

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY)

TUESDAY 26 JANUARY 2016

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE DALE

Can the leader give an update on the council's commitment to build 1,500 new council homes by 2018?

RESPONSE

131 new council homes have already been delivered, including the completion last year of 75 new homes at Willow Walk, all of which are now occupied. In addition, we are expecting the completion of a further 7 developments in the coming spring and summer, providing another 113 council rented homes, as well as 8 homes for shared ownership and 10 for private sale. A further scheme creating 112 new homes, including 50 at council rent, is due to start on site in the spring.

A further 22 sites have been approved by cabinet for inclusion in the programme, and these are in the initial design development or feasibility stages and are estimated to provide around 430 new homes.

On 15 September 2015, cabinet delegated the approval process for the inclusion of other sites within the programme, following initial resident consultation, to the cabinet member for regeneration and new homes. This will streamline the approval process and therefore assist with accelerating the programme.

The hidden homes programme, which brings back vacant spaces with blocks back into use by creating new homes, has already delivered 28 new homes, with a further 38 in the development pipeline.

Leathermarket JMB is also working on two schemes that could deliver 64 new homes.

S106 Purchase

The council exchanged on a scheme that will provide 56 council rented units and is due to complete early 2017. Exchange is imminent with another developer that would provide 34 units of which 24 would be council rent and 10 intermediate. The council is continuing to actively seek further opportunities.

Southwark Regeneration in Partnership (SRIP)

The SRIPs programme is currently at developer selection stage covering 19 sites that will deliver mixed tenure developments. Across these sites, a number of projects are due to start on site this year, delivering 294 council rent homes by 2018, along with 89 intermediate and 260 homes for sale. This element of the SRIPs programme is estimated to provide over 1,200 homes during the next 10 years.

In summary, sites to deliver around 1250 new homes by 2018 are already in the programme. Further opportunities have been identified, and will be following the

process for inclusion in the programme and initial resident consultation, over the next few months. These remaining sites will provide the additional homes required to meet the 1500 target by 2018.

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR HAMISH McCALLUM

Which frontline council services other than youth and play services are facing a 73% budget cut?

RESPONSE

It is simply not correct to say that the council's youth and play budget is taking a 73% cut next year; our budget options are being discussed at cabinet tomorrow and are still to be finalised as we seek to balance the books. While there will be a cut in budget for one part of our youth provision, we estimate that as a minimum, this council is currently committing more than £12m to the young people of this borough, not least the continuing Youth Fund of £1m, student bursaries for those most in need, through our libraries, parks, leisure and arts programmes, the Young Offenders Team, through Secondary and FE Employment and Inclusion and through our ever ambitious apprenticeship scheme. We are also committed to ongoing investment in capital projects such as the Mountview development in Peckham, Free Swim and Gym, the Old Vic scheme, the enhancements to all of our leisure centres and the new Castle Centre opening in the coming months. This is but a small sample of the value that this council places on young people.

Over the last 5 years, this council has had to make savings of over £150m and inevitably this has involved cutting significant parts and sometimes the whole of some services, either in a single year or over a number of years. As the government continues to cut funding for Southwark, we have to find new and different ways to deliver the services that people value, with less money to pay for it. We always try to be more efficient, but the simple scale of government funding reductions means that sometimes we have to take some difficult decisions and focus on allocating the resources that we have in the way that makes most impact.

Rather than cutting the same from every service, we are looking at all services to find the best ways of making savings. For example in Children and Adult services, adult services are taking a higher cut than children's services. We are also protecting our children's social services budget to protect the most vulnerable. These are choices that we are making about limiting the negative impact and protecting our most vulnerable residents first, including our most vulnerable children, young people and families.

While none of us like making cuts in those services that we value, we have no choice but to make changes in order to make the most of the reducing resources that we have available. We are committed to working with the voluntary sector and the young people who use our services to improve and update our youth offer, and we will be undertaking further consultation over and above the widespread discussions that we have already had with both young people in Southwark and our voluntary sector partners, in order to find innovative ways to deliver the services young people in Southwark want and need.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS

Can the leader explain what the likely impact of the government's pay to stay proposals will be for residents in Southwark on social rents?

RESPONSE

The most recent government proposals for 'pay to stay' are contained in the Housing and Planning Bill and a DCLG consultation document on pay to stay tapers that was published on 9 October 2015. As the Housing and Planning Bill is yet to make its passage through the House of Lords, the relevant sections of the bill are still subject to change.

As it stands, "High income social tenants" on household incomes of over £40,000 in London, or £30,000 nationally will be required to pay a market rent or close to market rent. £40,000 is not a particularly high household income in London given other higher living costs, and a household on an income of £40,000 would not be able to afford a high proportion of local market rents in Southwark, particularly for 2 beds and above, as demonstrated in the below table. It is essential that a safety net system is incorporated to ensure households are not made unintentionally homeless due to being unable to afford the increased rent relative to household income.

