

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY)

WEDNESDAY 6 JULY 2011

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

1. QUESTION FROM MICK BARNARD TO THE LEADER

Complaints about officers/members by members of the public are covered by the complaints procedure/standards committee respectively except in the case of the constitution with regards to abuse by officers. Do you have any plans to close this loophole particularly when some councillors refuse to progress such a case?

RESPONSE

We have no plans to review this at this time.

2. QUESTION FROM SHAMUS DARK TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT

Given Anchor Trust's proposal to transfer the ownership of our homes in Hopton's Almshouses in Southwark to a charity in Ealing, will Southwark Council support our request for the trusteeship of our homes to be transferred instead to a local Southwark charity, such as the United St Saviour's Charity?

RESPONSE

Anchor Trust are in advanced negotiations with Ealing and Brentford Consolidated Charity (EBCC) to take over trusteeship of 11 almshouses including Hopton's Almshouse. The basis of the proposed deal is that EBCC will become the Corporate Trustee of Hopton's Charity. It is understood that both sets of trustees believe this to be in the best interest of that charity. The assets of the charity will remain in their ownership and can only be used to meet the objects of the charity. No financial or other consideration has or will pass between Anchor and EBCC. As part of this process, Anchor have consulted with Tenancy Services Agency (TSA) (although there is no regulatory requirement to do so), the Charity Commission, and the National Almshouse Association, as well as their staff and residents. The direction from the Charity Commission was that it was the responsibility of the trustees of Hopton's Charity to run the charity in its best interests according to its governing instrument.

In light of the number of almshouses involved, and the geographical spread, their preferred option was a single partner, providing economies of scale in terms of transfer costs and future operations, and ensuring due diligence.

The legal transfer is likely to take place in September 2011 and if concluded satisfactorily, then EBCC will become the Corporate Trustee of Hopton's Charity. Anchor has been seeking a partner for this transfer for a number of years.

Anchor has stated that in the event that the negotiations falter or collapse, they would contact United St Saviour's Charity.

Anchor is currently carrying out a consultation exercise which finishes on 29 July 2011. I am noted with Councillor Ward on Anchor's schedule as interested parties, but Anchor

have made it clear it is not their policy to consult with the council, so we are not expecting any formal contact.

3. QUESTION FROM STANLEY RUSHTON TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT

In respect of the proposal by Anchor Trust to transfer the trusteeship of Hopton's Charity to the Ealing & Brentford Consolidated Charity, will Southwark Council please support our request for the transfer of our homes at Hopton's Gardens to the United St. Saviour's Charity?

RESPONSE

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