

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY)

WEDNESDAY 6 JULY 2011

MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR NEIL COYLE

What are the leader's views on the calls to further delay the regeneration of Elephant and Castle shopping centre?

RESPONSE

This administration was elected on a pledge of getting the regeneration of Elephant and Castle moving. For eight years it crawled at a snail's pace. Residents had waited too long for the regeneration to begin and London had waited too long for it to begin.

In line with our commitment, since May 2010 we have signed a regeneration deal, started the demolition of the Heygate Estate and seen genuine progress on a new leisure centre. This marks real change on the ground.

We now face a genuine choice on the shopping centre. Yet again, it is a choice between dither and delay or delivery.

Everybody believes that rebuilding the shopping centre is fundamental to Elephant's meaningful regeneration and for many it characterises everything that is wrong and out-of-date in the area. Just adding a lick of paint will not be enough, but the plan to strip the centre back to its core and start again entails far more than that. As residents will have seen through the concept images, its nature and appearance will be changed beyond recognition. It will not be refurbished, but rebuilt.

Vitality, by rebuilding the centre in this way work can start in a matter of years rather than decades. We will still have the flexibility to seek a full demolition if we aren't satisfied with the designs that the developers bring forward, but my hope is that local residents will see work begin within the next five years.

This is what local residents want: not a return to the days of delay and empty promises, but positive meaningful action. And that is what we're delivering.

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

Does the leader agree that the community should be actively involved in managing local spaces and facilities?

RESPONSE

I can only answer for council-owned facilities and spaces. Certainly, suitable council-owned spaces should have appropriate democratically accountable involvement in management from the community.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR RENATA HAMVAS

Has the leader had any parental feedback regarding the council's roll-out of free, healthy, school meals?

RESPONSE

A full evaluation of the pilot is currently underway and will include comments from parents. The report is due in the summer, but initial anecdotal evidence from parents is very positive.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR TIM MCNALLY

Please can the leader provide the number of decisions which were called in for each year since the introduction of overview and scrutiny?

RESPONSE

Year	Number of decisions called in
2002/3	3
2003/4	7
2004/5	10
2005/6	4
2006/7	8
2007/8	3
2008/9	3
2009/10	3
2010/11	5
2011/12	1 (rolled over from 2010/11) to date

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN HAYES

Does the leader believe the roll out of food waste recycling across the borough will help the council meet its pledge to double the borough’s recycling rates?

RESPONSE

Yes. In the pilot areas recycling rates have increased by approximately 20 percentage points, from around 33% to over 53%. Before May last year the introduction of food waste recycling in our borough was not planned until at least 2015. Without it I am fully confident that the council would not be able to double the borough’s recycling rate by 2014.

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

Can the leader tell me whether he would consider extending the plans for harnessing power from SELCHP to estates in Surrey Docks ward?

RESPONSE

Discussions are underway with SELCHP to explore the possibility of using heat from the incinerator to provide warmth and hot water to five estates in the north east of the borough. These estates are Silwood, Tissington, Pedworth, New Place and Abbeyfield. The possibility of adding additional sites in the future, if the costs are not prohibitive, is already being factored into our discussions and will be an explicit clause within the final agreement, assuming our discussions are successful.

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN MORRISSEY

How much have overview and scrutiny committee meetings to consider call-ins cost the council in the last year? (Please itemise by meeting).

RESPONSE

The cost of holding the individual call-in meetings have been as followed:

19/07/2010	£360
08/09/2010	£400
13/09/2010	£470
07/02/2011	£390
Total	£1620

However, this does not account for officer time, including the time of scrutiny officers and officers working in departments on the decisions that have been called in. It is not possible to quantify this cost.

Some call-ins have additional costs. For example, the call-in of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund in-year cuts decision at the September meeting cost the council an extra £18,359.61 in contracts payments as a direct result of the delay caused by the call-in.

8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE

To ask the leader, how many parking tickets have been issued by post at The Blue, Southwark Park Road in the last 12 months? How many of these were as a result of the use of surveillance cameras? Have any been challenged successfully?

RESPONSE

Note: This question has been referred to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Recycling

In the last twelve months, up to the end of May 2011, the council has issued 1498 penalty charge notices (PCNs) for parking and traffic offences on Southwark Park Road of which 1263 were issued by the CCTV vehicle. Of these only 6 notices have been successfully appealed by the parking adjudicator, which is some 0.4% of the tickets issued.

9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PATRICK DIAMOND

Has the introduction of deputy cabinet members been beneficial to the work of the council?

RESPONSE

The introduction of deputy cabinet members will deliver real benefits at a time when we are again cutting the cost of councillors for council tax payers.

Councillor Coyle will be providing invaluable work with those council tenants most let down by the previous approach to decent homes work. Councillor Hamvas will be the working side-by-side with parents to make sure that the school admissions process goes smoothly. Councillor Oyewole will be working with our borough's flourishing religious community to help spread understanding of planning obligations, and Councillor Situ will be working with those who give up some of their time to volunteer, to make sure that their views are represented at the highest level as our voluntary sector goes through transition.

We may now have a smaller cabinet, but what we have lost by removing one post I believe we have more than made up for through the new – and at a lower cost.

10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

If we are waiting for the Democracy Commission report before any savings have been made to community councils, why were the number of regular community council meetings reduced to six for 2011/12?

RESPONSE

The community council meetings were put in a 6 week cycle as that is the normal cycle for council meetings, the allocation of dates necessarily includes a deviation from the 6 week cycle to allow for school holidays, party conferences and other committed dates. Chairs and vice chairs were briefed on the cycle and the link between community councils and council assembly themes in February. The council calendar was noted by council assembly at constitutional council in May.

The 2011/12 calendar provides sufficient time for agenda planning cycles for community councils, which improves the agenda planning process and meeting preparation. The 2011/12 schedule also allows adequate time between community council and council assembly meetings so that engagement activities on particular council assembly themes can take place at community councils.

Although the intention was not to save money but to regulate meetings to the normal 6 week council cycle there will be savings in a reduced level of meetings. It is difficult to ascertain the exact cost of community council meetings as each meeting is different in terms of: length of meetings, venue, agenda size etc. Meeting costs (venue, transport, agenda, PA system) vary but are around £2,000 per meeting. A 6 week cycle would therefore save under £15,000. However, no budget reduction has been made, so any money saved will be available to support other initiatives on improving engagement in community councils.

11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR KEVIN AHERN

Why does he think Labour was able to increase its majority in The Lane by-election?

RESPONSE

When the council is being forced to make cuts on an unprecedented scale, with an unavoidable impact on local services, the result in The Lane is very significant. I think it shows that local residents understand the nature of the cuts and the difficulty of the choices that the council is being forced to make and agree that, while those decisions have been tough, they have been taken in partnership with the community. But more than that, I believe that it represents a rousing endorsement of our positive programme and a rejection of the ugly and negative, old politics demonstrated throughout the last two by-elections by the opposition.

It would have been all too easy for us, when faced with the scale of the challenge presented by the cuts, to hesitate or even capitulate. Instead we have, in 12 months delivered real changes for the community, which include:

- Finally getting the regeneration of the Elephant and Castle moving
- Piloting free, healthy school meals
- Publishing our housing investment plan to make every council home warm, dry and safe
- Piloting food waste recycling
- A transition fund for the voluntary sector
- A youth fund for our young people who are being impacted by government decisions.

And in the next few months we will:

- Roll out free, healthy school meals for all of our primary school children

- And roll out food waste recycling to all of our street properties.

These are real and tangible benefits of our work, and would not have been delivered under a Liberal Democrat administration.

At tonight's council assembly we will agree our council plan, which fully articulates our positive vision. I believe that the values expressed in it are shared with the values of our residents, including people in The Lane. And I believe that they elected Councillor Rhoden with an increased majority because they want to see our work continue.

12. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ROSIE SHIMELL

A decision was taken by the cabinet member for children's services to reduce council funding for teenage conceptions prevention by 54% in March 2011 because "allocations in previous years over-anticipated levels of need and have been under-spent by over £150,000." Does the leader think the excellent recommendations of the Teenage Pregnancy Commission require more funding than previous years? Does he think the good work of the commission will not be fully implemented because of this disproportionate cut?

RESPONSE

The political commitment to establish a Teenage Pregnancy Commission to help address this major challenge for the borough was matched with resources to help transform our approach. We anticipate that we will implement the commission's recommendations in full over the coming three years, and we were pleased to receive the report and recommendations at the cabinet meeting earlier this month. We fully appreciated how diligently and realistically commission members approached the issue, and recognise that their recommendations have helped us to focus our action on 'what works' and ensure they have the maximum impact.

13. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES

Southwark is being forced to find £500,000 of savings to its library services budget because of the cuts from central government. A library review is promised. What is planned to ensure maximum involvement of residents in this review and that all possible options are considered so that closure is a last resort?

RESPONSE

The library review is not just promised, it has started.

No one wants to make cuts to the library service. Unfortunately, the scale of the cuts being forced on the council is so great that no area of spending can remain unaffected. We demonstrated through the budget process last year our commitment to making tough decisions about spending in partnership with our residents, rather than just imposing them, and we're now doing the same with the library review.

Over the course of the review, public meetings will take place in all of the libraries and at every community council. Everyone will have the opportunity to contribute to the consultation by filling in the survey, which will also be available on the council's website.

Library closure will be a last resort.

14. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

Can the leader please state the specific increase in unallocated reserves and contingency funds so far this year?

RESPONSE

The council made significant calls on its reserves last year and in February we budgeted to take money out of reserves to be spent on frontline services. In that budget we also agreed, due to the huge uncertainty of the current financial climate, to increase the size of the council's contingency fund by £1.5 million. The need for contingency is not only to mitigate the financial risks of delivering budget plans finalised so late in 2010/11 at such short notice, following the late publication of the local government settlement, but also the significant costs of implementing new arrangements necessary to deliver savings of over £30m, not only in 11/12 but also 12/13 and beyond

At the close of the last financial year, £3.906 million of the £4 million set aside by council as a contingency fund in the previous budget remained. This remainder has been put into reserves in line with the Medium Term Resources Strategy 2011/14.

In 2011/12 so far there have been no other contributions to reserves or contingency funds.

This will be kept under review with formal quarterly reports to cabinet.

15. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR NICK DOLEZAL

At the Southwark Pensioner's Parliament it was highlighted that the number of podiatrists at Guys and St Thomas Hospital has been reduced from 25 to 12 since the start of the financial year. Is this the first example of the Tory and Liberal Democrats' disastrous NHS reorganisation impacting upon NHS services in Southwark?

RESPONSE

Before the last election the Tories promised no more top-down reorganisations of the NHS. The last 12 months have seen our local health services thrown into shameful uncertainty. And the fact that frontline care in this borough has been delivered throughout this period is a testament to the dedication of our doctors, nurses and hospital staff.

The real shame of this farcical reorganisation is the amount of resources that it has used up in our borough; resources that should have been directed towards patients. I think the cuts to our borough's podiatry services, highlighted to me by a pensioner in June, just go to show the local real-life impact on our older people. I hope that this is the last example that we hear of, but I fear that it will not.

16. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

Please can the leader give an update on the Southwark Park Athletics Track?

RESPONSE

The council is currently in the process of considering a bid to its Olympic Legacy Fund for Southwark Park Athletics Track. In conjunction with this, officers will also complete applications for external funding to make up the necessary budget. External resources will include potential contributions from the London Mayor's Olympic Legacy fund and the London Marathon Trust.

17. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

How many hours a week did the deputy leader work outside his cabinet position in 2010/11? How many will he be working in 2011/12?

RESPONSE

As a committed husband and grandfather, ward councillor, member of the executive of the Southwark Civic Association, school governor, member of the South East London NHS Ethics Committee and active member of many local community groups and charities, I can't say how many hours Councillor Wingfield works on top of the many that he dedicates to his cabinet member role. I believe, furthermore, that tenants and residents will judge his performance on his success in improving the council's repairs service and making every home warm, dry and safe.

18. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK (ROTHERHITHE COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Now we have confirmation of the exact amount of the New Homes Bonus, will the leader look again into keeping open the Pumphouse in Rotherhithe?

RESPONSE

We had allocated all of the New Homes Bonus into the 2011/12 budget. £1.5 million was allocated into the baseline 2011/12 budget and a further million went to establishing the council's Youth Fund.

The Pumphouse is a charity and not run by the council. Any final decision to close therefore is a decision made by the charity trustees. The council was forced to cut funding to the Pumphouse as a result of the unprecedented cuts made to the council's budget by the government.

We established the council's voluntary sector transition fund so that groups that are able to change the way they are funded do not collapse as they move to their new funding regime. Unfortunately, the Pumphouse's application was unsuccessful. The council has been working with the Pumphouse and other voluntary sector groups to provide advice and support even where we are no longer able to provide finance. My understanding is also that the Pumphouse has been approached by other organisations with offers of help, but that they have not taken them up.

19. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER (BERMONDSEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Can the security works on the Four Square Estates be done any earlier?

RESPONSE

I am delighted that we have been able to allocate money to carry out the security works for the Layard and Marden Squares. As the recent scrutiny report confirms, the residents of those squares were treated appallingly by the previous administration, who failed to manage the investment scheme properly, failed to take decisions and failed to communicate with local residents.

The works are programmed to commence in 2012/13. Design, procurement, mobilisation and resident consultation mean the works will need a 6-9 month lead-in before start on site. As such the works have been programmed as soon as practically possible. Any opportunities to speed up commencement on site will be pursued.

20. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FROM COUNCILLOR PODDY CLARK (BOROUGH & BANKSIDE COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Please could the cabinet member give details of all council owned land in Borough and Bankside that has been sold since June 2007, and how much of that land was sold to provide affordable housing?

RESPONSE

Note: This question has been referred to Councillor Richard Livingstone, cabinet member for finance, resources and community safety.

The table sets out all land sold in Borough and Bankside since 2007 as requested.

In terms of actual land no deals have been transacted but several prominent properties including Empire Warehouse, Bear Gardens have. Both these sites were sold for redevelopment and will include an element of affordable Housing when plans are brought forward. The remainder of the sales are disposal of void Housing stock requiring inward investment.