As the results of the consultation have not been published, it is not clear how a taper would operate. The only indication is from the DCLG impact assessment on the Housing and Planning Bill (including the pay to stay policy). This modelled income generated from the scheme from those earning between £40-50k in London paying 80% market rent, and those earning over £50k paying a market rent.

In addition it is not clear how the market rent will be defined: it could be a median or mean rent. The modelling below uses median rent, mean rents are nearly always higher due to some exceptionally high rents in Southwark. The modelling demonstrates the increases in rents from council rent to 60% market, 80% market and 100% market. Actual proportions of rent could be higher or lower once regulations are published.

Modelling impact on rents

Southwark average - The weekly market rent for a Southwark two bed property is £458. 80% of market rent would be £367. This would result in an increase from social rents in the region of £267. At a household income of £40,000, 48% of gross income would be spent on housing costs. For a 3 bed, the rent increase to 80% market would be £333. 58% of gross income would go on rent, 75% for a four-bed plus property. In reality this proportion would be even higher when calculated on the basis of 'take-home' pay, rather than gross income.

SE1 – The weekly market rent for a SE1 two bed property, our highest value area, is £548. 80% of market rent would be £438. This would result in an increase from social rents in the region of £339. Ignoring possible benefits, 57% of gross income would be spent on housing costs at a household income of £40,000. For a 3 bed, the rent increase to 80% market would be £398. 66% of gross income would go on rent, 75% for a four bed plus property.

SE15 - The weekly market rent for a SE15 two bed property is £345. 80% of market rent would be £276. This would result in an increase from social rents in the region of £177. Ignoring possible benefits, 36% of gross income would be spent on housing costs at a household income of £40,000. For a 3 bed, the rent increase to 80% market would be £241. 46% of gross income would go on rent, 70% for a four bed plus property.

		Modelling possible rent increases at 60%, 80% and full market rent								Modelling impact assessment values, £40-50k 80% market, £50k+ full market				
Area	Bed	South wark avg weekly council rent (LAHS 2015)	60 % median weekly market rent	80% median weekly market rent	100 % median weekly market rent	100 % weekly mean rent, to compare	Weekly increase in rent to 60% market	Weekly increase in rent to 80% market	Weekly increase in rent to 100 % market	Annual 80% market rent	Annual 100 % market rent	% of £40 K gross income on rent at 80% market	% of £49.99k gross income on rent at 80% market	% of £50 k gross income at 100 % market rent
South wark	1	90	227	303	379	414	137	213	289	158 11	197 64	40%	32%	40%
South wark	2	99	275	367	458	508	176	267	359	191 33	239 16	48%	38%	48%
South wark	3	109	331	442	552	659	223	333	443	230 40	288 00	58%	46%	58%
South wark	4 +	117	434	578	723	781	316	461	605	301 63	377 04	75%	60%	75%
SE1	1	90	241	322	402	458	151	232	312	168 00	210 00	42%	34%	42%
SE1	2	99	329	438	548	585	229	339	449	228 77	285 96	57%	46%	57%
SE1	3	109	380	506	633	768	271	398	524	264 19	330 24	66%	53%	66%
SE1	4 +	117	434	578	723	765	316	461	605	301 63	377 04	75%	60%	75%
SE5	1	90	181	242	302	308	91	151	212	126 05	157 56	32%	25%	32%
SE5	2	99	227	303	379	387	128	204	279	158 11	197 64	40%	32%	40%
SE5	3	109	299	399	498	512	190	290	390	208 03	260 04	52%	42%	52%
SE5	4 +	117	422	562	703	736	304	445	585	293 28	366 60	73%	59%	73%
SE11	1	90	215	287	359	369	125	197	269	149 76	187 20	37%	30%	37%
SE11	2	99	269	359	448	455	170	259	349	187 20	234 00	47%	37%	47%
SE11	3	109	359	478	598	633	250	370	489	249 60	312 00	62%	50%	62%
SE11	4 +	117	478	638	797	821	361	521	680	332 83	416 04	83%	67%	83%
SE15	1	90	185	246	308	360	95	156	218	128 45	160 56	32%	26%	32%
SE15	2	99	207	276	345	369	108	177	246	144 00	180 00	36%	29%	36%
SE15	3	109	262	350	437	486	154	241	328	182 40	228 00	46%	36%	46%
SE15	4 +	117	400	533	667	768	283	416	549	278 30	347 88	70%	56%	70%
SE16	1	90	215	287	359	365	125	197	269	149 76	187 20	37%	30%	37%

