

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY**  
**(ORDINARY)**  
**WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY 2014**  
**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

**1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARK WILLIAMS**

Can the leader confirm which councillors are the worst performing attendees of council meetings since 2010?

**RESPONSE**

Since May 2010, eight of the bottom ten councillors have been Liberal Democrat whilst seven of the top ten have been Labour. Labour members have to attend more meetings (122 per member) than Liberal Democrats or Conservatives (114 per member), yet are consistently attending more of their meetings, to represent local residents. Labour members have attended 88.3% of their meetings to the Liberal Democrats 82.4%.

The worst attending councillors since May 2010 are:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Meetings</b>
Cllr Columba Blango	Rotherhithe	Liberal Democrat	60.7%
Cllr Linda Manchester	Grange	Liberal Democrat	63.4%
Cllr Denise Capstick	Grange	Liberal Democrat	64.3%

In the last year, the worst attending councillors are:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Meetings</b>
Cllr Linda Manchester	Grange	Liberal Democrat	28.6%
Cllr Robin Crookshank Hilton	Village	Liberal Democrat	61.1%
Cllr Columba Blango	Rotherhithe	Liberal Democrat	61.2%

In the last six months the worst attending councillors are:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Meetings</b>
Cllr Linda Manchester	Grange	Liberal Democrat	25%
Cllr Robin Crookshank Hilton	Village	Liberal Democrat	25%
Cllr Columba Blango	Rotherhithe	Liberal Democrat	25%

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARK WILLIAMS**

Thank you very much Mr Mayor. I would like to thank the leader for his answer both to my question on paper but also to the answer to the question from Councillor Al-Samerai, which shows whose priorities are right in this borough.

My supplemental question is as follows, given that the three worst performing councillors, all of whom happen to be Liberal Democrats councillors, have attended only a quarter of their council meetings in the last three months, does the leader think the residents in Grange, Village and Rotherhithe wards are getting value for money and do you think they will welcome a change in representatives come 22 May?

## **RESPONSE**

I want to thank Councillor Williams for his excellent question, which identifies a very pertinent issue. We all know that simply attending meetings doesn't make you the world's best councillor but it is a pretty good indicator of whether you are on top of the issues facing this borough and if you only come to a quarter of meetings in our borough of this council you are not going to be hearing about issues, you are not going to be hearing the debate tonight.

I think the deputation from Connect absolutely demonstrated why we have themed debates, we would not have been talking about those issues, we would not have heard about those issues unless we were having a themed debate on that subject tonight, so you do miss out and I think therefore the people who are represented by these councillors miss out. I do think the people of this borough have a choice to make on May 22 and they will, I have no doubt, pass judgement on those councillors who do not attend meetings, do not stand up for their residents and do not represent them in the way that I believe councillors on this side of the chamber do and continue to do.

## **2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ROSIE SHIMELL**

How many families in Southwark have benefited from government's increased number of free childcare hours, broken down by age group?

## **RESPONSE**

Families in Southwark continue to struggle with childcare costs. In government, the Liberal Democrats have made it harder for families.

The amount of financial support available for working parents for childcare costs was reduced in 2011, when the government cut support within the tax credit system from 80% to 70% of eligible childcare costs, with a ceiling of fees of £175. This meant that low income families who were eligible had to find 30% rather than 20% of childcare bills. The Family and Childcare Trust calculate that the average loss was over £500 per year for the half million families who receive this support, and up to £1,500 for families receiving the maximum help.

If a parent is paying a typical £200 a week for childcare and on a low income the most they can now get is 70% of £175 = £122.50, so they have to find the remaining £78.50 from their wages - which will be low in order to qualify in the first place. Under the 80% system which Labour introduced, they would have received £140 in support. The coalition government has also failed to raise the £175 ceiling which Labour introduced despite the fact that childcare costs have continued to rise since and are higher in London than in other parts of the country. According to the Family and Childcare Trust, childcare costs are 24% higher in London than in other parts of the country, with the average fee for full daycare (50 hours per week) in the region of £250 per week.

In January 2009, in 'Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare, Building on the 10-Year Strategy', the previous Labour government announced extending the 12.5 hours per week childcare for three and four year olds to 15 hours a week. In Southwark, 3,300 three year olds and 3,670 four year olds are benefitting from these funded early education places.

The previous Labour government introduced free two year old places for the most vulnerable children, and this September, the current government extended this provision to 20% of two year olds on the lowest incomes. In the first term 714 children benefited from a place. The national criteria have benefited children living in families dependent on workless benefits, but low income working parents are not due to be included until September 2014. This Labour administration has agreed to begin broadening out the eligibility from this term ahead of the national extension to help working parents with their childcare costs. Whilst I fully support the additional provision for two year olds, this is against a backdrop of punishing families through the tax credit system and making it harder for parents who want to work and need support with childcare.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ROSIE SHIMELL**

I would like to thank the leader for his answer. I agree child care costs are clearly a huge issue for families in this borough, although I am not sure I agree with his assessment in the answer that this government is making things worse in that respect when they have extended free child care provision to cover the 20% most disadvantaged two year olds and are set to extend that offer again in September 2014, but I look forward to discussing that in a bit more detail later on.

Nonetheless, we have been talking to local people who would like to see more help provided in terms of bringing down child care costs and getting more information, including from the council about how they can access child care and what exactly the costs are. Will the leader look at what can be done to drive down the cost of child care in this borough?

### **RESPONSE**

I want to thank Councillor Shimell for her supplemental question. I can only refer to the figures which I think demonstrate some of the damage which the government's policies, although they may be well intentioned, have actually done for some of our families. But I do absolutely accept what she says about the issue of affordable child care. I think it is a crisis in London that we face; the whole issue of affordable child care and the fact that so many people are priced out of going back to work because they cannot afford child care. I do think it is not just a Southwark issue, it is a London-wide issue, as I say, and I think there has to be an ultimately London-wide solution. It does not mean that Southwark cannot be leading the way on this and I anticipate that we on this side will have something to say going in to the May elections about what we would do post May if we were elected again as an administration.

I do think it is a very important issue, I do think, as I say, it is at crisis level across London. We do have to offer affordable child care to people from all backgrounds. Some of the best child care, we know, we debated it here before, is provided and some of the most affordable is provided by council run centres but there aren't enough of them. We have to look at that, I think; I cannot offer a solution today but it is an important issue and we will keep bearing down on it.

### **3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON**

As the council approaches the end of the warm, dry, safe programme, what further plans does the leader have to improve housing in the borough?

#### **RESPONSE**

When the Liberal Democrat/Conservative coalition left office in 2010, there was a failing housing department, a shambolic decent homes programme, and a hole in the council's housing budget with no plan of how to get out of it.

Labour has turned this around and we are delivering on our commitment to make every home warm, dry and safe. In 2016, when we have brought every home up to this standard, we will start on the internal works which are needed. We will ensure that every council home has a decent kitchen and bathroom. A report is coming to cabinet setting out proposed future investment once the current warm, dry and safe programme comes to an end in March 2016.

As well as continuing to deliver decent homes, which will include continued investment in external enveloping works, the future strategy will focus on the internal condition of council homes and in particular replacement of kitchens and bathrooms.

Some replacement of kitchens and bathrooms is already taking place through the new enhanced void standard, but the new housing investment programme will specifically target the modernisation of kitchens and bathrooms in tenanted properties. The new programme will also shift the focus towards preventative planned and cyclical maintenance programmes.

The Liberal Democrats in Southwark make commitments to people about how they would improve housing – but while their record in office is one of failure, ours is, and will continue to be, one of delivery.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON**

Thank you Mr Mayor and I would like to thank the leader for his really comprehensive answer, indeed, highlighting the failings of the past Liberal Democrat administration.

My question to the leader is this, what impact will the announcement about quality homes and bathrooms have on residents in council homes throughout the borough?

#### **RESPONSE**

I want to thank Councillor Seaton for his supplemental question. I think it is a really important pledge which Councillor Wingfield and this Labour administration made last week that we will deliver a quality kitchen and bathroom for every council tenant during a second Labour administration.

You will recall when we came in to office there was a programme that was going at such a snail's pace improving council properties in our borough that some people would have had to wait sixteen or seventeen years just to get the basics right in

their homes. We recognise, and of course there was a £600 million funding gap in that programme, we recognise that that was a ludicrous position for us to be in. We said that we would get the basics right in everybody's home before moving on to some of the other internal aspects and that is why we made the pledge to make every council home warm, dry and safe. And we are delivering on that pledge, and we will deliver on that pledge by 2016 and then to move on inside to kitchens and bathrooms. I think this demonstrates only this Labour party has a vision, not only a vision but the ability to deliver on that vision for the people of this borough.

#### **4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI**

For what reason has the proposed Mike Nelson 'pyramid' artwork at the Heygate been cancelled? Who made the decision to withdraw the proposal? What costs has the council already incurred on this project (including any amounts still to be paid)?

#### **RESPONSE**

While we support and encourage art in the borough, it was clear that many local residents were unhappy with the art proposal on the Heygate Estate – I shared that concern. Taking into account local views, the director of regeneration took the decision not to go ahead. The block where the project was to be undertaken would have been demolished whether or not the art project proceeded. The demolition costs of this block will therefore be recovered from Lend Lease (with indexation) as part of the agreement with the council on the forward funding of the Heygate demolition.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI**

My question was continuing to be about the Elephant and Castle because the leader still doesn't seem to get it, the residents are annoyed because they are not being listened to at the Elephant and Castle. This is why he does not listen to them when they choose the name of a leisure centre; that's why he decides that what they need is art projects – actually what they need is affordable homes, Mr Mayor, so will the leader commit this evening to having a meeting at the Elephant and Castle where he can actually go and listen to the concerns of residents there for once?

#### **RESPONSE**

I do have meetings and I and colleagues talk to residents around the Elephant and Castle, week in, week out; I thought she would have seen us campaigning around there, we are out in very great numbers but I am sure she's just back in Riverside defending her own, it must be a very slim, majority these days with the collapse in the Liberal Democrat polling. Look, again she brings a question of such, I think, minor relevance to the issues facing us as a borough. I talk to residents, I will continue to talk to residents, we listen to residents and what their views were about this project; that is why it is not happening. I don't see what's wrong with that; I don't see why that should be criticised. If it was going ahead she would be criticising us, we have listened to people and she is criticising us – you know, really is there a coherent line from the Liberal Democrats or is it just really everybody running around the Liberal Democrat offices as if it is some absolute panic station not knowing what is going on? That is what it seems to be and that is the impression she is giving tonight.

We are delivering for the people of Southwark at the Elephant and Castle and we will carry on doing that. I am confident we will carry on doing it after May 22.

**5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR REBECCA LURY**

Can the leader provide an update on the progress of the council's commitment to build 11,000 new homes in the borough?

**RESPONSE**

Southwark continues to lead the way in building new council homes with the largest and most ambitious programme in the country. The first new homes are now being built with many more in progress over the coming years.

Having taken the strategic decision to develop 1,000 new council homes by 2020 in 2012, cabinet agreed the schemes for the first phase of the direct housing delivery programme.

Phase 1 is now projected to deliver 341 homes across nine schemes, of which 220 will be for social rent, 42 for supported housing, 28 for shared ownership and 51 for market sale. Four of the nine schemes have secured planning approval so far. For the remaining schemes planning has either been submitted or the planning submission is being finalised.

The first scheme commenced on site at Willow Walk last year with demolition of the previous buildings; construction is due to start there next month. All the remaining schemes will commence on site during 2014 with the majority completing by the end of 2015.

In October 2013 the cabinet agreed in principle a further 18 schemes to be worked up for development to form phase 2 of the direct housing delivery programme. The Phase 2 schemes are projected to deliver 327 homes, comprising 241 for social rent, 36 shared ownership and 50 for market sale. The projected development timetable for the Phase 2 schemes will run from 2014/15 with completions through to 2016/17.

The phase 2 decision followed on from the July cabinet which affirmed the future of council housing in Southwark. In July I also announced our commitment to build a further 10,000 council homes over the next 25 years. Preparations are under way to meet this commitment, particularly through consideration of the new homes housing investment plan prepared by Savills and the development of the new housing strategy.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR REBECCA LURY**

Thank you Mr Mayor and thank you to the leader for his answer, I have a supplementary question which is, can you tell us what the impact is of the governments changes to right to buy is having for council housing in the borough?

