

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY 2012

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC ON THE THEME

1. QUESTION FROM ABBY TAUBIN TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING

Why don't all council homes have loft and cavity wall insulation?

RESPONSE

Many council homes already have loft and cavity wall insulation and in the last 3 years we have carried out works to some 4,500 properties.

Whilst loft and cavity insulation is not included in the council's warm dry and safe investment programme, we already have a separate borough-wide insulation programme. We secured and spent £3.7m of external funding last year and have another £1.5m of external money set aside for further insulation works in this year and next.

However it is also important to note that not all the borough's properties are constructed in a way that allows cavity wall insulation. For example, of the 10,500 street properties included in the recent borough wide insulation programme, only 900 properties were appropriate for cavity insulation. We will have completed works to most of these properties by the end of March 2012.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM ABBY TAUBIN TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING

Yes thanks for giving me this opportunity. What I have to say exactly follows a part of what was said by Save the Riverside Campaign and I would like to remind you of what was said, which is why is not all the technology that's available in the world being used as resource for what decisions are being made here, so my follow up question is how is the council implementing ecological improvements to existing housing stock, my follow up question is what practical measure is the council using and doing to encourage micro generation and carbon reduction; where are they drawing ideas around from the world and how are they building in when they regenerate existing housing stock and when they build new housing stock, how are they building solar and passive heating and cooling into their ideas?

RESPONSE

Thank you Madam Mayor. The main way the council negotiates solar and wind energy is through the planning process. We don't have the money to spend on solar energy at the moment. At the moment we are really trying to bring all our homes up to warm, dry and safe standards and it has not helped with the council's current reduction to the feeding tariffs that we could even afford that. What we are doing at the moment is looking at the possibility of renting roofs on

some of our council stock, we can do that. I would also refer you to our energy strategy which was passed in September which was set up with regards to what we are doing on all those areas.

2. QUESTION FROM DONNACHADH McCARTHY TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING

As Southwark has one of Europe's lowest cycling rates and London's highest serious accident rate, will the council host an urgent summit of all interested parties, including parents and schools, to draw up an action plan to create child-friendly safe Dutch style cycle-lane infrastructure in Southwark within 5 years?

RESPONSE

Southwark ranks 8th out of 33 London boroughs for cycle mode share i.e. we have the 8th highest level of cycling and are in the top quartile. Only a handful of comparable boroughs have a higher mode share (Source TfL).

I am not convinced of the merits of a summit as set out within the parameters that the questioner has described. Nevertheless I am delighted that ongoing work with Southwark Cyclists has been productive and we will be holding a high-level meeting with them very soon to further integrate the views of the cycling community into our work.

There is nowhere in the UK that has retrofitted segregated cycle lanes on the scale proposed and there is no conclusive evidence to demonstrate that cycle lanes would themselves remove all risk. For example most collisions occur at junctions and this would still be an issue as would the transition between segregated and non segregated areas generally.

Cyclists would still need the skills to interact with other traffic which is why we will continue to focus on this aspect of cycle safety.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM DONNACHADH McCARTHY TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING

Thank you Madam Mayor. I regret the negative response to the constructive suggestion of the formal question, however in the light of the fact that Southwark at 3% has one of the lowest cycling rates of any European city, has for years had one of the highest fatality and serious accident rates in London, that 40% of our school children are suffering from clinical obesity, that 30% of kids, according to the council's own statistics, want to cycle, but only 3% of them are allowed to do so by their parents due to lack of safe cycle lanes. Noting that the cabinet has allocated zero pounds out of its new three year £40 million transport budget to cycle lanes. Noting that you have adopted an increase in cycling target that means it will take 225 years to reach current Dutch levels and noting that the council's own surveys that show cycle training has not led to any increase in kids actually cycling. How can the council justify its repeated opposition to cycle lanes and its advocacy instead of its extraordinary policy of forcing cyclists to share roads with articulated trucks, which means 10 year old kids and pensioners having to cycle down Peckham Road, Old Kent Road and Jamaica Road and almost every single other road with no physical protection? Why can't we instead, after 20 years of all-party support for cycling, adopt instead a positive vision for Southwark to be a modern leading European cycling borough within 5 years?

RESPONSE

I will do my best to reply with a positive response – I don't know whether you are representing an organisation or not but you are under the title 'stop murdering our cyclists', but I will do my very best to be positive today.

I take issue with you as you keep misrepresenting our policy on cycling in this borough. We don't have an anti cycle path/anti cycle lane policy, we will judge each road and each street as it comes. I think that is a much more sensible way to go forward rather than having a dogmatic approach. You know it seems to me you are basically saying things for sensationalist purposes because all those streets, you are asking us for something you know we cannot deliver at the moment. We want to engage with cyclists, talk to them about how we can work together in a positive sense, I want to work together with them in a positive sense and you are completely misrepresenting the point about TFL.

I never hear you singularly criticise the Mayor of London, you never say anything about his scrapping of average speed cameras, you say nothing about him not allowing us to have independent speed devices on our vans to slow down the traffic, you say nothing – you always take the big picture but say nothing about the fact he is not allowing us to put speed calming around the Peckham Rye west area so that we can slow down the traffic for cyclists. I never really actually hear you say anything about speed in cars because actually speed is the main killer on our roads.

I am saying something positive, the positive thing I have to say is tomorrow we are meeting with Southwark Cyclists and we are going to talk with them about how we can work closer together.

I don't want to be in a debate where someone who is accusing this council of institutional murder, he is now changed it to institutional killing, I think we can talk with people I think that there is improvement to be made. Some of what he says is right but I think when he puts it in this way and tries to make us look stupid I think it does not do the argument any good.