

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY JULY 8 2009**

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM MICK BARNARD**

Is the leader aware that despite 4 requests between 20.11.08 and 18.2.09 to provide documentary evidence to support an officers ruling on Mayor's gifts. It was not until 2.3.09 that information of a written protocol dated May 2008 was received. Can you provide the background to this protocol?

**RESPONSE**

I am aware that a number of requests have been made under the Freedom of Information Act relating to Mayor's gifts and that these were all fully answered within the deadlines. It is the case that a written protocol was drafted in May 2008 in an attempt to codify best and current practice and the section on gifts reiterates the legal requirements including those set out in the code of conduct for members.

**2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM LINDA DICKSON**

Should it come to light that an individual has failed to adhere to Southwark Council's constitution/protocol, what is the process for reporting and investigating such matters in the case of (1) A Councillor (2) An Officer?

**RESPONSE**

The council's constitution has a number of elements, and the process for resolving matters depends on the seriousness of the matter and the part of the constitution that has been breached. Where members of staff breach the constitution, the council's complaints process is the way to resolve it. This will be handled at an appropriate level within the relevant department.

If a member of the council has failed to adhere to the member code of conduct then a complaint could be made to the standards committee. Southwark has adopted a code of conduct that sets out rules governing the behaviour of its members. All councillors, co opted and independent members of the council are covered by the code.