Area	Bed	Modelling possible rent increases at 60%, 80% and full market rent								Modelling impact assessment values, £40-50k 80% market, £50k+ full market				
		South wark avg weekly council rent (LAHS 2015)	60% median weekly market rent	80% median weekly market rent	100% median weekly market rent	100% weekly mean rent, to compare	Weekly increase in rent to 60% market	Weekly increase in rent to 80% market	Weekly increase in rent to 100% market	Annual 80% market rent	Annual 100% market rent	% of £40 K gross income on rent at 80% market	% of £49.99k gross income on rent at 80% market	% of £50 k gross income at 100% market rent
SE16	2	99	254	339	424	461	155	240	324	17683	22104	44%	35%	44%
SE16	3	109	338	451	563	657	229	342	455	23520	29400	59%	47%	59%
SE16	4+	117	404	538	673	687	286	421	555	28080	35100	70%	56%	70%
SE17	1	90	191	255	319	315	101	165	229	13315	16644	33%	27%	33%
SE17	2	99	245	327	409	408	146	228	309	17059	21324	43%	34%	43%
SE17	3	109	314	419	523	530	205	310	415	21840	27300	55%	44%	55%
SE17	4+	117	422	563	704	940	305	446	586	29376	36720	73%	59%	73%
SE21	1	90	172	230	287	289	82	140	197	12000	15000	30%	24%	30%
SE21	2	99	221	294	368	369	121	195	269	15360	19200	38%	31%	38%
SE21	3	109	262	350	437	479	154	241	328	18240	22800	46%	36%	46%
SE21	4+	117	388	517	646	653	270	400	529	26966	33708	67%	54%	67%
SE22	1	90	179	239	299	303	89	149	209	12480	15600	31%	25%	31%
SE22	2	99	210	281	351	421	111	181	251	14640	18300	37%	29%	37%
SE22	3	109	324	432	540	557	216	324	432	22560	28200	56%	45%	56%
SE22	4+	117	478	638	797	828	361	521	680	33283	41604	83%	67%	83%
SE24	1	90	183	244	305	297	93	154	215	12720	15900	32%	25%	32%
SE24	2	99	220	293	366	368	120	193	267	15274	19092	38%	31%	38%
SE24	3	109	324	431	539	522	215	323	431	22512	28140	56%	45%	56%
SE24	4+	117	476	635	793	823	359	517	676	33120	41400	83%	66%	83%

Sources: LAHS 2015, October 2015 Zoopla rent data from the Southwark Market Trends Bulletin

Number of tenants affected

The council does not routinely collect data on tenant household income, therefore the council is unaware of how many tenants would have a household income over £40k. Potentially more tenants could be affected over time. The impact assessment on the Housing and Planning Bill states that: "4.4.12 As earnings increase over time, households which are currently beneath the thresholds at which higher rents are charged will break through the thresholds and be added to the higher-income cohort." Therefore more households may be affected by the pay to stay over time unless these thresholds are increased.

Possible impact on rates of the right to buy and the availability of social rented housing

Some tenants faced with high proportions of market rent may choose to exercise the right to buy to avoid the high rents. For some households this may be unsustainable in the long term. The increased rate of right to buy would lead to a further reduction in the social rented stock.

Summary

The pay to stay proposals contained in the Housing and Planning Bill could have a significant negative impact on residents in Southwark, with council tenants seeing a huge increase in their rent that would be unaffordable for many. There is also a real risk that the proposals will:

- Negatively impact on achieving mixed and balanced communities. Southwark is a very diverse borough with a very high proportion of social rented housing (42%), and considerably higher in some areas. These proposals could lead to polarised communities if those on higher incomes move to cheaper areas to avoid paying the market rent.
- Discourage aspiration and betterment, acting as a disincentive to find work or better paid work, and also potentially increasing non reported cash in hand jobs.
- Force some tenants to exercise the right to buy for whom the costs of owning their own home are unsustainable in the longer term.
- Place a huge burden on the council in terms of administering the scheme, the cost of which would outweigh the limited and questionable benefits of implementing the scheme.

The council has raised its concerns around these proposals through the government's pay to stay consultation, and will continue to lobby the government against the disastrous Housing and Planning Bill, which could have a devastating effect on council housing in our borough.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS

Given that the reduced play service is moving from children's services to parks and leisure at the end of March, what steps has the leader taken to ensure that all the "new" positions will be filled by 1 April so that there is continuity of service?

RESPONSE

The council is currently in formal consultation with staff and trade unions. Some staff have requested voluntary redundancy and these requests will be considered alongside our primary concern that the community needs are met. Service managers have a number of options, including redeployment of staff across the service to ensure continuity of service provision, and agreeing the timing of departure for staff taking voluntary redundancy that works for the service.

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR BILL WILLIAMS

Can the leader explain how local residents will be consulted on the best location for the new Canada Water leisure centre?

