

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY)
WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH 2014
MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH

By gender, ethnicity and pay-grade, will the leader of Southwark Council detail how many council posts and/or jobs have been added or lost since 2003 and of those posts and jobs how many individuals have been redeployed/made redundant?

RESPONSE

The council does not hold the information in the way in which the question is asked. The council does publish an annual workforce report which sets out details of our workforce including details on gender, ethnicity and disability. They can be found at:

www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/268/employment_and_equalities

The council does hold information on redundancy in the last three years, which is set out below.

Gender

Female	371	61%
Male	242	39%
Total	613	100%

Ethnic Origin

Asian	19	3%
Black	275	45%
Other	14	2%
White	285	46%
Mixed	14	2%
Not Stated	6	1%
Total	613	100%

Grade Bandings

Grades 2-6	142	23%
Grades 7-9	198	32%
Grades 10-12	128	21%
Grades 14-16	40	7%
Grades 17 & above	5	1%
Teacher grades	22	4%
Soulbury	19	3%
Building Workers	41	7%
Other	18	3%
Total	613	100%

Redundancy numbers in the grade bands are roughly proportionate to the numbers in those grades across the council.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH

Thank you Mr Mayor. I thank the Leader for his question but my supplementary question is what steps is he taking to make sure that jobs cut will not disproportionately fall on any groups?

RESPONSE

I want to thank Councillor Smith for her supplementary question. We do historically and will continue to monitor if there are any redundancies in this borough and from this council and where that impacts. It is an issue that both Councillor Livingstone and I look at carefully with the director of human resources. We do it both in meetings with trade unions and we do it at other times as well and will continue to do that.

I think that it is really important to note that in Southwark there have been very few, if any, I think maybe one or two, compulsory redundancies over the past four years because of these savage cuts from this government. Others have chosen to leave on a voluntary redundancy basis but it is something that we will continue to look at very carefully as time goes on. We do it now and will continue to do it into the future.

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS

What advice would the Leader give to residents with ongoing and regular noise complaints which the council's noise team are unable to monitor as they occur outside the team's operational hours?

RESPONSE

This Labour administration is committed to tackling the problem of noisy neighbours and the huge impact this can have on the wellbeing of others nearby.

Our noise team operates for 20 hours a day from 7am to 3am – during this time 97 per cent of complaints are made. If there is a noise problem between 3am and 7am, residents can call our 24 hour call centre on 0207 525 5777 and will be advised that a noise officer will call them back to discuss the problem.

With ongoing and regular noise complaints, the noise team will work with the resident making the complaint and so the will be advised by the noise team about what action to take. At any time, day or night, if a resident is being caused significant alarm, harassment or distress or they believe that an emergency incident is happening then they should call the police.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS

Thank you Mr Mayor and I thank the Leader for his answer. A couple of months ago we had an issue with a supermarket chain delivering out of hours. They were delivering at 4am and 5am and a senior manager from the noise team, very kindly in his own time, drove in from wherever he lives outside the borough – some

distance I believe – to monitor it and get it actioned to prove that it was actually happening and they were operating outside of their planning rules.

Currently there is a noise being reported which is happening outside of the noise team's hours. It is a regular noise which is occurring in my ward. Do I have to go out myself, or do I have to get that manager out at 4am again, or would it not be easier to get the noise team back to 24 hours? Then we would have the right people on duty to deal with those things when they happen. Do you agree that a 24 hours noise team would work?

RESPONSE

I want to thank Councillor Morris for her supplementary question. We know that noise nuisance is a real issue. About a third of all anti social behaviour complaints made to this borough are noise issues and you can see from my answer that 97 per cent of those occur during the 20 hour period when the noise team is working. We will try and look at what we can do to extend the hours of the noise team going forward because I know this is such an important issue.

I do think we do have to remember the circumstances in which the noise team was cut from 24 hours to 20 hours in any event, that was because we were forced by this coalition government – the coalition government of which Liberal Democrats make up a very important part – we were told to cut our budget by £18 million. You cannot take £18 million out of the budget without having some impact on services and that is the reality of the situation. However having said that I do recognise this as an issue. We will look at how we can extend it to 24 hours in the future and I am confident that it will be a Labour council looking at this issue after 22 May and seeing how that issue can be resolved.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR REBECCA LURY

How many council homes have been sold or demolished in Southwark since 2010 and how does this compare with the number sold or demolished under the previous administration from 2002 to 2010?

RESPONSE

1,044 council homes have been sold, removed or demolished since Labour took control. That is an average of 250 per year. This compares to 8,751 under the Liberal Democrats/Conservatives, an average of 1,093 per year – over four times more than Labour. This is also against a backdrop of the Liberal Democrat/Conservative government raising the right to buy discount and actively targeting Southwark estates to encourage more right to buy sales. This is already impacting our housing stock and this year we have had 930% more right to buy than 2009/10 – the last year of the Liberal Democrat/Conservative administration.

Labour has slowed the Liberal Democrat tide of home sales by selling off only those that are uneconomical, and investing the money into even more homes. The 11,000 new council homes which are currently underway is more than any other borough in the country. The Liberal Democrat alternative is to sit on their hands, complain and do nothing, whilst the need for new homes continues to rise.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR REBECCA LURY

Thank you Mr Mayor and yes, I do have a supplementary. Does the Leader believe that it is misleading of the Liberal Democrats to talk about a mass sell off of council homes under Labour when they sold off or demolished nearly 9,000 homes when they had control of this council; that is nearly four times as many as Labour?

RESPONSE

I want to thank Councillor Lury for her supplementary question. Yes I absolutely agree – it is rank hypocrisy. This is an issue that the Liberal Democrats have tried to ferment as an issue over the past twelve months or so but it just flies in the face of their own record and of their own rank hypocrisy on this issue and also of the fact that we have seen over the past two years a quadrupling of the number of people who are seeking to buy their own homes.

There are currently over 1,000 people seeking to buy their homes and to exercise their right to buy in Southwark. That is the housing sell off scandal when we have 20,500 people on our waiting list. But responsibility does not lie with us; it lies with the government of which they are an integral part, so they cannot have it both ways. They speak of not wanting to sell off council housing but they support a government which is doing everything it can to rob housing from the people of our borough by selling off.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN GOVIER

Following statements by members of his cabinet to the council assembly (council tax setting meeting) on Wednesday 26 February 2014 – will the leader, for each year since 2003 and until 2043 list:

- a) The number of actual and proposed council homes (the council rented stock as local authority rented landlord)
- b) The number of affordable homes (homes deemed affordable to those with a median household income which in Southwark in 2008 was £16,800)
- c) The number of other social rented homes?

RESPONSE

- a) The table below sets out the number of homes in the council's rental stock, the number of other local authority homes in Southwark, and the number of housing association homes in the borough from 2003 up to date. The numbers are as at the end (31 March) of the year indicated.

Financial year	LBS rental stock	Other local authority stock	Housing association stock
2003/04	44,544	806	13,131
2004/05	42,863	1,024	13,636
2005/06	41,484	806	14,043
2006/07	41,026	802	14,403
2007/08	40,497	802	14,569
2008/09	39,827	802	14,849
2009/10	39,337	802	15,013
2010/11	39,062	802	15,404
2011/12	38,990	808	15,791
2012/13	38,787	808	15,977
2013/14	38,483 to date		

- b) Future projections are not set on a year on year basis across the range of affordable housing types. The council has just embarked on the development of new 30 year housing strategy which will be adopted in 2015. The first principle is to use every tool at our disposal to increase the supply of all kinds of homes across Southwark. In terms of council stock, the council has set a target of building 11,000 new homes in the next 30 years. The strategy will also establish the principles for the ongoing asset management to plan and deliver a long term programme of investment in the council's housing stock. This will be delivered alongside our existing programme of major regeneration schemes at Elephant & Castle, Aylesbury Estate, Canada Water and beyond.

The delivery of new homes is guided by the planning process. The core strategy set a target of a minimum of 8,558 affordable homes to be delivered between 2011 and 2026. The London Plan currently sets an annual housing target of 2,005 net new homes a year for Southwark. In terms of affordable housing, the core strategy sets a minimum proportion in developments of ten or more units of 35% affordable housing.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN GOVIER

Thank you Leader for the very helpful response. I had to ask you because at the last council meeting I believe that Councillor Wingfield said that since 2010 there were more council homes in Southwark, so it is quite clear from the answer that is not the case.

My supplementary is now that the housing shortage is one of the most pressing issues facing us and the country, does he agree that the government missed the chance in the autumn statement to go the necessary extra step to lift the treasury borrowing cap and untie the hands of local authorities to build new council homes so desperately needed by the 20,000 plus on our waiting list in this borough?

RESPONSE

I want to thank Councillor Govier for this supplemental question. It is something that Labour councils and the Labour party is campaigning for, to lift that housing revenue account (HRA) borrowing cap. In Southwark we have something like £126 million within our borrowing cap, although some of that or most of that will be used in terms of getting our current stock up to an acceptable level.

There are some boroughs though where there is simply no head room at all on their borrowing cap in central London and they are the ones who face the real difficulty. What we are doing with our 11,000 new council homes is exploring ways and within the last cabinet report that we received, exploring ways of building those homes outside of the HRA, funding them through an alternative vehicle which keeps them outside the HRA and other authorities could do that. They could follow the same route in order that we deliver more council homes but really the government could send a really strong signal that it supports the building of council homes if it lifted the HRA limit.

It is really important and I think everyone appreciates this, although sometimes some people don't practice it, it is really important to realise that the only way - I believe - in which we are going to get the sort of housing supply we need in

London is by local authorities having the right to really build on a scale again; that is what we are trying to do here in our borough.

We are currently building something in the order of some 25,000 homes a year in London. The Mayor has set a target of 42,000 homes a year but we really need something like 60,000 homes a year. How are we going to get from that 25,000 to that 42,000? I do not know unless councils are allowed to get on and build homes again and really be developers again. So I do accept exactly what he says that we do need the HRA cap lifted. It is something that the Labour party both locally and nationally is campaigning for. A Labour government, I think, will deliver it after 2015.

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

How many council homes were built in Southwark between 2002 and 2010?

RESPONSE

From 2002/03 to 2005/06 there were 365 new council homes built. From 2006/07 to 2009/10 there was one new home built and two hidden homes.

Government funding for affordable housing delivery has reduced significantly since the Liberal Democrat/Conservative government came to office. In the current 2011-2015 programme the average grant is £38,000 per rental home. This compared to £117,000 per rental home in the 2008-2011 programme – when the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives managed to build just one new home.

All of this is against a backdrop of the Liberal Democrats losing 8,751 Southwark council homes.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

Thank you Mr Mayor. So the figures that we have been given in the answer seem to suggest that council homes building under Labour has fallen by 80 per cent by my figures, so I am not sure I set much stock by promises of what is going to happen in 30 years time. We have heard a bit of the usual excuses about “it is not our responsibility, it is right to buy, Liberal Democrats did it too”. Will the Leader just answer the question, will he stop selling off council homes?

