

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2011

URGENT QUESTION

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

How is the leader funding the early demolition of part of the Heygate Estate and does he believe that this is a good deal for residents?

RESPONSE

The open report regarding the variation of the Elephant and Castle regeneration agreement to allow for the early demolition of the Heygate was considered as item 15 of the 22 November cabinet meeting. The comments of the finance director were set out in the confidential closed report as they are commercially sensitive. I am however happy to confirm that subject to the agreement of the business case currently being prepared by the finance director, resources will be made available from the regeneration element of the housing investment programme. This would be possible as a result of re-profiling current projects that are not in need of resources as originally scheduled as sites are vacated and developed. I am certain that our decision to bring forward the demolition of the estate and not have it lingering as a derelict shell is excellent news for the residents who live around Elephant and Castle and the borough at large.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

Thank you Madam Mayor; thank you to the leader for his answer. It does seem it is always confidential when it is not a very good deal but anyway – maybe he can tell me whether the funding is at the expense of any other estates, given he has said it comes from the housing investment programme?

RESPONSE

No. My understanding is that we were talking about the Aylesbury earlier on and we were anticipating that the buyout of leaseholds on the Aylesbury would be slower than initially anticipated, therefore that gives us the funds within the housing investment programme to move forward with demolition, so no other estate will have its works delayed or have the housing investment works affected in any way. That is what I have been assured.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

Thanks Madam Mayor. Have the residents of the Aylesbury and the tenants' and residents' association been in discussions about this; the fact that some of that funding is moving?

RESPONSE

It is not funding moving, it is just simply re-profiling. The same amount of money will be there, it will just be going out at a different time. It does not affect the programme and I have not doubt that Councillor Colley has been talking to residents on the Aylesbury along with Councillor Wingfield and the Creation Trust about this whole project as it moves forward. I just want to emphasise here: we are absolutely committed to the regeneration to the Aylesbury. I am sure I don't have to remind Councillor Al-Samerai that things obviously took a massive hit last November when we lost the private finance initiative (PFI) funding which meant we were going ahead much quicker and part of the PFI funding included some of that leaseholder buy out within it, so that took a hit obviously for the programme going forward, and therefore it has enabled us to re-profile, it has enabled us to use some of that capital for demolition of the Heygate. We are going to make progress on both estates, delivering regeneration both to the Heygate and the Aylesbury.