**RESPONSE**

Well thank you, Councillor Lury for your supplemental question, I mean I really do think it is ironic that the Liberal Democrats constantly go on about affordable

housing and the loss of council housing in our borough. We as a borough, I just want to remind them again – we are going to deliver 11,000 council homes in Southwark over the course of the next thirty years. That is more council homes than any other borough has committed delivering. But at the same time we are losing homes thanks to this government's policy of increasing the discount of right to buy. Over 200 properties will be lost due to right to buy this year. How can that possibly be right at this time when we are facing a waiting list of 20,500 and a housing shortage in this country?

Why is she not arguing with Simon Hughes on this issue, why are the Liberal Democrats not going and knocking on the doors of their representatives in government to say 'this is a lunatic policy to have increased the discount at a time where there is an absolute shortage of properties in Southwark and in London'? Over two hundred properties a year will be lost through right to buy and in future years if this discount continues at this level. That is bad news for Southwark and it is bad news for our housing supply, so I'll take no lessons from the Liberal Democrats on this issue and what we do with our housing stock. We have a vision we are delivering council homes in spite of this government doing everything it can to undermine our position.

#### **6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE BOWMAN**

What is the average time it takes for the council to pay back rent account credit owed to tenants?

#### **RESPONSE**

The average time taken to refund credits to tenants is approximately eight to ten weeks.

The refund process initially starts with a requirement for the tenant to provide a signed statement and rent account details; this can delay the process while we wait for a signature as an email is insufficient. The requests are referred to other departments (housing benefit and council tax) who will check for any outstanding issues, claims, claw backs, change in circumstances, owed monies or account irregularities.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE BOWMAN**

Thank you. I would like to thank the leader for his supplemental, I am particularly interested to see that the target time for refunding credits to tenants is eight to ten weeks. He might be interested to hear that I was asked for help by a resident in September last year. She had been waiting to have an amount of about £700 re-credited to her account; she had been waiting for 12 months for that to happen and she had been assured by a succession of council housing officers that the money was due and was coming, and was, you know, on it's way. It did not materialise and she asked me for help. I involved the director of housing who agreed that 12 months was a totally unacceptable period amount of time for a tenant to wait to have £700 returned to them, she intervened and nonetheless it still took another three months before this lady got her money back. Now would he agree with me that is not good enough and that is not an acceptable level of service and isn't it the case that if a tenant owed £700 for 17 months the council might be inclined to display a degree of legitimate anger and take some steps to ensure they got there money back?

## **RESPONSE**

I want to thank Councillor Bowman for her supplemental question and I absolutely agree with her it is unacceptable. Actually, I think eight to ten weeks is an unacceptably long time for people to have to wait for a repayment from us as an authority. I am going to look at the chief executive now and say please look into how this can be speeded up because it is unacceptable. On that particular case I would be grateful if you could, if you haven't already, forward me or Councillor Wingfield the details of that so he can look into because it is utterly unacceptable and I absolutely agree with it.

### **7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN HAYES**

Can the leader update on what progress has been made London-wide on cycling safety since the recent deaths in the capital?

## **RESPONSE**

Serious accidents and deaths happen to cyclists disproportionately in two ways: while travelling through the busiest junctions; or in contact with heavy lorries. HGVs make up only four per cent of the traffic, but have been involved in 53 per cent of cyclist deaths over the last three years. I have therefore proposed a ban on HGVs entering central London during rush-hour, which has been actively considered by the Mayor of London. I also asked the Mayor to hold a cycling summit to consider this option. The Mayor has now agreed to my request and will be hosting a summit to explore what more can be done across the city to make cycling safer.

In direct response to the recent tragic spate of fatalities, the GLA and Metropolitan Police Service have undertaken a high-profile road safety campaign in and around major junctions in central London, directly targeting poor road user behaviour across all modes.

More than 14,000 motorists and cyclists in London got fixed penalty notices. Police issued drivers with 10,140 penalties for offences including using a phone while driving and not wearing a seat belt. A total of 4,269 cyclists got tickets for offences such as riding through red lights and cycling without lights.

However, such a campaign is clearly only one part of the solution. TfL are carrying out additional work to improve the worst road junctions, increasing standards for lorries, working with the construction industry to address the disproportionate number of construction vehicles involved in accidents, and introducing and enforcing 20mph zones.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN HAYES**

Thank you Mr Mayor and I would like to thank the leader for his answer and congratulate him on proposing the idea of a London-wide cycle summit on cycle safety to the Mayor and of persuading the mayor of the benefits of such a summit.

Can I ask the leader what he will seek to achieve at the London-wide summit on cycle safety?



## **RESPONSE**

I want to thank Councillor Hayes for her supplemental question. Well, I think I gave an indication when the deputation was here. I think there needs to be a radical shift in thinking across London; that we need to have roads for cars and lorries and buses and we need to have roads for cyclists. An absolute segregation so that cyclists are safe when they travel around, or at least where cyclists have absolute clear priority.

That is something we can help deliver in Southwark, but we can't do it on our own. That needs changing the minds of leaders and chief executives and departments right across our capital and this is what I hope will come out of this summit, a recognition that we do need to take a really radical approach and look at the map of London to see which roads are suitable to give priority to motor vehicles and which are suitable for priority for cyclists. As I say, that is what I hope to achieve. On a local level, I have talked about bringing in outside expertise; that will be somebody from the Netherlands or from Denmark, be absolutely sure of it. I am determined we will get somebody from one of those countries to come and look and advise us on how this can best be done, because I think it will reassure members and the cycling community and the wider population if we have that sort of outside expertise coming in and saying 'this is what you are doing right and this is what you are doing wrong, and this is how you can deliver that vision for safer cycling across Southwark', so I hope people will welcome that. I think it is a really important step to have got us to that stage and I hope we will be able to make announcements in the not too distant future about what form that would take in terms of the advice we are receiving.

### **8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER**

What recent contact has he or other council representatives had with BT regarding improving broadband speeds in the Rotherhithe peninsula?

## **RESPONSE**

I want to see the most modern broadband technologies across the whole of the borough but know that broadband in Rotherhithe remains poor. I share the frustration of residents and businesses about the historic lack of investment in the broadband infrastructure.

The infrastructure is the responsibility of private sector communication companies including, but not exclusively, BT. Even so, we are trying to find solutions to this issue. In December Councillor Colley, cabinet member for regeneration and corporate strategy, attended a meeting with Lambeth and Southwark Assembly Member Val Shawcross, local stakeholders and a representative from the Greater London Authority (GLA) to discuss the broadband issue. The meeting identified key issues and a work programme, and it was agreed to establish an informal group, the Rotherhithe Broadband Project to oversee the matter.

Councillor Colley made a commitment that the council will support the group and that officers from regeneration will undertake a number of specific tasks.

As part of this commitment the director of regeneration is in the process of setting up a meeting with BT.

I will also be meeting with BT tomorrow and will again raise this issue with them.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER**

Thank you Mr Mayor and I thank the leader for his answer to my question. I am glad to be a member of the Rotherhithe broadband project group which has now been set up and has started meeting and fortunately has representatives from three levels of government so to speak.

I note the leader is going to meet BT tomorrow I am wondering whether firstly if he is intending to meet with any other organisations such as Virgin or Hyperoptic or various other alternative all round providers of broadband service and whether he would be prepared to let us know the result of his meeting with BT tomorrow and any other organisations in due course?

### **RESPONSE**

I would like to thank Councillor Hubber for his supplemental question, I would be absolutely delighted to give an update on what if any progress I make tomorrow. I have met with other providers in the last twelve months, I can't remember exactly who I have met, but they always seem to say that 'BT hold the key to this' and of course BT are utterly shrouded in secrecy and one arm of BT won't talk to the other arm of BT about where they are going to implement a super fast broadband but it is utterly unacceptable.

I was talking to Councillor Colley only a couple of days ago about how when she used to live on the peninsula she could not stream anything or watch anything as on iPlayer or what ever, it's not a hard life, but it's not what people expect in the middle of London in 2014 and I think this is a campaign that will continue until we get a satisfactory solution. It's really important because people now expect wifi as a given wherever we go, particularly in a capital city like ours.

## **9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PATRICK DIAMOND**

What action is the cabinet taking to improve standards in the private rented sector?

### **RESPONSE**

The cabinet has taken the first steps towards mandatory landlord licensing with the introduction of a rental standard. We have adopted a set of minimum standards for private rented sector landlords, which will first apply to homes used for the council's own temporary accommodation.

This standard will be rolled out more widely over the coming months, before a compulsory licensing scheme is developed and introduced for private rented sector landlords in the borough. This standard draws together existing duties and good practice and includes services provided to tenants, repairs and maintenance, and the condition of the property.

The new standard will be hugely important in improving conditions, initially for some of Southwark's most vulnerable tenants who need temporary accommodation, and over the coming years will help to make our borough a better place to live for all private sector tenants.

**10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES**

Does the leader think residents in Southwark who are subjected to large scale developments in close proximity to their homes that have a significant impact on the quality of their home lives and cumulatively exceed 24 months should be entitled to a reduction in their council tax, either paid for by the developers as part of their section 106 agreements or by the council as the planning authority? Will he ask officers to look into whether such a policy could be introduced in Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

The council makes decisions on planning applications for development in line with the Southwark planning policies and the London Plan within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework. Considerations of whether the scale of development is appropriate are taken into consideration, as are amenity and environmental issues. Sustainable development needs to be approved. For proposed large scale developments that impact an adjoining area, consideration for mitigating these impacts through section 106 (S106) agreements is legally bound by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulation 122. This states that mitigation must be associated with the impact of a certain development, reasonable, fair and necessary in planning policy. The CIL Regulation does not permit contributions to be sought to compensate local residents for noise and disturbance from construction nuisance as planning policies and regulations deal with the principle of development, not the construction nuisance.

However, while S106 agreements cannot be used for compensation purposes, for major developments they may be used to require a construction management plan which seeks to minimise disruptions by controlling hours of operation and routes for construction traffic. If development activity is causing a nuisance, it may be subject to statutory control through environmental protection legislation.

Sections 11 and 11a of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 prescribe classes of property and the circumstances in which a council tax discount may be awarded and these circumstances do not fall within those classes of property where a discount can be awarded.

**11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR NEIL COYLE**

What further action is the council taking to tackle the rise of legal loan sharks in Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

Pay day lenders prey on people on low incomes and prevent other local businesses from flourishing. The cabinet is serious about tackling the negative impact of payday lenders, pawn shops and betting shops. We want high streets which deliver for local people and where we encourage responsible lending and promote local businesses, many of which are priced out of our high streets because of these businesses.

We intend to adopt a policy to restrict and/or prohibit a number of users that are considered to be detrimental to promoting a vibrant high streets which meet the needs of the community. This includes an absolute prohibition on:

- Payday loan shops and associated financial services - excluding not for profit co-operatives whose purpose is to provide affordable financial services for members of the local community
- Betting and gambling shops
- Amusement arcades.

In addition we will have a discretionary prohibition on pawnbrokers where pawnbroking is the primary or constitutes a substantial part of the business conducted from the premises (excluding jeweller's businesses where pawnbroking is conducted ancillary to the main use).

The council does not have within its retail portfolio any 'payday loan' shops. I have requested that officers ensure that we do not enter into new leases with payday loan shops.

## **12. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN**

Does he believe it was appropriate for the consultation on the demolition of Albion Street Library and Civic Centre to take place over the Christmas period after official notice of the proposed work was given on 19 December 2013? What account has it taken of the 622 petition signatures already submitted to the council opposing the plans?

### **RESPONSE**

The proposal to demolish Albion Street Library is a long standing one with considerable time for public engagement.

The property was declared surplus to requirements in April 2011. In December 2012 the cabinet approved a project mandate that seeks to bring forward a programme of strategically important projects along Albion Street. One of these is the redevelopment of the redundant council owned public library building. It is proposed to demolish the building and provide a housing development as part of the council's commitment to deliver 11,000 new council homes in the next 25 years. To give effect to this, the site was included in the Direct Delivery Housing Phase 2 report which was agreed by cabinet on 22 October 2013. The council is also seeking to provide improved GP premises at the site which would replace the existing facility in Albion Street.