RESPONSE

I cannot stop selling council homes when the government is forcing us to sell council homes under right to buy. It is an absolutely stupid question for her to put unless she realises what her government is doing. I mean really, quite frankly, the issue is that we have made it absolutely clear we are embarking on a house building programme which is unprecedented in this country. We have said and I have said this evening 1,500 of those 11,000 will be built and occupied by 2018. We are already on site or in the development phase for 500. That is going to be more than they built throughout their entire period in office – over eight years.

We are doing something about this. They need to do something about it by going and telling Simon Hughes that he should not be supporting and being part of a government which has increased the right to buy discount to £100,000. I am not blaming Simon Hughes; I am blaming you.

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS BROWN

During the last administration the Taxpayers Alliance criticised the council for having a £5.05 million publicity bill – the highest borough in London. Can the leader confirm if this bill has gone down and by how much?

RESPONSE

Under the previous Liberal Democrat/Conservative administration the Taxpayers Alliance highlighted that almost every single one of Southwark's departments was over budget, and that the council was making above-inflation council tax rises. In addition they revealed that the council was spending £5 million a year on publicity.

Under Labour the budget for communications next year is £1.02 million a year which includes events such as the Bermondsey Carnival, the Elephant and the Nun event and campaigns, including those relating to community safety and public health.

We have cut the number of editions of Southwark Life from ten to four per year and improved the standard and quality of it so that people read it and can find out more about what is happening in the borough.

It is important that the council has good quality communications to keep people informed about what is happening in the borough, to improve services and to ensure that residents can get the best from the council. But we need to make sure we get value from every penny we spend. Whilst the Liberal Democrats in Southwark make big claims on spending, their hopeless record is one of failure and waste.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS BROWN

Thank you Mr Mayor. Would the Leader agree that it is misleading for the Liberal Democrats to suggest that Labour wasted money on publicity when they spent considerably more when they were in office?

RESPONSE

I want to thank Councillor Brown. It is utterly misleading of course but when would you expect the Liberal Democrats to be anything other than utterly misleading? A party whose MPs and candidates pledge not to increase tuition fees and then trebling tuition fees; they don't know the meaning of misleading.

The reality is we have taken £80 million out of our budget over the past four years – that is a fact – and we have reduced spending considerably on these kind of items which have been highlighted time and again by the Liberal Democrats. Again it is simply trying to paint an extremely misleading picture of what this Labour council is doing because they do not want to really talk about the big issues, about the free healthy school meals that they opposed for four years. They do not want to talk about our commitment to build 11,000 council homes. They do not want to talk about the fact that we have doubled recycling and under them recycling would not have been doubled because we lifted the limit considerably and introduced food waste recycling. They do not want to talk about free gyms and swimming that we are offering as a Labour administration for the future. They do not want to talk

about credit union accounts for every eleven year old; £10 going in producing sound finance at this stage and I understand why they don't want to do it. They would prefer to mislead the public on the issues that don't matter to the public and the public will let them know on 22 May.

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES

How does the leader think existing residents will benefit from the approval of the Blackfriars Road supplementary planning document (SPD)?

RESPONSE

Blackfriars Road is a hot spot for development within the Bankside and London Bridge Opportunity Area as designated in the Mayor's London Plan. It is an immensely important link between the City and our key regeneration area at Elephant and Castle, establishing it as part of central London. The regeneration of Bankside and Elephant and Castle is bringing high quality new homes including affordable homes, a much improved environment and real job opportunities so that local people can benefit from employment and training.

Both existing and new residents around Blackfriars Road will benefit not only from the opportunities that are arising in the area with more jobs and employment, and the SPD will also ensure that the pressure for residential development is balanced with the need for places for leisure and business and a pleasant environment for people to live in and enjoy.

Any development needs to take place in a coordinated way so that Blackfriars Road reaches its potential and meets the needs of both existing and new residents. The SPD will provide a strategic framework and detailed guidance to coordinate future growth along and around the Blackfriars Road.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES

Can I thank the leader of the council for his answer but can I ask him what reassurances he can give to the residents of Quadrant House, Edward Edwards House, Tadworth House and Bridge House Court whose homes have been identified as potential development sites in the recently adopted Blackfriars Road SPD that their home will not be demolished and replaced by unaffordable high-rise private developments?

RESPONSE

I want to thank Councillor Noakes for his supplementary question. I was just conferring with Councillor Colley. I do not believe that this is housing which is Southwark housing. This is London and Quadrant housing association housing as I understand it. It is certainly not something which Southwark Council is bringing forward so you can absolutely provide reassurance to your residents on that point.

I cannot speak for London and Quadrant because we do not own that land and we do not manage that property but what I would say as an observation for London and Quadrant and any other housing association that works in this borough that if they wanted to do anything with their housing they should talk to residents in the way that we do when we manage projects such as at the Aylesbury, Elephant and

Castle and Heygate in order to ensure that residents either support or reject and what their views are.

So I can give you a categorical reassurance in respect of land owned by Southwark Council. I cannot give it for London and Quadrant but we are aware of that issue and I will take it up the Chief Executive of London and Quadrant when I next see him.

8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

Following on from the success of National Apprenticeship Week, what are the leader's plans for expanding apprenticeships in Southwark and ensuring young people in the borough have access to education, training and employment opportunities?

RESPONSE

This administration is supporting people into work, education, training and apprenticeships. Under Labour, Southwark now has more jobs than Lambeth and Lewisham combined. However we want to go further, which is why the next Labour administration will support 5,000 local people into jobs and 2,000 new apprenticeships. We will also introduce a new Southwark Young Person Guarantee by making sure that our young people are ready for work and guarantee education, employment or training for every school leaver.

Currently 95.8% of year 12 students are participating in learning. The majority are in full time learning, whilst others have chosen the paid employment route that includes a significant training element. This figure represents a huge improvement on our performance under the Liberal Democrat/Conservative council five years ago when the level of participation was around about 85%.

In the last four years, we have already made great progress including:

- A dedicated team of participation education and training officers who work with young people to ensure that they can access a relevant and productive course of study post 16
- High quality sixth forms where young people can now choose from a wide range of academic courses and are enjoying success that matches or betters the rest of the country
- Working with the Education Business Alliance to ensure that young people are given many opportunities to experience the world of work
- Agreement with Lend Lease to partner in the Southwark Apprenticeship Scheme, which has the potential to provide extensive employment and career opportunities
- Southwark Youth Fund, opposed by the Liberal Democrats, which is continuing to providing £1 million per annum, for the next three years, to support a number of additional employment pathways and jobs, work based training skills and enhanced educational opportunities to young people in the borough
- Commitment to create 3% of its entry posts as apprenticeships to ensure that this is an achievable employment pathway for young people, which provides a blend of work based and academic learning to support them achieving their career aspirations.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

I would like to thank the leader for his answer. Yes, I do have a supplementary question. It is great to hear about the fantastic work the council is already doing to support local young people for apprenticeships. Can the leader tell me what else the next Labour administration will do to support young people in Southwark into work, education and training?

RESPONSE

I want to thank Councillor Lauder for her question. As I made clear in my statement earlier on, the next Labour administration will give an 18 year old the guarantee of either education, training or employment and that is something which is really important. We have to drive down the number of those not in education, employment or training in our borough. We have seen a significant reduction over the past four years but there is still more work to do.

We will invest in apprenticeships and continue to invest in apprenticeships and I really do say again, I refer everyone – if you did not take it in when you came in – watch that video about the Southwark apprentice experience on You Tube because it really does demonstrate the life changing impact which apprenticeships have on young people and people who have got out of the world of work for whatever reason and the way that is bringing them back in.

I am also really pleased to say that so many of the 100 that we have had through our scheme over the past year in Southwark have found permanent work with us as well. So it is an apprenticeship which leads to a job and I think that is really important for us as a council to be doing this kind of work because it sets a standard and demonstrates our commitment to other employers across the borough, and I do hope that they follow our lead because there is nothing more important for young people than finding a job and a profession or a trade and vocation which pays a good living wage in our borough.

That is the way in which young people can avoid some of the problems which are coming from the massive benefit changes which are happening right across our system. It is a way in which they will feel part and be part of the opportunities that are coming to our borough and not feel excluded from what is going on. There are opportunities aplenty in this borough and we need to make sure our young people are part of that.

9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET

What action has the leader taken to help alleviate the issue of overseas buyers who buy up properties in Southwark and then leave them empty?

RESPONSE

The overriding reason why there is a shortage in new affordable housing, not just in Southwark but across the country, is because the Liberal Democrats in government slashed the social housing budget by 60% back in 2010 and that is on top of selling off and demolishing nearly 9,000 council homes in Southwark when they ran the council.

As they know, vacant homes are largely confined to very large value homes being kept as the occasional residence of extremely wealthy individuals. Most investors, either from home or abroad, rely on the income generating ability of their assets and therefore put them into the private rented sector to generate that income. The current government does not impose any restrictions on purchase of property be it commercial or residential by foreign investors.

Within the prime residential sector represented in Southwark by the highest value developments along the river, sales to foreign investors will make up a significant proportion. We are turning this situation to our advantage by using planning agreements with developers of a handful of the most valuable riverside sites to part fund the delivery of 11,000 new council homes. These council homes will be built across the borough, and represent the biggest council house building programme of its kind in the country.

Whilst the Liberal Democrats do nothing to fix the problem, we are getting on with building new council homes and stopping the mass sell off that happened under the previous administration.

10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR RENATA HAMVAS

What effect have cuts in government support for childcare had on parents in Southwark?

RESPONSE

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. The independent '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.

Families in Southwark continue to struggle with childcare costs. In government, the Liberal Democrats have made it harder for families. A conservative estimate of the Southwark Liberal Democrats policy is that their 15 minutes a day promise will cost £6.2million a year.

I do not believe that the best way to support families is to cut services across the council to a tune of £6.2 million to pay for just 15 minutes a day. Instead, the next Labour administration will invest in our children's centres to deliver more quality affordable childcare and build two new community nurseries.

We have launched a Childcare Commission under Dame Tessa Jowell MP to bring together experts, parents, providers and employers to find new ways to guarantee care and early education to help for parents and carers who are struggling to balance work and family life. I am confident that working with the community we will find long term support to parents. This approach will mean that we find a genuinely sustainable solution, rather than committing a budget that is double the size of our youth service, after-school and play services combined when the government is set to take another axe to our budget in 2015/16.

11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

Does the Leader agree with his Labour colleague, Councillor Gavin Edwards, that performance-related pay does not boost staff performance?

RESPONSE

I agree with Councillor Edwards that performance-related pay (PRP) on its own does not boost performance. However, as part of an overall package of pay and incentive and when properly implemented it can have a real value.

The council has a small element of PRP as part of our packages for senior staff. This element of senior officer pay is part of the total package which is comparable to other similar local authorities. It is worth noting that senior officers were offered contracts containing the same PRP arrangements under the last Liberal Democrat administration. This Labour administration has taken a number of measures to ensure that senior officer pay is kept at sensible levels since our election in 2010

We now have an excellent senior officer team at Southwark, led by what is widely recognised as the best chief executive in the country. The reward packages for this team is something which we keep under review including what part PRP pays in any remuneration package.

12. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS

Can the leader provide the latest figures on the number of people the council has supported into work?

