

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY)

WEDNESDAY 6 JULY 2011

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – THEMED DEBATE

1. QUESTION FROM RICHARD WHITE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Why do councillors feel that local people are more knowledgeable about the needs of youngsters rather than those who are trained in the service? Can the public make strategic decisions on this subject?

RESPONSE

I have not heard any councillors express a view that local people are more knowledgeable about the needs of young people rather than those who are trained in the service. When designing and delivering services for young people, it is important that young people's voices are heard - in addition to the voices of those professionals managing the service. We are committed to devolving part of the decision making process to young people, whilst the council continues to retain the overall strategic decision making responsibility to ensure policy decisions meet statutory duties and provide value for money within the current financial framework of budget constraints.

2. QUESTION FROM VERNON NEVE-DUNN TO THE LEADER

What is the future vision for sport in Burgess Park and can the management of the sports centre in Burgess Park be passed out to community clubs?

RESPONSE

The future vision for Burgess Park is that the park is a safe, vibrant and exciting place full of accessible activities for a cross section of the local community - sport forms an important part of this vision. Therefore we would like to encourage initiatives like the recently established Burgess Park Sports user group where representatives from the various user groups come together, helping to steer and develop sports initiatives in the park, in partnership with the council. The parks and open spaces business unit currently manages the community sports facility at Burgess Park and a new park director has just been appointed. This person will be tasked with the review of all facilities in the park including this facility to consider the best way of managing the facility in the future. Of course the clubs currently operating in the park will be closely involved in this review. The options include the council continuing to manage the facility or that it is contracted out to a third party, possibly the clubs. Whichever way the review leads us the council must ensure that this community asset is managed in a way that is in the best interests of the community.

3. QUESTION FROM TOM ULICSAK TO THE LEADER

Are the council still committed to a national standard BMX track?

RESPONSE

Subject to feasibility, funding, consultation and further risk assessment (given that this is designed to be an open-access facility), the council is committed to a national standard BMX track.

4. QUESTION FROM A MEMBER OF SOUTHWARK YOUTH COUNCIL TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT AND THE OLYMPICS

Bearing in mind the problems Southwark has with youth obesity, what is Southwark doing to encourage young people to get involved in sports other than football? Southwark Youth Council feel that although football is popular, there is a too much focus on it.

RESPONSE

Southwark Youth Council feel that although football is popular, there is a too much focus on it.

Football is indeed a very popular sport and we have to recognise and respond to the huge demand. Football is becoming more inclusive with big gains in girls playing football and also people with disabilities who all want the opportunity to take part in the national sport.

Having said, that we realise that football is not for everyone and Southwark Community Games (for example) deliver a range of sports for young people throughout the year including, rugby, cricket, athletics, netball. We are also currently training staff to deliver emerging sports like handball and dodgeball.

This summer, through partnerships with Fusion and 'Hitz' (another local provider) we will offering a menu of opportunities additional to the ones above including boxing; basketball; tennis, swimming and dance.

We work with partners in Southwark to deliver a huge number of sporting opportunities to children and young people in Southwark. In addition to the sports above, we entered teams in the London Youth Games for; table tennis, hockey, aquathlon, sailing, indoor rowing, cycling and bocca.

There is always room for more choice but there are a range of sporting and non-sporting opportunities for children in Southwark to be more active and get fitter and there has also been investment in our stock of leisure facilities so that more families can attend to get fit together.

5. QUESTION FROM A MEMBER OF DULWICH TABLE TENNIS CLUB TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT AND THE OLYMPICS

I'm 12 years old and live in Southwark. I play table tennis at my local club in Dulwich. Many of my friends also play. Many of them joined but we don't have enough money for equipment etc or for taking part in competitions. Is there any help available?

RESPONSE

I would first like to welcome the fact that you have taken up this sport and are trying to get your friends involved as well – this is exactly the sort of enterprise that this themed meeting was designed to celebrate.

Everyone is well aware of the difficult financial circumstance in which the council is operating. There is simply less money to go around for the foreseeable future. However there are still options available to Dulwich Table Tennis Club, especially if it is trying to broaden access to the sport.

Although it is too late for this year council funding is available through the community councils and the Youth Services Summer Activities programme, our Sports Development Team can also help clubs to make funding bids for external funding.