating fewer larger community councils takes power away from local people and runs counter to the whole localism agenda?

RESPONSE

Every area of council spending faces reduction following the government cuts. I am confident that community councils can be improved, even on a reduced budget. That is why the democracy commission will be looking at community councils for its next phase.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL MITCHELL

May I thank the leader for his answer and express, I think, a bit of disappointment that he was unable to sign up to the localism agenda that was the second part of the question; and I just wonder what it might be I should conclude from the fact that he was unable to say yes to that, that this reinforces the notion that he wants to use the fig leaf of the cuts to centralise power at the expense of local people?

RESPONSE

Well it is a pretty big fig leaf I have to say; £34 million this year and £20 million next year and rolling on. You know the reality is we are facing unprecedented cuts, as I say, from central government. Every department in every area of the council is having to find savings and in our draft budget proposals we have identified £340,000 to come from community councils. That is because the department on which community councils sits has got to find its 25% of savings as every other department has and that is the proposal that has come from them.

Now, I think it is important to recognise that the democracy commission is the body which will look at how we make those savings in community councils in future, and as I said at Dulwich Community Council on Monday if the democracy commission can come back with proposals which find that £340,000 worth of savings whilst at the same time maintaining community councils in their current shape and form of doing everything they do I would be delighted.

There is no hidden agenda from this administration to cut community councils but they have to bear their share of the reductions, otherwise I think we will have a very difficult job explaining to people who are going to face cuts in their front line services, who rely on children's services, who rely on adult social care, who use our other services, why we are putting our democratic niceties to some extent above them and above their absolutely basic front line needs. I think we have to demonstrate right across the piece that we are committed to making these savings and being intelligent in how we do it, as I say I am not prescribing anything but it does have to find its savings and I invite the democracy commission to come back with their proposals – and as a member I hope, Cllr Mitchell, you will contribute; I am sure you will to that debate.

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH

Given the current financial challenges facing the council does the leader intend to break promises that he has made to the electorate?

RESPONSE

I have no intention of breaking the promises that we made at the last election, despite the massive reductions in spending that we are being forced to make.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH

Thank your Mr Mayor, I would like to thank the leader for his answer, but I have a supplementary. I noticed in the South London Press on Tuesday that the cabinet has been attacked for keeping its pledges, does the leader think that is a better place to be than being attacked for breaking promises?

RESPONSE

It was a curious headline. I cannot remember the exact words but it was you know 'Council under attack for keeping election promises', with our commitment to free healthy school meals, and I was heartened that Councillor Al-Samerai actually mentioned school dinners as a way of which we can help young people in their education, but you know I would much rather be under attack in keeping promises and pledges to the people of Southwark delivering on our manifesto, delivering on our commitment to make a fairer future for all in this borough, because I think that is what they want and that is what they expect of a Labour council and that is what they will get from a Labour council, a council which delivers on its promises and on its priorities; not one which walks away at the first puff of wind and inconvenience.

8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR WILMA NELSON

Does the leader think it was necessary to have 8 community wardens in addition to security staff for the cabinet meeting on 21 December 2010?

RESPONSE

People across London have expressed their anger with the scale of government cuts, and this has in places, from Parliament Square to Lewisham Town Hall, escalated to violence. The police have been concerned about the potential for further violent protests and Southwark is, as all other responsible local authorities are, taking extra precautions to make sure that our residents remain safe.

9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

Can the leader provide an update on the two visits that he has made to Grant Shapps?

RESPONSE

I have made two visits to Grant Shapps in the last two months to discuss the Aylesbury Estate and the council's grant settlement.

In early December Councillors Colley, Al-Samerai and I visited the housing minister to discuss the withdrawal of private finance initiative (PFI) money from the Aylesbury Estate regeneration. We made the case for keeping money for the PFI, given the scale and importance of this scheme not just to Southwark but to London. Mr Shapps was unable to

offer any assurances that this money would not be withdrawn nor to outline any other funding stream.

Earlier this month Councillors Livingstone, McNally and I visited the housing minister to discuss the council's grant settlement, explaining that Southwark is the hardest hit council in London in cash terms and making our case for a reconsideration of the proposed cuts. Mr Shapps listened, but offered no further finance at the meeting.

We are monitoring the position on the new homes bonus (NHB) and as one of the largest home builders in the country, we are optimistic that once consultation is complete that more cash will be forthcoming to support the council through this dreadful settlement. We have received some modest assumptions in the budget report yesterday.

As any further cash is awarded, we will need to take a view on the levels guaranteed and over what period. We will also need to take a view on the priorities to be addressed as we battle to make homes warm safe and dry and to support the housing revenue account (HRA) through the early years of the new subsidy regime.

I am obliged to the minister for listening so carefully to us and look forward to seeing him again and showing him in real terms the potential impacts of recent government cuts on the great work that the council is trying to complete.

On a supplementary point, I have twice since May asked to meet with the Secretary of State for Communities, Law and Governance, Eric Pickles. On the first occasion he said he was too busy. I still have not received a response to the second request for a meeting, which was sent on 20 September.

10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR TIM MCNALLY

Will the leader be using reserves and the contingency set aside by the previous administration in order to prevent cuts to front line services?

RESPONSE

The draft budget proposals identify the use of around £4 million from balances across the next two years. Unlike the local government minister Grant Shapps we do not believe it's prudent to commit further reserves at this time as the vast majority of our reserves are already committed and are vital to the future of key programmes like the regeneration of Elephant & Castle and the Aylesbury Estate. In any case, reserves are assets not income, meaning that if we spent reserves in the coming financial year we still have to find the savings in the next financial year.

11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON

We are all very concerned that the previous administration accounts relating to the decent homes investment programme highlighted woeful strategic administrative weaknesses coupled with political sleight of hand. Can the leader confirm by ward and how much was spent between years 2006 to 2010 by the previous administration?

RESPONSE

The information is only available by housing management areas rather than by wards. Details of spend over the four year from 2006 – 2010 are set out below.

Decent Homes expenditure by Area

Area	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total by Area
Bermondsey	12,795,396	9,994,932	10,665,253	6,746,325	40,201,906
Borough & Bankside	4,874,866	4,300,572	12,879,753	3,775,978	25,831,169
Camberwell	8,558,068	3,098,996	5,433,791	2,123,692	19,214,547
Dulwich	3,033,512	1,313,123	3,293,568	3,495,037	11,135,240
Nunhead & Peckham					
Rye	4,571,559	1,619,647	7,632,175	3,943,462	17,766,843
Peckham	5,235,735	4,633,195	5,409,532	11,219,188	26,497,650
Rotherhithe	3,325,042	6,413,296	4,960,721	7,019,196	21,718,255
Walworth	7,317,628	12,450,969	5,479,776	3,203,994	28,452,367
Misc borough-wide	0	61,179	46	1,929,001	1,990,226
Decent Homes allocation total	49,711,806	43,885,909	55,754,615	43,455,873	192,808,203

Notes

Spend against main decent homes (DH) allocation only. Does not include works contributing to DH through e.g. rewiring, minor voids budgets. Tenant management organisation spend shown within area.

12. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

As quoted in question 17 at the last council assembly, can the leader tell me the location of additional CCTV cameras he has installed, not including the link up with Transport for London (TfL) which was agreed with TfL under the last administration?

RESPONSE

The following new cameras have or will shortly be installed:

The parking services have purchased three new re-deployable cameras for traffic management this financial year. Two have been deployed at the junction of Camberwell Road and Wyndham Road to manage issues at the Box Junction. The third is waiting for a suitable deployment location.

Three standalone cameras were purchased for use in the Dulwich area and are currently sited along Norwood Road.

We have not purchased any new cameras in Burgess Park, but have relocated four Sentriescope cameras.

Four new cameras are to be purchased for the new road layout at the Elephant & Castle Southern Roundabout. This project is under way and due to be completed before the end of this financial year.

13. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR NICK DOLEZAL

Does the leader believe that the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government's decision to scrap the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) will have an effect on social mobility in Southwark?

RESPONSE

Yes. Over 3,600, a third of Southwark's 16-19 year olds received the EMA this year, which helped young people from less affluent backgrounds stay in education. The payment was

designed to help with the day-to-day costs of staying on in education, like buying lunch or paying for transport, for those who might not otherwise be able to afford it.

Without this payment I am deeply concerned that some young people in Southwark will decide that further education is a luxury they cannot afford. I believe that further education, which provides young people with the qualifications to go on to university or equips them with the skills to get a good job, should not be seen as a luxury, but should be open to all.

14. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GETTLESON

What will the leader do to support the development of 'community plans' set out in the Localism Bill and maximise these opportunities for local residents?

RESPONSE

In December the cabinet member for regeneration met with representatives of a new community forum eager to develop a neighbourhood plan for parts of Bermondsey. The group is currently working to establish its constitution and to determine their preferred boundaries of the area for their plan.

We are working constructively with this group and actively considering the possibility of applying to be a Vanguard Council – that is, piloting the development of a neighbourhood plan ahead of the Localism Bill making its passage through both Houses of Parliament. Officers are exploring the implications of this, including the likely costs and the implications for other parts of the Borough, Bankside & London Bridge supplementary planning document (SPD) area. They have also met with officials from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Greater London Assembly (GLA) to discuss the matter.

I understand that Councillor Colley emailed you on 4 January to ask for your views on the proposal, but that to date she has received no response.

15. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE

Does the leader believe residents of Southwark value community councils?

RESPONSE

Yes. I also believe they value social care for the young and old, our environmental services and refuse collection, local libraries and leisure facilities, measures to tackle anti-social behaviour and early years services.

16. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

Does the leader agree that increased use of the River Thames could make a significant contribution to improving the travel services available to many residents of Southwark and has he pressed the Mayor and Transport for London to treat the river-bus service as public transport, rather than a tourist facility?

RESPONSE

I met earlier in the year with the London Port Authority to discuss the potential for extra stops on the river in Southwark. I am happy to take forward the councillor's concerns about the river-bus service to the Mayor of London. However, this service may not be given a high priority by TfL in the light of the investment required to bring the service in line with other public transport and stresses on its budget.

17. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

Please will the leader provide attendance for Southwark citizens at all council assembly meetings and all of the community council meetings in Southwark since 1 May 2006? Please can he provide a breakdown by community council?

RESPONSE

The council does not collect details of residents who attend council assembly meetings. In relation to community councils we have figures for 2006, 2007 and 2010 to date. These are as follows:

Community Council Attendance 2006, 2007 and 2010

Community Council Area	2006	Number of mtgs & (Ave)	2007	Number of mtgs & (Ave)	No* data 2008	No* data 2009	2010	Number of mtgs & (Ave)	Total
Dulwich	444	7 (63)	472	8 (59)			220	6 (36)	1135
Camberwell	358	6 (59)	296	7 (42)			269	6 (44)	923
Walworth	470	7 (67)	364	6 (60)			352	6 (58)	1186
Borough & Bankside	374	6 (62)	483	8 (60)			233	6 (38)	1090
Bermondsey	464	8 (58)	353	9 (39)			359	6 (59)	1176
Rotherhithe	449	8 (56)	378	9 (42)			303	6 (50)	1130
Peckham	428	6 (71)	324	8 (40)			267	6 (44)	1019
Nunhead & Peckham Rye	392	6 (65)	571	8 (71)			263	6 (44)	1226
Total	3379		3241				2266		8885

*Data for 2008 and 2009 unreliable or missing due to system/database fault

18. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES (BOROUGH AND BANKSIDE COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Would the cabinet member for environment support a bid for Borough High Street for LIP funding in 2012/13, as both an important strategic road and as an identified local priority by residents and ward councillors for improvements?

RESPONSE

I share residents', ward councillors' and local workers' concern about Borough High Street, as both a major thoroughfare and a pleasant environment for pedestrians.

There are very particular complexities with this street associated with its gateway to the City of London position, the fact that the entrance to a major rail station is sited along its route and now the future development of the European Union's tallest building located on its periphery and accommodating thousands more people.

The questioner is right in so far that to resolve the range of public realm problems Borough High Street presents, a large scale solution supported by significant funding is vital.

Council assembly will need no reminding that Borough High Street is part of the Transport for London Road Network. TfL have final authority responsibility for this road.

Since its introduction, LiP funding (and predecessor scheme) has provided funding for transport and improvements on council maintained highways infrastructure. There is no doubt that if improvements to Borough High Street were to be funded from this funding stream this would be to the detriment of investment in the borough road network.

As part of the development surrounding London Bridge station, a study of pedestrian movement is currently being undertaken by Network Rail and partners. In addition, development funds from nearby London Bridge developments will provide funds for improvements to Borough High Street.

I am more than ready to commit the council's support, to lobby and to work with TfL to provide ways for much needed improvements for Borough High Street.

19. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK (ROTHERHITHE COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Can the cabinet member for children's services advise how many pupils living in the Rotherhithe Community Council area are having to travel to secondary schools outside the Rotherhithe area due to acute shortage of secondary school places in the north of the borough? How many of these need to travel outside the borough?

RESPONSE

There is no acute shortage of secondary school places in the north of the borough. In addition, the reasons for families choosing one school over another are not recorded and may be varied.

20. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU (BERMONDSEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Please will the cabinet member for resources please provide the number of people who have visited the Bermondsey One Stop Shop since it was opened? Please can he provide a breakdown by year?

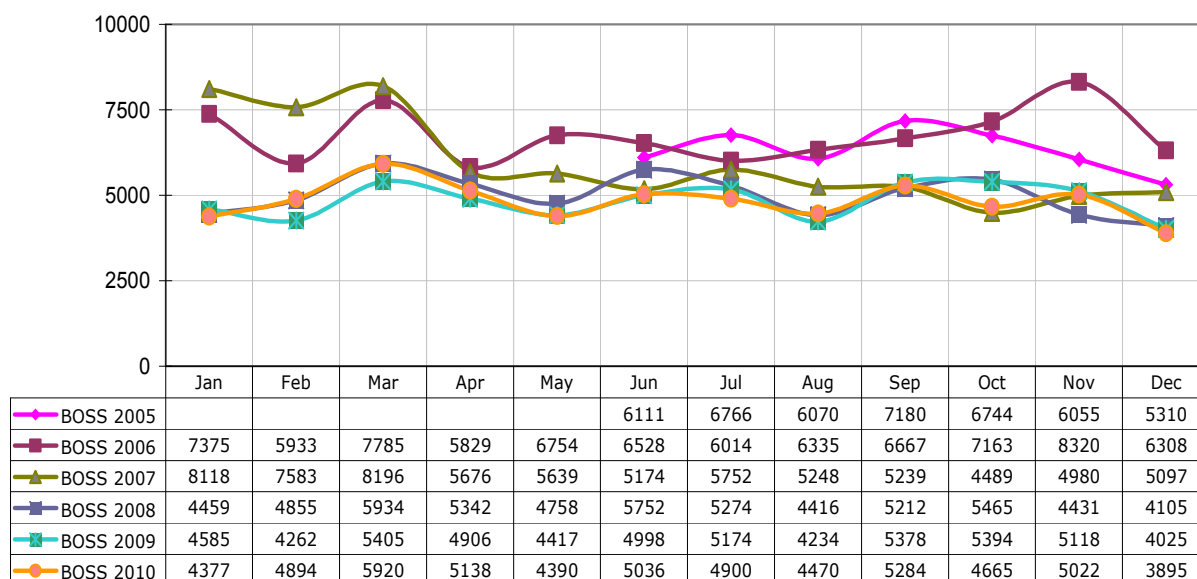
RESPONSE

Below is a graph showing the numbers of people visiting the Bermondsey One Stop Shop since it was opened in June 2005. The breakdown indicates that there has been a year on year fall in residents choosing to visit the one stop shop over the last 5 years.

The figures below demonstrate an overall fall in the number of visits of 28.4% between 2006 and 2010. In the same period, the number of visits at the Peckham One Stop Shop increased by 55.5% and those at the Walworth One Stop Shop increased by 31.4%.

The proposed plan to move the existing customer office to the new Canada Water Library, which is has greater transport links, is expected to increase access to council services and customer satisfaction.

of visitors BOSS



21. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER (DULWICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Please can the cabinet member for children's services please inform me how many primary school applications for Southwark schools have been received from Dulwich residents, which schools she would expect to have bulge classes and what percentage of applicants she anticipates to have their 1st or 2nd choices?

RESPONSE

The application and allocation process is still underway for this year (2011 admissions). The application closing date was on Saturday 15 January and the results have yet to be analysed.

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

Has the cabinet member considered evidence given on free school meals by an expert panel to children's services scrutiny sub-committee on 16 November 2010 for the pilot?

RESPONSE

Two members from the expert panel that gave evidence to the scrutiny meeting are members of the free healthy school meals project board. Their expertise has been informing the project's direction and supporting the evaluation process of the programme.

23. QUESTION TO CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS

Please can the cabinet member provide the number of children who are currently eligible for free school meals for each of the following schools:

- a) Dulwich Church of England Infant School
- b) Oliver Goldsmith Primary School
- c) Southwark Park Primary School

Please can she provide what percentage of the total population of each school this equates to?

RESPONSE

Data from January 2010 census:

School	Percentage	Number
Dulwich Church of England Infant School	4.5%	12
Oliver Goldsmith Primary School	37.4%	215
Southwark Park Primary School	32.2%	127

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

How many young people have a) visited and b) are members of Brandon Library?

RESPONSE

Visitor data is not collected by age range. There are 587 members up to the age of 17 at Brandon Library

25. QUESTION TO CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK

Does the cabinet member think that stigma is an issue in the uptake of free school meals in primary schools?

RESPONSE

Research from the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) states that nationally one in every five children, who is entitled to a free school meal does not claim it, in part because there can be a stigma attached to eating a free school meal.

26. QUESTION TO CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET

Please will the cabinet member list all the primary schools that require capital investment in their kitchens to provide universal free school meals? If she is unable to provide a complete list, please can she provide a list of schools that she knows require capital investment?

RESPONSE

An audit is in progress to determine which primary schools require capital investment to bring in free healthy school meals.

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

Will the cabinet member ensure that she will not make any cuts to the youth service in order to fund universal free school meals?

RESPONSE

The government's cuts are deeper and quicker than necessary. This has a large impact on the children's services budget. We will prioritise our statutory services and the commitments

on which we were elected and are looking at how we can make savings in youth services whilst enhancing provision where possible.

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

What will the cabinet member do to ensure that every meal eaten by primary school children outside school are healthy and nutritious?

RESPONSE

Our free healthy schools meals policy concerns meals provided at school not outside school.

29. QUESTION TO CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR NICK STANTON

How will the cabinet member measure the success of her teenage pregnancy strategy?

RESPONSE

In line with our manifesto pledge I have set up a teenage pregnancy commission, composed of representatives from across the community, who will be reporting to me in the spring with recommendations, with the aims of delivering a step-change in levels of teenage pregnancy.

30. QUESTION TO CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL BUKOLA

Following the abolition of the previous government's shameful policy on detaining children in asylum centres, would the cabinet member congratulate the coalition government and further would she confirm how many of our residents are affected locally in Southwark?

RESPONSE

Data on the number of residents affected locally in Southwark is not available.

31. QUESTION TO CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR VICTORIA MILLS

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the progress made to bring in free healthy school meals and any early findings from the pilot schemes that are now underway?

RESPONSE

The pilot for the free healthy school meals programme began in ten primary schools, of varying characteristics, at the beginning of January, for reception and year 1 pupils. The pilot is a vital phase of a programme of this size and complexity, to ensure that it provides best value for money and improves the outcomes of our children and young people.