Address	Ward	Date sold	Interest sold	Amount
Abbey Street, 26, Wharton House, SE1 (residential sold at auction)	Grange	18th March 2010	Leasehold	£165,000
Arch Street, SE1 (land for E & C regeneration)	Cathedrals	31st March 2009	Leasehold	£1
Bear Gardens, Empire Warehouse, SE1 (land)	Cathedrals	16th January 2008	Freehold	£5,750,000
Blackfriars Road, 22, Vaughan House, SE1 (residential sold at auction)	Cathedrals	18th March 2010	Leasehold	£126,000
Brook Drive, 193, SE11 (commercial premises)	Cathedrals	27th May 2009	Freehold	£320,000
Dolben Street, 31-32(c), SE1 (land)	Cathedrals	14th May 2008	Freehold	£325,000
Gaywood Street, Prospect House, SE1 (land for E & C regeneration)	Cathedrals	31st March 2009	Leasehold	£1
Hayles Street, 7, SE11 (residential)	Cathedrals	14th April 2011	Freehold	£640,000
Hayles Street, 28, SE11 (residential)	Cathedrals	27th January 2009	Freehold	£320,000
Hayles Street, 33, SE11 (residential)	Cathedrals	23rd July 2009	Freehold	£355,000
Hayles Street, 34, SE11 (residential)	Cathedrals	10th December 2008	Freehold	£475,000
Hayles Street, 38, SE11 (residential)	Cathedrals	22nd May 2009	Freehold	£277,500
Lant Street, 38, Redman House, SE1 (residential sold at auction)	Cathedrals	21st December 2009	Leasehold	£147,000
Lant Street, 51, Redman House, SE1 (residential sold at auction)	Cathedrals	23rd December 2009	Leasehold	£166,500
Library Street, SE1 (land for E & C regeneration)	Cathedrals	15th March 2010	Leasehold	£1
Long Lane, 171, SE1 (Valentines pub)	Grange	23rd November 2007	Freehold	£750,000
Park Street, 58, SE1 (grant of building lease)	Cathedrals	30th March 2009	Leasehold	£80,000
Princess Street, 11, SE1 (residential) leasehold enfranchisement	Cathedrals	8th December 2008	Freehold	£14,500
Princess Street, 19, SE1 (residential) leasehold enfranchisement	Cathedrals	27th March 2009	Freehold	£11,000
Tabard Street, 14-18(e) & 20-28(e), SE1 post building lease	Chaucer	14th January 2010	Freehold	£1
Tabard Street, 40, Pallant House, SE1 (residential sold at auction)	Chaucer	17th March 2010	Leasehold	£151,000
Tabard Street, 217, SE1 (commercial premises)	Chaucer	21st March 2008	Freehold	£425,000
Tennis Street, Drying room at 25, Boughton House, SE1	Chaucer	26th February 2010	Leasehold	£19,000
Weston Street, 106, SE1 (commercial premises)	Grange	13th March 2008	Freehold	£1,351,000
Weston Street Laundry Room, 1 Seal House, SE1	Chaucer	7th August 2009	Leasehold	£15,000

21. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES (PECKHAM COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Peckham Community Council recently held a youth themed meeting entitled "Peckham's got Talent" celebrating the achievements of our young people. Could you outline the council's current programme for engaging young people/empowering them to take part in the decision making process about their services?

RESPONSE

It is important to get young people's input to decisions that affect them. That's why this administration has committed to giving power over 20% of the youth services budget to young people by 2014. We are currently designing what this looks like, with strong input from Southwark Youth Council. We plan to involve young people in commissioning decisions, and they will also make decisions on a greater range of specific funds, such as the Youth Opportunities Fund which we have committed to continue. We are also strengthening the existing Youth Community Councils so they are more involved in decision making at a local level. Already young people - including Southwark Youth Council and Speakerbox, the council for Looked After Children - were consulted on the council's budget decisions, and young people will be assessing and deciding which activities should be commissioned through the voluntary and community sector for this year's summer activities programme.

We aim to further increase young people's involvement in the quality assurance of services so they can give direct feedback on what works and what they would like more of.

22. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR VICTORIA MILLS (NUNHEAD AND PECKHAM RYE COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Following traffic and road changes in the Pomeroy Street and Kender Road Triangle area, how is the cabinet member working with Transport for London and counterparts in Lewisham to review that the new schemes are successfully combating traffic congestion in this area?

RESPONSE

Southwark's public realm division were initially contacted in January 2011 via email on road markings and raised table works - to be carried by Lewisham near to or adjoining the borough boundary with Southwark - to which we replied with comments concerning the road markings layout on the 25 January. We subsequently also made comment on the wording of the traffic management order (TMO) for the waiting / loading changes on 16 February 2011. As such, Southwark officers have engaged with the works promoter Lewisham Council to the extent that they were made aware of the proposals. We do not have any record of a specific working group with a remit for design or works coordination in this area, however Southwark would certainly consider involvement in such an effort if the need is established.

23. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT AND THE OLYMPICS FROM COUNCILLOR NORMA GIBBES (CAMBERWELL COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Residents in Camberwell have waited a long time for Camberwell Baths to be fully refurbished. Can the cabinet member for culture, leisure, sport and the Olympics confirm that the council will complete phase 2 refurbishment, including the gym, dayside changing facility and Warwick Hall, this year?

RESPONSE

It has indeed taken some time to refurbish Camberwell Leisure Centre, not least because working on a 19th century building revealed previously hidden structural problems and it is great credit to the contractors and our sports department that we are nearing completion of the second and third part of the work this year. Identifying funding sources to do more work has also been ongoing. This has meant that more work has been carried out than planned at the outset. In the long run, although causing delay, this will secure this wonderful building for many more years to come than if we had done less work on it.

The gym and dryside changing facilities as well as the youth facilities are approaching completion but listed building consent is required due to unexpected modifications needed to the gym roofline. This is to accommodate a specific energy efficient air handling system. This work is due for completion September this year depending on the planning permission. The Warwick Hall work, one of the projects for which extra funds were raised, has been submitted for listed building approval. Due to the sensitive refurbishment required the hall may open later than September.

As you know plans are in place to complete work on the Sports Hall in the future and is the subject of a Southwark 2012 Capital Legacy application for funding towards the refurbishment of this hall. All this takes time but will be well worth waiting for.

24. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON (WALWORTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

There can be no doubt that the regeneration of the Elephant & Castle shopping centre is absolutely central to the transformation needed in the Walworth area. After 8 years of dither and delay from the Liberal Democrats, how will the cabinet member for regeneration and corporate strategy ensure that residents in Walworth see the change to the shopping centre which they have been calling for?

RESPONSE

The transformation of the shopping centre site is essential for our plans to regenerate the area. The cabinet has therefore moved quickly to bring certainty to the future of this key site. In May cabinet agreed in principle to sell council land adjoining the shopping centre subject to a satisfactory planning consent being obtained. This decision will assist the shopping centre owners to bring forward a developable scheme. We also agreed to enter into a cooperation agreement with the owners and Lend Lease which will ensure that the planning of the central area of the Elephant and Castle is coordinated to achieve our objective of establishing a new town centre including an improved range of shops to meet the needs of Walworth residents. The shopping centre owners are now in the process of establishing a design team which will develop plans for the site and these will be the subject of consultation prior to the submission of a formal planning application in Autumn 2012. I am confident the decisions we have taken will ensure the earliest possible transformation of the site and meet our objectives for the regeneration of the Elephant and Castle.

25. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS

Will he provide an update on Southwark's housing investment programme and revised housing strategy?

RESPONSE

On 31 May 2011 cabinet agreed a strategy aimed at making all council homes warm, dry and safe by 2015. The key elements are: the replacement of the Southwark decent homes

standard adopted on an interim basis in April 2008 by the government's decent homes standard; approval of a minimum housing investment programme of £326.5m over the next five years, and that resident consultation on the draft 5 year housing investment programme is undertaken during the summer and reported back to cabinet in the autumn.

Consultation on the proposed five year programme will take place via existing mechanisms between July and early September. In addition all residents will be notified of the planned consultation and invited to participate through their local tenants and residents associations (TRAs), through a web based information page, at their area housing office or via a dedicated email address.

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

What were the criteria on the scheduling of the works programme to bring all homes to a warm, dry and safe standard?

RESPONSE

The criteria for prioritisation of improvement works is based on our commitment to make every home warm, dry and safe by meeting the government decent homes standard during the five year programme. The scheduling has been done on the basis of need, unlike the previous administration. As a result properties currently failing decency because of poor external components, such as windows and roofs have been prioritised first. This is because there is considerable evidence to support the fact that failing external components have a detrimental impact on the fabric of buildings, leading to poor insulation, water ingress and is the main source of dissatisfaction and disrepair complaints from residents. New roofs and windows make a positive contribution to delivery of warm, dry and safe homes. Properties requiring internal only works, such as heating, electrics and front doors follow in the later years of the programme.

27. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MARK WILLIAMS

On 6 October 2010 Southwark News printed a letter from Councillor Al-Samerai, regarding the unfinished security works on the Four Squares Estate stating "The previous executive allocated £8 million for security works and at no point made a decision not to complete the work because of overspend." Since then, Southwark's housing and community safety scrutiny sub-committee has investigated the unfinished works and concluded: "No formal decision was ever made by the previous Executive to allocate money specifically to the Four Squares Security Works" and "No formal decision was ever made by the previous Executive to allocate additional funds to the Four Squares security works following the overspend in phase 1 of the project." Is he surprised that Councillor Al-Samerai has made such potentially misleading comments in the local press in an apparent attempt to divert attention from the last administration's failure to monitor and direct decisions made by senior officers?

RESPONSE

I am disappointed, but not surprised. The previous Liberal Democrat administration's housing investment programme was so incompetent and poorly managed that many residents in our borough were left with unfinished works. Councillor Al-Samerai should apologise to the residents of the Four Squares Estate for this failure and for then trying to deny any culpability.

28. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ROWENNA DAVIS

What impact will the Localism Bill – and especially the proposals regarding flexible tenancies – have on council and housing association tenants in Southwark in the future?

RESPONSES

Under the Localism Bill the government proposes to give local authority and housing association landlords the flexibility to offer, in addition to secure or assured tenancies, a new ‘flexible tenancy’, allowing landlords to offer some or all new tenants fixed term tenancies. The proposals apply to new tenants of social housing: existing council and registered provider tenants will generally be unaffected, even if they transfer or mutually exchange properties. However for those existing secure or assured tenants transferring to an ‘affordable rent’ property, it is proposed that landlords will have the discretion as to whether to offer a lifetime tenancy.

It is proposed that the minimum fixed term for flexible tenancies will be two years. However landlords will be free to offer longer terms, or retain lifetime tenancies should they wish.

The proposals for flexible tenancies allow for succession for spouses or partners, but give landlords the flexibility to grant whatever additional succession rights they choose.

While local authorities will be required to develop strategic tenancy policies for their areas, the recent Homes and Communities funding prospectus makes it clear that it is up to individual landlords to determine the length and type of tenancy they wish to offer. While Southwark as a landlord has chosen to retain secure tenancies, it is likely that different registered providers will introduce flexible tenancies of varying lengths. This could cause some confusion or anxiety for housing applicants. In Southwark property adverts for properties offered under the Homesearch scheme will specify the length of the tenancy term to assist applicants when bidding for new homes.

In developing our strategic tenancy policy in partnership with registered providers, there will be an expectation that very few tenants would be required to move on expiry of their tenancy term as the majority of tenants will continue to need affordable homes.

Housing Ombudsman

The Bill also proposes to restrict access to referrals to the Housing Ombudsman to ‘designated persons’ only. For the purposes of the Bill, the following are identified as designated persons:

- a. A member of the House of Commons.
- b. A member of the local housing authority for the district in which the property concerned is situated, or
- c. A designated tenant panel for the social landlord.

29. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH

Will he provide an update on the restructuring of the housing department?

RESPONSE

This is not a ‘restructuring’ so much as the creation of a brand new housing department. We recognised before May 2010 that the decision to scrap the council’s dedicated housing department was a retrograde step. We saw that tenants and residents needed a new department bringing together housing functions from across the council with an absolute focus on improving performance and providing modern excellent customer services. In bringing together all our housing services we are also more equipped to deal with the financial

pressures that the council is experiencing as a result of the changes to the housing revenue account finance regime.

Formal consultation on the new proposals began in earnest in January 2011 and the department is due to 'go live' on 1 September 2011. The new structure provides a flatter simpler structure with two senior posts deleted (Head of Housing Management and Head of AMIP) and the number of area managers reduced from nine to two.

Interviews will take place during the coming months to ensure as many staff as possible are selected for the new roles. Those staff who are unsuccessful at interview will be given the opportunity of securing alternative roles through the council's re-organisation, redeployment and redundancy procedure. We have also received a number of requests for employees to leave on voluntary severance and management are in the process of reviewing requests to see if the numbers tally in terms of required reductions which may remove the need to interview staff and the remainder would be assimilated.

30. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR SUNIL CHOPRA

Can the cabinet member for housing management provide an update on why 14,000 rent incorrect statements were issued to Southwark Council tenants?

RESPONSE

The incident which led to incorrect rent statements being issued to Southwark tenants during May was attributable to an input error on the IT programme which operates the collation of statements.

Unfortunately a member of the Northgate team running the programme on the council's behalf incorrectly set the programme to produce statements dating to 1995.

The problem was identified before all statements were issued and as a result 3792 statements were issued rather than the 14000 which concerns originally existed over.

All tenants affected by the error were written to within 24 hours of the problem coming to light with an apology letter and letters containing correct balances were distributed during the following week.

The department has now instigated a process of audits for statements prior to their release in order to ensure that a similar accidental error does not result in residents being affected.

31. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL BUKOLA

Following Ed Milliband's speech on 11 June 2011, does the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management agree that people who are unemployed should not be given social housing? Will he be including this when he sets his own social tenure policy?

RESPONSE

Ed Milliband did not say that people who are unemployed should be barred from social housing. Rather, he said that those people who have made a contribution to their community could be given priority. This is a policy which, in the case of former armed services personnel, the Liberal Democrats agree with us on this locally.

In contrast, the Tory/Liberal Democrat government, by hiking rents and restricting housing benefit, appears set on seriously restricting access to social housing, making it more difficult for people who are trying to get back into work to do so.

32. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PODDY CLARK

In view of the closure of the Long Lane Housing Office, can I have the cabinet member's reassurance that the proposed mobile housing office will be in place prior to its closure and how will he inform residents and councillors of Chaucer ward?

RESPONSE

The changes in office accommodation in the housing service are currently under discussion with residents through a series of presentations and open meetings across the borough. It is intended that residents in Chaucer ward will still have access to a reception desk in the north west of the borough at Walworth one stop shop. No offices will be closed until adequate provision of service is in place including the deployment of a mobile housing office. Officers are currently identifying locations across the borough where the mobile housing office will operate from and will consider Chaucer ward as part of this arrangement.

33. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES

Please can the cabinet member provide the number of estates that will receive warm, dry and safe works a) before 2014/15 and b) including and after 2014/15? Please can he provide a breakdown by community council area?

RESPONSE

The housing areas are almost the same as the community council areas and the breakdowns are set out in the table below.

Area	2011/12 - 2013/14	2014/15 - 2015/16	Total
Bermondsey	3	52	55
Borough & Bankside	3	26	29
Camberwell	7	33	40
Dulwich	3	20	23
Nunhead & P. Rye	5	60	65
Peckham	2	33	35
Rotherhithe	2	36	38
Walworth	12	36	48
Total:	43	296	339

This is based on the funding that is currently identified. However, we continue to actively explore new additional forms of funding to support our housing investment programme and if new funding becomes available, then we will use it to bring forward work and to carry out schemes more quickly.

Note: At council assembly on 12 October 2011 the minutes of the meeting of 6 July 2011 were amended as follows – In the table for figures for Borough and Bankside, in the

period 2011/12 – 2012/14, should read “3” and not ”9” as published and the total should read “29” not “35” as published.

34. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN

What is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour, including vandalism and even arson, in the communal areas of the Osprey Estate in Surrey Docks ward?

RESPONSE

Southwark anti social behaviour unit (SASBU) Unit and Southwark Housing are aware of the issues of anti social behaviour being experienced by the community on Osprey Estate. The issue is also a Safer Neighbourhood Team policing ward priority.