RESPONSE

Consultation on a site for a new leisure centre at Canada Water will run in parallel with British Land's consultation on their planning application for a new town centre to be located on the printworks, Surrey Quay's Shopping centre and Mast Leisure centre sites.

British Land will be holding four drop in exhibitions of the emerging plans [including an interactive model] at the former Apple Snow unit opposite Tesco within the Surrey Quay's Shopping centre. These will be on: Friday 5 February [11-5pm], Saturday 6 February [10-4 pm], Wednesday 10 February [4-8pm], and Saturday 13 February [10-4pm]. There will also be local mini-exhibitions on 18 February [5.30-8pm] at the Osprey Estate TRA, Thursday 25 February [3-5.30pm] at Canada Estate Tenants Hall and Thursday 25 February [6.30-9pm] at Mayflower Tenants Association Hall. Southwark Council officers will be at all these sessions to answer questions and explain the leisure centre proposal and the alternative sites which have been considered.

British Land will issue a newsletter to 23,000 residents and local organisations to promote the consultation event. The newsletter will include a section which promotes the council's consultation sessions on the leisure centre site and a weblink where residents can find additional information and details of how they can provide us with their views. There will also be a letter from the cabinet member for regeneration and new homes which will be delivered alongside this newsletter setting out the leisure centre consultation in more detail.

We will also hold an open public meeting at the Canada Water Library at which residents will be able to raise any further questions they have arising from the other consultation events.

A final cabinet decision on whether to proceed with the preferred site will not be taken until early summer 2016. The report will be publically available and residents will be able to make representations to the cabinet if they wish and these will be considered before a decision is taken. The report will include details of the consultation responses which have been received by the council in response to the consultation.

The cabinet decision making timetable means that residents will be able to continue to provide views on the proposals and options throughout March until the end of April 2016. We will also hold meetings with interested local groups and residents during this period if requested. All the feedback from these events will be considered before

cabinet makes its final decision on whether to proceed with the preferred site in early summer.

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

Can the leader set out how many Southwark residents have responded to this year's council budget consultation so far?

RESPONSE

The main focus of the council's budget consultation for 2015/16 has been online through the council's website and community council meetings. There have been 303 responses to the consultation to date, which taken together with previous years consultation exercises means over 1,000 responses have been made over the last 3 years. There has also been ongoing consultation with voluntary and community sector organisations, and further consultation is taking place or will take place by departments on individual proposals.

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LUCAS GREEN

How will the council respond to the government's proposals to force any schools rated "inadequate" to automatically become academies?

RESPONSE

One of the council's key commitments is to drive up standards in Southwark schools and our school improvement team works with schools to help them make improvements, secure and remain being graded as Ofsted 'Outstanding' and 'Good' and prevent them being graded as 'Inadequate'. We regularly risk assess our schools so that as benchmarks are set by the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted requirements change, we can ensure that we can take swift action to ensure we minimise the threat to schools who may be at risk against new measures. This has been highly successful to date and we have no schools rated inadequate. Currently 91% of our schools are graded as good or outstanding. We are committed to keeping this offer for schools, which is why funding for the school improvement team is being protected despite significant budget pressures.

We believe that parents should always have a say in their child's education and completely oppose scrapping the requirement for academy sponsors to consult locally on whether they should take over schools. Changing the structure of a school does not necessarily guarantee an improvement in standards and in the case of schools rated inadequate, local experience in Southwark shows that intensive support from a local authority can help a struggling school get back on track. Over the last three years only 37% of secondary schools have actually improved their Ofsted rating after becoming academies, which the LGA has described as 'extremely worrying'.

We are constantly vigilant about the messages from the government about the proposals to move inadequate schools to academies and we have regular meetings and open lines of communication with the Regional Schools Commissioner and his representatives. We have and will continue to respond to consultations on any proposals for changes to the school system.

8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES

Please set out the current locations and number of homes to be provided by purchasing units from developers or housing associations as part of the administration's target of 11,000 new council homes over the next thirty years.

RESPONSE

To date 90 new dwellings have been secured or are in the course of being acquired through this initiative.

Contracts have now been exchanged for 56 units at 128-150 Blackfriars Road, SE1. Exchange is imminent on a further 34 units (10 of which are intermediate) on the site of the former Surrey Docks Stadium in Salter Road, SE16.

The potential for more acquisitions from developments in the pipeline is appraised as schemes come forward. At present several opportunities are being considered. Although it is too early to say conclusively which of these will yield additional units, there does appear to be good scope to make further contributions to the 11,000 new homes target from this source.

9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JASMINE ALI

What impact will the joint Southwark, Lambeth and Lewisham Better Placed Joint Committee on skills and employment have on people in the borough who are struggling to find employment?