The intention is to begin rolling out the programme next academic year, starting with specific year groups in all primary schools. The roll out will be informed by the findings from the pilot phase.

An audit of primary schools' capacity to deliver the full programme is currently ongoing, and work is underway to evaluate the pilot phase. This will include a number of areas including take-up of school meals, supporting healthy lifestyles, sustainability and logistics.

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

Southwark winters appear to be trending towards colder more extreme weather – so far a very snowy third winter in a row. Recently stocks ran very low and we witnessed people being sent out litter picking in the snow due to running out of salt.

Does the cabinet member agree with me that 1,000 tonnes of salt in stock at the winter start no longer seems adequate and would he please consider a proper salt barn that can hold more salt in ideal condition rather than in an open yard and hold sufficient salt such that side roads and pavements can be salted during snowy periods?

RESPONSE

By far the biggest negative impact this winter on our salt supply resulted from government intervention and prioritisation of salt supply based on the current size of the stock. In this context, it is beholden on me to pay a fulsome tribute to our street and estates sweeping staff for their dedication in providing a very considerable manual effort towards our snow and ice clearing operation.

In terms of a salt barn the main advantage would be the lessening of water absorption which forms a crust and can make dispersal rates from gritting vehicles more difficult to regulate. Based on the experience of the two previous winter periods and the proposed additional network coverage we would need to consider a facility in excess of 3,000 tonnes and requiring a site size far in excess of the existing site at Latona Road. The cost of a timber covered structure, for example, would be approximately £175,000 plus investigations, plus groundwork, plus services, plus planning application, plus fees and charges. This is without the location of an alternative site.

I have agreed that officers explore the possibilities for purchasing stock and holding it in storage out of the borough. This could allow for an uninterrupted supply, but of course also needs to be considered within the current financial climate, which is a very harsh one due to coalition government cuts.

Moreover, whilst holding additional stock at the outset of the winter period may seem advantageous and allow for the gritting of all footways, weather conditions will still dictate service levels. Should the weather be sufficiently intense to need footpath gritting then engineers will weigh this fact against the likelihood of it being for a sustained period. Experience has shown that where the weather is likely to be bad for a sustained period, salt stock must be conserved and the maintenance of the resilience carriageway network will take precedence.

33. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN

The council's travel plan prioritises pedestrians and public transport over car use. Do you therefore agree that pavements, particularly bus stops, should be gritted during snowy/icy periods in response to residents' requests to grit pavements to reduce risk of injuries caused by slips and falls?

RESPONSE

It goes without saying that I would like this council to grit as many pavements as possible. However, there are constraints as to the salt stocks we can hold, order with guaranteed delivery safe from central government re-allocation, and what percentage of the salt stock we have at any one time that we can commit to gritting footways. To put this in perspective we

would need approximately 300 tonnes of salt to grit all pavements in the borough in a day. This would represent 30% of our total storage capacity.

To make effective use of available resources the following issues are considered developing our treatment strategies in the winter service plan:

- Where do people need to go?
- How many people would need to go there?
- Are there any hills or other conditions that will make it difficult for people to go where they need to go?

With these in mind the following have been prioritised for pavement gritting:

- Accident and emergency centres
- Bus, train, rail stations and other transport hubs and links
- Access to schools
- Access to police, fire and ambulance stations
- Shopping areas.

The above notwithstanding, I am happy to consider bus stops with high levels of patronage that may have been left out of our current list of vulnerable sites. However, let me say that this is against a background of extremely harsh cuts that the coalition government is making to the council's funding.

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

Please will the cabinet member provide an update on the MUSCo?

RESPONSE

A report on the MUSCo was received at the cabinet meeting of 25 January and this sets out our position in some detail. In summary I can confirm that we have not been able to conclude the MUSCo project with our preferred bidder. This is regrettable but we had to be absolutely sure that their proposal represented best value for the council was a workable model with which to proceed, and that it presented no material risks to the regeneration projects going ahead. Unfortunately, we were not satisfied that this was the case.

However, we remain committed champions of sustainable development and remain confident that the schemes which will be put in place for the Elephant and Castle, the Aylesbury, and those existing elsewhere across the housing stock incorporate really robust measures to achieve the same results.

We retain our zero carbon growth strategy for the Elephant and Castle development and in accordance with the London Plan, a major part of this must be through the use of renewable sources of energy and low-carbon technology.

Elsewhere the council continues with other major carbon reduction schemes such as the proposed SELCHP scheme, the only 'waste into power' facility of its kind in London, which aims to capture the heat currently wasted at the plant to heat up to five nearby estates. The Peckham Low Carbon Zone, which is one of only 10 in London, has an overall target of reducing CO₂ emissions across homes, schools and businesses by 20.12% by 2012.

While the termination of the MUSCo process is disappointing I remain confident we can meet our targets through alternative means.

35. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

Why are commuters allowed to use Southwark Park as a free car park while local residents around the corner have to pay to park outside their homes?

RESPONSE

Car parks in the major parks in Southwark exist to ensure that those who want or need to travel to use the park by car are able to. We are aware of issues of commuters parking for free in car parks in Southwark's parks. Parks are free at the point of access and to date we have resisted implementing pay and display or controlled parking.

However it would be possible to implement parking control systems that did not require payment by the customer but were ticketing systems and patrolled by our existing parking contractors. This is a system that we are considering for other parks in the borough where the issues are so extreme that disabled park users are not able to park in the car park. It is important to be aware that this system will incur costs for the parks business unit i.e. cost of marking, signage, ticketing machines and extra patrols and will not lead to extra income. To date officers are not aware of incidents of genuine park users not being able to park in Southwark Park and therefore are not currently considering implementing this system there due to the cost that would be incurred.

The situation in Southwark Park differs from on-street (highway) parking where there is a controlled parking zone (CPZ) in operation. CPZs are introduced where there is public support for a scheme and the aspects of cost are always made clear. Legislation states that CPZs must be self-financing and therefore the cost of enforcement, maintenance, signs, lines and machines must be borne by those who wish to park in a CPZ. Those charges include resident's permits, business permits, visitor permits, pay and display and penalty charge notices.

Legislation requires that we keep a separate parking account and that all parking schemes are self-financing. Therefore, it is not possible to introduce, enforce, maintain or review parking regulations without making a charge to permit holders.

Charges are set at a level which covers the cost of administration and achieves the objectives of parking controls: that is prevention of waiting where there is a risk to road safety or potential for congestion, and to manage parking space in areas where demand exceeds supply.

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

How many trees have died over the past three years due to salt damage from gritting exercises, how much have the replacement costs been, and what is being done to make contractors and the public aware of the costs incurred by the unfortunate application of salted grit in tree pits on the pavements during inclement weather conditions?