RESPONSE

Since 2010/11, this administration has supported 2,576 Southwark residents into work through commissioned employment programmes, including Southwark Works and s.106 agreements (861 of these related to construction through s106). The next Labour administration will double this, and support 5,000 into work.

Southwark's January 2014 JSA claimant count is currently 8,305, the lowest it has been since March 2009. This represents a fall of 3,160 since the peak of 11,465 claimants in October 2011.

13. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ROSIE SHIMELL

When is the council going to deliver the free childcare hours it voted to offer parents at January's council assembly?

RESPONSE

Yesterday, the leader of Lambeth Council, Councillor Lib Peck, and I launched the Southwark and Lambeth Childcare Commission which will be chaired by Dame Tessa Jowell MP. This Commission will bring together experts, parents, providers and employers to find new ways to guarantee care and early education to help parents balance work and family life.

Nationally, all the parties are setting out how they would support families with childcare. Tax breaks, funded additional hours and other schemes like this are best done nationally. This is because at a national level, government can commit the resources to make a real impact. The Liberal Democrats' local proposal will cost £6.2 million – the equivalent of 150 social workers – will pay for just 15 minutes help a day, and will not guarantee a single new quality childcare place needed for people to take up the offer.

This Labour administration think we need to be smarter about how we use the resources to have the biggest impact on families. We need to improve both quality and provision. Labour is also committed to funding additional hours for childcare but want to find the best way to do this. I will ask the commission to explore the best way of funding additional hours. We need to make sure that we get the best value for Southwark and the most help to parents. The Liberal Democrats' scheme won't do this; we will take the responsible approach to tackle the childcare crisis and will see this through when elected after May.

14. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR KEVIN AHERN

Liberal Democrat councillors have accused the council of 'wasting money' on catering and taxi bills – can the leader confirm whether the council's bills for catering and taxis are higher or lower than under the previous administration?

RESPONSE

Staff taxi costs have dropped from £246,000 under the Liberal Democrats to £52,000 a year under Labour – a reduction of 79%.

The table below shows the total spend figure for taxi transport (excluding VAT) for the financial year 2012/13 and previous years.

Financial year	Administration	Cost £,000
2007/08	Liberal Democrat/Conservative	226
2008/09	Liberal Democrat/Conservative	222
2009/10	Liberal Democrat/Conservative	246
2010/11	Labour	195
2011/12	Labour	65
2012/13	Labour	52

Similarly, the Liberal Democrats spent a whopping £2,765,000 on catering and refreshments in 2007/8 which we have brought down to £586,000 a year in the last full financial year.

Financial year	Administration	Cost £,000
2007/08	Liberal Democrat/Conservative	2,765
2008/09	Liberal Democrat/Conservative	1,765
2009/10	Liberal Democrat/Conservative	1,179
2010/11	Labour	913
2011/12	Labour	750
2012/13	Labour	586

These massive reductions in catering and cabs show that while Labour uses every penny as if it were from our own pocket, the Liberal Democrats' incompetence hit Southwark families hard.

15. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

Can the leader confirm whether there has been any realistic offer to take over the South Dock and Greenland Dock Marina from the council? If not, how does he see the future of this valuable asset?

RESPONSE

There have been no realistic offers to take over the marina.

The council is investing circa £780,000 in new shower facilities, decks and electrical and water services. The marina is a net contributor to the council's revenue budget, and the enhanced investment makes it more attractive for both residents and leisure users so we expect this valuable asset to continue to contribute to revenue.

16. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS

Could the cabinet member list what measures are being taken to increase resident satisfaction with the quality of void properties and the numbers the council has turned around over the last four years?

RESPONSE

The budget was increased to fund an enhanced standard to the refurbishment of vacant properties of poor condition. The revised standard focuses on decorations, bathrooms and kitchens and allows tenants to move in without the need to undertake decorations. Previously, we would have provided new tenants with decoration vouchers. Now the property will be freshly decorated with, where appropriate, a new kitchen and bathroom fit for purpose. Not all properties will need new kitchens or bathrooms, but where the need is evident, this will be carried out within the voids program, and be on a case by case assessment.

Additional void technical officers have been employed to promote best value for money throughout the period of voids works, checking the progress of works on an ongoing basis, rather than leaving it to completion.

Contractors have formal weekly update meetings with the operational and lettings teams to address any arising issues and problems. Weekly meetings with team leaders and operational staff monitor the weekly status of all works in progress, properties let and voids due to arrive.

In the current financial year there is a drive to improve tenant satisfaction levels and reduce complaints. The void satisfaction survey provides conclusive evidence that tenants are in favour of the new enhanced standards. Satisfaction levels have increased by 17% to 89% YTD (95% for January 2014).

The total number of voids which have been re-let since 2010/11 is 7,041, as set out in the table below.

All voids

2010/11	2,179	
2011/12	1,639	
2012/13	1,803	
2013/14	1,420	(10 months)
Total	7,041	

17. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GETTLESON

Does he believe it is right that affordable housing payments negotiated as part of new developments in Bermondsey, such as the old town hall on Spa Road, should be taken out of the area and spent in communities over three miles away?

RESPONSE

Southwark faces a huge shortage of affordable houses. I think it is right that the council maximises the building of affordable houses, including with the use of section 106 money and should do this throughout the borough when sites become available.

The vast majority of affordable housing funds generated will be utilised through the Direct Delivery programme which will provide over 1,000 new affordable homes across the borough. The cabinet has agreed phase 1 and phase 2 of the programme including new housing in Grange ward on Willow Walk which is now underway.

18. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE (BERMONDSEY AND ROTHERHITHE COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

In the next 10 years, how many residents are you expecting to live in Rotherhithe and where will they go to school? What percentage of students of Bacon's College live in Rotherhithe?

RESPONSE

The GLA population projections forecast that the population aged 5 to 14 in the Rotherhithe ward could increase from 1,356 in 2014 to 1,802 in 2024. It is anticipated that, as is the case now, pupils are likely to go to primary schools in the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe areas and secondary schools across the borough and in our neighbouring boroughs. The GLA population projections are fed into the GLA school roll projections that are used to prepare the council's school places strategy, which will meet the forecast demand for additional places.

The GLA London Schools Atlas includes information on Bacon's School's January 2013 pupil intake. It shows 18% of pupils coming from Rotherhithe and 12% from Surrey Docks ward. The rest of the pupils come from a wider area.

19. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN HAYES (DULWICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

In view of the up-coming "soft market testing" of the uses to which Dulwich Hospital site could be put, would the cabinet member for regeneration and corporate strategy outline the council's likely input to this process?

RESPONSE

Officers have met with and provided information to the NHS Property Services, and the Greater London Authority (GLA), to ensure the outline requirements for educational provision are included in the recently published soft market test brief. Initially our advice was to make provision for a primary school on site, but this has

since been revised in light of this year's secondary school preferences in the south of the borough to press the case for a secondary school on the site.

Soft market testing responses are due to be received and reviewed by the NHS during April, when officers will hold further exploratory discussions with NHS Property Services, the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the GLA on the potential for secondary school provision alongside the proposed health service provision.

I would remind members that the Dulwich Supplementary Planning Document adopted by cabinet in July 2013 says:

A planning brief has been prepared for this site which sets out the objective to provide a framework for a mixed-use scheme comprising health facilities, ancillary office and community facilities and residential development. The use of part of this site for a school would help to meet the requirements of the planning brief. The site is also expected to play a significant role in meeting local health needs in Dulwich.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN HAYES (DULWICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would like to thank the cabinet member for her answer. We heard last week at Dulwich Community Council from the NHS property services company, who seemed very reluctant to publish the brief for the soft market testing exercise. It is vital that we get to see the brief because the uses which the NHS property market services company are putting out to test in the market will have a very significant influence on the values which they receive back from their valuers. Will the cabinet member join me in lobbying the NHS property services company to publish the brief for public scrutiny as soon as possible?

RESPONSE

Thank you I would like to thank Councillor Hayes for her question. Secondary school places; we took a report on that at cabinet last week and I do believe we identified a shortfall of 19 forms of entry by 2018. So I think whilst we know that some of this can be filled by expanding existing popular schools, it is undoubtedly the case that we also need new secondary schools. I have also, like some people who have spoken tonight, been on the council for some time and long enough to remember the last campaign for a new school to serve East Dulwich and Nunhead that resulted in the opening of Harris Boys school and one of the biggest problems at that time was finding a suitable site.

There simply are not many vacant or brownfield sites in the south of the borough that can be big enough for a secondary school and for that reason I think that the Dulwich Hospital site is an opportunity that is too good to be missed. We simply cannot miss the opportunity to provide a new school on that site. So with that in mind I am very happy to do anything that I can to support the campaign working to get hold of this brief on soft market testing.

I know that Councillor Barber has also suggested something around planning policy – I was looking into that today. I am not sure that his proposal around planning brief is actually strong enough, I think that is only guidance in the same way that the SPD is and I wonder if there is some thing that we can do that is more

powerful. That is typical because planning policy is a very slow process as we all know. If we wait for the new Southwark plan, which was one suggestion being put to me by planning policy officers today, then I think we would like to have the new school opened or I think we are likely to have a new Southwark plan adopted so that is not the way forward I suspect.

I was pondering a moment ago whether this might be an instance where neighbourhood planning might be useful. Perhaps a short sharp focused neighbourhood plan on a really small area on one issue rather than something that takes a very long time might actually be helpful in this case because it might actually put in place strong planning policy that we could use but maybe that is something we can explore in more detail because I think there is no doubt that all parties in this chamber tonight want to see that new secondary school on the Dulwich hospital site.

20. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON (BOROUGH, BANKSIDE AND WALWORTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Given the recent closure of fire stations in the borough by the Mayor of London, will the council continue to pressure and lobby to regain more fire safety in the borough?

RESPONSE

The council's paramount focus is for the safety of our residents. The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority plan saw the closure of Southwark fire station and the loss of a tender at Peckham. This equated to the loss of approximately 50 fire fighters from the borough. I remain concerned that the removal of fire station, fire alliances and fire crews from the borough increases the risks to our vulnerable communities.

We have continued to work with the fire service in Southwark. In particular work on sheltered housing with joint programmed visits to all sheltered housing units, continued improvement measures on housing estates including comprehensive guidance for residents on fire safety advice, the agreement to retro-fit a number of sheltered housing and hostels with sprinkler systems; a specific programme on hoarders to reduce the risk of fire. The council and fire service have worked together to deliver fire safety to students halls of residents.

In addition, the council's housing department have worked with the fire service to produce more comprehensive plans for estates which aid fire crews on arrival.

We will continue to lobby for the best future service for our residents whether that is one more fire station or an additional tender and crew who are familiar with the borough and can undertake more preventative work around fire safety.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON (BOROUGH, BANKSIDE AND WALWORTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Thank you. I want to thank the leader of the council for a very comprehensive answer and I am sure he would share with me, if he lived in the Borough, Bankside and Walworth community council area, being very concerned that we have a large number of new homes being built in our area. The increased potential for fires, therefore, is clearly very high. I know people who live in this area will also

recognise clearly that the sacking of fire officers must bring danger to us all. So I ask the leader this question, what chance does he have of working with other Labour councils to persuade the Mayor to increase the number of fire attendants or stations within this area or indeed what should local people do on the 22nd of next month to decide the future of the fire service?

