

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY)

WEDNESDAY JULY 8 2009

URGENT QUESTION

**URGENT QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN**

Can the leader provide the details of any Southwark Council owned blocks that have been identified as being of the same design as Lakanal House? In the light of the fire at Lakanal House is the council proposing any emergency action, either in terms of physical works or information provision, in regards to these buildings?

RESPONSE

In Southwark alone we have 208 high rise blocks with single exit enclosed fire escapes and 29 large blocks of concrete and brick infill construction. Around 4500 properties in Southwark are in blocks that are 6 storeys or higher. We have received numerous enquiries from housing authorities in London and nationally given that these design characteristics are highly typical in 1960's architecture.

Given the tragic events at Lakanal on Friday we are rolling out additional community reassurance measures across our estates. This includes information on fire safety and on the measures each individual can take to make themselves safe. We are working closely with the London Fire Brigade on the investigation into the fire, and will comply willingly with any recommendations they make on fire safety in relation to our estates.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

How many blocks are there which are identically designed to Lakanal and Marie Curie in the borough and where are they – I wonder whether he knows that or could he or the deputy leader give that information to me within the course of the next day or so?

RESPONSE

I don't have that information but obviously we will show it as soon as it is available. What I can say, because I think there is a couple of bits of misinformation or folklore memories gone adrift; Lakanal House was built by the old Metropolitan Borough of Camberwell, designed in 1955, built by 1959. It is not an ex-GLC block as I think some people have said – I think some people saw an old GLC signs knocking about. It was a Camberwell designed, Camberwell Council built. I also want to make the point just for the sake of clarity. In my entire time on this council, and I have checked with Councillor Wingfield and I have checked with the chairs of the tenants association, it has never been to my knowledge a proposal to demolish Lakanal House. People were saying 2-3 years ago we were up for demolition and then the council changed their minds. I am not aware

and during my time as leader there has not been a proposal to demolish. There may have been talks about before 2002 but not since. Obviously we will get you the answer to that question.