RESPONSE

Unfortunately records from previous years are not conclusive and we will not know the extent of salt deaths from this winter until the coming spring as salt damage can only be positively identified after tests have been carried out.

Therefore whilst it is not possible to say the total cost for the reasons, the cost of replacing a highway tree is approximately £280 for felling a dead tree and £400 for planting a replacement tree.

Officers are investigating all reports of alleged damage as they are reported. Officers are liaising with public realm on this to revise guidelines on the positioning of salt bins and spreading. Guidance for salt spreading in proximity to trees is outlined in Southwark's winter services plan.

The tree team is currently working on developing information for residents about how to spread salt on the pavements while avoiding damaging the trees i.e. not to pile salt in pits.

37. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY

Would the cabinet member for the environment care to advise what response has been issued, or is being prepared, to the Civil Aviation Authority's current consultation entitled "Future Airspace Strategy"?

RESPONSE

In line with Heathrow Association for Control of Aircraft Noise (HACAN) response, we welcome the basic thrust of this consultation: a willingness to think radically and flexibly to develop a new airspace strategy with due attention to environmental noise issues. In view of the far-reaching nature of the document we would encourage the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to seek at this early stage from a wide range of stakeholders including environmental pressure groups. The review presents a real opportunity to improve the noise climate for a very significant number of people in London and the Home Counties, particularly those living or working under the arrivals flight paths. As such, we will be asking for a policy to use dispersion, eg by using alternation of routes within the airspace allocation, to reduce the impact on particular communities where ever reasonably possible.

We support the removal of stacks and the adoption of more direct routes to the airport.

We suggest that the operation of continuous descent approach is reassessed alongside this review, and would ask that the impact of the steeper take-off procedures recommended be assessed carefully before any final decision is taken.

In order to be able accurately to assess the impact on noise of any flight path changes, we will be suggesting that actual noise measurements be taken across all the key areas where noise disturbance occurs (rather than rely on computer models).

We would ask that there be a requirement that all environmental factors (in addition to greenhouse emissions) are included when assessing the impacts of change from an efficiency perspective.

38. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER

Could the cabinet member provide leaf collection amounts for the years 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11?

RESPONSE

	Streets & Estates	Parks	Total Leaf-fall composted
Autumn 2008	1,398	385	1,783
Autumn 2009	1,507	335	1,841
Autumn 2010	1,339	355	1,693

The tonnages of leaf-fall collected by Southwark Cleaning and Quadron (our Parks Contractor) from our streets, estates and parks are shown in the table above. These figures do not include leaves collected by residents in their own gardens and presented for collection.

Composting leaves is more environmentally friendly than sending them to landfill, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and producing a useful end product. There is also a financial saving to the council of approximately £140,000 per annum and a contribution to our recycling rate of approximately 1.2%.

39. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN MORRISSEY

Can the cabinet member update council assembly on plans to increase the number of intelligent speed adaptors (ISAs) used on the council fleet?

RESPONSE

Southwark has recently been selected by Transport for London (TfL) to take part in a research project involving ISAs which will entail 50 new units being fitted in our fleet vehicles. The purpose of the research is to establish how ISAs will effect vehicle emissions, vehicle safety, vehicle wear and tear and driver technique. We are presently awaiting written confirmation from TfL to confirm the start date.

Currently the council has four fleet vehicles fitted with intelligent speed adaptation (ISA) units.

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

Has the cabinet member made any requests for the extension of the Mayor's cycle hire scheme into new parts of our borough?

RESPONSE

Transport for London (TfL) has recently announced the phase 2 expansion of the Barclays Cycle Hire scheme.

In essence their intention is to expand the scheme by summer 2012 further into the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney covering an additional area of approximately 20km² which will include 2720 new docking points, and providing access to the Olympic Park.

I have made representations at London Councils and officers have met with TfL and requested that they look at the possibility of expanding the scheme, currently without success. I will continue to lobby for the scheme to be expanded further into our borough as new phases are considered.

41. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR RENATA HAMVAS

How has the car club scheme contributed to reduced car usage in the borough and how well is the scheme used locally?

RESPONSE

Southwark launched its on-street car club scheme in March 2010 and has rolled out nearly 90 car club bays over 9 months, the fastest launch of any London borough.

Streetcar, our car club operator, report membership and vehicle usage figures on a monthly basis. Since the launch, we've seen membership increase by 42% and now have over 6,500 Streetcar members in Southwark. Car club usage has been excellent across the borough, indicating that members are making good use of the council partnership with Streetcar.

Southwark do not collect data on whether members say they have reduced their private car usage on becoming members. This is monitored and surveyed by the national charity, Carplus, who report on overall national trends for car sharing and car clubs; the results of which are published on an annual basis in conjunction with the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL). The 2009/10 report identified that:

- A quarter of respondents have reduced the number of vehicles owned by their household since joining a car club
- 30% of respondents reported that they would have bought a car had they not joined a car club
- Each car club car is estimated to result in an average of 11 private vehicles being sold. Inclusion of those who might otherwise have purchased suggests that each car club vehicle is potentially displacing more than 20 private vehicles
- On average London car club members are report making 4-5 trips of less than 25 miles each month, compared to 33 for the average London license holder.

We will in time be looking at the impact that car club bays have on parking permit issuance but at this stage it is too early to evaluate this data.

The council is also about to commence a research project, with a University College London researcher into member profiles and their car club experience. The report will also look at how the car club service can be improved and how we can increase awareness and usage of car clubs, especially, with those who are not currently members.

42. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL

Please can the cabinet member tell us how the newly formed housing department plans to make changes to improve the repairs and maintenance department to ensure that where possible we have a improved quality and response times for repairs?

RESPONSE

Repairs are one of the top priorities for council residents and the director of the new housing services department has been charged with delivering a step change in performance. The recent scrutiny report on the repairs and maintenance service clearly sets out the urgent need to improve resident satisfaction and the contract management of repairs contractors.

I am committed to a stronger performance management regime which holds contractors to account for poor performance, including applying the full range of financial penalties. We will work with contractors to ensure that high calibre staff are employed who are passionate about delivering an excellent service to residents. A meaningful suite of key performance indicators will be put in place that measures performance by what residents tell us first-hand rather than relying on contractors' feedback.

Individual repairs will be followed through to successful completion, rather than repeat repairs being ordered for appointments not being kept, call backs for incomplete work or cancellations when repairs become overdue. There will be a strong emphasis on post-inspection of repairs with an independent check to ensure that contractors' work is up to scratch. Our aim is to deliver better value for money with the council paying once for repairs that residents are happy with.

