

**SOUTHWARK COUNCIL
COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY MEETING)
WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL 2011
URGENT QUESTION**

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

In response to my question at Council Assembly of 26 January 2011, the leader of the council stated;

"There is no question of an amnesty for illegal occupancy of any Southwark property."

Could the leader of the council therefore clarify the position in light of the report to the Dulwich Area Housing Forum on the "Unauthorised Occupants Campaign" which states;

"The cabinet member and the corporate management team have previously been briefed and endorsed the proposal:-

- a) To implement a short term initiative to encourage illegal subletters to voluntarily surrender council properties they occupy in return for an agreement not to pursue lost rent and associated costs."

and that "The specified period for voluntary surrender run from 31 January 2011 to 28 February 2011."

RESPONSE

This question has been referred to the deputy leader.

The report that went to area forums does not reflect the illegal occupancy campaign, which has since concluded. The report has been withdrawn from area forums' agendas and an update on the outcome of the campaign will be provided to area forum meeting by the strategic director of housing.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON

Councillor Robinson stated that he had meet with the strategic director of housing and that she had apologised, he went on to ask if the report was legal and if the council would withdraw the campaign in its entirety.

RESPONSE FROM THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT

Councillor Wingfield replied yes on both points and went on to state that the paper had not come to him or the director and that the person who signed it off was no longer employed by the council.

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

Has he calculated the costs which will be incurred by the council as a direct result of cutting park rangers at Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park and stopping work with the Southwark Mediation Centre?

RESPONSE

For information concerning Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park please see the response by the cabinet member for transport, environment and recycling to question 27 of the members' questions.

The portion of this question relating to the Southwark Mediation Centre has been referred to the cabinet member for finance, resources and community safety:

The funding that the government gave the council for this work was provided through the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, which has been abolished. The council's housing department will continue to work with the Southwark Mediation Centre on a case by case basis and the centre will also receive voluntary sector transition funding to help them diversify their income sources over the coming months.

FIRST SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

A supplemental question was asked of the leader.

RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The leader responded to the supplemental question.

SECOND SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

A second supplemental question was asked of the leader.

RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER

The leader responded to the supplemental question.