The proposals for the library site have been the subject of extensive consultation with local residents and the Albion Street Steering Group. The proposals from Sublime Arts Group were considered by cabinet in December as part of a deputation on the matter, however it was concluded that while they have some interesting ideas the organisation did not have a funded business plan which would justify omitting this site from the direct delivery programme which will deliver new affordable homes for rent to meet a well established local need. The security of the building continues to be a significant cost to the council and its early demolition is considered necessary to reduce these ongoing liabilities and risks.

## **13. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL**

Does the leader agree that it is disappointing that the Deputy Prime Minister has failed to commit to free school meals for all and has not taken advantage of the opportunity to work cross-party with Southwark on this important initiative?

## **RESPONSE**

Yes, it is extremely disappointing that the Deputy Prime Minister has failed to commit to free school meals for all. Liberal Democrat plans mean that primary children aged 8-11 will have to start paying for meals unless their council is able to find funding elsewhere in the budget. In Southwark, the Liberal Democrats have consistently voted to cut the budget and campaigned against free school meals. Their record shows they cannot be trusted to protect free school meals.

There is a lot that government could learn from our experience in Southwark which is why I offered to work with the Deputy Prime Minister, so that our success in Southwark could be replicated elsewhere. The Deputy Prime Minister declined our offer of help and was too busy to meet. I suspect he will be embarrassed that his local Liberal Democrat councillors have been the biggest opponents of free healthy school meals and Labour councillors have made it a success. Sadly the Liberal Democrats again seem to be putting party politics before what is best for children and their health.

### **14. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK**

What progress has been made on setting up a voluntary sector commission as proposed by Community Action Southwark?

## **RESPONSE**

The establishment of a voluntary sector commission (VCS)/early action commission was proposed by Community Action Southwark (CAS) at the value of the VCS in Southwark breakfast meeting held at Tooley Street on 10 December 2013. The idea of a commission was subsequently raised at the health and wellbeing board on 19 December 2013.

Officers from corporate strategy and community engagement will be supporting CAS in the development of the commission. A paper on the development, terms of reference etc will be submitted to the health and wellbeing board in advance of the next meeting due to take place in March 2014.

We welcome the establishment of a VCS commission and look forward to some fresh thinking on the contribution the sector can make in these challenging times.

### **15. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR MARK WILLIAMS (CAMBERWELL COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

In view of the tragic death of a cyclist on the junction of Camberwell Road and Albany Road, when will the council install safety measures such as Trixi mirrors?

## **RESPONSE**

Trixi mirrors are due to be installed at the junction of Camberwell Road and Albany Road by the end of March 2014.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR MARK WILLIAMS (CAMBERWELL COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

Thank you very much Mr Mayor. I would just like to thank the cabinet member for his response and it is good news to hear that the Trixi mirrors will be installed at the junction by the end of March.

I would like to ask the cabinet member what other steps he is considering to improve cycle safety in the vicinity of that accident?

## **RESPONSE**

I thank Councillor Williams for his question. We are certainly going to be installing Trixi mirrors at that junction, and if he wishes I am very happy to go along with officers on a walkabout at that junction and to look at anything that he can suggest that we can improve. We certainly have plans to resurface the road along there where we have had a number of complaints about the standard of the road surface. We also will be looking very closely at the outcome of the inquest as a result of the death of poor Mr Richard recently and any findings that the inquest publish, we will take into full consideration and see whether there is anything else we can do to make that junction safer.

### **16. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES (PECKHAM AND NUNHEAD COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

Please could you provide an update on the consultation process, scheduled works and timescale for Network Rail Peckham Rye Station redevelopment project. Given that a lot of the arts based economic activity continues to recognise the established creative industries and will encourage new creative industries to emerge?

## **RESPONSE**

### **Consultation and engagement**

The Gateway to Peckham project is identified in the Peckham and Nunhead Area Action Plan, which has been prepared and consulted on over the past eight years and forms the basis of the project moving forward.

In June 2013, we appointed business support consultants Greater London Enterprise (GLE) to aid and assist businesses throughout the life of the project. The council then wrote to all businesses in July 2013 and in November 2013, informing them of the project, advising of the appointment of the architects and offering support through the appointed business support GLE. All letters were hand delivered to ensure they reached those operating on the sites.

The focus of the GLE work has been on building one to one relationships and, through this, understanding of individual business needs and ambitions. GLE have offered support to a majority of businesses operating, focussing on the front of the station having made contact with 27 out of 31 known businesses and provided a range of support including investigating relocation opportunities and assistance with business rates.

In addition to the work of the council, Network Rail have been actively discussing the project with tenants and have been advising of available tenancies elsewhere

in their portfolio. GLE have also offered support with Network Rail to three of the nine businesses operating to the rear of the station.

Architects were appointed by Network Rail in November 2013 and attended the 25 November Peckham and Nunhead Community Council to introduce them to the community.

A public event to gather information on how the local community currently feel about and use the site to inform the development of initial designs was held on 30 November 2013. This was attended by nearly 200 people. The presentation materials were displayed in Peckham Library and made available on the website, inviting feedback. To ensure that the views of station users were captured over 500 flyers were handed out to station users in a morning and evening peak. In addition flyers were also distributed to properties within 100m of the site.

A second set of public events are planned for 18 and 20 January 2014. To improve awareness of this consultation, press releases and leaflet drops, including over 500 to commuters and local networks circulating the leaflet, took place. This will be followed by a week long exhibition at Peckham Library.

In addition, Weston Williamson will be attending February community council, a number of youth community groups and will be meeting with the Peckham Town Team. Once designed, a planning application will be submitted to the council by Network Rail. As part of the planning permission process a statutory consultation process will be undertaken.

A contact list is being collated and regular e-newsletters will be provided to keep people up to date on project progress.

## **Schedule**

Works to bring the northern tower retail unit (formerly a William Hill) back into operation are underway. Network Rail is currently advertising this unit and we expect a new tenant to be in place by spring 2014.

Accessibility is an issue at Peckham Rye, particularly for those with disabilities and young children and an application has been made to the Department for Transport for funding to install lifts. We expect to be notified in early 2014 if the station has been successful.

Following a structural survey of the floor of the Old Waiting Room (also known as the former Billiard Room), further improvement works are being investigated with the hope that the space can be brought into a safe and usable condition – with further progress early in Spring 2014. Alongside this, we are also looking to improve the lighting of the front of the station to accentuate the design of the building, again starting in spring 2014.

It is anticipated that a planning application will be made in early spring and has been informed by the consultation events outlined above. The programme set out in the Mayor's regeneration fund requires delivery of the project by March 2016. As mentioned above, the council will be providing regular updates to ensure the community is kept informed of project progress.

## **Cultural businesses**

The council will be working with local cultural organisations and businesses to develop a cultural programme of events and activities alongside the regeneration. This will compliment all the amazing things already happening in Peckham. The council will soon be approaching local arts groups and others to help create and design the programme of events. The project is in its early stages and we hope to update the community in the next few months.

### **17. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT AND VOLUNTEERING FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON (BOROUGH, BANKSIDE AND WALWORTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

How many community organisations in the Borough, Bankside and Walworth Community Council area have lost funding this financial year?

#### **RESPONSE**

There were no organisations in the area where the council had made a commitment to grant funding in this financial year which was then reduced or cut.

There may have been organisations who applied for council contracts to deliver services but were unsuccessful in the procurement and were not awarded contracts. However, these contracts will still have been awarded and the services will still have been provided to residents by other groups.

### **18. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN HAYES (DULWICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

What amounts have been disbursed by the council and Thames Water under their schemes to assist businesses in Herne Hill affected by the burst main in August 2013?

#### **RESPONSE**

Within days of the floods caused by the burst water main in Herne Hill, the leader made available a £100,000 Herne Hill recovery fund. Urgent action from the council was needed as it was clear that insurance payments were going to take time and that many businesses had monthly bills which they would struggle to pay.

Up to the week commencing 13 January 2014 the council has distributed £88,250 of this fund to businesses affected by the flooding in Herne Hill. This includes direct funding to 17 businesses as well as a £5,000 contribution to the Herne Hill Christmas fair.

Following meetings and correspondence between the leader and the cabinet member for communities and economic wellbeing and Thames Water, Thames Water agreed to match the council's fund with a further £100,000 to support businesses affected by the flood. They are not running a separate support scheme for businesses and instead their funding will be used to restore footfall and improve trade in Herne Hill. The council will lead on developing options for this in consultation with Herne Hill businesses and their representative organisations.



**19. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR RENATA HAMVAS**

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the delivery on the cemeteries strategy agreed by cabinet in June 2012, including what additional work is being undertaken with the London Environmental Directors Network (LEDNET) and the Greater London Authority to identify a regional solution to the shortage of burial space in London?

**RESPONSE**

The delivery of the cemetery strategy is on progress as per the planned programme. This includes implementation of all immediate measures which were required to address the shortfall in burial space.

The schemes delivered since June 2012 are:

- Camberwell New Cemetery Extension (Area A)  
First short term option listed in Cemetery Strategy  
Phase 2 completed in August 2012  
Provides an additional 200 plots  
The area is currently in use for burial.
- Camberwell Old Cemetery (Area F)  
Second option listed in Cemetery Strategy  
Completed May 2013  
Provides 800 new plots  
Will become operational in March 2014.
- Nunhead Cemetery Muslim Burial Area  
Completed in November 2013  
Provided 90 Muslim burial plots  
Now available.
- Feasibility study at Camberwell Old Cemetery (Area Z) completed.

In October 2013 LEDNET published its report entitled Technical Guidance on the Re-Use and Reclamation of Graves in London Local Authorities Cemeteries. The guidance document was commissioned by LEDNET in response to the reality that despite there being a critical shortage of burial space in London, very few local authorities are making use of the legal provision that allows for graves to be re-used. The guidance notes aim to make planning and implementation of grave re-use more achievable for local burial authorities. As per the cemetery strategy officers are currently exploring the options available in applying the guidance in the borough.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR RENATA HAMVAS**

Thank you Mr Mayor I have got a supplemental for the cabinet member and thanks to the cabinet member for his response.

In light of the significant adverse weather conditions we have experienced recently how has that impacted on the work in the borough cemeteries, is it still all on schedule? Thanks.

## **RESPONSE**

I would like to thank my colleague Councillor Hamvas for her question.

We certainly have had some disruptions, particularly to Nunhead Cemetery, by the adverse weather recently. A number of trees were brought down by the winds and we did have to close the cemetery for a couple of days. It is now back on course and we are progressing with the extensive improvements that we have made to our cemeteries since May 2010. It is something that I care very dearly about. I have generations of my family buried in the cemeteries, some known and some unknown, and I visited the cemeteries at a very early age and it struck me when I came into my position in May 2010 how much long term neglect there had been of our cemeteries going back quite a number of years and was not only faced in July 2012 with the fact that we were going to be running out of burial space, but also I think the level of maintenance and care needed to improve quite dramatically. And what we have done is to get a lot more money into the revenue side of our cemeteries and we have made a number of improvements from opening up a new access road from the crematorium into Camberwell New Cemetery, which makes funeral cortege movements around the crematorium a lot easier, we have improved roads and pathways, we have made improvements to the chapel, our grounds maintenance has made step changes and including around the gardens of remembrance and the pond area.

## **20. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS**

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the council's Clean Air 4 Schools (CA4S) programme?

## **RESPONSE**

Air quality is a real issue for central London boroughs such as Southwark and I am very pleased that we have been able to work with schools on the delivery of the CA4S programme.

Six of Southwark's primary schools have been learning about air pollution issues and the adverse health effects of poor air quality. It is particularly important for us to do this work with schools, because children are more sensitive to the health impacts of persistent poor air quality. The project allows us to teach children to be aware of air pollution and for them to learn about the steps that they can take to protect themselves and to provide education on the impact of poor air quality on the environment.

Last week, alongside my cabinet colleague, Councillor Dixon-Fyle, and The Worshipful the Mayor, I presented schools with awards for their participation in the project. The awards recognise the achievement and great work of the participating schools and their pupils and should be a catalyst for additional schools joining in on the project.

Aside from improving the level of individual air quality awareness in the borough, a number of other benefits have been achieved from the scheme including:

- All six schools have reduced their energy bills
- Identifying the level of atmospheric pollutants around participating schools
- Improving school travel plans to reduce the number of cars near schools at peak times
- Reducing the carbon footprint of the schools by improving heating systems and other infrastructure changes.