The ASB is being perpetrated by a number of young people who are responsible for a range of behaviours from vandalism and graffiti to verbal abuse and noise. There was a number of arson incidents some months ago which appears to have abated. Although investigated by police no arrests were made in connection with this crime.

Staff from SASBU and the interim head of area management recently visited the tenants and residents at Osprey estate to discuss these issues. Following this meeting works have been undertaken to rectify a faulty door entry system which was permitting access to the communal areas of Sheldrake, Fulmar and Tawny Way.

Extensive doorstep engagement has also taken place carried out by local police, housing and SASBU staff. Whilst many residents are complaining it has proven difficult to get hard evidence at this stage that can be put before the courts. Police have been able to forward a number of names to the council anti social behaviour unit of young people who have been visiting the estate and causing problems. These individuals have been written to in the strongest possible terms and advised not to return.

In spite of the above complexities and the difficulties with obtaining strong, credible evidence, enforcement action has commenced against one family and a Notice of Seeking Possession has been served. Legal advice is being sought on the possibility of applying for an Anti Social Behaviour Injunction against the tenant of the property for their failure to exercise due care and control of their household.

This situation will continue to be the focus of concentrated efforts by SASBU, Housing and other partners in the effort find a solution which will bring some long term respite to the tenants and residents of Osprey Estate.

35. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS

Please can the cabinet member provide site specific details for all council homes sold in the last ten years, detailed by bed size and type of property? Please can he provide a breakdown by ward?

RESPONSE

Please find a summary attached. If Councillor Morris would like any further information, I would be happy to provide it.

Ward	Property Type	Bedrooms	Total		
BRUNSWICK PARK	FLAT	Bedsit	4		
		1	90		
			2	83	
			3	34	
			4	5	
			HOUSE	2	2
				3	10
				4	4
				5	2
	MAISONETTE	6	2		
		7	2		
		2	44		
		3	48		
	CAMBERWELL GREEN	BUNGALOW	4	1	
FLAT		Bedsit	21		
		1	85		
		2	166		
		3	46		
		4	5		
HOUSE		2	3		
		3	3		
		4	6		
MAISONETTE		1	2		
		2	25		
		3	71		
		4	3		
	5	2			
#N/A	2	1			
CATHEDRALS	FLAT	Bedsit	9		
		1	84		
		2	62		
		3	21		
		4	4		
	HOUSE	2	7		
		3	3		
		4	11		
		5	1		
		7	1		
	MAISONETTE	Bedsit	3		
		1	4		
		2	31		
		3	12		
4		2			
CHAUCER	FLAT	Bedsit	10		
		1	143		
		2	270		
		3	97		
		4	25		
	5	2			
	HOUSE	3	3		
		4	9		

Ward	Property Type	Bedrooms	Total	
		5	1	
	MAISONETTE	1	3	
		2	45	
		3	30	
		4	6	
COLLEGE	FLAT	Bedsit	4	
		1	29	
		2	66	
		3	34	
		4	3	
	HOUSE	3	13	
	MAISONETTE	3	5	
	#N/A	2	1	
EAST DULWICH	FLAT	Bedsit	5	
		1	32	
		2	15	
		3	3	
		4	1	
		HOUSE	2	9
			3	12
			4	1
		MAISONETTE	1	1
			3	1
EAST WALWORTH	FLAT	Bedsit	10	
		1	97	
		2	134	
		3	54	
		4	5	
		HOUSE	2	1
			3	8
			4	9
			5	3
		MAISONETTE	1	1
			2	15
			3	24
			4	6
		#N/A	Bedsit	1
		1	44	
		2	35	
		3	6	
FARADAY	FLAT	Bedsit	15	
		1	113	
		2	89	
		3	7	
		4	2	
		HOUSE	2	3
			3	4
			4	1
			5	2
		MAISONETTE	Bedsit	1
			2	25
			3	87
			4	37
		5	9	
	#N/A	1	2	

Ward	Property Type	Bedrooms	Total
		2	1
		4	1
GRANGE	FLAT	Bedsit	48
		1	87
		2	64
		3	16
		4	2
	HOUSE	1	3
		2	3
		3	2
	MAISONETTE	Bedsit	3
		1	14
		2	85
		3	35
		4	2
		5	1
	#N/A	1	2
		2	4
		3	1
LIVESEY	FLAT	Bedsit	21
		1	83
		2	149
		3	69
		4	18
	HOUSE	1	3
		2	13
		3	38
		4	19
		5	1
	MAISONETTE	1	1
		2	32
		3	41
		4	14
		5	2
	#N/A	Bedsit	1
		1	2
		2	1
NEWINGTON	BUNGALOW	Bedsit	2
	FLAT	Bedsit	22
		1	151
		2	141
		3	48
		4	2
	HOUSE	2	19
		3	26
		4	34
	MAISONETTE	1	1
		2	44
		3	75
		4	4
	#N/A	3	1
NUNHEAD	BUNGALOW	1	1
	FLAT	Bedsit	2
		1	125
		2	52

Ward	Property Type	Bedrooms	Total
		3	5
		4	4
	HOUSE	Bedsit	1
		1	1
		2	8
		3	63
		4	29
		5	2
		8	1
	MAISONETTE	1	5
		2	9
		3	16
		4	2
	#N/A	1	7
		2	12
		3	1
PECKHAM	FLAT	Bedsit	15
		1	127
		2	53
		3	23
	HA MAISONETTE	2	1
	HOUSE	2	45
		3	55
		4	19
		5	1
		6	1
	MAISONETTE	Bedsit	1
		1	6
		2	81
		3	91
		4	16
		5	4
		6	1
		7	2
	#N/A	3	1
PECKHAM RYE	FLAT	Bedsit	6
		1	37
		2	60
		3	9
		4	4
	HOUSE	2	14
		3	30
		4	5
	MAISONETTE	1	1
		2	6
		3	3
	#N/A	2	1
		3	1
		4	1
RIVERSIDE	FLAT	Bedsit	43
		1	145
		2	120
		3	15
		4	5

Ward	Property Type	Bedrooms	Total
		5	2
	HOUSE	2	4
		3	13
		4	4
	MAISONETTE	1	6
		2	28
		3	30
		4	6
	#N/A	2	1
ROTHERHITHE	FLAT	Bedsit	13
		1	67
		2	101
		3	3
	HOUSE	2	4
		3	15
		4	6
	MAISONETTE	1	1
		2	62
		3	49
		4	2
	#N/A	3	3
SOUTH BERMONDSEY	FLAT	Bedsit	20
		1	55
		2	53
		3	18
		4	1
	HOUSE	2	3
		3	12
		4	6
		5	1
	MAISONETTE	1	1
		2	37
		3	38
		4	3
	#N/A	1	1
		2	2
		3	1
SOUTH CAMBERWELL	FLAT	Bedsit	6
		1	79
		2	122
		3	54
		4	13
	HOUSE	2	3
		3	8
		4	7
	MAISONETTE	1	1
		2	13
		3	4
		4	5
		5	1
SURREY DOCKS	FLAT	Bedsit	2
		1	7
		2	8
	HOUSE	2	2
		3	11

Ward	Property Type	Bedrooms	Total
		4	1
	MAISONETTE	2	4
		3	6
		4	1
THE LANE	FLAT	Bedsit	6
		1	51
		2	49
		3	13
		4	3
	HOUSE	2	5
		3	75
		4	17
		5	6
	MAISONETTE	1	3
		2	39
		3	24
		4	2
	#N/A	2	1
3		4	
VILLAGE	BUNGALOW	1	2
	FLAT	Bedsit	2
		1	18
		2	15
		3	6
	HOUSE	4	2
		1	1
		2	4
	MAISONETTE	3	17
		3	2
#N/A	1	1	
	2	1	
#N/A	FLAT	1	3
Total			7023

36. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR GEOFFREY THORNTON

Can the cabinet member comment on the practice of accepting in-lieu payments from developers in place of affordable housing being built?