The new housing services department will also have responsibility for the customer contact centre. The majority of calls to the contact centre concern repairs and my expectation is that alignment of call answering with service delivery should improve ownership and responsibility for the successful completion of residents' repairs.

43. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR CLAIRE HICKSON

Can the cabinet member outline how he has worked to undo the legacy of the previous administration and what steps he is taking to make sure that every council home is warm, safe and dry?

RESPONSE

Since May 2010, we have finalised the council's stock condition survey and carried out a robust review of all of the available options to make sure that every council home is warm, safe, and dry by 2014/15.

A report was considered by cabinet in December 2010 which set out in detail the current funding gap, which ranges from £64 million to £314 million depending upon the level of standard to be achieved.

We are looking again at the decent homes programme and what we need to do in Southwark to deliver warm, safe, and dry homes for residents. The recent stock condition survey has given us certainty over the funding gap and the scale of the challenge.

The cabinet in December agreed a programme of work for officers to look at how additional resources can be brought in to meet this high level of investment need.

In January 2011, we submitted a bid to the government for £148 million for funding to support the council's decent homes programme.

There is a limited pot of available government funding, however, we believe that we have made a persuasive case based on Southwark's particular stock profile. Even if our bid is successful, due to the number of local authorities bidding into this central resource, we cannot bank on this funding alone to plug the gap.

We are currently looking again at the commitments within the decent homes programme and whether there is scope to redefine the standard to enable us to deliver decent homes to all of those which require investment in the borough. If we remain at the current Southwark Standard we will have less decent homes overall by 2014 at a cost of £520 million.

In February 2011, we will be sending out a survey to all tenants and leaseholders to ask them for their views on priorities and how we should put future programmes together.

In March 2011, cabinet will be considering proposals on the targeted sale of empty homes to fund additional investment.

Also, in March 2011, we expect to have begun consultation on an interim developer premium policy to help fund decent homes investment needs.

Officers have been asked to consider all of the available options and we will be coming back to cabinet in the summer with a final report which recommends the way forward following wider public consultation.

44. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR PATRICK DIAMOND

The government has broken its election pledge of automatic jail terms for criminals caught carrying knives. What message does this send to the small minority of people in Southwark who think it is acceptable to carry a knife?

RESPONSE

We are keen to work closely with the Home Office and Ministry of Justice to ensure that the criminal justice system has an appropriate response to ensure that the threat caused by knife and weapon crime is reduced. The Southwark Violent Crime Strategy provides a valuable framework to how, where and with whom we can intervene in the most effective way to ensure that responses, including criminal justice, are effective and proportionate.

Sentencing provides a useful deterrent, but the greatest deterrent to knife crime is our communities, our families and peers. Knife crime does not have to be a feature of our society. To be successful we have to ensure there is a common voice that violence is not acceptable and ensure that we provide the support to our communities to take a positive step. We must ensure that we universally say no to knife crime and, as a result, address the fear of knife and weapon assaults. This is one of the reasons that we actively support the Borough Commander's initiative, "Stand up for Southwark".

45. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT AND THE OLYMPICS FROM COUNCILLOR SUNIL CHOPRA

Concerns have been expressed for the future of adult learning in Southwark by some users due to changes in funding and rules through the creation of the Skills Funding Agency, the existing funder. What steps is the cabinet member taking to ensure Southwark continues to provide sustainable learning opportunities for residents in Southwark?

RESPONSE

I would like to reiterate my commitment to adult learning and my support for provision from the Thomas Calton Centre. As you know, in addition to £750,000 external funding secured for refurbishing the building, the council has itself contributed £250,000 from its capital programme to complete the planned works. The refurbishment programme is nearly complete and a new, modern learning centre is about to be re-launched. The Adult Learning Service is vital to the well being of many Southwark residents and in relation to strategies for maximising employment opportunities.

Our Adult Learning Service now has significantly more learners than for the past several years and for the first time in a number of years we have not just met but exceeded our contractual targets. In addition to this, the service is reaching out to local people through schools and through working with the voluntary sector in a number of locations across the borough.

The Adult Learning Service is entirely funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) which replaced the Learning and Skills Council and has itself suffered cuts. We are waiting for confirmation of our funding allocation from the Skills Funding Agency for academic year 2011/12.

I will be writing to the relevant minister to enquire what plans are being put in place to ensure adequate resources for Adult Learning are in place for the future and what direction the government is likely to take on this very important service.

46. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT AND THE OLYMPICS FROM COUNCILLOR KEVIN AHERN

What will the effects of the budget settlement be on culture and arts in Southwark?

RESPONSE

The Department of Environment and Housing is, alongside all other council departments seeking to find a 25% saving over three years. Detailed budget proposals will be set out in the council's overall budget paper.

The Arts Council of England faces a 29.6% cut to be implemented over the next four years. The majority of arts organisations will be given an equal cut which has been kept to 6.9% for 2011/12. Over the four-year period 2011-2015, the percentage budget cut for funded arts organisations will be 14.9%. This will impact on arts organisations that are jointly funded by the council, and a number of organisations that have their base in the borough.

The Arts Council also has a budget for strategic opportunities for artistic work - this will be reduced by £21m (64%) next year. This supports work such as touring, the Cultural Leadership Programme and the Manchester International Festival. In the future the Arts Council will be asking funded organisations to take on more responsibility for furthering their strategic goals, particularly in the areas of touring and audience development. This will apply to some Southwark organisations.

A new funding structure for the arts was launched in November 2010, with priorities determined by 'Achieving great art for everyone'. 2011/2012 will be a transitional year. Whilst the funding pot will be reduced, for the first time national arts funds will be open to new organisations, and there may be defunding of some existing ones. Organisations will be informed of their funding for 2012/13 at the end of March 2011, and the new funding structure will be in place in April 2012. The five long-term goals are:

- Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated
- More people experience and are inspired by the arts
- The arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative
- The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled
- Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts.

The Grants for the Arts scheme will remain as a useful funding pot for key arts projects, and from which many Southwark organisations have benefited.

There are a number of national and regional organisations that support arts, heritage, film and architecture that are being disbanded, or amalgamated. The key ones are: the transfer of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to the Arts Council in 2012; disbanding of the UK Film Council, with the distribution of lottery funding for film being transferred to the British Film Institute in 2011/12. Film London will however remain to support the industry, location work in the capital and support for new film-makers. Whilst English Heritage remains, its funding is reduced by half. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) will close on 31 March 2011.

The Heritage Lottery Fund will remain as the key source of public funding for sustaining and transforming heritage, with an increase to national lottery funding for heritage. National Lottery funding for the arts, heritage and sport will increase from 2012 and receive a 20% share of the total £25 billion again and funding for the voluntary and community sector will rise from 2013. Southwark organisations have been beneficiaries of this funding and will continue to benefit.