We have also secured further funding from the Mayor's Air Quality Fund to develop an educational toolkit for secondary schools and to offer this programme to more primary schools. I look forward to continuing to work with colleagues and our delivery partner agent to bring about the benefits for more local schools.

**21. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR CLAIRE HICKSON**

What plans does the council have to improve pedestrian safety on Borough High Street?

**RESPONSE**

Firstly I would like to thank the local campaigners for bringing this issue to my attention.

Large numbers of people cross Borough High Street every day. There are a number of pedestrian safety concerns along the length of Borough High Street. However, the most urgent pedestrian concerns relate to junctions heavily used by those travelling to and from school. These are the Borough High Street junctions of Great Dover Street – Marshalsea Road and Great Suffolk Street – Trinity Street. Both of these crossings have no facility for pedestrians to see directly what the state of the road signals are before they attempt to cross. In short, they do not have a pedestrian phase.

I therefore give my firm commitment that funding will be found to make the necessary changes at these junctions at the earliest opportunity.

With regards to some of the other parts of Borough High Street, the following are planned:

- a) Transport for London (TfL) are currently preparing a scheme to improve pedestrian safety and crossing facilities at the junction of St Thomas Street and Borough High Street. This is due to be consulted on in summer 2014.
- b) Officers are working with TfL to create a scheme for the junction of Newcomen Street and Borough High Street which will improve pedestrian and cycle permeability as part of the Mayor's central London grid.
- c) Nearby, at 127 Borough High Street, council officers have secured an agreement from the applicant to undertake a road safety audit to ensure access to the future development will be constructed to increase pedestrian safety along this section of Borough High Street.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR CLAIRE HICKSON**

Thank you Mr Mayor I would like to thank the cabinet member for the response to my question and also to the leader to his earlier statement on safe crossings on Borough High Street and I want to thank them for their support on this issue and also join them in thanking the campaigners who led such a fantastic campaign on this. I am sure all councillors will join me in that. I also wanted to know as the leader mentioned in his statement, a particular role played by three women who lead the petition who came to see the leader I think on Monday, Victoria Diamond, Sumina Khan and Claire Moore who did a fantastic job of gathering all those signatures.

I had a supplemental which is, given that we have now got these vital changes to make these crossings safe on Borough High Street, is there anything more that we can do to make Borough High Street both safer but also more pleasant to be on?

**RESPONSE**

Yes, I would like to thank my colleague Councillor Hickson for her question, there is certainly a lot of good, welcome, piecemeal developments which are happening along Borough High Street and as we have all recognised here the real importance of getting a pedestrian phase at the Great Suffolk Street junction and the Marshall Street junctions. But there needs to be a bit more joined up work along the lines that Southwark Living Streets have been calling for for quite some time, and I think the way to deal with that is to get a big investment bid from TfL to try and radically alter the ambience of Borough High Street and make it much more pedestrian friendly and appreciative of the history and the building quality of Borough High Street. I think we have got to work with TfL to try and get the kind of investment that we have already had in Camberwell that is going forward for Borough High Street.

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

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the progress of the 20mph programme?

**RESPONSE**

This authority is committed to improving the safety of borough roads. Limiting speeds reduces the likelihood of a fatality or serious injury as a result of a road traffic incident.

Recent progress includes:

- A bid for £1.2 million proposal is being prepared for decision in February.
- Two new local implementation plan funded 20mph zones are about to be implemented. One in SE1 and one in East Dulwich.

- I have written to Transport for London (TfL) to notify them that Southwark is about to become a 20mph borough on the roads we control and inviting them to make the red route roads in our borough which they control, 20mph also.
- Discussions continue with TfL to overcome their reticence and allow us to deploy average speed cameras to combat speeding vehicles – though progress dealing with the current regime in this respect, is so slow to actually call it progress would be a misrepresentation.
- We have found the funding to save two spot speed cameras from decommissioning. They would have otherwise been lost as part of TfL's programme to upgrade all spot speed and red light cameras and can be used to enforce 20mph limits.
- The Association of Chief Police Officers has been written to, to urge the police to enforce 20mph speed limits, concerns we have also raised from within the Safer Southwark Partnership and to London Councils.

**23. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL SITU**

What does the cabinet member believe the implications would be were Barclays to withdraw sponsorship from the cycle hire scheme in 2015?

**RESPONSE**

Since the Barclays Cycle Hire scheme started in 2010, Barclays have invested over £50 million into delivering cycle highways across London. Though Barclays have taken the decision to end their funding when the current contract ends in 2015, Transport for London (TfL) are committed to the schemes continuance.

Transport for London are seeking a new sponsor for the scheme and have an aspiration to ensure that whichever partner they continue with, the highways are delivered to the high standard that cyclists require - one that puts accessibility and safety at its heart.

Though it is too early to fully estimate the implications of Barclays' choice not to continue their sponsorship past 2015, TfL assure me that there are no immediate implications for the scheme and the scheme will continue to operate as normal. In delivering the Mayor's cycling vision, TfL advises that cycle hire will become part of a much wider and larger cycling sponsorship offer.

I have discussed with Andrew Gilligan and remain optimistic that we can achieve expansion of the Cycle Superhighway scheme into Walworth, Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, Peckham and Camberwell. TfL are currently preparing a scoping report for the Mayor to expand the cycle hire scheme, including identification and evaluation of potential sites, costs and their feasibility.

Our part of central south London has an equally good case for cycle hire expansion as does the south west part of central south London where cycle hire expansion is already underway.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL SITU**

I thank the cabinet member for his answer. My supplementary question is what has Southwark for its part been doing to further the expansion?

**RESPONSE**

I would like to thank Councillor Situ for his question. We have been working very hard to put forward some expansion plans for the cycle hire. We have commissioned two surveys, one from a firm of consultants that have looked at how and what areas we would like to expand the cycle hire, and we have identified that we wish to go forward with the areas of Rotherhithe, Bermondsey, Camberwell and Peckham as a first phase.

We have also been successful in being awarded £150,000 from the Velocita European Project. What that project does is it identifies how we can get people to use the cycle hire system who don't normally use it, that is most people who use the cycle hire system are people that work in the cities and are city workers. We want to get other type of users and the Velocita project will help to identify that.

One thing that was really pleasing from our consultant survey was that the cycle stand that had the second most use in our borough was the Wansey Street stand which is in East Walworth, which I think illustrates to me that there is the demand further south and further east in our borough for cycle hire.

**24. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES**

Can the cabinet member provide a progress update on the Herne Hill – Dulwich flood alleviation scheme?

**RESPONSE**

I am very pleased to announce that the council are the first borough in London to successfully secure funding from the Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA). We have been awarded £1.745 million from the Environment Agency for a surface water flooding related scheme; the Herne Hill Flood Alleviation Scheme (HHFAS). In delivering the flood alleviation scheme and holding water in predetermined places we will of course provide the benefits of dryer more accessible parks and open spaces in the area. The greatest benefit however will be alleviation to over 60 properties in a relatively likely weather event and to over 200 properties in an extreme event. Initial estimates identify that such an extreme event could result in property damage of in excess of £12 million.

The scheme has progressed from outline design through detailed hydraulic modelling and a widely publicised public consultation exercise to the submission of planning application on 20 December 2013 as follows:

- Belair Park planning application: 13/AP/4479
- SCST (Dulwich Sports Ground) planning application: 13/AP/4478
- Dulwich Park planning application: 13/AP/4517.

Local ward councillors and local interest groups including Friends of Belair Park; Dulwich Park Friends; Southwark Community Sports Trust (SCST); Turney Road Residents' Associations and Burbage Road Residents' Associations have also met with us to discuss the scheme in more detail.

We have adopted a partnership approach for developing the HHFAS with Thames Water Utilities, our strategic partner commending the scheme as 'an innovative approach to resolving both surface water and sewer flooding issues in the Dulwich area'. They are also supporting our defence work, with in kind funding of up to £2 million towards the scheme.

Our scheme has been held as a good model of flood risk management and is being actively promoted by both Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

While awaiting the outcome of the planning application, negotiations which will lead to a formal contract agreement between the council and Thames Water for the latter's £2 million contribution to the scheme is progressing well. Discussions in respect of licensing agreements with Dulwich Estate and the SCST are also ongoing. Detailed design of the scheme is expected to be completed in time for construction to start by the middle of April 2014 and be completed by the end of December 2014.

A range of other measures are being explored in a bid to respond to the challenge of raising surface water levels including:

- We have explored other sources of funding and secured grants from the Greater London Authority (GLA) to undertake two pocket park schemes. The schemes will not only reduce surface water flood risk but also enhance the amenity value of the areas selected.
- We are one of very few London authorities that have prepared a local flood risk strategy. The strategy is currently being readied for public consultation.
- We are making a difference to the way departments work, with flood risk awareness being actively raised among other departments.
- We are coordinating the external flood partnership with Lambeth which is recognised as the most thriving flood partnership in London.
- Working with our partners the GLA and Thames Water, we have secured 20 water butts for the Wells Way Triangle Tenants and Residents' Association in the Camberwell area to help reduce flood risk to the community.
- We are raising local awareness of flood risk by keeping the community informed at public meetings.
- The council has also secured funding from the Environment Agency to investigate and develop more flood alleviation schemes particularly in East Camberwell and Peckham Rye.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR  
TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO  
SOANES**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would like to thank the cabinet member for his response. I do have a supplemental. I would like to ask him, in light of recent flooding events from sources of rivers and surface water, how important does he think that the delivery of this scheme is for the areas of this borough most vulnerable to flooding? Thank you.

## **RESPONSE**

I would like to thank Councillor Soanes for her follow up question. I was extremely pleased when through the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and in partnership with Thames Water we secured £3.5 million pounds to carry out the Herne Hill/Dulwich flood alleviation scheme, and make no mistake, that is the most vulnerable area in our borough for surface water flooding. So this scheme is actually an exemplar project which is going to be looked at right across London, one of the very first surface water schemes to be delivered and we have worked very, very hard to involve the local community, get the support of the local community and get a scheme which is credible in the eyes of the local community. It is a really good scheme. Despite the fact the government are cutting back quite severely on flood measures, particularly surface water flood measures, we in Southwark have a scheme we can be very, very proud of.

## **25. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR NICK DOLEZAL**

Does the cabinet member agree with the Local Government Association that government plans to ban councils from operating CCTV parking patrols outside schools could put children at risk?

## **RESPONSE**

Yes, I firmly oppose the government's proposal to abolish the use of CCTV cameras for parking enforcement and agree with the Local Government Association that banning the use of these cameras as a means to enforce against dangerous and illegal parking will put children, young people and pedestrians at risk.

If implemented, such a proposal would cause a significant reduction in the safety of our streets as a result of increased congestion and increased enforcement costs. Those costs would inevitably be passed on to the public including, most unfairly, those residents who never commit a parking contravention.

The use of civil enforcement officers to enforce outside a school is ineffective as motorists can stop with little chance of a parking ticket being issued. Our experience shows that only the use of highly visible CCTV vehicles and the knowledge that the motorist will receive a parking ticket will actually prevent motorists from making the dangerous decision to park on a school keep clear.

The use of CCTV for parking enforcement where there are multiple, short term breaks in compliance of regulations is an invaluable and efficient tool in parking enforcement.



**26. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE**

Following the council's recent decision to increase its target for journeys conducted by bike from 5% to 10% by 2026, what new schemes has the cabinet member introduced to use the council's own powers to begin progress towards this new target? How has the cabinet member sought specifically to address renewed concerns about cycle safety following the tragic deaths of six cyclists on London's roads in a two week period in November 2013?

**RESPONSE**

A number of measures have for some time been underway to both increase safer routes for cyclists and encourage more cyclists onto borough roads including:

- The establishment of a new network of cycle routes in central London, which will be delivered in partnership with other central boroughs. This central London 'Bike Grid' will provide high quality, high-volume cycle routes, that benefit from both segregated lanes and quiet street routes.
- All future Barclays Cycle Superhighways will be delivered to much higher standards; reflecting international best practice. In addition (transport for London (TfL) will substantially improve the existing Barclays Cycle Superhighways with a view to making all superhighways 'substantially segregated' in future.
- A cross-London network of high-quality guided Quietways will be implemented on low traffic back streets and other routes so cyclists have a choice about which routes they use. This provides a marked improvement with enhanced surfaces and clearly signed routes.

We have identified three main areas to improve the safety of cyclists; cycling infrastructure, improvements to the strategic network, and training and speed reduction measures.