RESPONSE

The draft Affordable Housing supplementary planning document (SPD) sets out the council's approach to pooled contributions (payments in lieu of affordable housing). This was approved for consultation on 21 June 2011 by Cabinet. Consultation on the draft SPD will run until 30 September 2011. It is anticipated that the SPD will be taken to Cabinet for adoption in November 2011.

It is the case that some developments can not provide on-site affordable housing, particularly rented affordable housing. For instance in some developments very high service charges or other management issues (such as not being able to accommodate a separate lift core in high rise blocks) make the developments unattractive to registered providers. The government's introduction of the "affordable rent" model and refusal to allow the use of social housing grant for s106 affordable housing units, is likely to exacerbate this problem as we estimate that an "affordable rent" 2 bed flat in SE1 would require a household income of over £70,000 pa and a

4 bed home over £100,000 pa. With average income levels in the borough of around £17,000 pa, it is clear that homes at this level of rent not be affordable.

Likewise in some very high value developments shared ownership units can also fail to provide truly affordable housing options. For instance it was estimated that even based on the minimum 25% share in a flat in Neo Bankside would have required an income of over £90,000 pa. This is not affordable housing and I support the recent decision of the Planning Committee to accept an in-lieu payment of £9m instead.

This £9m and all other money received in lieu of on-site affordable housing will be paid into Southwark's Affordable Housing Fund. By combining this money with our own land we will be able to deliver far more affordable homes than would have been built at Neo Bankside and they will be genuinely affordable homes for Southwark residents. I believe this will be very welcome news to the 19,000 plus families on our housing waiting list.

37. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR NICK STANTON

Now that Southwark is in charge of its own social tenure policy, can the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management please outline his plans for consulting with local residents and tenants and residents associations?

RESPONSES

This policy will be fully consulted on.

Southwark has always been in charge of its housing allocations policy, and in addition has nomination agreements with registered providers [housing associations]. Following the Localism Bill, Southwark will have to develop a strategic tenancy policy, which will relate to the types of tenancy to be made available both by Southwark and by registered providers [housing associations] under the new legislation. Registered providers will have little choice with relation to affordable rents, due to the terms of the affordable housing programme, which determines how new homes are funded.

Because of the wide variety of legislative changes and new policies it has also become necessary to 'refresh' the Housing Strategy Key Targets, and this will require a programme of consultation. To avoid 'consultation fatigue' Southwark is considering consulting on both the housing strategy and the strategic tenancy policy at the same time. Plans for this are at an early stage, but it is thought that extensive consultation will be required with the following key stakeholders in drafting a strategic tenancy policy:

- Southwark Housing Strategic Partnership
- Tenant Council
- TMO Liaison Committee
- SOUHAG (Main and Management)

It should be remembered that a strategic tenancy policy is not the same as Southwark's housing allocation policy but that there will be cross-cutting implications.

38. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET

Can the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management tell me whether district heating boilers and connecting ducts will be included in the five year housing investment programme?

RESPONSE

Yes. There is provision in the five year draft programme for extensive work to landlord obligations such as district heating schemes. There are specifically allocated schemes including New Place, Gilesmead, Kinglake, Newington, Portland Street and Salisbury in the 2011/12 programme and a total provision of over £16m over the next five years. A full breakdown of schemes is in the investment programme and can be made available to any member who requests this information.

39. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GETTLESON

Please can the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management please give an update on the progress of giving housing priority for ex-service men and women in Southwark?

RESPONSE

I am very happy to report that significant progress has been made.

We have now amended our current lettings policy to reflect Manchester City Council's policy to give the highest priority that Southwark's lettings policy will allow for ex-service personnel who have sustained a serious injury, medical condition or disability during service.

Consultation is also currently in hand to introduce a choice based lettings scheme for accessible and adapted homes. The consultation period ends on 22 July 2011 and the consultation includes the proposal to give ex-service personnel additional priority in the lettings policy for adapted homes.

The government has also announced that it will be consulting during the autumn on proposals to change the statutory housing guidance on social lettings to give ex armed forces personnel maximum priority (or additional preference) in local authority lettings schemes. I have asked officers to meet with government officials ahead of the publication of the draft consultation paper to help to inform the guidance.

We are also currently considering a policy change to give ex armed forces personnel priority status which will place the applicant at the top of the band they have been assessed in for a set period of time to enable them to make a successful bid.

I am pleased to report that Southwark is helping to lead the way in this area to support our ex service personnel.

40. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

Will tenant management organisations be warm, dry and safe by 2014?

RESPONSE

There are currently 14 tenant management organisations (TMOs) across the borough. Two are already warm, dry and safe: Benchley Gardens and Two Towers (Caspin and Lupin). Leathermarket JMB has responsibility for the procurement, delivery and prioritisation of their major works. The remaining 11 TMOs will be made warm, dry and safe during this period the housing investment programme covers 2011/12 - 2015/16.

41. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU

Please can the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management confirm what date the works on the Manor Estate will commence?

RESPONSE

Design and survey works have started and warm, dry safe works will commence in January 2012.

42. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBA BLANGO

Now that Southwark is free to determine its own social tenure policy, please will the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management confirm whether he will choose to give all new tenants life time tenancies?

RESPONSE

We opposed the creation of flexible tenancies when the government consulted us on it last autumn, and continue to do so. I have already endorsed the retention of lifetime tenancies for Southwark Council homes, as these are the best guarantee of the council's objective to provide mixed and sustainable communities.

However, as the council will have little no control over whether other social landlords in Southwark choose to move to flexible tenancies, there is a not inconsiderable risk that some new social tenants in our borough will be punished by this government policy. Furthermore, the member will do well to remember that it is his government that is introducing flexible tenancies and it is his local party that put a Tory in charge of housing in this borough 2006-2010. I hate to imagine what might have happened to lifelong tenancies in this borough were the former executive member for housing still in power.

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

How can people in my ward and the rest of the borough find out when they can expect decent homes work to be carried out on their estate or street?

RESPONSE

We are committed to making our programme of housing the most transparent ever. As a result we are currently consulting with all area forums, tenants council and home owners council. In addition all the tenants and residents associations in the borough will be written to with the draft programme and copies will be made available in area housing offices. The details of the programme are also being put on the council's website and all residents will be invited to make comments. All the feedback received will be taken into consideration before the final report is presented to cabinet for decision in October 2011.

44. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON

What does the cabinet member for housing management make of reports in Southwark News that, under the government's new affordable rent model, council tenants on the Aylesbury would need a household income of £50,400 for a two bedroom council house?

RESPONSE

The government's affordable rent model presents significant challenges for the council's ability to meet housing need, not just on the basis of affordability, but at many practical levels as outlined in the question on the impact of the Localism Bill.

In terms of affordability, officers have worked with colleagues in the South East London Housing Partnership to build a picture of housing rental patterns across the sub-region and the effect of rents being set at up to 80% of market rent level or the local housing allowance level.

Our analysis of income levels in Southwark clearly tell us that most residents in housing need cannot afford rents at the levels projected, unless they are in receipt of housing benefit, and that the government's proposed welfare reforms apply opposing pressures. The affordable rent model is being introduced by default, by making the use of the approach, for both new properties and a proportion of their relets, a condition of receiving grant from the Homes and Communities Agency. This is affecting our housing association partners, but the council has chosen not to submit a bid for development funding, although eligible to do so, because of the rent levels and the fixed terms tenancies that go with it.

Although I believe the Aylesbury example was used as a geographic reference rather than relating to the regeneration scheme, it is clear that although the future for housing association properties outlined above is bleak, the difficulties for providing truly affordable replacement housing in regeneration schemes are compounded.

45. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR NORMA GIBBES

Can he outline the council's efforts to prevent housing benefit fraud and to improve accountability and fairness in the system?

RESPONSE

The Housing Benefits Service considers the risk of fraud in their work to try to prevent fraudulent claims, through its control framework, validation and monitoring processes to help ensure transparency and fairness in the application system. Housing benefit processes are also reviewed as part of the annual cycle of managed audits.

As well as undertaking regular validation checks, the council also undertake proactive fraud work, participating in the National Fraud Initiative and responding to matches identified. With the fraud service having returned in-house, the council's fraud teams are working more closely than ever to help detect and prevent fraud in all areas including benefits. We also undertake activity, for example communications campaigns, to act as a deterrent. We are also exploring pilot exercises with the National Fraud Authority to further help prevent and detect all fraud. As you will know, the council takes all fraud seriously and operates a zero tolerance approach.

In the respect of housing benefits cases, the council operates a prosecution policy and sanctions panel, with a view to helping provide a fair and consistent approach to the sanctions to be applied.

46. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE BOWMAN

Can the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management account for the sudden increase in parking enforcement activity on the Brandon Estate as of March this year?

RESPONSE

The parking enforcement policy was reviewed between September and December 2010. Enforcement activity was previously based on a timetable of visits to estates on a rotation

basis to provide a high profile presence to deter illegal parking. This policy was expensive and increasingly ineffective in ensuring compliance with the parking rules agreed with the residents. Following the review, enforcement activity has changed to focus on areas of highest breach leading to an increase in the number of vehicles clamped or removed. The basis in which cars are clamped or removed is unchanged, but residents entitled to park on the estate are now benefitting from a reduction in illegal parking.

At the Brandon Estate this new focus has meant that illegally parked vehicles have been subject to the same enforcement rules but with a more focused approach the level of enforcement has increased from approximately 10 actions per month to around 20 actions per month in April and May 2011.

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

Can the cabinet publish the total amount of public money spent on new signage on council estates in College ward since May last year?

RESPONSE

The total spent on new signage on council estates in College Ward totals £4,098.69 from May last year to date.

48. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL SITU

Can the cabinet member of equalities and community engagement provide an update on Southwark's transition fund, what was the publicised aim of the fund and how many voluntary organisations applied for the 1st round?

RESPONSE

The transition fund was aimed at providing interim support to help VCS organisations make the changes necessary to meet the challenges faced by reduced public sector funding. It is not a replacement for such funding and instead, the fund should assist organisations in the voluntary sector to become more sustainable as well as introducing a greater degree of innovation to ensure the sector thinks about better ways of operating and providing its services.

As a result of openly advertising the transition fund in February 2011, including on the council's website and through Community Action Southwark's (CAS) e-bulletin, a total of 91 applications for the £1m fund were submitted totalling £2,061,908.

All council funded voluntary sector organisations were provided with guidance on the application process and criteria against which their applications would be assessed. The applications received fell within the thematic funding programmes administered by several council departments and were initially considered by an officer panel, providing recommendations for the final decision. At the end of the first round 19 organisations were successful in receiving transition funding totalling £376,004

I have now made a decision on round 2 applications, where 49 applications were received. Eleven organisations were successful, being awarded a total of £174, 902.

49. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DAN GARFIELD

How many voluntary organisations were successful in applying for the transition fund, how many organisations appealed following an unsuccessful application and how many appeals were successful?

RESPONSE

The cabinet approved £1.5m transition funding for the voluntary sector over the next two years. In the first round of funding a total of 19 organisations were successful in receiving transition funding totalling £376,004.

Further to the round 2 applications, 11 organisations were successful, being awarded a total of £174, 902.

For Round 1, representations were received from 2 organisations, Southwark Mediation and Peckham Voluntary Sector Forum. Southwark Mediation was successful in its representation and were awarded funding of £17,140.

For Round 2, representations were received from East Dulwich SNUB, the Latin American Development Association and the Blue Elephant Theatre. Blue Elephant Theatre were successful in its representation and were awarded funding of £19,800.

50. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR VICTORIA MILLS

Can the cabinet member give clear assurance that no decisions have been taken regarding the savings required in the community council budgets and that the Democracy Commission will investigate all possible options for making the £344,000 savings and ensure that the views of members, community councils and local residents are heard?

RESPONSE

In my scrutiny interview response in March this year, I confirmed that community councils are a valued part of our democratic institutions and the way in which they would evolve will be the subject of the second phase of the Democracy Commission – it remains a priority that community councils operate in the best way possible for local people.

The Democracy Commission is currently reviewing the role and functions of community councils in the budgetary context. No final decisions have been made and the commission aims to make recommendations in January 2012. Focus groups will take place with local residents in July, 'community conversations' are planned for August and questionnaires have been distributed at community council meetings. Phase 2 of the commission's work has been discussed at community council chairs' and vice chairs' meetings and they will continue to be kept informed. I plan to discuss how we best engage the community councils in Phase 2 with chairs and vice chairs at their next meeting in July.

51. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER

What role has and will be taken by the council's 'critical friend' in responding to cuts to voluntary sector funding?

RESPONSE

The "Forum for Equalities and Human Rights Southwark" (FEHRS) is the council's "critical friend" for equality and human rights. It has a role in supporting and facilitating community consultation on equality impact assessments and in providing a response to these.

To date FEHRS has facilitated community engagement in a number of areas affected by budget reductions. These include the consultation on changes to the Taxi Card scheme and an Equality Impact Assessment for Childrens' Services. It has also organised events for Carers Rights Week and Refugee Week.

The service will assist the council in meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and assessing the impact of budget reductions on communities and in particular residents within the protected characteristics of the Act.

New guidance has been issued to departments on the role of FEHRS and the council's duties under the new Equality Act.

52. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE & SPORT AND THE OLYMPICS FROM COUNCILLOR THE RIGHT REVD EMMANUEL OYEWOLE

How can we ensure that Black History Month is appropriately celebrated in Southwark?

RESPONSE

Black History Month is a very important annual event in Southwark which is the opportunity we have each year to celebrate the true diversity of people in this borough, especially their culture and history. This year, as every year, a full programme of events is already in the planning stage and the council will continue to fund the many organisations that have applied for funding to put on events, workshops and performances.

Southwark Council has supported Black History Month activities in the borough for more than 20 years, and provides the highest level of funding for Black History Month of all the London boroughs, demonstrating the significance of the month and our continued support to develop and support its celebration.

It takes the theme of 'Journey: past, present and future'. The events reflect and represent Black History within Southwark, as well as celebrating the achievements of African and Caribbean communities locally and across the UK.

A steering group made up of community representatives and service providers guides the programme, and consultation meetings have been held with community organisations regarding the delivery of BHM 2011.

In 2010, BHM delivered 120 events which included Black Heritage workshops, walks, films, performances, literary events, exhibitions and debates for people of all ages. In the past, however, activities have been scattered across the whole Borough which has sometimes meant that events have not managed to attract the audiences they truly deserve. For 2011, it has been decided, in consultation with the communities, to have four main series of events in centres where the maximum number of people can attend. These "hub" venues will be well publicised and will concentrate on putting on events in the four weekends covering the month. There will also be maximum activities over half term to attract children and young people.

Black History Month is not only about the events taking place during the month. It is about making a positive difference and fostering integration every day. It is vital we learn from the contributions that all our communities make and develop a respect and understanding of what makes our borough such a dynamic and exciting place to live.

53. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR ROBIN CROOKSHANK HILTON

Can the cabinet member state how much the Holmhurst Day Centre is valued by our property department and how much a sale of the property could be expected to release? Please can she provide a breakdown of operating and maintenance costs for the grounds and property?