RESPONSE

The establishment of the Southwark Lambeth and Lewisham Joint Committee was approved by cabinet in October 2015 to ensure effective and transparent governance of the three borough *Better Placed* initiative. *Better Placed* seeks to better understand the individual needs of residents furthest away from the labour market with the most complex circumstances, and ensure that the right support is available at the right time to deliver improved employment and skills outcomes. The evidence shows that local authorities are 'better placed' to deliver this type of support for local residents.

As part of *Better Placed*, the Pathways to Employment pilot has been designed to test an integrated work and skills pathway for residents with complex barriers to employment, supporting them from universal credit/welfare application to employment using a key worker approach. Phase 1 of the Pathways to Employment pilot, delivered in 2014/15 by Tomorrow's People, supported 111 residents into work with success rates far in excess of those of the work programme, clearly demonstrating the benefits of a localised approach. The Phase 2 pilot, contracted to a consortium led by St Giles Trust, will support many more residents into work from early 2016.

10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN

If the majority of residents say as part of the current consultation that they want the existing Seven Islands or the shopping centre overspill car park as the site for the new leisure centre at Canada Water, will the leader of the council listen?

RESPONSE

A final cabinet decision on whether to proceed with our preferred site for a new leisure centre at Canada Water will not be taken until early summer 2016. We think it is important for the health and well being of our residents that we not only provide improved facilities in the area to meet the demand arising from our free swim and gym policy, as well as an increasing population, but also that we maintain continuity of leisure provision in the area. We are consulting residents about these issues through a number of drop in exhibitions which will take place during February. Residents will also be able to make their views known via the council's website until the end of April. We will consider all the information collected through this process before taking a final decision on whether to proceed with our preferred site for a new leisure centre.

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

What action will the council take to prevent loss of Section 106 under government plans affecting contributions to local green spaces from future developments?

RESPONSE

The government's Housing and Planning Bill includes provision for the introduction of 'starter homes', which will be new homes offered for sale at 80% of market price to first-time buyers under the age of 40. The impact is unclear at present until more detail about the implementation of the Bill emerges, however if starter homes are counted as affordable housing then they will not have to pay financial contributions through the Community Infrastructure Levy or section 106.

The government has made changes to how planning obligations interact with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Southwark cannot "double charge" developers for the same infrastructure projects and since April 2015 we can no longer pool more than five S106 agreements (if they were entered into since 2010) or if it is for infrastructure capable of being funded by the CIL. This being the case, the council has made a commitment that 25% of all CIL collected in an area will remain in the area regardless of whether or not there is a local neighbourhood plan.

Furthermore the council is committed to a process by which the infrastructure priorities of local residents in an area are captured in community infrastructure project lists which will be updated yearly. Projects on these list, which can include local parks and publicly accessible green spaces, can be championed by anyone who lives, works or studies in Southwark and by local groups such as tenants and residents associations, youth groups, faith organisations, community groups or sports clubs. These lists are then approved on an annual basis by the community council. In addition, if a particular development has direct impact on a local space, S106 may be still negotiated to minimise the impacts.

12. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC REALM FROM COUNCILLOR JOHNSON SITU (PECKHAM AND NUNHEAD COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

We would like to ask the cabinet member for environment and public realm to lobby Transport for London (TfL) for the installation of a new bus stop along Peckham High Street? This was in light of the recent fatality of an elderly resident in Peckham.

RESPONSE

My thoughts are with the family following the recent tragic fatality.

The council with TfL are working to deliver a road safety scheme in Peckham town centre and within this I will work with Transport for London to consider the provision of a new bus stop on Peckham High Street.

13. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR BILL WILLIAMS (BERMONDSEY AND ROTHERHITHE COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

Can the leader of the council make sure that a full traffic management survey is carried out for the area between Great Dover Street, Borough High Street, Tower Bridge Road and the river? Also, that it includes any information obtainable from Network Rail?

RESPONSE

As part of the approval of Network Rail's works at London Bridge station they are committed to providing regular traffic analysis of local area, as described in your question. I'd be very happy to share the next report with ward members.

14. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

What steps is the council taking to prepare for any further closures of existing nursing homes in the borough?

RESPONSE

The council is actively developing an accommodation strategy for older people which will look at the needs of older people (both current and future) across the borough and how these can be met by utilising all models of care including care at home, extra care housing, shared lives arrangements, residential and nursing care. This will provide a framework for commissioning sufficient, quality nursing provision to meet future need. A workshop on this is planned for late February / early March.

In the interim, the following activity is underway:

- Re-establishing relationships with high quality providers of nursing care.
- Stabilising the current provision by continuing contract negotiations to strengthen our arrangements with them.
- Reviewing our accommodation portfolio with colleagues from housing to establish where there is potential to convert existing provision to nursing care.

15. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR MARIA LINFORTH-HALL

Will the council use its new powers to increase council tax by up to 2% to fund adult social care services in Southwark?