1. Significant improvements are being made into the cycling infrastructure in the borough:
  - First borough to implement Trixi mirrors to improve safety for cyclists at junctions. Eight junctions have been completed with another five expected this financial year.
  - Piloting cycle hangers on the highway.
  - Programme of installing cycle parking (Sheffield stands) on the highway - mapped on council website.
  - Programme of cycle parking on estates - accessible via council website. Currently there are 672 lockers on 46 estates (18%) with a further 338 to be installed this financial year.
  - 11 cycle contra flows, one cut through, five cycle superhighway complimentary measure and three green links. All being implemented during 2012/13 and 2013/14.

- Peckham Rye bike hub open for business, further hub planned at Queen's Road.
  - Local implementation plan 'Lip' schemes incorporating improvements for cyclists e.g. Rotherhithe New Road, e.g. Paxton Green Roundabout.
2. Working closely with TfL and the Mayor's officer on improvements to the strategic network:
- Central London grid – seven routes have been identified in Southwark. Detail design and stakeholder engagement is planned to commence during 2014 before an implementation programme can be prepared.
  - Quietways – some seven quiet cycle routes have been identified through discussion between TfL, Sustrans and Southwark. These routes will be investigated over the next few months with a view to completing the first route by late 2014.
  - Feasibility study for expansion of cycle hire scheme commissioned.
  - Working with TfL to deliver new and improved cycle superhighways.
3. Training and speed reduction are key for cyclist safety:
- 20 mph borough decision taken.
  - Offer free cyclist training to anyone that lives, works or is educated in the borough (training around 959 children and 731 adults per year). Have a Council Plan target to increase this by 10% by March 2014.
  - Run Safer Urban Driver courses for drivers of HGVs.
  - Have a programme of HGV/Cyclist awareness days – Exchanging Places.
  - All roads Bikeability assessed - accessible via the councils website.
  - Successful with £285,000 bid as part of the cycling schools partnership for junction improvements, Bike it Plus Officer and seed funding in Dulwich area – a further bid has been submitted to extend this partnership in Dulwich, Peckham, and Bermondsey.
  - Run a programme of Dr Bikes.
  - Run 'Park to Park' mass cycle ride for children.
  - Run a cycle loan scheme for teachers.
  - Run cycling clubs in schools.
  - Currently running cycling campaign promoting cycling and cycle safety.

- Promoting cycling and cycle safety through the school travel plan process.
- Run education/enforcement days with the police.
- Looking at the possibility of running HGV events in senior schools.
- Looking at running bike building/maintenance classes for children and adults where participants get to keep their bikes.
- Working closely with our health colleagues on future cycling schemes.

Despite the many interventions and progressive action being taken, I am also pleased that the cabinet are to commit an additional £2 million over four years into cycling infrastructure in the borough. Our aim is to ensure that our highway network is bike-friendly and to implement “Dutch standards” wherever possible.

We are committed to being London’s most bike-friendly borough over the next four years.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE**

Thank you Mr Mayor. My experience as chair of the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Community Council has afforded me an insight into the purchase and installation lockers. I understand that the process has accelerated with the withdrawal of planning regulations for the cycle lockers, saving the cleaner greener safer schemes in the north of the borough £300 per locker and that is to be welcomed.

Is there any way that we can directly, or the administration rather, could directly fund them, thus saving the cleaner greener budgets for other projects? Thank you.

**RESPONSE**

I would like to thank Councillor Neale for his question. The policy that we have had over the last number of years is to fit secure bikeaway cycle lockers on our council estates and there is a very good reason to have those high quality, durable cycle lockers on the estates and we have been extremely successful in delivering those on the estates. As he probably knows, every year I as cabinet member for transport, I receive £100,000 from the Mayor for discretionary awards and I took the lead on bringing in, or introducing trial on-street cycle parking, which are the fold-up stands and since then Southwark Cyclists then took the initiative to bid for further on-street cycle parking right across all the community councils and I don’t mind saying here I very much hope that the community councils will support those bids, and I think we need to look at this to see how successful it is, and if it is successful I think we can look to roll them out over the coming years.

**27. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER**

What meetings has the cabinet member had with Cycling England since he was appointed as the council’s Cycling England ‘Member Champion for Cycling’ in June 2013?

## **RESPONSE**

I was appointed Cycling England Member Champion for Cycling in June 2012 and since then have had a productive introductory meeting as part of the opening for the Burgess Park BMX track in August last year.

### **28. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU**

How many times have the council ticketed delivery lorries on Southwark Park Road since 1 January 2011? How much has the council collected in fines from these vehicles? What is the council doing to discourage the regular illegal parking by delivery lorries to Tesco in Bermondsey?

## **RESPONSE**

The law allows commercial vehicles to load and unload from both single and double yellow lines for as long as the activity is constant. That means that parking tickets cannot be issued unless, following a period of observation, the vehicle is found unattended and the activity has ceased. The area around the Tesco Express on Southwark Park Road has restrictions which allow loading and unloading activity and their vehicles are not normally parking in contravention. As a result there are low numbers of parking tickets issued to Tesco vehicles on Southwark Park Road.

In the period requested officers can identify only 4 parking tickets that have Tesco as the business name; two of which have been paid with two cancelled on appeal. These however may not be the only parking tickets issued to Tesco vehicles on Southwark Park Road, because if a parking ticket is paid before 28 days has expired after its issue then the council (in line with its statutory duties) will not apply to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for a name and address of the keeper of the vehicle and therefore will not be able to identify the keeper.

I understand that concerns have been raised that although these activities are legal, they cause inconvenience to the traffic in this area. I have therefore asked officers to explore with Tesco a permanent solution to the loading issue caused by their delivery vehicles. An initial proposal has been developed to provide a new lay by outside the store to help with the loading and unloading of their vehicles, thus reducing the vehicle obstruction on the road. Officers are in negotiation with Tesco about funding for this proposal which would be subject to full public consultation in due course.

### **29. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR PODDY CLARK**

Is the cabinet member aware of the bags of rubbish regularly piled up outside blocks of flats on Bath Terrace [Bath House, Devonshire House and Trinity House]? Will he look into what can be done to support residents in keeping this area free from rubbish bags outside of bin collection days?

## **RESPONSE**

Councillor Hickson and I have enquired about the problem associated with rubbish being dumped outside Bath, Devonshire and Trinity Houses with residents leaving rubbish bags out on non-collection days.

In addition to the scheduled collections by Veolia Environmental Services (weekly recycling and residual waste three times per week) the cleaning service also clear bags/fly-tipped waste dumped on the pavement in between scheduled collections as and when required.

Residents of the three blocks were written to by waste management in July 2013 reminding them of the refuse/recycling collection days and advising against leaving bags out on non-collection days. Waste management officers will send a further reminder this month setting out the correct procedure for waste disposal.

Officers are also exploring the possibility of constructing a purpose built bin storage area for use by the residents of these three blocks to replace the need for the bag collection service and will update me once an adequate location can be found for the proposed bin storage area.

**30. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR GEOFFREY THORNTON**

How many council vehicles have been involved in road accidents involving cyclist since 1 January 2011? Please give details of each incident, including type of vehicle involved and any injuries or damage suffered.

**RESPONSE**

There have been a total of 13 collisions involving council vehicles and cyclists since 1 January 2011.

For context, we operate around 700 vehicles ranging from cars and vans to trucks and tippers. The average annual mileage is 8,000 per annum so around 16.8 million miles have been travelled by our fleet since 1 January 2011. Although every road traffic accident is regrettable, this means that, on average, an accident involving one of our vehicles and a cyclist occurs once every 1.2 million miles.

Details of accidents are set out in the table below.

<b>Incident Date</b>	<b>Vehicle Type</b>	<b>Driver's Statement</b>	<b>Injury</b>	<b>Damage</b>
Jan 2011	Small van	Proceeding ahead through green traffic lights, slowed to turn left, cyclist hit side of our van.	Head and back	Front wheel and handle bar
Jan 2011	Small van	Turning right out of junction, proceeded ahead and hit cyclist with the front of our van	Elbow	Rear wheel, clothing
Jun 2011	Small van	Turning at junction, cyclist hit the side of our van	None	None
Nov 2011	Large van	Turning right at a yellow box junction, box was clear, cyclist rode through from behind bus and skidded into the side of our van	None	Front wheel
Mar 2012	Small van	Driving across junction, car stopped to let me through, cyclist continued and collided with our van	None	None

Incident Date	Vehicle Type	Driver's Statement	Injury	Damage
Jun 2012	Small van	Slowed down to pull over and park, when I heard a cyclist shouting at me, no collision	Cut hands	None
Aug 2012	Small van	Slowing down approaching Give Way, cyclist rode off the pavement into the side of our van	None	Broken bell
Feb 2013	Small van	Turning right at traffic light, cyclist rode through red light and hit side of our van.	Cut lip	None
Mar 2013	Car	No collision, cyclist hit road island next to our car.	None	Handle bar, chain
Apr 2013	Small van	Reversed out of road junction, cyclist hit side of van.	Head Injury	Unknown
Jun 2013	Car	Proceeding along road, cyclist decided to change lane and hit our car.	None	None
Aug 2013	Car	Whilst stationary at traffic lights, cyclist hit mirror of our car.	None	None
Dec 2013	Small van	Turning right out of road junction, cyclist hit side of van.	Unknown	Brake lever

**31. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN**

What meetings has the cabinet member had with Transport for London (TfL) about reconfiguring Rotherhithe roundabout to help ease traffic congestion around Jamaica Road?

**RESPONSE**

Can I thank the member for raising with me. I am aware of that concern with congestion problems related to the Rotherhithe roundabout and Jamaica Road are longstanding, going back very many years.

Officers have been in dialogue with Transport for London (TfL) for some time in relation to congestion and access issues at the Rotherhithe roundabout. Topics under discussion range from improvements to traffic management at the tunnel entrance to reduce delays, provision for Cycle Superhighway Route 4 (CS4) and measures to better separate local and through traffic.

A number of meetings have been held over the last 12 months and TfL have presented a number of initial options for comment. It is expected that proposals will be brought forward for public consultation as part of the wider consultation on CS4 which is currently scheduled for autumn 2014.

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

Would the cabinet member for transport, environment and recycling set out what steps the council has taken and/or will take to obtain from Thames Water (a) the results of their forensic tests of the main that burst at Herne Hill on 7 Aug 2013,

and (b) assurances that the main is fit for purpose throughout its length in Southwark?

## **RESPONSE**

We have yet to receive the final report of Thames Water's findings in relation to the burst water main along Half Moon Lane. However the public realm division is in contact with Thames Water to ensure the report when complete is made available. Contact with the Thames Water Project Manager on Monday 20 January 2014 confirmed that the report into the cause of the broken main in Half Moon Lane has not been completed and would not be available for some time. We expect a timeframe of approximately eight weeks.

I have asked officers to seek assurances from Thames Water that they will share asset condition assessments to understand the level of risk associated with their assets in the borough. On receipt of the burst water main report and asset condition information we will of course share with all ward members.

Thames Water have since identified a weakness in a joint on the main on Village Way – identified as an anomaly. They are therefore taking this as an opportunity to carry out remedial works to strengthen the joint prior to the bridge works commencing early next month.

Thames Water have also agreed for the bridge works to commence without the need to divert the main.

Though it is difficult to predict the traffic impacts resultant from these works, our network management team are working with Lambeth Council and Transport for London to mitigate and minimise disruption caused as a result of the road closure. Traffic flows will continue to be monitored during the works and any changes that are identified which would improve traffic flows will be implemented at the earliest opportunity.

### **33. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL BUKOLA**

What is the cabinet member doing to tackle repeat fly-tippers in and around Stevenson Crescent? How many prosecutions have been made in the past three years for fly-tipping a) around Stevenson Crescent and b) across the whole of Southwark?

## **RESPONSE**

The cleaning services team has two dedicated vehicles in the Bermondsey/ Rotherhithe areas that check and pro-actively clear fly-tipping from all known hot-spots on the public highway on a daily basis. In addition any fly-tipping reported by the public is removed within 24 hours.

While the public highway areas of Stevenson Crescent are the responsibility of the council's cleaning service, the residential blocks and street properties are maintained by housing associations and unfortunately this is where the fly-tipping problems tend to occur. We are unable to take enforcement action against the culprits in these areas, nor do we have responsibility to clear tipped waste on housing association land.