RESPONSE

I want to thank Councillor Seaton for his supplemental question. I think it is a really worrying time actually for the fire service. Not only have we lost the fire station at Southwark Bridge Road – we will continue to fight for it to be brought back – but only over the last couple of weeks the Mayor has begun to consult on changes to the constitution of LFEPA (London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority). Those changes unsurprisingly involve reducing the number of borough nominees from seven to five, reducing the number of GLA representatives similarly and increasing the number of Mayoral appointees from two to six; and why would he want to do that? Well because of course he still does not have a balanced budget in respect of his fire service and he wants to make far more swinging cuts and he does not want anyone opposing those cuts. When is the Mayor intending to consult on this? Well it concludes on Friday. Actually London Councils managed to persuade him yesterday to extend it for another two weeks to see what agreement might be reached.

But this really is a Mayor who is hell bent on making further significant cuts to the fire service right across London and given the way in which those cuts have fallen indiscriminately in areas where the argument for increased fire coverage must be highest, as in Southwark, then one really fears for the future of other stations and other appliances in our borough.

The real thing to do obviously is to vote Labour on 22 May in order to have a council that stands up to a Conservative Mayor unsurprisingly but also what we must do is ensure that we do not have a Conservative Mayor after 2016 and in fact encourage him, positively encourage him to stand for Parliament in 2015, so we have an election in 2015 for the mayoralty of London when a Labour Mayor, I have no doubt, will romp home and maybe reverse, well, undoubtedly reverse, the cuts of this Mayor.

21. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR SOANES (PECKHAM AND NUNHEAD COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Do leaseholders have any discretion when alterations are required to their property such as installing new windows and doors? Do leaseholders have to agree to works arranged by the council when they have not been consulted on options and cost implications?

RESPONSE

A key component of the 1985 Housing Act has an obligation that, in the case of Right to Buy leases, the council is accountable for the maintenance of the structure, exterior, services and installations of the block in which a flat is situated. This statutory provision ensures there is one 'person' (i.e. the landlord) who is responsible for a block with different tenures and different owners of individual flats.

Integral parts of the block are windows – this is why the definition of the flat in Southwark's leases specifically excludes external windows (and doors).

The external doors and windows are the landlord's responsibility; and the final authority for repair, renewal, design solution etc. sits with the landlord.

The major works division conducts comprehensive consultation with all residents (regardless of tenure) before a package of works commences, including the gathering of opinions in regards to the scope of work. In addition, statutory consultation is carried out with leaseholders before any package of work starts on site. The statutory notices issued provide details of the proposed scope of works, the reasons why the council believes the work to be necessary and the total cost of the work, along with an individual estimated service charge. They also contain information of how leaseholders are able to inspect all the detailed documentation associated with the proposed scheme. Leaseholders are invited to make observations and given a 30 day period to respond. The major works division will also hold a public meeting for leaseholders during this period, which officers from home ownership services attend.

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

What steps are the council taking to make sure that drains and sewage works are maintained properly within the borough including those owned and operated by Thames Water?

RESPONSE

We have embarked on a programme of repairing our non-functional gullies to facilitate a more effective surface water runoff management. The cyclical gulley maintenance programme has been revised to ensure areas prone to surface water flooding get more frequent gulley cleaning. Furthermore the street cleaning programme has been revised to take into consideration the risk of leaves blocking gullies.

Thames Water is a member of the South Central flood partnership and attends our quarterly meetings. They are therefore working collaboratively with us in our joint efforts to manage the risk of flooding. They are a strategic partner and are making a significant financial contribution towards the Herne Hill Flood Alleviation Scheme.

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

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would like to thank the cabinet member for his response and I do have a supplemental question. I would just like to ask what schemes and proposals are under way for flood alleviation in the Camberwell area?

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Councillor Williams for his supplementary question. We have secured funding for pocket spaces on Southampton Way and Comber Grove. We are providing 20 water butts for the residents of the Wells Way Triangle Residents' Association. We are also concentrating our gulley cleaning programme in areas of

higher flood risk and of course with the £8 million transformation of Burgess Park we have introduced rain gardens, we have introduced surface water run off plantings, we have planted more trees than were there before, we have increased the size of the lake, we are CPOing the southern entrance to make that green park space again. All in all Labour has a very good message to tell about the green of Camberwell.

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

What plans does he have to implement the Liberal Democrat Decent Homes Plus programme?

RESPONSE

The fundamental difference between this administration's warm, dry and safe (WDS) programme and the Liberal Democrat's Decent Homes Plus Programme, is the renewal of kitchens and bathrooms.

Our scheme equates to the Government's Decent Homes Standard. The core principles are:

- **Warm** – modern functioning heating, well insulated roofs, windows in good condition or double glazed with secure locks, sliding window vents and restrictor hinges where needed, draught excluders on front doors, cavity wall insulation
- **Dry** – roofs, windows and building fabric in good condition, free from water penetration and damp
- **Safe** – modern electrics including rewiring where necessary, secure front doors (fire rated where necessary).

The WDS programme focuses on the properties most in need of refurbishment first and is scheduled to be completed in March 2016. The programme is on track and works have already been brought forward. Once the programme is complete, the asset management strategy will move on to internal refurbishment of properties, including the renewal of all kitchens and bathrooms that require replacement.

In terms of bathrooms and kitchens, WDS generally only completes kitchens where they fail on health and safety grounds under Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHRS) or in exceptional circumstances such as the Four Squares Estate. Bathroom components are undertaken if they are of sufficient age or disrepair.

Unlike the previous administration we have not misled Southwark residents. We are on course to deliver our Fairer Future promise of delivering our five year housing plan.

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

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would like to thank the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management for his answer. I do have one supplemental if I may, will the deputy leader confirm that his definition of a quality kitchen and bathroom for

every council tenant will include a full refurbishment; that is a three piece bathroom set and a full kitchen?

RESPONSE

Thank you Mr Mayor and I would like to thank the member for his question. Our commitment is to provide new kitchens and bathrooms completely and we are going to allocate a budget of nearly £1 billion. Every tenant will have a first class bathroom and kitchen suite that this council can provide and that is coming on top of the £330 million we have spent on our external works to make every home in this borough warm dry and safe. So I am very pleased that the councillor has asked me that question because we are getting on with the job you want us to do.

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

What proportion of repeat calls to the customer call centre are housing related?

RESPONSE

Just under 14% of calls to the contact centre are repeat calls about housing repairs, i.e. the customer is calling about a repair that has already been raised.

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

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would like to thank the cabinet member for his answer. Over the last six months the number of housing repairs complaints has more than doubled. I wonder if he could tell us how he plans to tackle that?

RESPONSE

Thank you Mr Mayor and I would like to thank the member for her supplementary question. The key ingredient to improving our repairs service, as you know, was to bring that service back in-house and we have seen tremendous improvements as it came as a recommendation from the housing scrutiny committee in the first place.

On top of that we have reduced call waiting times but we have also put the emphasis on dealing with quality calls so that people are not referred through to department after department and there is time spent on dealing with their particular call. But the other issue in relation to customer service is that we want to continue to improve that service. That is why we got genuine resident involvement.

The leader was only just speaking this morning about residents going down to the call centre and meeting the call operators there direct so that people can see the service as it is directly provided. We are open to fresh ideas from our residents on how that service can be improved and certainly any members of the council if they want to suggest their ideas on that improvement and I hope the scrutiny committee will continue to scrutinise that service, then that will be something positive for the future.

Can I also say we are also introducing, as part of our manifesto when we are re-elected on 22 May, resident repair inspectors. We want our residents to take full

control of their repairs. We have taken the first step already by introducing communal repairs officers so that leaseholders know that communal repairs are properly identified, properly costed and that they are properly carried out. Now we want to give all our residents that opportunity by giving them the power to inspect their own repairs.

25. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR TIM MCNALLY

How many empty homes are there in the borough? How many of these have been empty for more than a) six months and b) 18 months?

RESPONSE

The council does not keep a list of properties in the borough which are empty. Many of these are privately owned and so we only know if they are empty if the owners have applied for council tax exemption. Our most recent snapshot in December is set out below.

	02/12/2013
150% Levy on Long Term Empty Property	4
Empty over 2 months 0%	160
Empty Under 2 Months 100%	130
Uninhabitable/Works Required 0%	212
Unoccupied and furnished lets 0%	
Unoccupied and furnished lets 10%	
Unoccupied Awaiting Minister of Religion	
Unoccupied Awaiting probate	9
Unoccupied in Hospital/Residential Care	
Unoccupied in Prison	
Unoccupied Left Empty by Student(s)	
Unoccupied Probate granted < 6 months	
Unoccupied Providing personal care	
Unoccupied Receiving personal care	
Unoccupied Repossessed	2
Unoccupied: Left Empty by Bankrupt	
Total numbers of empty properties taken on snapshot date above	517

As part of this snapshot we do not record properties that have been empty for more than 6 or 18 months.

Over the year 2012/13 there were 2,668 properties that were at some time empty and of these, 853 were empty for more than six months.

These figures do not include local authority or housing association properties. However on these, when a property becomes empty, we aim to turn it around and re-let within 22 days.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR TIM MCNALLY

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would like to thank the cabinet member for his answer. My supplemental is, given that 70 per cent of new home and flat sales in London are being sold off plan to foreign investors, how much money is the Labour council spending on councillors and their officers taking trips to Cannes in France to promote just this sort of seepage for available housing in our borough?

RESPONSE

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would like to thank the member for his supplemental question. It is beyond my pay grade I am afraid, it is out of my particular brief but the leader assures me that the sum is zero.

26. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE

What was the total council housing stock in May 2010? What is it now?

RESPONSE

The council's housing stock as at 1 May 2010 was 39,313.

The council's housing stock currently (figure on 17 March 2014) is 38,392.

The Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government has continued to support right to buy (RTB) which was recently extended and erode into our housing stock on a weekly basis. Up to 14 March 2014 we have lost 328 properties to RTB since 2010.

27. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

How many properties and, specifically, acquired street properties have been made 'warm, dry and safe' in each ward since 2010? What plans does the council have to complete these programmes?

RESPONSE

Since the 'warm, dry and safe' programme was agreed:

- The Camberwell Street Properties Programme and the 2012/13 streets programme have completed (results by ward in table below)
- The 2013/14 streets programme is currently on site
- It is planned to complete the remaining streets programmes by March 2016.
- 612 tenanted properties received WDS works.