RESPONSE

The existing use value of the property is estimated to be £300,000. Based on preliminary estimates the market value which could be realised upon sale is expected to be in the region of £1million+, assuming full vacant possession and alternative use.

The running costs for the premises have been stated to be as follows:

Maintenance (building repairs & maintenance)	£5,855
Planned maintenance	£8,000
Utilities (Gas, Electricity, Water)	£8,495
Cleaning	£4,324
Other miscellaneous cost (service & accommodation charges)	£330
Total	£27,004

54. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS

Could the cabinet member for transport, environment and recycling please provide the amount spent by the council on highways and pavements major works since May 2006 for each ward, broken down by funding source?

RESPONSE

See following page.

Expenditure by Community Council Area								
		LDA	TfL	Southwark Council	S106	Other	Total	CCA Total
Bermondsey	Grange		£1,039,571		£91,500		£1,131,071	£10,294,246
	Riverside	£2,580,000	£213,640	£605,870	£4,305,000	£80,000	£7,784,310	
	South Bermondsey		£998,084	£380,781			£1,378,865	
Camberwell	Brunswick Park		£56,733	£206,895			£263,628	
	Camberwell Green		£816,834	£129,522			£946,356	
	South Camberwell		£184,601	£658,653			£843,254	
Borough & Bankside	Cathedrals	£474,000	£1,500,809	£484,378	£1,246,264	£5,481,000	£9,186,251	
	Chaucer		£418,368	£356,167	£249,905		£1,024,440	
	College		£1,843,890	£1,161,832			£3,005,722	
Dulwich	East Dulwich		£332,960	£976,289			£1,309,249	
	Village		£1,538,710	£1,897,982			£3,436,692	
Nunhead & Peckham Rye	Nunhead		£78,549	£783,317			£861,866	
	Peckham Rye		£209,134	£1,658,972			£1,868,106	
	The Lane		£1,272,995	£890,184			£2,163,179	
Peckham	Peckham		£276,084	£570,075			£846,159	
	Peckham Livesey		£257,680	£375,530			£633,210	
Rotherhithe	Rotherhithe		£597,218	£1,250,000	£1,750,000		£3,597,218	
	Rotherhithe Livesey		£520,317	£777,278			£1,297,595	
	Surrey Docks		£522,429	£160,862			£683,291	
Walworth	East Walworth		£2,537,378	£18,250			£2,555,628	
	Faraday		£73,087	£22,000			£95,087	
	Newington		£127,410	£21,000			£148,410	
	Multiwards*		£6,959,011				£6,959,011	
	Boroughwide		£1,298,352				£1,298,352	
	No ward specified**		£4,283,464				£4,283,464	
Total		£3,054,000	£27,957,108	£13,385,637	£7,642,669	£5,561,000	£57,600,414	£10,294,246

55. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK

What is the cabinet member for transport, environment and recycling doing to stop the rat running that occurs through the estates from Jamaica Road through the estates of Riverside and Rotherhithe?

RESPONSE

Transport for London (TfL) are currently investigating traffic conditions on Jamaica Road. As part of this study they will be considering whether there are opportunities to deter rat running. Council officers are meeting with the responsible TfL officers on 7 July and will be able to update members following that meeting.

56. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR WILMA NELSON

What is the cabinet member for transport, environment and recycling's intentions for the future of the street leader scheme?

RESPONSE

The scheme is being coordinated by the Community Warden Service who are very keen to support the programme and ensure that street leaders continue to be fully supported in their role. This will be facilitated through the warden supervisors and their teams at the local level. The Service will be holding an information event on 29th July with street leaders as an induction and to involve them in further discussions about the future development of the programme.

57. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL MITCHELL

Would the cabinet member for transport, environment and recycling please set out:

(a) the current policy on assessing the merits of, and deciding upon, the provision of short-term free parking bays to assist shoppers and traders in shopping parades in areas within controlled parking zones, with particular reference to flexibility with regard to the time permitted for free parking; and

(b) any proposals he may have for improving and/or localising decision-making in this regard?

RESPONSE

Priority for available parking space is based on a clear hierarchy of road users including pedestrians, cyclists and people with a disability.

The parking hierarchy, below, contained within the Parking and Enforcement Plan is applied when allocating space.

Parking hierarchy	
Road users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local disabled resident parking need (parking at origin); • Non local disabled parking need (parking at destinations); • Car share and car club bays; • Local resident parking; • Building contractors, appliance repair and other tradesman services; • Essential worker in the delivery of public service and carers; • Local business essential parking/servicing need; • Short stay shopper/visitor parking need; • Long stay shopper/visitor parking need; • Long stay commuter parking need.
Vehicle type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency vehicle; • Cycle; • Bus; • Public service vehicle including managed levels of short term coach parking; • Taxi; • Shared/pool car; • Cleaner/greener private car; • Private cars and powered two wheelers.

The hierarchy is applied with regard to the local circumstances. For example, in areas where there is very limited space for residents parking the needs of essential public workers and care workers may need to be given higher priority. In commercial areas, higher priority is generally given to short stay parking in areas adjacent or very near to business premises.

Generally, paid-for parking is introduced within Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) for two reasons. 1) As a means of providing an effective mechanism for enforcement (the presence of a pay and display ticket improves compliance and reduces the enforcement costs that are problematic in free limited-waiting bays). 2) As a means of income to offset the costs of implementation, maintenance and enforcement that would otherwise be placed upon resident permit holders.

(b) any proposals he may have for improving and/or localising decision-making in this regard?

The detail of proposed new CPZs (including the position and type of parking bays) are always consulted upon with the community council before an individual cabinet member decision and prior to implementation. Where minor adjustments to parking layouts are identified (and in line with policy) decision making is delegated to the community council.

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

Would the cabinet member for transport, environment and recycling please explain the circumstances, if any, in which the council will designate a "disabled" bay for a specific vehicle, with particular reference to bays in controlled parking zones?

RESPONSE

The council does not provide any "disabled" parking bays that are specifically allocated to a vehicle.

We have 1000 on-street bays that are designated solely for use at all times by disabled drivers. The majority of these have been installed following successful application for a bay by a local resident. These are known as ‘origin’ bays.

Additionally, there are about 50 ‘destination’ on-street bays located in key positions across the borough that improve accessibility to services, town centres etc. These usually have a maximum stay limit of 4 hours to encourage turn-over of the space. These bays are in addition to the general entitlement for blue badge holders to park free and without limit in pay and display or shared-use parking bays and on yellow lines for up to three hours (where no obstruction is occurring)

Both origin and destination bays are part of the European “Blue Badge” scheme. That is to say that the bays can be used by any holder of a blue badge and at present cannot be allocated to a specific user or vehicle.

To do this, the council would have to change the parking signs to make the bay specific to an associated permit. The applicant would also need to receive and display the relevant permit.

With 1000 ‘origin’ bays across the borough (approximately 50% within CPZs) there would be substantial consultative and implementation costs in changing all bays from general blue badge bays to vehicle specific bays. Whilst there are advantages to such a change, there are also disadvantages (for example visitors collecting and driving a disabled resident would neither be able to use the blue badge in that bay nor would they, necessarily, have a permit for that particular vehicle-specific bay).

The approximate costs of implementing a change from a general “blue badge” bay to a vehicle specific blue badge bay are outlined below, at a minimum:

Element	Quantity	Item cost	Total Cost
Consultation of all LBS blue badge holders	8000	£ 1.50	£ 12,000
Stakeholder consultation event	1	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000
Analysis, reports and decision making	1	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000
Change of signage of existing bays	1000	£ 85.00	£ 85,000
Traffic management orders	1	£ 3,500.00	£ 3,500
Notification to BB holders of permit transfer	1000	£ 0.50	£ 500
Administration for change in permits	1000	£ 10.00	£ 10,000
TOTAL			£ 113,000