RESPONSE

We are minded to implement the government proposed precept for Adult Social Care in Southwark. Government funding to Local Authorities for Adult Social Care has been

significantly reduced year on year since 2010 and this undermines quality care and effective partnership work between the NHS and social care. The c.£1.7m per annum that this precept will raise is of course welcome but wholly insufficient when compared to the cuts that Local Authorities are facing from government. It simply makes no sense to protect the NHS and to, again, cut funding to Local Authorities for Adult Social Care. This is not a whole-system response from government and makes a challenging job for Local Authorities all the more difficult.

The government's decision to postpone the implementation of part 2 of the Care Act [Funding Reform – postponed indefinitely, likely 2020 we're told] leaves people using Adult Social Care services, their families, providers and people working in the sector in a further prolonged period of uncertainty and that is causing some instability in parts of the sector, such as care homes. Should we decide to implement the precept we will use this to stabilise local provision and to invest in quality of care, whilst continuing to lobby Government to finally take a coordinated approach, in support of integration of health and social care and to fairly funding our public care system.

16. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN DENNIS

Can the cabinet member give an update on progress on the mental health challenge?

RESPONSE

Southwark Council has recently signed up to the Mental Health Challenge and I would like to congratulate Councillor Dennis who has been appointed as our Mental Health Champion. A working party of councillors has been established who will be raising awareness of mental health issues in the development of council policies and strategies.

The Southwark Mental Health Social Care Review was completed in August 2015. It is a vision paper which details what is needed for effective change for delivering mental health social work nearer the front of the system at the interface of primary and secondary care. In implementing and developing the review, full consultation has happened with partner organisations and full consultation with all staff members and groups.

A steering group has been established with wide membership with our partners e.g. Voluntary Sector, South London and Maudsley (SLaM), Housing, CCG and Local Care Networks, GP's, and Looked after Children.

Meetings are taking place regularly with SLaM to maintain integration that is more focussed on the primary/secondary care interface along with meeting other partner organisations including users and carers as the model of delivery is developed.

The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has now carried out an analysis of the capacity needed to carry out the consultation and drafting of a Southwark Joint Mental Health Strategy, which was a key recommendation of the recent Mental Health Social Care Review. CCG will publish an "expression of interest" for a specialist company to undertake this work within the next two weeks. The council will contribute resources and expertise to this work.

17. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR KARL EASTHAM

How much additional funding would the government's proposed 2% council tax precept for social care raise in Southwark? What proportion of the adult social care budget would this cover?

RESPONSE

The government's proposed 2% precept for adult social care would raise in the region of £1.7m per annum for Southwark. To put this in context, the total budget for adult social care in Southwark is £80,286,536. This year we have to make approximately £30m of cuts to adult social care; the income generated through the precept represents only 5% of that amount so this precept would not even begin to plug the gap in the social care budget.

However any additional funding for social care is welcome and our focus for this additional and ring-fenced funding would be quality of service for older people and adults with disabilities living at home, in extra care housing, in care homes and especially in nursing care homes. Building on the Southwark Ethical Care Charter which is already making a significant difference to residents with care and support needs, our focus for investment is quality of care – treating our residents with dignity and respect and treating care staff fairly.

18. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR ELEANOR KERSLAKE

How many 11 year olds in the borough have taken up the Smart Savers offer and signed up to the credit union?

RESPONSE

In total 512 vouchers have been redeemed by 11 year olds signing up to the credit union through the council's Smart Savers offer, which is an 11% take up rate. 91% of vouchers used were to create a new account, rather than applied to existing credit union accounts and 56 other accounts have also been set up at linked addresses (e.g siblings). There has been a 29% increase overall in junior accounts at the credit union. The average balance on new accounts is £33, indicating additional monies being paid in and few withdrawals. We will be sending out the vouchers for this year just before February half term.

19. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

Please set out the number of new requests for adult care social services that have been made by both vulnerable and non-vulnerable residents over the past five years and how many of each category have been accepted or rejected each year?

RESPONSE

The number of requests for adult social care services in each of the last five years are set out in the table below.

New requests for services	Year				
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Services offered	2740	1975	2155	2210	2235
Services not offered	3515	3030	3865	4895	3940
Total requests	6255	5005	6020	7105	6175
Sources:	Annual Referrals, Assessments and Packages of Care (RAP) returns, Tables A11, R2 and R3, HSCIC (discontinued 2013/4). Short and Long Term Support (SALT) return, Table STS1 (for 2014/15), HSCIC.				

All of those who are offered services can be considered to be “vulnerable”, people who are not offered services have needs which are assessed as not being substantial or critical. Additionally, the council funds many voluntary sector services for people with lower level needs and sign-posts residents and carers where appropriate.

20. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR REBECCA LURY

What has been the initial response from GPs and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to the introduction of debt advisers in GP surgeries?