754 properties have received works under WDS (including some Leasehold)

The addresses are:

Alma Grove	Date Street	Kelvington Road	Oswyth Road
Ambergate Street	Evelina Road	Kimberley Avenue	Queens Road
Asylum Road	Friary Road	Kincaid Road	Raul Road

Athenley Road	Friern Road	Kings Grove	Shawbury Road
Bellwood Road	Gairloch Road	Kirkwood Road	Shenley Road
Brisbane St	Goodrich Road	Linden Grove	Southampton Way
Bushey Hill Road	Gordon Road	Linnell Road	Surrey Road
Carter Street	Graces Road	Lomond Grove	Tarbert Road
Cheltenham Road	Hawkslade Road	Longley Street	Tintagle Gardens
Cobourg Road	Hillcourt Road	Love Walk	Trafalgar Avenue
Coleman Road	Hindmans Road	Lynton Road	Trafalgar Street
Crofton Road	Jago Walk	Oakley Place	Urlwin Street
			Whateley Road

WARDS	Tenants	L/H	TOTAL
SOUTH BERMONDSEY	51	5	56
GRANGE	0	0	0
RIVERSIDE	0	0	0
CHAUCER	0	0	0
ROTHERHITHE	0	0	0
PECKHAM RYE	66	18	84
COLLEGE	0	0	0
THE LANE	63	5	68
FARADAY	30	2	32
BRUNSWICK PARK	99	56	155
CAMBERWELL GREEN	29	6	35
LIVESEY	22	6	28
CATHEDRALS	0	0	0
PECKHAM	27	2	29
SOUTH CAMBERWELL	0	0	0
EAST DULWICH	48	7	55
VILLAGE	5	1	6
NUNHEAD	53	15	68
EAST WALWORTH	37	4	41
SURREY DOCKS	0	0	0
NEWINGTON	82	15	97
TOTAL	612	142	754

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

What were the estimated and actual leaseholder service charges at the Four Squares Estate in each of the past three years available? What were the estimates for major works charges for each of the past three years?

RESPONSE

The estimated cost for leaseholders on the Four Squares Estate is outlined below.

The estimated/actual revenue service charges on the Four Squares Estate vary dependent on which block a particular flat is in and the size of the flat. The following table shows the modal figures for each bedroom size in each block for each financial year 2010/11 to 2012/13. Actual service charges for this financial year (2013/14) will not be available until October. Engineering type major works are not apportioned according to the size of the flat as agreed at Homeownership Council and are therefore set out as a simple list of major works carried out over the past three years.

Annual Service Charges (Modal values)

Four Squares: Revenue Service Charges: Total per bedroomed property by Block						
Comparative total estimates and actuals for periods 2010/2011 to 2012/2013						
Bedrooms/Block	2012/2013 Total Estimate	2012/2013 Total Actual	2011/2012 Total Estimate	2011/2012 Total Actual	2010/2011 Total Estimate	2010/2011 Total Actual
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Properties: Bedsit						
1 to 156 LAYARD SQUARE	1,455	1,594	1,520	1,813	1,464	1,565
3 to 188 LOCKWOOD SQUARE	1,406	1,626	1,448	1,734	1,372	1,475
2 to 185 MARDEN SQUARE	1,412	1,761	1,491	2,018	1,431	1,537
1 to 144 NEW PLACE SQUARE	1,547	1,843	1,712	1,810	1,444	1,710
Properties: 1 Bedroom						
1 to 156 LAYARD SQUARE	1,807	1,980	1,888	2,254	1,818	1,944
3 to 188 LOCKWOOD SQUARE	1,746	2,020	1,798	2,155	1,703	1,832
2 to 185 MARDEN SQUARE	1,753	2,189	1,851	2,510	1,776	1,910
1 to 144 NEW PLACE SQUARE	1,921	2,291	2,128	2,250	1,789	2,125
Properties: 2 Bedrooms						
1 to 156 LAYARD SQUARE	2,158	2,366	2,255	2,695	2,172	2,323
3 to 188 LOCKWOOD SQUARE	2,085	2,414	2,148	2,577	2,034	2,189
2 to 185 MARDEN SQUARE	2,093	2,617	2,212	3,003	2,121	2,282
1 to 144 NEW PLACE SQUARE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Properties: 3 Bedrooms						
1 to 156 LAYARD SQUARE	2,491	2,734	2,605	3,118	2,508	2,683
3 to 188 LOCKWOOD SQUARE	2,406	2,789	2,479	2,979	2,347	2,527
2 to 185 MARDEN SQUARE	2,416	3,027	2,554	3,476	2,449	2,636
1 to 144 NEW PLACE SQUARE	2,651	3,169	2,837	3,112	2,462	2,937
Properties: 4 Bedrooms						
1 to 156 LAYARD SQUARE	2,824	3,102	2,889	3,540	2,843	3,044
3 to 188 LOCKWOOD SQUARE	2,726	3,165	2,810	3,382	2,659	2,865
2 to 185 MARDEN SQUARE	2,578	3,320	2,713	3,824	2,550	2,843
1 to 144 NEW PLACE SQUARE	3,007	3,599	3,133	3,534	2,790	3,334

Major Works Service Charges

Billed March 2012

Emergency Lighting

Marden Square estimate - £484.27

Marden Square actual - £421.53

Layard Square estimate - £558.85

Layard Square actual - £483.08

Billed February 2013

Lift Renewal

Layard Square estimate £2,593.49

(Actual charges not yet known)

Billed February 2014

Security Works

Marden Square estimate - £12,192.90

(Actual charge not yet known)

New Place Square (fire doors only) estimate - £2,848.32

(Actual charge not yet known)

District Heating Pipes

Marden Square estimate - £1,790.19

(Actual charge not yet known)

Layard Square estimate- £1,790.19

(Actual charge not yet known)

New Place Square estimate- £1,790.19

(Actual charge not yet known)

Lockwood Square estimate- £1,790.19

(Actual charge not yet known)

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

What is the council doing to tackle moss and slippery underfoot conditions in Gomm Road and other estates in Rotherhithe which are causing concern for residents? Will the cabinet member look at what can be done to improve this situation for residents?

RESPONSE

The council is aware of the issue in Gomm Road. The estate in question has asphalt pathways and brick-paving estate roads. There is a minor build up of algae/lichen between the pavings. The level of build up is usually not treated as the growth supports local biodiversity and tends to soften often quite hard landscapes. Algae, moss or lichen build-up usually occurs during the winter because of the wet weather and is usually found in shady, humid areas.

A joint inspection with the resident services officers (RSOs) and estate cleaning supervisors will be carried out during more inclement weather and in the meantime, RSOs and estate cleaning supervisors have also been asked to be aware of moss/algae growth and the risk of slippery conditions.

The cleaning arrangements across all Southwark housing estates includes a daily presence to conduct standard cleaning tasks which includes the sweeping of hard surfaces to remove loose debris. This sweeping is usually enough to keep moss and algae growth under control. During the course of that daily visit other issues are identified, including any hazards such as slippery underfoot conditions. The removal of weed growth on hard surfaces is included in the standard tasks in the service level agreement although that is qualified so as to limit the amount of herbicide used to three applications a year to be applied between April and September.

No service requests have been received from residents for moss/algae growth in Rotherhithe in the last 18 months.

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

Will the cabinet member please give an update on the current status of the warm, dry and safe works to the Lytcott Grove Estate. Why has this work been delayed?

RESPONSE

Lycott Grove Estates was scheduled for work in the original Warm, Dry Safe programme for 2015/16. It was agreed by cabinet in June 2013 to bring this forward into 2014/15. Preparations and feasibility studies have begun and work on site should start in the new financial year.

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

Four years after promising to make every council home 'warm, dry and safe', why are there still ongoing damp and condensation problems in Southwark's housing blocks? What is it specifically doing to tackle the long-standing problems at the Arnold Estate?

RESPONSE

This administration's extensive Warm Dry Safe programme has invested over £330 million in order to improve the council's housing stock and renewing key elements such as roofs, windows, heating and electrical systems. These works have markedly increased the thermal efficiencies of council housing which is vital in reducing our carbon footprint and ensuring our residents' homes are warm and dry, as well as safe.

Condensation problems occur in blocks for several reasons but are mainly attributed to the moisture production in the properties regulated against the heating and ventilation levels.

As the council invests in reducing heat loss in blocks, the background ventilation is reduced (from old draughty windows, roofs, etc) and so the need for our residents to ventilate by use of ventilations systems and opening of windows becomes greater. Investigations into blocks across the borough where there are reports of condensation damp have often identified that ventilation systems are not always fully utilised.

The issues on the Arnold Estate are condensation problems which the council has aimed to resolve in line with other similar situations in the borough. The council has looked to educate residents through personal visits by council officers; sending out specific information on how to reduce condensation building up in properties and supplying damp packs to deal with minor mould issues. In addition to this, the council has completed improvement works to a number of properties by installing thermal boarding and mechanical ventilation where required.

The reduced ventilation in the property leads to retaining greater moisture in the air, created through normal use and occupation, which results in condensation dampness. Another significant contributing factor to the formation of condensation dampness to blocks is fuel poverty. As heating bills increase residents become more hesitant to turn on their heating systems and tend to use them sporadically. The council has recently brought out a leaflet to advise residents how to ventilate their homes and prevent condensation.

32. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL SITU

Given the current housing shortage and increase in residents sub-letting council flats from council tenants, does the council have any plan to raise awareness amongst our residents of the dangers and implications of renting a council flat without the council's knowledge?

RESPONSE

The housing department are acutely aware of the issue and have been pro-active in this area. Our tenancy checks in the last 12 months have recovered over 350 properties. We are also continually raising awareness amongst our residents of the dangers and implications of renting a council flat without the council's knowledge and regularly reporting our successful cases to the media so that both the legal and illegal tenants are aware of the actions and consequences.

Our fraud hotline (020 7525 4686) is advertised on the council's website and is included in mail shots, informs members of the public on how to contact the team with information.

In January 2014, Southwark launched a media campaign to publicise illegal subletting becoming a criminal offence. This campaign includes leaflets and posters, sending a hard hitting message that Southwark is not tolerating illegal subletting. With illegal subletting now a criminal offence, communications will utilise more hard hitting messages to highlight the risks involved, including prosecution, and will encourage tenants who illegally sublet to voluntarily hand back their keys or face jail.

Southwark was recently featured on London television programme 'Inside Out' on primetime. The programme showed the council using the latest technology, such as passport scanners and credit data matching, to detect and prevent fraud at the point of entry. This was invaluable publicity in raising awareness.

The council's outstanding work in fraud prevention was recognised nationally at the Local Government Chronicle awards on 12 March 2014 where Southwark won an award.

33. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR NICK DOLEZAL

Could the cabinet member identify the checks that are in place to make sure that the council disposes of its empty properties wisely in accordance with its public duty?

RESPONSE

The original void disposal strategy was agreed by the executive six years ago to provide resources for the housing investment programme and for the delivery of hidden homes. The following categories for disposal were identified:

- Bedsits, 1 and 2 bedroom properties located above the third floor if based within a block
- Properties valued in excess of £400,000, irrespective of bed size
- Leasehold units in blocks with a high percentage of leasehold properties, where additional sales can mean that the freehold can potentially be considered for disposal, either by leaseholder enfranchisement or direct sale
- Listed residential properties, irrespective of bed size
- Properties that are difficult to let
- Pre-fabricated homes – due to their high level investment need
- Properties that were uneconomical to repair.

A review of the strategy was completed in May 2011 because insufficient resources were being generated for reinvestment. The cabinet then agreed to include the following categories:

- Bedsits, 1 and 2 bedroom A and B street flats at first and second floors with a view to disposal of the freehold, thus widening to include properties where there are presently no other leaseholder present in the building, with the exception of ground floor units.
- Bedsits, 1 and 2 bedroom properties located on 3rd floor or above
- Void properties valued in excess of £300,000 irrespective of bed size.