The number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued by the enforcement team for fly tipping across the borough in the past three years is as follows:

Environmental Enforcement Action

<b>Year</b>	<b>FPNs issued for fly tipping</b>	<b>Total FPNs issued</b>
2011/12	301* (+ 2 prosecutions)	376
2012/13	661*(+1 prosecution)	741
2013/14	569	764

NB – 2013/14 figures up until December 2013

\* Please note these figures include a combination of commercial waste and littering enforcement issues.

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

What is the average waiting time to receive an allotment once a request has been made? How many new allotment plots has the council made available from its own land in the past three years? What plans does the council have to make more land available for new allotments?

**RESPONSE**

Allotment sites in the borough are largely managed independently by voluntary organisations, with few sites owned by the council. Since allotments are tenant managed initiatives, the local tenant association can bid for funding from the Cleaner Greener Safer fund to assist in the construction of a new site and then manage the use either communally or allocate space to interested tenants.

The Southwark Plan and core strategy require all existing allotments to be protected as open spaces. The council's open space strategy (2013) found that there were 12 allotment sites and nine spaces identified as community gardens in the borough, as well as Surrey Docks Farm. These sites collectively provide 18.9 hectares of allotment, community garden and urban farm space.

The open space strategy includes an action plan with a number of specific recommendations, including:

- To encourage food growing opportunities in all developments and encourage opportunities for allotments and community gardens as part of large developments or in existing open spaces where appropriate.
- To improve the quality and role of amenity space, introducing small scale improvements to encourage a range of activities including food growing, nature conservation and recreation.

Planning polices for open space and food growing will be reviewed in the forthcoming new Southwark Plan, in light of the open spaces strategy. The process of embedding the open space strategy in the local plan has started with the review of the Canada Water Area Action Plan (AAP). The revised AAP requires new developments to provide opportunities for food growing.



We are committed to increasing the amount of food that Londoners grow for themselves, and we are delighted that so many residents are putting down roots on their estates. We are actively supporting the Edible Estates initiative where underutilised land within council estates is used by tenants for food growing. Since many allotment societies have long waiting lists and demand for council and voluntary owned sites is expected to grow, the Edible Estates initiative provides a creative opportunity for residents to engage in intergenerational activity, and work together to foster community spirit and increase pride in their estates. A recent example is on the Whites Ground estate nearby the council offices in Tooley Street which was supported by the Royal Horticultural Society. There is also the Burgess Park food growing initiative managed by a group of local people. The Burgess Park food project has transformed and reclaimed a stretch of land; bringing about a productive change and introducing locally grown supplies to eateries in the area.

If the councillor would like to see the inspiring work of the Burgess Park Food Project, I am sure he would be welcomed thought contacting [burgessfoodproject@gmail.com](mailto:burgessfoodproject@gmail.com).

**35. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GETTLESON**

How many a) speeding tickets, b) parking tickets and c) fines for other road contraventions have been issued to council vehicles since 1 January 2011?

**RESPONSE**

The Fleet Services team has checked their files and report the following parking fines and/or driving contraventions have been issued to either commercial and or car-leased vehicles:

- 2009            415
- 2010            211
- 2011            386
- 2012            359
- 2013            303

**36. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR THE RIGHT REVEREND EMMANUEL OYEWOLE**

Could the cabinet member explain what measures the council has in place to tackle fraud in housing services?

**RESPONSE**

During my tenure as deputy leader and lead member for housing management I have requested staff to eliminate all fraud with zeal.

The housing and community services department achievements include the recovery of 548 properties since April 2012 and (since recording began in April 2013) have prevented 46 fraudulent applications.

The following measures have been, or are in the process of being implemented:

- Increased requirement on proof of identification and residency documentation when applying for and signing a new tenancy including photographs on all new tenancy agreements. Settling-in visits are carried out with all new tenants to confirm occupancy.
- Better use of technology to identify fraudulent documents being produced in all departments and annual gas servicing have enabled better working relationships with engineering services and pest control teams.
- Joint partnership with external and internal agencies i.e. police, UKBA, DWP, anti fraud and internal audit on their housing benefit fraud cases, including London hub which enables data sharing amongst member local authorities.
- Joint working with registered social landlords (RSLs) via South East London Housing Partnership and major housing associations. To date, 65 properties owned and managed by RSLs have been recovered, this allowing the council to provide homes to an additional 65 families.
- With over 1,000 right to buy (RTB) applications currently being processed due to the increase in discount available which is currently £100,000. The settling in team and home ownership unit are jointly reviewing all applications awaiting completion to ensure that they are genuine. 14 fraudulent RTB applications have been stopped since April 2013 with additional investigations in progress.
- All the measures outlined have contributed to the department achieving the highest number of recovered properties (309) within all London boroughs in 2013 according to the Audit Commission's report: "Protecting the Public Purse."

**37. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DAN GARFIELD**

Could the cabinet member update the council assembly on the current programme of improvement works to tenants and residents' association halls?

**RESPONSE**

The tenants and residents' association (TRA) halls refurbishment programme is a £3.1 million, five year capital programme of improvement works to our valuable community assets.

The works centre on enhancing the legacy of poorly maintained and managed TRA halls to a warm, dry, safe standard – with particular attention given to compliance and access improvements. The works are part of a significantly improved package of support to TRAs running TRA halls that aims to ensure that they are fit for purpose and well used. Officers worked in conjunction with a tenants halls working party complemented by the work recently undertaken by the housing, transport, environment and community safety scrutiny committee and with TRAs to look at resolving issues, improving management and maintenance and developing a tailor-made package of support. Work streams include:

- Improving training available to TRAs

- Addressing health and safety Issues
- Compliance
- Developing a transparent and equitable rent structure and regularising occupation (with clear understanding of responsibilities)
- Brokering relationships and developing partnerships between TRAs and the wider voluntary and community sector to increase usage of halls
- Having a more comprehensive overview of the entire TRA hall estate.

Physical works commenced in 2013 prioritised against criteria agreed with the halls working party of tenants and leaseholders. The first two ongoing phases of works are set out below with further phases to be agreed with the working party.

### **Phase 1**

Estimated final cost works: £296,823.

All halls now completed with the exception of Nelson and Glebe.

- Astley and Cooper
- Penrose
- Consort
- Brimtonroy
- Nelson – Due for completion end of Jan 14
- Glebe – Awaiting imminent completion of internal works underway by the TRA .

### **Phase 1a**

Estimated final cost works: £304,760.

All halls nearing completion. Estimated completion date is March 2014.

- Rockingham
- Queensborough
- Silverlock
- Brandon 3
- Buchan
- Bells Gardens
- Unwin and Friary
- Four Squares.

### **Phase 2**

Total cost: £742,147.

£30,000 of the above costs is being funded from cleaner greener safer works at Rye Hill TRA hall.

Surveys and designs are all completed and final costs agreed. An approval report is in process. Estimated start date is February 2014.

- Lordship Lane
- Setchell and Longfield
- Newington
- Pelier
- Denmark Hill

- Rye Hill
- Sydenham Hill
- Cossall.

Works to Tabard TRA hall are being carried out as a stand alone project, approval report up for financial implications prior to final signatures. Works estimated to commence end of January 2014 and be completed by end of March 2014. The total cost is £41,359, with £11,011 of this being funded from cleaner greener safer funds.

**38. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR KEVIN AHERN**

Could the cabinet member update the council assembly on the current programme of improvement works to sheltered accommodation?

**RESPONSE**

A comprehensive refurbishment of the sheltered schemes in the borough has started with four key strands to the work:

- a) Fire safety upgrades, which will now include sprinkler systems for all individual properties
- b) Works to warm, dry, safe specifications, including work to the building and electrics
- c) Heating repairs and upgrades
- d) Decoration upgrades and internal works, where necessary.

Fire upgrades have been completed at D'Eynesford, Lew Evans and Lucy Brown schemes. Since the start of the current contract to deal with this work, Silverlock and Jack Jones House sheltered home units are approaching completion, while the other priority schemes, King Charles Court, Basset and Russell Court, will start within the next four weeks with the latter two to be completed by April. In addition to the fire safety upgrades these schemes are receiving new internal decorations to a high standard, while at King Charles Court major internal refurbishment, including work to upgrade bathrooms and kitchens, is to be carried out.

King Charles Court, Hughes House and Locksfield will all have heating upgrades in the next few months. The works are being programmed in such a way that the heating upgrades are phased in to other works where possible, to minimise disruption.

At the end of the three year programme, all properties will have had full fire safety upgrades completed and sprinklers installed, warm, dry, safe works done and all faulty heating systems replaced.

**39. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS BROWN**

Could the cabinet member detail how are local residents being involved in determining the future of the Lakanal block?

## **RESPONSE**

Residents' representatives from the Sceaux Gardens Tenants and Residents Association, officers and I have met a few times over the last six months to discuss the future of the block. They told us that they want the block refurbished and brought back into occupation as soon as possible.

It was agreed that all blocks on the estate should be encouraged to have representation on a resident project team to work with the council on the project and ensure that there is a good spread of opinion. We also agreed that there would be open meetings for all residents as the project progresses. An options appraisal and feasibility surveys have been undertaken by the council with a view to refurbishing the block and bringing it back into occupation as soon as possible with Keepmoat as the contractor.

The group has agreed that residents from Sceaux Gardens Estate, where there is over-crowding or under-occupation, would be given the first option for applying for a transfer to the newly refurbished Lakanal. An independent residents' friend has been appointed from Open Communities to give advice and support to residents. Open Communities have publicised to residents what they will provide for all tenants and leaseholders as independent advisors (including any training necessary). This includes a free phone, email web and text contact plus a surgery supported by home visits, to ensure support and to develop effective ways to represent tenants' interests.

Meetings are held monthly. There will also be in drop-in sessions so that residents have an opportunity for 1-2-1 discussions with the consultants/contractors and officers on any specific issues or concerns they may have with the proposals to refurbish the block and bring it back into occupation as soon as possible. A local lettings policy has also been requested for the future letting of the block. The TRA has also been involved in the development of draft fire safety packs which will be rolled out across the borough.

### **40. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER**

Could the cabinet member describe the progress of the year on year level of tenancy checks and the initial findings of the current programme?

## **RESPONSE**

I asked housing operations to visit 100% of our tenants this year - a tough target by any measure. There are a number of reasons why the council conducts annual tenancy visits:

- To deliver against our safeguarding responsibilities and ensure the welfare of our tenants.
- To ensure the tenant's property is in good repair and respond to any issues.
- To eliminate illegal subletting.

Performance in 2013/14 has been our best ever. At the end of December 2013 70.9% of our tenancy visits have been carried out – 24,525 visits. Officers are achieving this level of success via a number of means, including working with colleagues across the council to maximise opportunities for joint visits, such as

with our gas contractors. Our year on year performance is shown in the below table:

Year	Target	No. of visits	Percentage of visits
2009/10	100% over two year programme	19,113	49%
2010/11		16,521	42.5%
2011/12	Mopping up exercise to finish outstanding 3,347 cases from two year programme. Of these 2,741 had a successful visit.		
October 2012 – March 2013	50% for full year	8,981	25.3%
April 2013 – December 2013	100%	24,525	70.9%

Officers monitor a number of outcomes on a quarterly basis to ensure the tenancy visits result in better services for our residents. To the end of September 2013:

- An increase of at least 300 referrals to colleagues in maintenance and compliance, including six referrals to our disrepair team.
- 69 properties were recovered thanks to intelligence referred to the special investigation team from resident officers and 55 properties were recovered by the actions of resident officers alone.
- The identification of at least 134 hoarding cases. When a hoarder is identified, officers work with social care and environmental health to clear the property as quickly as possible. We work with the tenant to ensure a long term positive outcome.
- 156 flags relating to vulnerability of the tenant were added to our systems, ensuring we know and take into account the needs of our tenants.
- 300 tenancy visits were prioritised for those affected by the benefit cap to raise awareness of the changes and to signpost people to help and advice, including information relating to mutual exchange possibilities, employment support agencies and the discretionary housing payment scheme.

Officers are currently preparing a quarter three performance report for me to ensure performance remains our best ever and that outcomes are delivered for our tenants.

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

What steps will the cabinet member take to review and improve Southwark's tenant involvement work given the complete loss of confidence in Dulwich amongst elected members and representatives of tenants and residents in their performance?