RESPONSE

In partnership with the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and other organisations, the council’s local support team (Rightfully Yours) commenced a six month pilot working in one of Southwark’s GP surgeries from the 9 December 2015.

With support from both the CCG and from GPs, they are providing patients attending Bermondsey Spa Medical Centre with debt support and guidance. Local support officers are based in the surgery all day on Wednesday and on Thursday afternoons. They are available to answer any queries direct from visitors to the centre and to receive any specific referrals of patients from their GPs.

GPs have told us that there is a link between an individual’s capacity to manage personal finances and their health and well being. We are keen to respond to this link in a positive way so that we may help find the root cause of any financial problems that an individual may have and therefore help to improve their general health. GP’s and CCG have been very positive about the pilot to date and continue to support our presence at their surgery. To date, 20 patients have been referred to us and we are continuing to work with the practice manager to increase awareness of the service being offered, both to GPs and to their patients. We are monitoring outcomes so that a decision can be made later this year on whether to roll out this service to other surgeries in Southwark.

21. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR SUNIL CHOPRA

Can the cabinet member give an update on the progress of the ethical care charter?

RESPONSE

The Southwark Ethical Care Charter has been implemented in all directly contracted home care services. This has improved staff retention and subsequently provided better continuity of care and lower levels of complaints amongst these services compared to the previous year. The council is currently concluding an extensive engagement programme which has included both care workers and people who use the service before advertising for new home care contracts that will ensure that all spot purchased and children's home care is fully covered by the Southwark Ethical Care Charter by the end of the next financial year.

22. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION FROM COUNCILLOR EVELYN AKOTO

Can the cabinet member give an update on the progress of the work to make Southwark an Age Friendly Borough?

RESPONSE

The council was awarded Age Friendly Borough status by the World Health Organisation in the summer of 2015 so we already have a solid foundation to build on.

Over the last few months, colleagues have been working with local organisations that represent and support older people, and key partners, on our community conversation and cabinet will consider our co-produced action plan in the spring.

Additionally Southwark is working to become a Dementia Friendly Community and has just been accepted on the national programme which means that in partnership with Southwark Dementia Action Alliance, we can issue accreditation to local organisations and businesses in our community that are taking action to be supportive of people with dementia.

23. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES OKOSUN

What progress has there been implementing each of the Childcare Commission recommendations?

RESPONSE

The cabinet gave its response to the Childcare Commission in July 2015 and a full report on progress and further actions will be presented to Cabinet in April 2016.

24. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS

Can the cabinet member confirm the number of additional reception places that will be available from September 2016?

RESPONSE

An additional 330 permanent reception places, and an additional 120 temporary reception places will be provided in September 2016, totalling 450 additional places for reception age children at the beginning of the next academic year.

Since September 2008, the authority has added 800 places to reception provision, an increase of around 25%.

25. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS FROM COUNCILLOR RADHA BURGESS

Can the cabinet member give an update on the implementation of the council tax exemption for Southwark foster carers and adopters?

RESPONSE

Southwark Council recognises that foster carers and adopters play a vital role in looking after children and young people in Southwark. This initiative recognises the huge commitment foster carers and adopters make particularly to some of our most vulnerable children in our borough. From 1 April 2015, foster carers who live in Southwark have been eligible to receive a discretionary relief from council tax if they are actively fostering, or will be actively available to foster, one or more young persons under an arrangement with the council. During 2015/16, 63 foster carers have been awarded council tax relief of £47,385.30 and the relief will continue to be available in 2016/17.

Council tax exemption for new adopters, who live in Southwark and adopt Southwark children, will be covered through post-adoption benefit payments, with council tax being paid for two years post-adoption.

26. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS FROM COUNCILLOR SUNNY LAMBE

Can the cabinet member explain what work is being done to ensure that pupil premium for eligible three and four year olds is being claimed?

RESPONSE

The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) was introduced across the country from April 2015 and is targeted at children aged three and four who meet certain funding criteria, similar to those used to assess eligibility for free school meals. The funding of up to £302 per annum is paid to the early years setting that the child is attending in order to provide for the needs of disadvantaged children.

Southwark has ensured that all early years settings with three and four year old children are aware of EYPP through providing briefings, both through meetings and letters. This has involved schools, private, voluntary and independent sector settings as well as childminders.

Southwark also has an important role in checking which parents are eligible for funding. Parents complete an application form and these are sent by the early years provider to the council to be checked. The setting is then advised which children are eligible for funding.

Finally, Southwark is responsible for making EYPP payments to the providers. Schools, nurseries and childminders provide a census return to the local authority each term with details of which children are receiving free nursery education. This now includes details of which children are entitled to EYPP, and this is used to calculate the EYPP payments made to the setting.

27. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE PUBLIC REALM FROM COUNCILLOR ROSIE SHIMELL

Please confirm the overall number of flytipping incidents and actions recorded by the council in 2014-2015.