To ensure that particular housing needs would continue to be met, the following exceptions were allowed for:

- Ground floor properties that may meet medical needs or are suitable for adaptation
- Properties suitable for re-housing households on regeneration schemes
- 3 bedroom+ family units withdrawn from the disposal process as a result of a review.

The cabinet also agreed to delegate all disposal decisions in respect of implementation of the policy to the head of property, and to the monitoring of the process by an officer panel and by the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management. These arrangements are ongoing.

All properties are subject to the appropriate legal general housing consents prior to disposal. In accordance with the council's constitution, the appropriate authority for disposal is sought. Authority for disposals of property up to a market value of

£500,000 is delegated to the head of property, whereas authority to dispose of properties with a market value above £500,000 is reserved to cabinet.

The deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management has instructed officers to undertake a review of the current void strategy. The review is currently underway and a report is due to be submitted to cabinet in July 2014.

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

Will the cabinet member describe what help is put in place by the council to enable those residents who are impacted by welfare reform measures to downsize their accommodation?

RESPONSE

The council has identified approximately 4,047 current residents impacted by the recent welfare reforms, including the bedroom tax and the benefit cap, both introduced last year.

Council services have been working in partnership with colleagues in the voluntary sector to provide assistance and advice to those affected by the welfare reforms. The council has offered directly, or working with others as well in the following areas:

- Job Centre Plus are holding joint surgeries with housing officers at Bournemouth Road to assist with identifying employment opportunities and work with London Mutual Credit Union to provide banking support and help improve financial inclusion.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau and housing officers are offering money management and welfare reform advice sessions for all new tenants to help them manage and maintain their new home.
- Collaborating with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the Credit Union to create community champions and offer housing options support and advice to residents in the community.
- Undertaking monthly money advice and housing events (known as "money savvy") in partnership with the CAB, providing advice to residents affected by welfare reform.
- Increasing the incentive payment from £250 per bedroom released to £1,000 per bedroom, when a customer down-sizes through the SMART move scheme. Also includes tenants down-sizing through a mutual exchange.
- Promoting awareness of a lodging scheme to mitigate the impact of the bedroom tax. A booklet about taking in a lodger has been produced which provides advice about how to do this safely and successfully.
- Promoting discretionary housing payments (DHP) by post and telephone and use £1 million of housing revenue account funding to supplement the DHP budget for funding council tenants should the need arise.

- Housing and community services has appointed a mutual exchange officer to promote and facilitate tenants undertaking mutual exchanges.
- Housing operations identified those tenants affected by the bedroom tax and has targeted resources to visit these tenants and work with them at an early stage to manage the effects of welfare reform.

35. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR NEIL COYLE

Could the cabinet member comment on the success of the current annual tenancy checks in relation to identifying the amount of illegal occupancy uncovered to date, and on the cross-council departmental working to tackle internal fraud as identified by the Bundu case?

RESPONSE

Housing operations were set a challenging performance target to visit 100% of our tenants this year. There are a number of reasons why the council conducts annual tenancy visits – the key ones are adhering to our responsibilities as a council to safeguard the welfare to our tenants and ensuring that issues with subletting are communicated to the right channels and acted upon swiftly.

2013/14 has been our most successful yet on record. To date almost 90% of our tenancy visits have been carried out – this is 29,779 visits. Of the remaining tenants, the vast majority have had at least three visits and officers are moving to the next stages of the process, where this is appropriate. We aspire to be as thorough as possible as every home reclaimed is a home that can go to a deserving family. An increased drive on tenancy fraud has resulted in more than 600 council properties being recovered in the last two years, representing 12% of the national total last year.

The special investigation team in conjunction with housing operations have received over 1,800 referrals since April 2013. The vast majority of referrals come from resident officers and income officers, as well as gas servicing contractors. To date we have recovered 348 properties from illegal occupants, with 137 of these recovered from information of resident officers alone, as well as over 100 prosecutions in the last two years. This has resulted in the detection of council tax discount fraud valued at £2.1 million, and housing benefit saving almost £1.8 million.

Mr Bundu was successfully convicted to four years in prison last week.

Our success in combating illegal subletting and bringing homes back into use for those in genuine need, as well as prosecuting fraudsters, was recognised at the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards on Wednesday 12 March 2014. The judges praised the council for "excellent impact tackling fraud across the borough and good evidence of learning."

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

Could the cabinet member detail what are the plans for the council's implementation of fixed service charges to offer leaseholders cost certainty year on year?

RESPONSE

The innovative proposal to offer leaseholders the option to surrender their current variable service charge lease and renew it with a fixed service charge lease was agreed by cabinet on 22 October 2013, subject to a report to be agreed by me, containing the detailed processes to be adopted in delivering the policy.

The draft report was taken to my weekly housing management briefing on 19 March 2014 and is on the forward plan for an individual decision member next month.

A press release on the proposal and a letter outlining further details will be sent to all leaseholders with the final quarterly statement for 2013/14, due to be issued mid April.

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

Following complaints I have received about the redacting of information on service charge breakdowns does the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management agree with me that at least where elected members raise works orders which are chargeable back and result in additional charges to leaseholders, they should be named as a matter of course for transparency in service charge breakdowns?

RESPONSE

Yes.

The councillor will know that where service charge breakdowns include the names and/or personal details of individuals this information must be redacted from the breakdowns before being made public. This action has been required by the Information Commissioner. However, councillors act in a public capacity and are not subject to the same restrictions when lobbying for particular action to be taken.

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

How much has been deducted by the council from payments to the major works contractors at Whitworth House and Bramwell House for failing to complete works to specification and schedule? What has been the result of the discussions regarding compensation for residents? Can the council assure leaseholders that there will be no further costs to them for major works on this project?

RESPONSE

The question possibly should relate to Whitworth and Ellington Houses rather than to Whitworth and Bramwell. This is because no works have been carried out to Bramwell House but there is a major works scheme for Whitworth and Ellington.

£105,384.35 has been held back from the last valuation paid to the original contractor (Breyer) for incomplete works. The council terminated the contract with Breyer and engaged A&E Elkins to complete the outstanding works. The council has agreed a payment to all residents, irrespective of tenure, as per the compensation policy. We will be writing to residents by 29 March to advise them of the basis of the compensation payments and the dates the payments will cover, which will be from 18 March 2013 (the date the Breyer contract should have been completed) to the completion date of outstanding works A&E Elkins will be carrying out. The chair of the tenants and residents association, as well as the local councillors have been updated on the current situation.

The final account has yet to be constructed. The initial assessment of the final account indicates that there are no additional service chargeable costs and that there should not be an increase in the estimates issued.

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

How many incidents of theft of electrical and fire safety equipment have there been from council housing in each of the last three years?

RESPONSE

The maintenance and compliance team monitor metal thefts through their term contractors and inspection regime. The introduction of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 has seen a major reduction in reported thefts. The legislation introduced tougher licensing and prohibited the sale of metal for cash at scrap metal dealers.

The numbers of thefts identified are detailed in the table below.

	Fire equipment	Electrical equipment
2012	17	166
2013	6	44
2014	0	4

40. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER

How many new council homes are currently on site or have planning permission?

RESPONSE

Included in the detail are all schemes within Phase 1 of direct housing delivery and the hidden homes programme.

New council homes on site

Address	Tenure	Units
Willow Walk	Social rent	21
	Temporary accommodation rent	54
Dickens Estate*	Social rent	5

New council homes with planning permission

Address	Tenure	Units
Lordship Lane Estate*	Social rent	1
Champion Hill Estate*	Social rent	1
Glebe Estate*	Social rent	1
Lindley Estate*	Social rent	3
Pelican Falcon House*	Social rent	4
Nunhead Green	Social rent	8
Gatebeck House, East Dulwich	Social rent	9
Southdown House	Social rent	10
	Intermediate	8

In addition, the following either have planning submitted or are due to be submitted shortly:

Proposed new council homes with planning due to be determined in April

Address	Tenure	Units
Long Lane, SE1	Social rent	21
Cator Street Extra Care	Social rent	42
Clifton Estate	Social rent	8
Masterman House	Social rent	15

Proposed new council homes, planning to be submitted

Address	Tenure	Units
Sumner Road	Social rent	50
	Intermediate	20
Crossways	Social rent	4

Overall	Tenure	Units
	Social rent	203
	Temporary accommodation rent	54
	Intermediate	28
TOTAL		285

*Hidden homes developments

NB. As part of the programme, 42 private homes will be developed at Sumner Road and 10 at Masterman House.

41. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR PATRICK DIAMOND

Can the cabinet member provide an update on funding allocated to open spaces around the Elephant and Castle regeneration area?

RESPONSE

A capital bid for £5.96 million (including contingency) to regenerate open spaces at Elephant and Castle was agreed in the capital refresh report which was considered by cabinet on 18 March. This project will seek to ensure the network of existing parks and open spaces within the opportunity area are brought up to a standard ensuring that they meet the needs of the existing and future community. At present the Elephant and Castle has a deficiency in open space provision and therefore this project will ensure that the open space that is available is of the highest quality. The programme for improvement will be approximately three years, including the required design, consultation and planning period.

Park / Open Space	Investment
Nursery Row	£600,000
St Mary's Churchyard	£1.25 million
Pullen's Yard	£350,000
Victory Park	£1.8 million
Dicken's Square	£1.5 million
Green Links	£400,000

In addition to this council funding, there is a further circa. £17 million of investment section 106 from developments going into new and existing parks in the Elephant and Castle area including the new Elephant Park, (central London's largest new park for 70 years) Victory Park, the new Market Square on Elephant Road, and new pocket parks and play areas within the Heygate master plan area.

Park / Open Space	Investment
Tribeca Sq/Elephant Park/Pocket Parks within Heygate Masterplan	circa £17 million

42. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN HAYES

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the number of new homes that have been given planning permission in Southwark since 2010?

RESPONSE

11,975 gross from April 2010 – November 2013, of which 2,918 gross are affordable new homes.

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

Is the cabinet sufficiently prepared to deal with flooding in Southwark in light of government cuts to funding for lead local flood authorities?

RESPONSE

We are all too aware of the problems associated with flooding in the borough, especially in terms of the potential or actual damage or harm caused to people and their property. We are raising local awareness of flood risk by keeping the community informed at public meetings, carrying out detailed flood investigations, and are coordinating the external flood partnership with Lambeth which has been recognised as the most thriving flood partnership in London. Alongside this, we are working to ensure that the council has robust response plans in place.

Following the preliminary flood risk assessment, locations within the following areas were identified as having a higher risk of flooding than other areas: Herne Hill, Dulwich, Camberwell, Peckham, and Nunhead and Peckham Rye. Upon further study it has been confirmed that Herne Hill and the Dulwich area are at a relatively higher risk of flooding and would benefit greatly from flood alleviation measures.