**RESPONSE**

Officers have been in contact with the local housing area forum to consider what more support can be given to tenants' and residents' associations (TRAs) in the area that are struggling to attract sufficient active members to make them sustainable.

Officers have also consulted the area housing forum on the new resident involvement strategy that aims to widen the participation of residents beyond formal meetings. Officers have given the local area forum a commitment to contact all TRA chairs in the area to ascertain any need for extra support and have made it clear that they are happy to meet the associations individually to discuss their needs.

The outcome is that there are three associations that urgently needed additional support. We are working with residents to re-launch two associations in February 2014. In the other case officers have worked with the remaining members of the TRA committee to circulate a questionnaire to all residents seeking views on their knowledge of the TRA and what they would like to see for the future based on which there is likely to be a "re-launch" of the association.

A third association has requested assistance in engaging more residents in its regular attendance. We have agreed an action plan to focus on raising awareness of the association and the work that it does. The aim is to hold a successful general meeting in the spring to galvanise residents and ask them to help shape an organisation that meets their needs.

We are now collating the monthly lettings information for new tenancies and that as of January 2014 all new tenants are being written to with the contact details for their local tenant and resident association. In addition, a mail-out is being prepared to be sent across the borough to all the new tenant sign-ups since January 2013.

The team has also been doing work around residents who are not presently involved in the consultation structure with specific work to identify block representatives and create interest in individual sheltered housing units. We are hopeful that this will lead to the formation of new associations.

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

How many officers (full time employment equivalent) are in the housing downsizing team at the council? How many residents have been helped to downsize to smaller properties in the past year? What is the latest update on changes to the IT system for mutual exchanges?

**RESPONSE**

From 1 April to 31 December 2013 one officer was specifically employed to undertake SMART Moves downsizing. On 20 January 2014, this will increase to two officers, as per the budget provision.

Between 1 April to 31 December 2013, 194 under-occupation moves were completed compared to 155 moves throughout the 12 months of the 2012/13 financial year. In addition, 102 mutual exchanges were undertaken from 1 April to 31 December 2013, compared to 110 in the 12 months of the 2012/13 financial year.

The council employed a new mutual exchange officer in September 2013, in addition to the under-occupation officer to promote additional transfers, mutual exchanges and under-occupation moves.

The council has obtained costs and specifications from Abris and Northgate for the online framework. The council is currently doing an appraisal of these quotations and evaluating the options. This work is in addition to the online mutual exchange framework that exists at present, and the new initiative launched by London Councils to secure accommodation outside of London.

Southwark has also moved the largest number of elderly residents through the Seaside and Country Homes Initiative, compared to other councils in London.

**43. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR WILMA NELSON**

What support is the council offering to residents of Frank Whymark House?

**RESPONSE**

Frank Whymark House is a sheltered housing scheme for older people run by Hyde Housing Association.

Support services provided to residents that relate to housing support needs are funded through a service charge and recovered through housing benefits.

The council also funds the SEASONS support service (provided by Metropolitan Housing Association) to provide emotional support for those tenants in housing association sheltered housing (including Frank Wyman House) who are in crisis and needed the type of individualised support that is not directly housing related (e.g. bereavement support etc).

Residents who are eligible for social care services receive these in line with their needs assessment.

The cabinet member for regeneration and corporate strategy raised the matter with the London Regional Director of Hyde Homes recently who said he would look at the possibility of re-introducing community wardens and any repair issues.

**44. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ROBIN CROOKSHANK HILTON**

How many empty homes are there in the borough? How many of these have been empty more than a) six months and b) two years?

**RESPONSE**

Empty homes are an issue across all London boroughs, but especially in Southwark with over 20,000 people currently on the council waiting list. However, this administration has striven to reduce the number of empty homes as much possible in the face of crippling reductions from the coalition government and have put in place steps to build over 11,000 new council homes.

As at November 2012 and using council tax base figures, it is estimated that there are approximately 2,645 empty homes across all tenures.



From the overall figure, 2,101 empty properties are in the private sector. Of the total numbers of empty properties, 829 had been empty more than 6 months across all tenures.

Figures are unavailable for properties that have been empty for more than 2 years within the private sector.

The table below shows the numbers of empty properties across all tenures within Southwark from 2004 to 2012.

	<b>Total Empty Homes</b>	<b>Local Council</b>	<b>Housing Associations</b>	<b>Other Public Bodies</b>	<b>Private Owners</b>	<b>Homes empty more than 6 months</b>
Financial Year						
2004-2005	4439	1318	252	0	2869	2192
2005-2006	2723	1703	525	0	495	1094
2006-2007	2830	1653	133	0	1044	1192
2007-2008	2520	1293	290	0	937	922
2008-2009	2720	1054	183	0	1483	1113
2009-2010	3001	725	176	0	2100	1267
2010 -2011	3367	650	255	0	2462	1628
2011-2012	2645	388	152	4	2101	829

Since Labour took control, void turnarounds are happening faster and as you will see from the table above, there were 388 empty council properties in the last year, compared to over 1,700 under the Liberal Democrats in 2005/06.

**45. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR SUNIL CHOPRA**

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the Nunhead Outer London Fund regeneration project?

**RESPONSE**

It is an exciting time for Nunhead; with a series of coordinated funding opportunities supporting the delivery of a number of projects in the area. These projects will encourage activity and improve Nunhead's village centre. With over a million pounds being invested, Nunhead will be transformed.

Alongside the council's £653,000 capital funding, the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund and Pocket Parks Fund are helping to increase the vibrancy and growth of the high street and the improvement of the green. This funding will help to deliver a programme of physical improvements, business support, community engagement and build upon the rich mix of festivals already taking place.

The specific projects emerging in Nunhead include:

- Preparatory works to rebuild the new Nunhead community centre are programmed to start on site in May 2014 and the new centre is anticipated to be operational from the end of the year.

- Demolition of the former community centre site in March, with construction of new council homes due to commence in summer 2014.
- The shop front improvement programme for Evelina Road and Nunhead Green has now commenced, with Cuttle Construction onsite and due to complete in spring. 22 businesses will benefit from the programme that will provide exciting change in the form of building fabric improvements and new signage to enhance the quality of shop-fronts. The shop front programme will be complimented by local artists who will have the opportunity to have their artwork showcased as part of the public realm.
- The phase 1 designs for the enhancement of Nunhead Green have now been submitted for planning approval and the bid for construction works will be the next stage of the process. We have also successfully bid for £80,000 from the Marathon Trust to improve the play area and cleaner greener safer (CGS) funding has also been awarded to create another mosaic for Nunhead and this will be incorporated into the improvements to the green.
- A vibrant events programme has ensured that Nunhead benefits from an ongoing pool of activity; including film making workshops, an open day for the cemetery and an interactive theatrical production and a mouth watering food and drink festival. These have provided a shared sense of community enjoyment across different venues in Nunhead.
- The pop up shop “Nunhead Corner” is contributing to the vitality of the high street, with a number of dynamic tenants taking residence, including, ‘Stylish’ a business showcasing art and unique up and coming clothing and accessories and most recently J.H. Beulah Eco-Couture, a business providing bespoke clothing - designed and made by Jemima and good quality second hand items.

Other regeneration activity in the area include the bridge and street lighting programme which has been completed, resurfacing of Evelina Road, improved pedestrian signage and the installation of an electric vehicle charging point at Cheam Street.

You can find out more about the activity and regeneration activities on the community website at <http://www.lovenunhead.co.uk/regeneration/>

**46. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR ROWENNA DAVIS**

Following recent claims about a lack of consultation with residents and traders around the Gateway to Peckham project, can the cabinet member provide an update on the project and reassurance that consultation is taking place?

**RESPONSE**

See the answer to question 16.

**47. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER**

Can the cabinet member tell me what steps we are taking to improve gateways into the Aylesbury estate, for example on West Moorland Road?

**RESPONSE**

Recognising the importance of Westmoreland Road as a link between Walworth Road and the Aylesbury regeneration area, the council is proposing to carry out some improvement works to the street. These works will extend from the Walworth Road end of Westmoreland Road to the junction with Queen's Row and will comprise improvements to the pavements, planting of street trees, installation of street furniture, re-surfacing of the road and new parking bays. These improvements will serve to extend the quality public environment of the recently completed new development which includes the Southwark resource centre.

Design proposals for the Westmoreland Road improvements are currently being developed and the council expects to present these at a public consultation event in March. Following grant of planning consent, the council would expect to carry out the works from late autumn 2014 – spring 2015.

**48. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR NORMA GIBBES**

What progress is the council making with plans for the regeneration of Albion Street?

**RESPONSE**

We have been working in partnership with the local community, in particular the Albion Street Steering Group to significantly progress the regeneration of Albion Street.

To date a number of public realm work packages have been completed at various sites along the street. Also, power points have been installed along the western section of the street that will be used for street markets.

A number of larger scale initiatives are also in train:

- The procurement of architects to build the replacement of the Albion Street Primary School has commenced. The new building is programmed to be in place by September 2016.
- We are coming towards the end of a compulsory purchase order (CPO) process in relation to the former public toilets that have been an eyesore and potential health and safety risk for several years.
- Once the public toilets have been acquired, they will be incorporated into a new pocket park that will be built in front of the Norwegian Church. Officers are in detailed discussions with the church to include their land in the new facility and for the church to make a contribution towards the cost of this new piece of public realm.

- Work to create a popup shop is nearing completion and the property will soon be let. The shop will be available on a short term basis to community groups, cultural organisations and business start-ups.
- The former Rotherhithe Library has been included in phase 2 of the Housing Direct Delivery programme and the design proposal will include community or commercial space on the ground floor.
- Discussions are ongoing with the Albion Street Surgery to assist them to find a new home and move out of their current, not-fit-for-purpose facility. The preferred option at the moment is to relocate the surgery into the ground floor of the redeveloped Rotherhithe Library site.
- Court action is underway to complete the purchase of three dilapidated and unsightly houses, 71, 73 and 75 Albion Street. Once we have control of the houses the site will be brought back into beneficial use.

**49. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET**

Will the council consider a compulsory purchase order for the land adjacent to Melville Court, at the junction of Lower Road and Croft Street, as part of plans for changes to the local road network?

**RESPONSE**

The council is developing plans to revise the road layout in the Lower Road area in order to support development around Canada Water and improve local access. As part of this work, better use of available space around the current gyratory system will be considered with a view to allowing 2-way working where possible and supporting the delivery of Cycle Superhighway Route 4 which is expected to run along Lower Road.

The introduction of 2-way working is likely to require a re-assessment of carriageway widths and kerbside provision at key locations. All options to support this, including use of any additional land that becomes available, will be considered as part of this process. If any such land is identified as required to support the delivery of the project then the preferred option would be to acquire this by negotiation, but we would consider use of compulsory purchase powers if necessary.

**50. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS**

Does the cabinet member support Lambeth cabinet's recent decision to set out a table of appropriate licensing hours for different premises and different locations in the borough, in order that residents can be given greater protection from alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour? Does he agree with me that such measures could add value to the Borough and Bankside saturation policy – which despite its title does not in itself prevent any new premises from opening – and assist licensees to better understand the true nature of the local area in which they plan to operate? Would he consider introducing them in Southwark?

## **RESPONSE**

The London Borough of Lambeth's review of their statement of licensing policy under the Licensing Act 2013 introduces an interesting change to their existing saturation policies; namely proposing to classify areas of the borough, in line with current planning policy, as major town centres; district town centres; local centres / shopping parades; and residential areas.

The draft policy goes on to ask applicants for licences "to be clear, open and frank about the nature of the venue they wish to operate" and goes on to suggest "expected" hours of operation for each category of premises.

We are due to begin a review of our current licensing policy later on this year and as such officers will take the opportunity to look at all developments in the field, including the revised approach being proposed by Lambeth, and are monitoring these with interest. I will be kept informed of the work being undertaken and of course, where there are benefits identified to the amended approach currently being pursued by Lambeth, we will of course look to consider these new proposals and other new approaches, in conjunction with the licensing committee.

The review of the policy document will be the subject of full public consultation and all interested parties will be provided with the opportunity to make submissions.

### **51. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR TIM McNALLY**

How much of the council's £800,000 welfare hardship fund has been spent to date, broken down by type of spending?