Creative Partnerships, managed by the charity Creativity, Culture and Education has had its funding removed. A cluster of Southwark Schools benefited from this programme where artists and creative practitioners worked within the curriculum. Other programmes that

benefited children and young people's learning and participation in the arts were curtailed in the summer, Find Your Talent and the free theatre tickets scheme 'A night less ordinary'.

Arts and Business, the national organisation for encouraging private sector support for the arts will have its funding removed in 2011/12, to be replaced by new schemes and training for arts organisations in developing private sector support. There is a new focus on strengthening joint public and private sector for the arts through endowments and philanthropic giving and the council with businesses and cultural partners will have an important role to play in ensuring that Southwark's organisations benefit from the new series of 'match fund' schemes. An £80 million scheme to boost philanthropic giving for the arts was announced in December, and there is strong directive for the sector to build on the mixed economy funding (public/private) model. It is acknowledged that few organisations are currently equipped with the skills to develop private sector and individual giving.

National museums and galleries, including the Imperial War Museum, are facing a 15% reduction in their budgets from Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) from 2011/12 to 2014/15. National organisations in the Southbank and Bankside Cultural Quarter are considering ways of minimising the impact of reductions through shared back office functions.

It will be necessary for organisations to work together to deliver services for local areas as part of regeneration and area development programmes.

47. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBA BLANGO

How will the cabinet member make the monthly list of expenditure over £500 more user friendly for members of the public? Will he ensure that it is made clear exactly what each item was spent on?

RESPONSE

I am glad to reiterate that Southwark was the third inner-London council to publish a monthly list of expenditure over £500, and in the first seventh of councils nationally to do so. We understand that currently less than half of councils publish this information, despite government's deadline to do this by this month.

Unlike some other boroughs that do publish their expenditure, Southwark details all expenditure over £500, with the exception of payments to individuals. This means that whilst other boroughs could avoid publication of what it pays a firm in a month by making a number of payments of £499.99, Southwark would publish the total payments in the month to that firm and so have a fuller level of disclosure to the public. This is a level of openness and transparency that is beyond that sought in government's draft guidance.

The government published a consultation paper on guidance in November, but has yet to publish its final guidance. Once they do, I will be asking officers to ensure that we are fully compliant with that guidance.

However, it must be noted that fuller explanations of expenditure would require more officer time to input the data into the system at a time when we are trying to reduce expenditure on back office functions. It is also likely to necessitate updating our systems, and it is therefore prudent to await the final guidance before committing to such an upgrade. As we publish on the basis of expenditure per supplier, rather than by individual payment, we would also need to combine data where a number of payments have been made to the same company.

It should also be noted that the council has responded quickly to any requests by the media for further information on payments. Members of the public are also free to request

information on any of the suppliers listed, under the freedom of information legislation, in which case the details of the payment would be fully investigated and reported.

48. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS

Where does Southwark rank in terms of cuts to its formula grant compared to other London boroughs?

RESPONSE

On 20 October 2010 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the spending review for 2010 which would cover the period from 2011/12 to 2014/15. He announced that funding to local government will be reduced by 7.1% for each year to 2014/15. The Chancellor also announced a reduction in the number of grants to local government from 90 to less than 10 as part of the government's intention to lift the ring-fencing of all local government revenue grants from 2011/12, with the exception of local health and schools grants.

On the same date the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (CLG) wrote to all councils explaining that 'councils will face an average loss of grant of 7.25%, in real terms, in each of the next four years'.

We received the provisional 2011/12 grant settlement on 13 December and the figures show that Southwark's formula grant will reduce from £262.446m to £232.790m: a reduction of £29.656m or 11.3%. The government also set out the provisional 2012/13 formula grant of £214.821m, a further reduction of £17.167m or 7.4%. Southwark is therefore facing the largest reduction in formula grant, in cash terms, in London.

These cuts are at the upper end of our expectations and will necessitate extensive budget reductions for 2011/12 and 2012/13. Despite having the largest cut reduction in London, Southwark has not been allocated the transition grant that has been offered to a number of other authorities.

In 2011/12 the total level of provisional formula grant funding to local government nationally will be £29.4 billion, a reduction of 9.9% against the 2010/11 position.

Southwark is a Band 1 authority in that it is one of those councils most dependent on formula grant. 72% of the council's net budget is funded through formula grant. Nationally, there are 38 single-tier councils in this band, 17 of which are in London. The floors are self-financing. This means that those councils within a particular class that are above the floor will have the resources from their formula grant scaled back. The resources made available are then used to bring the councils which are below the floor up to their 'band' levels.

The government has introduced a transition grant to manage the impact of spending reductions. Whether a council receives the transition grant or not is dependent on the extent to which their overall 'revenue spending power' has decreased as a result of the provisional grant settlement.

Nationally in 2011/12 there are 36 councils that will see their revenue spending power reduced by the maximum 8.9%. Only one authority will experience an increase in revenue spending power, which is Dorset at 0.25%. A further 8 authorities will see their revenue spending power reduced by less than 1%. In London, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Hackney have experience more than the maximum reduction in revenue spending power and therefore will be in receipt of transition grant totalling £15.3m. No other council in London will receive the transition grant. Richmond-upon-Thames experiences the least reduction in revenue spending power at 0.6%. Inner London boroughs will lose revenue spending power of 7.5%. This compares with 4.3% in outer London boroughs.

The attached appendices show the effect of these cuts on London boroughs.

London Boroughs Cash Reduction

Local Authority	2011/12 cash Reduction £m	2012/12 cash Reduction £m	Total cash Reduction £m
England	-3,243.426	-2,136.737	-5,380.163
Inner London boroughs incl. City	-281.050	-164.878	-445.928
Outer London boroughs	-254.089	-155.944	-410.034
London boroughs	-535.139	-320.823	-855.962
Southwark	-29.656	-17.167	-46.824
Tower Hamlets	-29.259	-16.929	-46.188
Hackney	-28.656	-16.594	-45.251
Lambeth	-28.128	-16.282	-44.410
Camden	-23.538	-13.636	-37.174
Westminster	-23.383	-13.773	-37.156
Lewisham	-22.050	-13.744	-35.794
Islington	-21.001	-12.158	-33.159
Greenwich	-20.696	-12.226	-32.921
Wandsworth	-19.451	-11.251	-30.702
Hammersmith and Fulham	-15.862	-9.184	-25.046
Kensington and Chelsea	-15.185	-9.072	-24.257
City of London (Excl Police)	-4.183	-2.863	-7.046
	-281.050	-164.878	-445.928
Newham	-28.017	-16.202	-44.219
Brent	-21.136	-12.214	-33.351
Ealing	-20.386	-12.137	-32.522
Haringey	-19.520	-11.285	-30.805
Croydon	-15.571	-10.127	-25.698
Waltham Forest	-13.695	-9.161	-22.857
Hounslow	-13.711	-8.357	-22.068
Barnet	-13.283	-8.017	-21.301
Enfield	-11.450	-7.786	-19.236
Hillingdon	-11.305	-7.337	-18.642
Bromley	-11.233	-6.922	-18.155
Redbridge	-10.086	-6.635	-16.720
Merton	-10.219	-6.221	-16.440
Barking and Dagenham	-8.991	-6.386	-15.377
Bexley	-9.249	-5.482	-14.731
Sutton	-8.476	-5.146	-13.623
Harrow	-8.034	-4.946	-12.980
Havering	-8.021	-4.578	-12.600
Kingston upon Thames	-6.574	-3.842	-10.416
Richmond upon Thames	-5.131	-3.161	-8.293
	-254.089	-155.944	-410.034
	-535.139	-320.823	-855.962

