

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

29 NOVEMBER 2017

RESPONSES TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. QUESTION FROM AMIR EDEN TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

On behalf of residents we offer our support to the council and ask that the discussions with the GLA about the Old Southwark Fire Station redevelopment be swiftly concluded, to prevent further delay of the school and the subsequent impact on children.

Please update us on the matter?

RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES

Southwark Council supports the provision of a new secondary school at this site. However, the planning application for the Old Southwark Fire Station redevelopment has been submitted with no affordable housing and this issue is currently being reviewed by the Greater London Authority.

The council is aware of the urgency of this planning decision as the proposal includes the construction of a new secondary school which is a critical piece of new community infrastructure and has time-limited funding.

The council is liaising directly with the Greater London Authority to determine the issue as soon as possible. We are doing all we can to proceed with this application and make a decision on the planning application in January.

2. QUESTION FROM NICK GRENSIDE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, SAFETY AND LEISURE

I feel we are not prepared enough for the indirect impacts of terrorist attacks. Residents were left seriously impacted and without help from authorities after the London Bridge incident, such as vulnerable residents of Lucy Brown House. What measures are in place if an attack was to happen again?

RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

London faced wicked attacks on an unprecedented scale during the summer of 2017. The speed and scale of the attack on the borough on Saturday 3 June was distinctive, targeting people enjoying a night out, causing major disruption at one of London's busiest transport hubs and creating huge anxiety and upset amongst residents and local businesses. Despite the unprecedented, swift and violent nature of the attacks, the borough's established emergency procedures for managing our response held up extremely well. Although there is no room for complacency and we would not wish to see such events on this scale hurt our borough again, the council's response was commended externally – which is especially reassuring given the stretch on available resources due to scale of events across London over the summer.

The borough emergency control centre (BECC) was established within 30 minutes of the first reported attacks and once operational an early priority was to gather as much information as possible, especially in consideration of those most vulnerable so that support could be provided as swiftly and sensitively as possible. This took place at a time of considerable information flow in and out and our priority remaining on supporting residents and businesses during this horrific incident.

Although the preferred option in such events will be to place displaced residents in temporary accommodation we have in place arrangements to provide temporary rest centres for residents displaced from their premises due to emergency events.

We have identified suitable premises for use for a range of situations and at various locations throughout the borough. We constantly review and amend our records of these premises.

We have a designated on call rest centre manager whose task is to open and establish a rest centre when required. We have rest centre “start up packs” held at Tooley Street and Queens Road together with a smaller version carried on the emergency planning vehicle. Once a rest centre is required, we have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the British Red Cross to provide support and additional officers to run the rest centre.

These procedures have been tested and activated on numerous occasions.

Returning to the awful night of 3 June at London Bridge and subsequent response:

Lucy Brown House was not evacuated. Residents remained in the premises. It is possible that a resident was denied access through police cordons to gain access to the building during the initial stages of the incident.

Our incident log confirms Lucy Brown House was discussed during the early stages of the incident (01.45) together with the vulnerabilities of the residents. By 10:24 the following morning we had confirmation that support workers were accessing Lucy Brown House.

For those residents that were actually displaced during the incident, we opened a rest centre at London Southbank University on the night of the attack. The centre had capacity for up to 200 people. Only a handful of people attended the centre and none opted to remain at the centre - all choosing to make their own alternative arrangements.

On the second night we opened a smaller rest centre in Jamaica Road – no one attended and it was closed the following morning.

3. QUESTION FROM TOBY O'CONNOR TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES

Why has the council chosen against coming into line with other progressive boroughs like Camden, Croydon, Tower Hamlets, Lambeth and Hackney for example by developing a Local List? Why did the council drop policy DM55 “Local list buildings and views” from the New Southwark Plan (NSP) Options

Draft of October 2014?

RESPONSE

When making planning decisions affecting non-designated heritage assets the council takes full account of paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states:

"The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

The council has chosen to integrate the protection of buildings that are not protected as listed or in a conservation area into the area guidance. Most of the borough now has area action plans or supplementary planning guidance and most of the conservation areas have conservation area appraisals. The policy and guidance requires planning permission and consideration of the historic merits of local buildings that are considered to be important. There are some neighbourhood areas which do not have guidance where we would expect the neighbourhood forums to put forward local buildings with historic merit in a similar way. We will be preparing some guidance for the Bankside, Borough and London Bridge area that is not covered by neighbourhood areas which will cover these matters.

We consider the protection through planning policy to be more effective as the buildings can be considered within the local policy context.

We have also responded to local concerns about the protection of non-designated heritage assets by identifying opportunities to designate or extend conservation areas, with two notable examples being the Valentine's Place Conservation Area and the Liberty of the Mint Conservation Area.