RESPONSE

The council has a very strong record on clearing fly tipping quickly and efficiently. A total of 5,563 reports of fly tips were received by the council between April 2014 and March 2015. Over 98% of these were cleared within 24 hours of being reported.

In addition to this, the cleaning service cleared an additional 20,020 fly tips proactively, before the public had seen and reported the flytipping. This demonstrates that the council clears the vast majority of fly tips before the public even see them.

These figures are collated on a monthly basis and sent to DEFRA where they are published and available to view on their website by accessing the 'Flycapture' database. While some other boroughs only record fly tips reported by the public, Southwark ensures we report all fly tips in the borough, including those collected proactively.

We recognise that fly tipping is still a problem in the borough despite our good record of clearing it, so we are also working to reduce fly-tipping through enforcement, wardens, police and cleaning all working in the same service area, so that real joined up working is finally possible. This will mean a 'whole council' approach to these problems.

28. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE PUBLIC REALM FROM COUNCILLOR DAMIAN O'BRIEN

What steps is the council taking to re-introduce the cycle to work scheme for its employees?

RESPONSE

As part of the council's workforce strategy, officers are exploring the re-introduction of the "cycle to work" scheme as a benefit for employees.

Two potential scheme providers have been identified, with a view to launching the scheme in spring 2016.

29. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

Please provide a table showing how long the council has taken to approve applications by leaseholders and freeholders for works to their homes over the past five years (broken down by the number of each group receiving permission within periods of 1-3 months; 3-6 months; 6-9 months; over 9 months in each year).

RESPONSE

Overview						Timeframe for Consent in Principle to be granted				
Year	Total applications received	Applications withdrawn	Applications Declined	Consent in Principle Pending	Consent in Principle granted	Up to 3 months	3-6 months	6-9 months	9-12 months	Over 12 months
2009	18	9	0	0	9	1	1	1	3	3
2010	37	17	0	0	20	7	2	1	1	9
2011	179	82	3	1	93	67	11	5	2	8
2012	198	83	2	4	109	81	10	8	0	10
2013	290	149	3	10	128	89	14	13	5	7
2014	252	89	8	46	109	50	11	10	17	21
2015	195	13	4	103	75	64	8	3	0	0

Please note:

These figures reflect the status of applications for Landlord's Consent to Make Alterations received within each calendar year.

When consent in principle is granted, homeowners are permitted to commence works. Formal consent is provided when the homeowner informs the council that works have been completed, a post-works inspection confirms that all conditions of the consent in principle have been met and all required certifications are in place.

The form of the formal consent may take a number of forms depending on the nature of the works carried out and their effect on the lease/transfer agreement.

The table above shows the number of applications received, withdrawn, declined and given consent in principle, as well as the numbers still pending and the timeframe in which permission was granted. Consent in principle is needed by leaseholders and freeholders before work can commence whilst formal consent is granted once work has been completed and post-work inspection has been carried out to confirm that the conditions of the consent in principle have been met.

The figures above show a significant increase in the number of applications by council leaseholders and freeholders for permission to carry out alterations to their properties. In 2009 there were only 18 such applications, of which 9 were later withdrawn by the applicant, whilst they have exceeded 190 in the last four years. As the figures above show, this has resulted in delays in being able to process this caseload. However, the

2015 applications where consent was given in principle were all agreed within six months.

As part of the council's recent changes to its leaseholder services, emphasis is being put on dealing with applications more quickly, in particular the more straight-forward requests. This will further improve the timescales in which these decisions are taken.

30. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR BEN JOHNSON

Does the cabinet member agree that the government's new starter homes policy will have a negative impact on affordable housing provision in the borough and how will the policy be mitigated against in the New Southwark Plan?

RESPONSE

The Housing and Planning Bill proposes a duty on planning authorities to require a proportion of starter homes on all reasonably sized sites. The details of this requirement will be established through enabling regulations which have not yet been published in draft form. As such it is difficult to forecast the effect of the policy on the borough's affordable housing provision. The government is currently consulting on proposed changes to National Planning Policy Guidance to include starter homes within the definition of affordable housing.

It is likely that starter homes provision will not represent additional housing supply but rather it will, to some extent, be provided in place of traditional rented affordable housing. If this is confirmed in changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and in regulations following on from the Housing and Planning Bill we will have to use whatever powers we have to ensure that our priority, to provide social rented housing to meet the real needs of the borough, prevail. This policy is backed up by hard evidence of need. The policies in the New Southwark Plan currently out to consultation on its 'preferred options' draft make it very clear what the council's priorities are.

The council will need to reevaluate local planning policy when further details emerge to ensure that policy continues to meet local housing needs to the greatest extent possible within the limits of what is viable and permissible under the legislation.