London Boroughs 2011/12 Reductions In Spending Power

Local Authority	'Revenue Spending Power 2010-11'	Estimated 2011-12 Revenue Spending Power	Change in estimated 'revenue spending power' 2011-12	Change in estimated 'revenue spending power' 2011-12	Transition grant - cost of bringing reduction to 8.9%	'Revenue sending power if reduction limited to no more than 8.9%	Total Change in estimated revenue spending power 2011-12
	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	£m	£m
Newham	368.186	329.687	-38.499	-10.46%	5.731	-32.769	-8.90%
Hackney	370.105	331.390	-38.715	-10.46%	5.776	-32.939	-8.90%
Tower Hamlets	376.025	338.791	-37.233	-9.90%	3.767	-33.466	-8.90%
Islington	305.297	278.495	-26.802	-8.78%	0.000	-26.802	-8.78%
Southwark	398.907	365.250	-33.657	-8.44%	0.000	-33.657	-8.44%
Haringey	307.767	283.439	-24.328	-7.90%	0.000	-24.328	-7.90%
Greenwich	296.568	273.677	-22.891	-7.72%	0.000	-22.891	-7.72%
Lambeth	388.304	358.423	-29.881	-7.70%	0.000	-29.881	-7.70%
Westminster	290.911	269.898	-21.013	-7.22%	0.000	-21.013	-7.22%
Hammersmith and Fulham	224.982	210.223	-14.759	-6.56%	0.000	-14.759	-6.56%
Camden	331.317	309.646	-21.672	-6.54%	0.000	-21.672	-6.54%
Lewisham	335.886	314.083	-21.803	-6.49%	0.000	-21.803	-6.49%
City of London	116.106	108.585	-7.522	-6.48%	0.000	-7.522	-6.48%
Wandsworth	246.757	230.841	-15.915	-6.45%	0.000	-15.915	-6.45%
Barking and Dagenham	193.848	182.317	-11.531	-5.95%	0.000	-11.531	-5.95%
Brent	319.872	301.145	-18.727	-5.85%	0.000	-18.727	-5.85%
Kensington and Chelsea	217.417	205.973	-11.444	-5.26%	0.000	-11.444	-5.26%
Waltham Forest	256.284	242.904	-13.379	-5.22%	0.000	-13.379	-5.22%
Croydon	328.030	311.492	-16.538	-5.04%	0.000	-16.538	-5.04%
Ealing	318.551	303.046	-15.505	-4.87%	0.000	-15.505	-4.87%
Hounslow	220.093	209.760	-10.333	-4.69%	0.000	-10.333	-4.69%
Merton	176.029	169.270	-6.758	-3.84%	0.000	-6.758	-3.84%
Hillingdon	227.077	220.005	-7.073	-3.11%	0.000	-7.073	-3.11%
Sutton	175.892	170.959	-4.933	-2.80%	0.000	-4.933	-2.80%
Bexley	186.530	181.323	-5.208	-2.79%	0.000	-5.208	-2.79%
Enfield	289.672	281.604	-8.067	-2.78%	0.000	-8.067	-2.78%
Redbridge	227.101	221.182	-5.919	-2.61%	0.000	-5.919	-2.61%
Barnet	295.184	287.502	-7.682	-2.60%	0.000	-7.682	-2.60%
Kingston upon Thames	140.519	136.912	-3.607	-2.57%	0.000	-3.607	-2.57%
Bromley	233.285	227.556	-5.729	-2.46%	0.000	-5.729	-2.46%
Harrow	196.305	192.571	-3.733	-1.90%	0.000	-3.733	-1.90%
Havering	189.469	186.222	-3.247	-1.71%	0.000	-3.247	-1.71%
Richmond upon Thames	167.700	166.681	-1.019	-0.61%	0.000	-1.019	-0.61%
Total London	8,715.975	8,200.851	-515.123	-5.91%	15.274	-499.850	-5.73%

49. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

What work has the council done with Thames Water to find an alternative site for the sewage tunnel?

RESPONSE

On 14 December 2010 the cabinet considered the council's response to the current consultation being carried out by Thames Water as follows:

1. As a borough with around 4.5 miles of River Thames frontage, we have a strong interest in reducing the amount of sewage which overflows into the river each year.
2. We are united in our opposition to Thames Water's proposals to use the Alfred Salter Playground as a combined sewer overflow (CSO) shaft with two years of construction work, King's Stairs Gardens as a reception shaft with seven years of construction work

and their plan to leave permanent servicing and ventilation structures behind on both sites

3. We strongly object to these disgraceful proposals, which we believe will have an unacceptable impact on local residents and are contrary to a wealth of planning policies.
4. This report sets out our draft response to Thames Water's consultation on the site selection. Work is continuing with an engineering consultant due to provide an expert overview of the engineering constraints. The final version of the response to the consultation has been signed off by the leader and reflected the rationale for the objections made, pertaining to:
 - a. The site selection methodology and our concerns that the means Thames Water used to elect a preferred site was not clear;
 - b. Clarity sought on the size required for the erection of the shaft/tunnel;
 - c. The objection to King's Stairs Gardens as a potential site due to its designation as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), a site of regional importance as well as being a revered amenity for local people, the fact that it is within a priority zone and the works will be detrimental to the views and setting of the listed buildings and its heritage features; and
 - d. The negative social, economic and environmental impacts related to the construction of the tunnel at any site.

We will continue to oppose Thames Water's proposals to use the Alfred Salter Playground as a CSO shaft, King's Stairs Gardens as a reception shaft and their plan to leave permanent servicing and ventilation structures behind on both sites due to the significant impact on local residents.