## **RESPONSE**

The welfare hardship fund (WHF) was created as part of the 2013/14 budget setting process, as approved by council assembly in February last year. The fund was created in response to the potential impact of welfare reform being enacted by central government, not least by universal credit that was, at the time, due to be operational in 2013. The implementation of universal credit has now been deferred. Southwark has seen the introduction of bedroom tax, council tax benefit reduction and the benefit cap during the year; the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) pilot for direct payments has now concluded and government has slowed the introduction of personal independence payments for those with disabilities.

In addition to the creation of the WHF, funding was passported in full from the former DWP social fund into the new Southwark emergency support scheme (SESS) which came into effect on 1 April 2013. This passporting of social fund grant monies (albeit at a lower level as assessed by DWP) will continue through 2014/15, although government has also indicated that funding will no longer be available for 2015/16 and beyond.

Separately, pressures in the housing market have led to additional applications for discretionary housing payments. Some extra grant has been allocated by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) but a further application has been made as this has been spent in full.

We are also aware, from the operation of the SESS, of the high numbers of people in Southwark that have been made subject to sanctions of their benefits over the last year.

All the above factors have made it very difficult to anticipate where the pressures arising from the government's welfare reforms will impact on Southwark residents.

Of the WHF allocation of £800,000, the March 2013 cabinet report set aside a sum of up to £400,000 to provide support for households where the level of disability prevents temporary or full time employment. This support was subject to criteria set out in the SESS. To date, £82,000 of the WHF has been spent for this purpose. 605 individuals have applied for support from the fund and 394 have received awards. The financial payment is one part of a much wider assessment as to the needs of those who apply and to date there have been 461 different services or instances of support provided.

The unearmarked and unspent elements of the fund will remain available to support the most vulnerable in the borough. I have initiated a review of hardship and how the fund may continue to support those most vulnerable in the community in the coming months and years in light of the developing picture of how welfare reform is affecting our residents, remembering that there are significant welfare reform initiatives still to be introduced. This administration remains committed to ensuring that these limited resources are best used.

Southwark emergency support will continue to refer people to the most appropriate council department or voluntary sector support body, including housing for discretionary housing payments. It is important to note that the social fund is being reduced next year and withdrawn in 2015/16. These funds are to benefit the most disadvantaged and any unspent balances will be ring fenced and made available for future years.

**52. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL**

How many potential breaches of personal data have occurred since January 2011? For each case, please give a description of the data affected including date and how many records were affected.

**RESPONSE**

The council only records actual breaches rather than potential breaches.

In 2013 an updated information security breach policy was agreed; where security weaknesses or breaches are identified, the procedure set out the policy to be followed to report the breach, investigate it and take appropriate action to contain and manage the risks and prevent further breaches occurring.

**53. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT AND VOLUNTEERING FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH**

What contribution is the sport and leisure services team currently making to tackle the problem of childhood obesity?

## RESPONSE

This Labour administration takes the alarming statistics about childhood obesity very seriously. To emphasise this the Southwark physical activity and sports strategy 2014-17 will provide the borough with a clear direction on how physical activity and participation progresses across Southwark over the next 4 years.

The Southwark physical activity and sport strategy 2014-17 noted that child obesity is the worst in England, with 28.3% of Southwark children in Year 6 being measured as obese.

Our sport and leisure services team provides a strategic direction for the service of sport and physical activity in the borough.

By improving facilities and access to them, creating more and better opportunities for people to take part in activities and by working with key partners to develop the structure of sport and physical activity in the borough we are helping more people including young people, to take part in sport and physical activity. Specifically, this is highlighted by the increase in young people visiting our leisure centres from 2009 to 2013 (39,762 in 2009/10 to 176,882 in 2012/13).

A recommendation and action from the new strategy is the development of two working groups to be initiated which commence this month. Two groups set up to implement this – the tackling inactivity working group and the children, youth and young people working group will evaluate ways to create better opportunities for young people to take part in sport and physical activity which in turn helps reduce the likelihood of becoming obese.

To achieve our goal of engaging more people in sport and physical activity we work closely with partners in the borough who are either working directly in sport (Fusion, sports clubs) or who realise the potential advantages that being physically active can have on local people (police and public health).

All sport development programmes are designed to maximise participation in sport from all sections of the community and provide pathways that enable every resident to maximise their sporting abilities, aspirations and potential. Key aspects to the team's work include:

- Promoting and providing opportunities for groups and individuals to become more involved in sport and physical activity
- Increasing the numbers of people participating and volunteering within sports clubs
- Working with health and education to help improve health inequalities
- Contribution consultancy services for such things as funding and training
- Supporting clubs, sports coaches and officials to provide a range of formal sporting experiences from regular participation to competition
- Developing recreational and informal sport and physical activity in local areas.

A clear strategic priority therefore is to improve access to and participation in physical activity for young people of an unhealthy weight, to ensure the greatest health benefit can be gained. The work around this priority will be monitored through the tackling inactivity working group and the children, youth and young people working group.

Our programmed sessions include:

- Swim school. Structured lessons to develop swimming ability in young people. These take place at all centres that have pools (Camberwell, Dulwich, Peckham and Seven Islands). Through the swim school and school swimming lessons there are currently over 3,700 young people swimming in our leisure centre pools each week. Two years ago the number of young people involved each week was at 2,500 and the increases are expected to continue as the programme gains in popularity, and in 2015 there will be a new pool at the Elephant & Castle Leisure Centre.
- School swimming lessons. 47 schools in Southwark currently send pupils to the leisure centre pool for swimming lessons. Fusion have recently surveyed the schools who use the facilities and following feedback they are further developing the service offered
- Parent and toddler swim sessions. Across Southwark there are 19 of these sessions taking place each week
- Access to swimming pools. The four swimming pools in the borough currently have an overall combined total of 555.5 hours of pool time available on the swimming pool programme.
- Junior gym sessions. 14 and 15 year olds can access gyms at four leisure centres at specific times to use cardiovascular machines under qualified supervision. Across Southwark there are 25 hours per week allocated to these sessions and due to demand extra sessions are provided during school holidays.
- Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Sports Facility. Outdoor space used by local schools (for free) for PE and after school clubs. Young people can also use the outdoor courts for free when the space is not already booked out.
- Sportivate. A National Lottery funded 2012 legacy project that gives young people the opportunity to participate in sport. The programme is aimed at 11-24 year olds who are not involved in sport or physical activity and provides them with access to 6-8 weeks of free coaching.
- The Southwark Youth Sport Panel, formed in August 2013, was introduced to establish the sport and physical activity needs of young people in Southwark and develop new projects to meet this need and promote a sporting habit for life as well as contribute to the delivery of strategy. The panel consists of nine young people aged between 14-25 who either live or go to school in the borough
- Club Development. The team actively engages local sports clubs to help them to develop and create greater and better opportunities for local people including children and young adults.
- Disability Project. Five exercise classes take place across Southwark targeting disabled people (16 years old and over). These classes include chair based activity, tai chi and pilates classes and are open to all impairment groups. Two new sports clubs started in September 2013. These were a wheelchair basketball club for young people aged 11 years and above at the Salmon



Youth Centre and a disability community club (paralympic and multi-sports) for 14-25 year olds at Camberwell Leisure Centre. Working with local partners, organisations and schools we are hoping to continue to grow these clubs further by feeding them directly into specific national governing bodies (NGBs) plans like British wheelchair basketball, Boccia England and England Athletics. Participation in disability sport has been increasing throughout 2013/14 and our programmes are currently engaging with just under 150 individuals each month.

- Women and Girls. Us Girls was delivered by the Active Women Consortium, a body led by StreetGames. It was funded by Sport England as part of its 'Active Women's' campaign to tackle the gender gap in sport. This was a 2 year national project aimed at women and girls between the ages of 16 to 25. the programme now engages with 100 females each month.
- Door Step Sports Clubs. This national programme is funded by Street Games and its aim in the first year is to create 1,000 new doorstep sport clubs as their contribution to the 2012 Olympic Legacy. The clubs will change the sporting landscape in hundreds of deprived communities across the UK and give over 100,000 young people (14-25 years old) the chance to develop a sporting habit for life. Southwark's aim is to target 105 new participants (14-25 years old), 20 volunteers and to get 10 new qualifications gained by coaches/volunteers involved in the programme
- Competitive Sport (London Youth Games). In 2013, 363 young people aged between 7 and 18 competed for Southwark in the games (up from 333 in 2012) and over 1,000 were engaged in the experience. Over the last couple of years we have increased the number of children involved in the games, the number of sports we enter teams for (up from 35 in 2011 to 42 in 2013) and the number of community sports clubs involved in the programme. These developments have helped overall performances improve continually over the period with Team Southwark finishing in ninth place overall in 2013, nine places higher than 2011
- The Mini London Marathon is the official UK road running championships for junior athletes aged 10-17 years of age. 33 borough teams take part in a London-wide competition which also includes a nine team regional/home nations competition, taking place on the last three miles of the full London Marathon course. Southwark council enter a team into this competition by selecting young people from an annual schools running competition in February.
- The community sports team have organised an annual schools cross country championship since 2011. The event primarily acts as a trial for the London Youth Games cross country. The championships were created to boost the borough's performance at this competition. Teams entering the competition have generally stayed at 9 to 10 schools but the overall number of participants has grown year on year from 103 in 2011, 185 in 2012 to 205 in 2013 where for the first time female entries slightly outnumbered male. The event has had a positive impact on performance at the London Youth Games event where the borough achieved fifth place in 2012 and 2013 after climbing from 22nd in 2011 and 29th in 2010.

- Southwark Legacy Games is a borough wide free programme of athletics coaching and competition which included youth centred workshops on nutrition, sexual health and substance misuse. The programme ran for 3 weeks through the summer holidays in July and August 2013 and a total of 105 young people aged 8-16 took part. The Southwark Legacy Games was created to raise interest in a future athletics club and programme developments and is expected to continue in the summer of 2014.
- Get Active London is an online search facility which enables people to find sports and physical providers and venues suitable for them. Southwark currently has 588 opportunities listed on the website.

**54. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBA BLANGO**

How many incidents of children in care going missing for more than 24 hours have been recorded in each of the past four years? How many children are currently missing from care, and for how long have they been missing in each case?

**RESPONSE**

The issue of children going missing from care does cause us concern because when a child is missing there is a possibility that they could be at risk of harm or danger.

At present we do not have any children reported missing from care and I am pleased that when our children in care go missing, we are able to return them within 48 hours. On the rare occasion where this is longer we work with the police to alert the media.

- In 2012-13 there were 168 missing incidents recorded for 36 young people.
- In 2011-12, there were 88 missing incidents recorded for 27 young people.
- In 2010-11 there were 17 missing incidents recorded for 9 young people.
- In 2009-10 there were 14 missing incidents recorded for 9 young people.

All of the above were young people missing for over 24 hours. There has been a significant improvement in the recording of missing incidents in the last three years and we have implemented workshops for staff and our administrative systems to assist with the loading of missing incidents.

**55. QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF PLANNING COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL MITCHELL**

Could the chair of planning committee set out the "special circumstances" which would justify departure from the council's policy of protecting Metropolitan Open Land?

**RESPONSE**

It all depends on the circumstance of the individual application; and it is for the applicant to demonstrate the special circumstances for granting planning permission on Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and not for the council to generate a prescriptive list. Importantly, the council is guided by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government and their approach to

granting planning permissions on Green Belt and MOL, and as reflected in the decisions made by the Planning Inspectorate and the courts.

Southwark's Core Strategy (Para 5.89) acknowledges that MOL has the highest level of protection and must be kept open in nature, with development only in exceptional circumstances. While the London Plan (Policy 7.17) provides that inappropriate development should be refused, except in very special circumstances. Para 7.56 of the London Plan explains that appropriate development should be limited to small scale structures to support outdoor open space uses and minimise any adverse impact on the openness of the MOL. Both the CS and London Plan policies are in compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which uses similar language although no further guidance as to "exceptional circumstances" is provided with the result that applications have in recent months come before the courts for further interpretation.

Recent court cases have indicated that what amounts to "exceptional circumstances" (the phrase from the NPPF and the Core Strategy) will include an assessment of (a) the "need" for the development and its impact on the local economy, (b) the opportunity for developing elsewhere and (c) any detrimental effect and the extent to which this could be moderated."

In any application brought before the Southwark planning committee seeking development under "exceptional circumstances", these questions will need to be addressed to the satisfaction of the local authority as decision maker.