The council has successfully applied for funding from the Environment Agency to undertake detailed investigation of the Herne Hill and Dulwich areas and has subsequently secured additional funding from both the Environment Agency and Thames Water to implement a surface water and sewer flooding mitigation scheme. The scheme is at planning application stage (a decision expected on 25 March 2014) and subject to approval work due to be on site by the end of April.

The scheme has already been recognised as innovative and is being held up as model of partnership working and as an urban surface water management scheme.

In the Camberwell area, the council obtained funding from the Environment Agency and the Greater London Authority (GLA) to undertake detailed investigation of the flooding risk and identified opportunities to alleviate this. We are exploring funding opportunities for detailed design and implementation. In the process we have secured grants from the 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, Southampton Way and Comber Grove.

Working in close partnership with Thames Water, the Environment Agency and the GLA, we have also secured 20 water butts for the Wells Way Triangle Tenants and Residents' Association in the Camberwell area to enable improved individual water management capacity.

Staff across the organisation have a key role since the government delegated responsibility for flood prevention to local councils. We are making a difference to the way departments work, with flood risk awareness being actively raised among our teams through our internal flood partnership. A well established link between the flood team and the planning department has ensured surface water management issues are being considered early in the design of new developments.

We have embarked on a programme of repairing our non-functional gullies to facilitate management of surface water run-off more effectively. The cyclical gulley maintenance programme has been revised to ensure areas more prone to surface water flooding get more frequent cleaning.

The table below shows funding allocations to Southwark Council and projected spend:

Year	Original Allocation (£000)	New Allocation (£000)	Other Grants (£000)	Spend/Projected (£000)
2011/12	182.8	182.8		176
2012/13	438.2	438.2	160	268
2013/14	438.2	438.2	310	560
2014/15	438.2	435.5 (1.5% cut)	780*	1080
2015/16	438.2	350.3 (19.6% cut)	725*	400
2016/17	Unknown	Unknown		600
2017/18	Unknown	Unknown		500
	1935.6	1845	1975	3584
Total	1935.6	3820		3584

* includes funding for the implementation and maintenance (£0.3 million) of the Herne Hill Scheme over the life of the project.

The team will continue to pursue opportunities for additional grants; and we are hopeful that these funding reductions will not have a significant impact on services.

Lastly, I wish to put on record that it is a source of great pride to me the way that the public realm asset management team have adapted and thrived following delegation of flood alleviation and management to local authorities. I am optimistic that despite the considerable cuts in grant by central government (esp. 19.6% in 2015-16) the team will continue to develop our borough's resistance to the threat of surface and drainage water flooding, which will increase with the weather changes linked to the changes in the Earth's climate.

44. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the council's use of Article 4 planning directions to curb the growth of betting shops and payday lenders?

RESPONSE

Our ability to manage the balance of uses on the high street and proliferation and clustering of individual uses is constrained by the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) which allows a change of use from class A3 (restaurants and cafes), class A4 (drinking establishments) and class A5 (hot food takeaways) to uses in class A2 (financial and professional services, including betting shops and pay day loan shops) without the need to apply for planning permission.

Moreover, in May last year the government introduced new permitted development rights that aim to allow redundant buildings to be brought back into use. The effect of the revised GPDO is to allow a range of buildings to convert temporarily for a two year period to a set of alternative uses, including betting shops and payday loan shops, without the need for planning permission. These new development rights are often in conflict with our policies which are aimed at regenerating high streets and town centres.

As a borough with one of the highest concentrations of betting shops, we have taken steps to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to protect local economic activity as our ambition is to have successful town centres and shopping areas which have a range of shops, services and facilities. We oppose the clustering and proliferation of payday lenders and betting shops on our high streets and believe they have a negative impact on the vitality of town centres and the wellbeing of our residents.

The planning committee therefore introduced two immediate article 4 directions as a means to control certain uses, and removing permitted development rights. Immediate article 4 directions expire six months after they come into force, unless confirmed by the council. Consultation on the two directions was undertaken for a period of six weeks following their introduction last October 2013. Three objections were received which included Ladbrokes plc, Paddy Power and the Association of British Bookmakers. According to the relevant planning regulations, these representations must be taken into account by the council in determining whether to confirm the directions.

The consultation responses received have been fully considered and the evidence base has been set out more clearly to ensure there is a fuller understanding of all of the issues and concerns that have been raised and considered. A report is being taken to planning committee on 25 March 2014 which sets out the justification for the continued implementation of the two directions and recommends they are both confirmed before the expiry date of 17 April 2014.

Since the article 4 directions were implemented back in October 2013, there have been no planning applications submitted for a change of use to betting shops or pay-day loan shops in any of the shopping frontages covered by the directions.

Article 4 directions are not however our only response to the damaging increases in high street gambling in some of the poorest parts of our borough. I have raised my concerns with the Planning Minister, Nick Boles MP, as to the use of article 4 directions since they do not allow us to refuse outright applications for change of use if an application is made. Instead we would support the ability to place betting shops in a separate use class, in order to limit the detrimental growth of betting shops in Southwark. Nick Boles MP has commended our innovative and proactive approach to addressing this issue.

The leader has also written to the Secretary of State for Communities, Law and Governance to request greater powers to set levies on the income of high street betting shops – though the government have not supported our call, I do hope that they will look to afford local councils with the powers that we need to tackle this problem.

45. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the regeneration in Peckham, including the Gateway to Peckham project and town centre improvements?

RESPONSE

The council intends to improve Peckham as a successful place with a new regeneration project that is focused on Peckham town centre. Drawing on the vision statement that has been agreed with the community in the Peckham and

Nunhead Area Action Plan (PNAAP), and to initiate delivery the council will carry out further research and provide opportunities for the community to have their say to help establish the key concerns and priorities, and to help us to further define the scope of the programme. Ahead of this there are three regeneration projects already underway.

Gateway to Peckham Project

The Gateway to Peckham project provides an exciting opportunity to bring about much needed improvements to the Victorian grade II listed Peckham Rye Station and the area around it. It will help to create a high quality public square with improved commercial premises, and improvements to the station itself.

However, significant local concerns have been expressed about the initial designs, scope and scale of the proposals for redevelopment and as a result it has been agreed that there should be a longer period of time for consultation and discussion using co-designing principles.

Pocket Places Project

The Pocket Places project funded by the council and run by Sustrans has been working on transforming under used spaces along Rye Lane into lively community spaces.

On 7 June 2014 there will be a large event to demonstrate all of the ideas that have been developed by community members over the last year. This will come in the form of a celebration event showing trial interventions over four sites. These include temporary resurfacing to create a park feel in Holly Grove, 16 fruit trees planted in shiny industrial bins with integrated seating in Moncrieff Place; a modern day bandstand and a rotating artist in residents programme in the corridor in Choumert Grove car park and community gardens with a food inspired mural and street games in Bournemouth Close.

These ideas are all going to be trialled for up to six months with the more successful projects becoming permanent with a completion date of July 2015.

The project also aims to deliver a temporary surface pattern on Rye Lane to encourage motorists to slow down in this area where there is heavy pedestrian usage. This will be on Rye Lane between Blenheim Grove and Elm Grove.

Townscape Heritage Initiative

Also on 3 March 2014, we submitted a £1.7m stage 2 Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This HLF is for a programme of grants that help communities to regenerate Conservation Areas displaying particular social and economic need. The programme is aims to help building owners to carry out repairs, conservation and restoration works to deliver heritage-led regeneration.

The proposed THI will work within the PNAAP vision and address the need for improvements to historic buildings in the town centre, complementing existing public realm improvements. The project will focus on tackling building decay and the reinstatement of lost architectural detailing, as well as encouraging the reuse of upper floors and complementary initiatives in building local community capacity in traditional skills, education and involvement in the local heritage.

46. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR CLAIRE HICKSON

How many empty homes has the council helped bring back into use since 2010?

RESPONSE

Since the beginning of this administration we have ensured that we utilise every opportunity to not only bring back into use empty homes across the borough, but are also making every effort to provide homes for the colossal number of people that we have on our waiting list. We are highly oversubscribed, with over 20,000 people waiting for a new home.

Since 2010 the council's interventions have brought back 545 empty homes back into use.

The empty homes team actively seek out owners of empty properties and work closely with them to find ways to bring their properties back into use. We also provide limited incentive funding in the form of grants and loans for homeowners to carry out repairs, conversions or refurbishment works to their properties, and can help owners by identifying options where they wish to rent their property through the council or our partners. Empty homes owners can also receive advice from our teams to better understand the issues that are currently preventing them from making use of their properties, including receiving guidance through the planning process, design advice, or where there is need guidance on the construction process if they wish to undertake repair or rebuild projects themselves.

I am especially proud of the work of the empty homes team for this, as working with homeowners whose properties have been in a long state of disrepair can be a challenging process. There is often a marked difference in the costs associated with reusing local homes as compared to some of our South East London regional boroughs. As an example, in Southwark, the average repair costs for a property that has been empty for over 6 months is £48,000 as compared to £15,000 in Bexley, due to the differences in the type and quality of housing stock and associated refurbishment.

47. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL

How many affordable homes have been built in Southwark since 2010?

RESPONSE

Affordable Housing Completions 2010/11 – 2013/14

	Social Rent	Intermediate	Affordable Rent	Total
2010-11 (Actual)	335	432	0	767
2011-12 (Actual)	466	142	24	632
2012-13 (Actual)	450	150	0	600
2013-14 (Projected)	309	196	28	533
Total	1560	920	52	

48. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR ROWENNA DAVIS

Can the cabinet member provide an update on what the council is doing to combat domestic violence in the borough?

RESPONSE

The council is delivering range of projects to combat domestic abuse. Despite the massive financial pressures faced by the council, there have been no budget reductions for this area of work. Indeed, we in fact increased the money spent on tackling this abuse by approximately £80,000 in 2013/14 and are committed to maintaining a high quality service in 2014/15.

When the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives ran the council there was no plan in place to tackle violent crime: Labour has delivered a violent crime strategy and violent crime is falling.

Violence against women and girls formed one part of the Violent Crime Strategy and since 2010 we have made progress with a range of project that I detail below. However, I believe that we need to go even further and make tackling all forms of domestic abuse one of the top priorities for the next administration. That is why, Labour is committing to work with the police to deliver a new Domestic Violence Strategy to combat this abuse wherever it exists in our borough.

Work that the council is already doing to combat domestic violence includes:

Southwark Advocacy and Support Service (SASS) provided by Solace Women's Aid

In April 2012, the council commissioned SASS, a new service for victims of domestic abuse in our borough.

- An accredited borough wide flagship service, with a new centre for domestic violence and a one phone number and one email for all domestic abuse related issues
- 24/7 access to the service, with male and female advocates and a response time to high risk victims of 4 hours
- Services for all victims of domestic abuse over 16 years of age, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation
- Two specialist support programmes for children and young people, with parallel workshops for mothers
- Domestic abuse awareness training for external agencies and a domestic abuse champions training for professionals. so that they are able to recognise the signs of domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity and are confident signposting victims for help
- A sub contracted perpetrator programme
- A service user forum
- A volunteer programme, open to local residents
- Peer support programmes

Since the service was launched in April 2012, over 2500 people have been in contact with the service and 46 perpetrators have been referred to programmes to help them change their abusive behaviour. The service has worked intensively with

1166 survivors and most of them now report increased mental, emotional, social and physical well being and increased resilience, confidence and self esteem.

The service has expanded over the last year with additional counselling and legal advice services, incorporation of the sanctuary scheme (enabling victims to remain safety in their own homes) as well as service user engagement and peer support groups. A domestic abuse worker is now co-located on a weekly basis with the children services family support team and at Peckham and Walworth Police Stations to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse can access help and support at the earliest opportunity.

77 council and SLAM staff have been on the domestic abuse champions training for professions, from departments including Housing management and specialist housing services, community safety, youth offending, children's services, and customer experience.

A successful borough-wide domestic abuse awareness campaign was launched in December 2013 which included bus stop ads, ads in Southwark news, posters distributed to all surgeries and libraries, two radio programmes, a cinema ad (at Peckham Multiplex) and twitter feeds; since its launch, SASS are reporting an increase in self referrals.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

The council works closely alongside other agencies to ensure the safety of women at high risk of domestic violence. Key Southwark statutory and non statutory agencies meet once a month to discuss the highest risk victims who live in Southwark. The MARAC also give consideration to the perpetrator and looks at what intervention is available for them too. So far this financial year this multiagency conference has helped over 200 survivors at high risk of harm.

- **Safe, Healthy and Equal Relationships (SHER)**

The council also focuses on prevention work, for example the SHER programme, which delivers sessions in schools to increase awareness of what is and isn't a healthy relationship and prevent children and young people from becoming victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse in the future.

- **Tackling violence against women and girls pilot projects**

The council was successful in its bid to the London Crime Prevention fund for funding in 2013/14; receiving £116,000 to deliver new projects to help tackle violence against women and girls.

- **Counseling programme for domestic abuse and sexual violence survivors**

1-2-1 and group work counselling provided by SASS. Since its launch in June 2103, the service has worked with 36 survivors.

- **King's College Hospital A&E pilot**

King's College Hospital A&E Girls' pilot project is delivered by the Redthread youth team. The service works with young females presenting at A&E with injuries caused by physical violence to enable them to improve their sexual health, mental health and engagement with statutory services.

- **Mobile phone safety app**

A free smart phone app to help women/young girls stay safe. Tap-It was launched in early 2014 and allows users to set up networks of 'best friends' to stay connected with family and friends and allow them to ask for assistance when they are feeling vulnerable.

- **YUVA (work with adolescent perpetrators)**

Yuva works with young people (age 11-25) who have been abusive to their parents/carers and in their close relationships. Yuva help young people to look at their abusive behaviour and find safe, non-abusive alternatives. The team also work with the parents/carers of the young people who are involved with their service.

49. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

What is the cabinet member's view about investing the staff pension fund into new homes for market rent or sale, similar to the scheme already undertaken by Manchester City Council?

RESPONSE

Manchester City Council does not have its own personal pension fund – instead it is covered by a single fund covering all ten of the local authorities in Greater Manchester. The value of that fund is almost thirteen times the size of Southwark's.

Having a fund covering a number of authorities in this way helps to reduce the risk of the fund being used inappropriately to fund political priorities that might not generate the best returns for the fund.

This is why Southwark is entirely involved in the discussions with other London authorities seeking to establish a common investment vehicle (CIV) for the capital that could consider making investments in new areas such as residential development or infrastructure building in a way that would both maximise potential returns from them (done to scale) whilst minimising the risk of inappropriate investments being made to suit short-term political objective.

As is the case for all investments made by the fund, any such investment would need to fit into the funding investment strategy which members will be aware is currently being reviewed by the Pensions Advisory Panel. Investments must also provide at least equivalent returns as other asset classes within an acceptable level of risk after taking into account the management fees incurred which can vary widely across different asset classes. Investment returns must be optimised in order to maintain a controlled deficit position and deficit recovery period and be compatible with the results of the actuarial triennial valuation which is currently being carried out.

50. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT AND VOLUNTEERING FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK

What has the council done to ensure work at Southwark Park athletics track gets underway, other than putting out a press release? When will the track be brought back into use?

RESPONSE

We have taken action to ensure the refurbishment of the track and facilities.

All members know that the council had to start from scratch in terms of funding and planning from May 2010. £370,000 of funding towards track refurbishment was granted by the Olympic Legacy Fund in 2011. We have since secured £1.1 million of additional funding for the track. The design of the whole facility has now been finalised and we will be submitting a planning application at the beginning of April 2014. We anticipate the project will begin in late summer 2014.

Cabinet agreed on 18 March 2014 further capital expenditure to complete the whole facility: Quarter 3 Capital Monitoring Report for 2013/14 and Capital Programme Refresh for 2013/14 – 2023/24. As the future programme proudly outlines, “money will be provided to refurbish Southwark Park athletics track and providing new pavilion and changing facilities there.”

Action from this administration is in stark contrast to the Liberal Democrats on the council. They had years to sort this out and failed. That is why we were starting from scratch when we were elected. Since May 2010, not a single Liberal Democrat councillor has ever approached me expressing concerns about the progress of refurbishment, they have never asked to meet with me and have never lobbied me for any funding. Local residents are right to be sceptical about the Liberal Democrats’ commitment to this which to date has involved a press release, photo call and a small piece on their website.

51. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU

What is the future of the Blue Anchor Playroom premises? What plans does the council have to sell the site to private nursery providers or other buyers?

RESPONSE

We have previously used the building for play services; however it has not been used by children's services for at least five years, other than for storage. There are no current plans for us to deliver services at the Blue Anchor Playroom premises.

We can undergo an appraisal assessment to identify potential future uses for the premises.

52. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN

The council predicts that some 18 forms of entry for secondary school pupils are needed by September 2019. While recognising that secondary pupil place planning is carried out on a borough-wide basis, what evidence has the council collected on supply and demand in each of the five community council areas - especially those facing major regeneration projects - as a basis for ensuring that children do not have to travel long distances to schools in other parts of the borough or outside the borough?

RESPONSE

The information collected on supply and demand in the five community council areas includes:

- The Greater London Authority (GLA) population projections, which feed into the GLA school roll projections, and which take into account the possible additional population as a result of the new housing in the borough
- Expressed preferences for school places which, along with the GLA school roll forecasts, inform the council's school places strategy.

53. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

How many complaints have there been about the conduct of vehicles operated by the council and its contractors since 1 January 2011? Please list details of each complaint, including the date and the action taken by the council.

RESPONSE

With a fleet of over 300 commercial vehicles used by council staff in the borough, all clearly marked with the Southwark Council logo, we take complaints about poor driving seriously as such incidents can damage the reputation of the council as well as cause a risk to other road users.

We encourage responsible driving by our staff and contractors, and value the role of the public in reporting poor driving via both the council's customer service centre and the DriveCare 'How is my driving?' system.

Complaints received directly by the council are captured on ICase, the council's complaint management system. Table 1 below shows how many complaints we have received on ICase since 2011 related to the driving of Southwark and contractor vehicles. It is not possible to provide in-depth details for confidentiality reasons and limitations in the reporting ability of the system but the most common reason for complaints are poor driving, causing an obstruction, inappropriate behaviour when challenged about driving and damage to other vehicles. Every report received is sent to the relevant management team for investigation.

Complaints recorded on the council's ICase system are reported below in Table 1:

Table 1

Year	Team	Outcome	Total
2011	Cleansing Services	Upheld	4
	Gas & Heating team	Upheld	1
	Waste management and collections	Not upheld	3
		Partially upheld	1
2012	Cleansing Services	Upheld	3
		Partially upheld	1
	Conways	Not upheld	1
	Parks and open spaces	Not upheld	1
	Possibly SBS	Withdrawn	1
	Public realm projects	Upheld	1

Year	Team	Outcome	Total
	Recycling and collection	Upheld	2
	School Transport	Withdrawn	1
	Waste management and collections	Not upheld Partially upheld Upheld	1 1 2
2013	Cleansing Services	Not upheld Upheld Withdrawn	3 1 1
	Community Warden Service	Upheld	1
	Home Ownership and TMI Team	Not upheld	1
	Major Works	Upheld	1
	Recycling and collection	Not upheld Partially upheld Upheld	2 1 2
	Repairs Mears	Upheld	1
	Temporary Accommodation	Not upheld	1
	Waste management and collections	Not upheld Upheld	10 9
2014	Cleansing Services	Upheld	2
	Repairs	Upheld	1
	Recycling and collection	Upheld	1
	Repairs Mears	Not upheld Upheld	1 2
	Waste management and collections	Upheld	3
Total			71

Complaints received through DriveCare are shown below in Table 2. Complaints received through the DriveCare reporting system typically relate to concerns about safety, parking and causing an obstruction to the highway. We are unable to provide details of action taken against the driver as this is an employment matter but as with the council's own reporting system, every report received is sent to the relevant management team for investigation.

Table 2

Year	Department	Number
2011	Cleansing services	15
	Building services	7
	Wardens	1
	Library service	1
	Property	1
	Pool car	1
2012	Cleansing services	6
	Building services	5
	Pool car	1
2013	Cleansing services	6
	Building services	14
	Wardens	1
	Play service	1
	Highways	1
	Temporary accommodation	2
	Enforcement	1

Year	Department	Number
2014	Cleansing services	5
	Building services	3
	Highways	1

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

How many new cycle stands does the council intend to install across the borough this year?

RESPONSE

The council has installed 253 on-highway cycle parking spaces at 139 sites in the financial year 2013/14.

For the 2014/15 financial year, a programme is yet to be agreed. Funds are available from Transport for London (TfL) for cycle parking and other sustainable transport initiatives, although not ring fenced specifically to cycle stands so figures cannot be verified at this stage.

Figures for previous years are:

- 2010-11: 20 stands, 40 spaces
- 2011-12: 71 stands 139 spaces
- 2012-13: 55 stands 100 spaces

We currently have plans to install five on street secure 'cycle hangers' in a trial funded by TfL's local implementation plan discretionary fund (£30,000) in the next two months. Cleaner greener safer funding in 2014/15 has also been allocated for the installation of a further three hangers, two in Dulwich and one in Peckham.

In addition, since May 2010 we have also installed 479 lockers on 46 estates (18%) with a further 261 to be installed this financial year.

The breakdown for cycle lockers on estates is as follows:

2010/11	177
2011/12	171
2012/13	131

55. QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY

Would the chair of overview and scrutiny committee (OSC) outline progress on considering, and helping implementation of, measures to reduce the unfairness faced by leaseholders to be displaced by the regeneration of the Aylesbury Estate, notably as exemplified by their representations to OSC on 10 March 2014?

RESPONSE

OSC held two meetings on this topic - at the first session we heard from council officers about the policy context. We went on to hear from a number of leaseholders who are in the process of buyback or have already been through it

and wanted to feed back their experience. The committee made a number of recommendations to cabinet covering the accessibility of the options open to leaseholders in this situation, the benefit of the valuations cases presently in hand, better promotion of the existing sources of advice to leaseholders, and the provision of independent surveyors' advice.

I am grateful to the cabinet for allowing time for our recommendations at last week's meeting, and I look forward to hearing a positive response in due course.