

Item No. 5.	Classification: Open	Date: January 30 2008	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Members' Question Time	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Legal and Democratic Services	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.9 member's question time shall not exceed 30 minutes. During this time, members may not question any one executive member or committee chair for longer than fifteen minutes.

Members are limited to one question at each meeting.

Questions to the leader will be taken first, followed by questions to other executive members. The strategic director of legal and democratic services will rotate the order in which the different political groups ask questions of the leader (CAPR 3.9.5). Questions to executive members will be taken in the order of receipt and portfolio. The order of portfolios will be rotated at each meeting such that the executive member answering questions immediately after the leader will be the last executive member to answer any questions at the next meeting of council assembly in which questions are put to executive members.

Executive members and committee chairs have discretion to refer a question to another executive member if this is appropriate.

Responses to member's questions will be circulated on yellow paper around the council chamber on the evening of the meeting.

The Mayor will ask the member asking the question if they wish to ask one supplemental question to the member to whom the question was asked. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. Therefore, supplemental questions to the leader or other executive members are not free ranging.

No question shall be asked on a matter concerning a planning or licensing application.

Note: In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.9 (10) & (11) (prioritisation and rotation by the political groups) the order in which questions appear in this report may not necessarily be the order in which they are considered at the meeting.

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

Can the leader outline what the council is doing to increase participation in the democratic process?

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH

Does the leader believe that there will be an above inflation increase in council tax this year?

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

Can the leader inform assembly of how many times in each of the last five years the town hall or other council buildings have been used for surgeries by local Members of Parliament?

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

Can the leader outline what work is being done in the borough to provide homeless people opportunities to gain permanent work?

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS

Will the leader explain what representations have been made to the government by him and other executive members about Southwark's Local Government grant settlement?

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON

Will the leader provide assembly with an update on the status of proposals for Surrey Square Park?

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR TIM MCNALLY

Will the leader update assembly on the achievements of Southwark's pupils in the recent round of Key Stage 2 tests?

8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

Does the executive member for regeneration's intention to take up full time employment with Lexington Communications, representatives of Balfour Beatty, BeeBee Developments, Wharf Land Investment, Places for People Developments and Gladedale Group make his current position untenable?

9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARY FOULKES

On what date did the leader first know that the Aylesbury estate regeneration faced funding pressures? On what date did the Leader first inform the executive member for Regeneration that the Aylesbury estate regeneration project faced funding pressures? In what format did he communicate these problems to the executive member?

10. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES GURLING

Can the executive member for leisure, culture and sport inform council of the travel time to the London 2012 Athletics Track from a) Sydenham Hill Station, b) Queen's Road, Peckham Station and how this compares to major cities in the UK and Europe?

11. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU

Will the executive member for leisure, culture and sport provide details of how much finance has been given to Southwark by central government in order to promote tourism and cultural events during the 2012 Olympics? Can she provide a breakdown by community council area?

12. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

What is the additional cost to the library service of the extended opening hours at Dulwich, Newington and John Harvard libraries?

13. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ADE LASAKI

How much money did the council receive from the organisers of the Tour De France Grand Depart event in recognition of the fact that Southwark hosted part of the route?

14. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

Can we be confident that the library service is fully prepared to maximise the benefits of the National Year of Reading?

15. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

What feedback has been received in response to the recent consultation exercises regarding the improvements to Dulwich Leisure Centre and Surrey Docks Water Sports Centre?

16. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

Are final figures available for participation levels in this year's summer reading challenge in libraries?

17. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON McGOVERN

Before the last election the controlling group made pledges to keep council tax under inflation and bring all the boroughs leisure centres up to a 21st century standard. Now we see speculation in the press that in order to do the first the council may be willing to close three leisure centres. Can the member assure me that the executive will stick to all of its pre-election pledges by guaranteeing the future of all of the borough's leisure

centres? Can she also assure me that the centres will undergo all planned improvements and that current levels of service will not be cut?

18. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR MACKIE SHEIK

Will the executive member for resources indicate how Southwark's position on the index of deprivation has been reflected in Southwark's local government grant settlement?

19. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR JELIL LADIPO

Will the executive member outline what impact the number of high-rise blocks has on the calculation of the housing revenue account subsidy?

20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ANNE YATES

Will the executive member for resources explain the impact of the calculation formula for children and younger adults social services on Southwark's local government grant settlement?

21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE

How does the executive member intend to curtail the chronic overspending experienced in quarters 1 and 2 across council departments?

22. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR SUSAN ELAN JONES

Will executive members have offices in the new building on Tooley Street? How much space in square meters will those offices take up? (Multiply by factor of £420 psm pa £39 psf pa)

23. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR SANDRA RHULE

With regard to the new building on Tooley Street, how does the executive member propose to fill the gap between the £168,549,496 to pay the 25 year lease and the amount the council anticipates receiving in asset sales? How much of the £30m asset sales will stay in the area where the assets are being sold to regenerate the area? How much does he estimate will be lost by local businesses when the council moves out?

24. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS PAGE

How much was spent on conferences, away days and staff events that were not held on council property by the council last year? Please itemise your answer per department. How much would the events have cost if they were held in council buildings (such as Cator Street)?

25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE

Was the executive member aware of the likelihood of a difficult settlement for the next three years before he set last year's budget?

26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE

How much does the council currently spend on licenses for software (Microsoft Office, Windows, Adobe Writer, Adobe Photoshop, etc) or how much were they worth when they were transferred to Serco? Could the council save money in the future by switching to the use of open source software?

27. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY

20% of the council's revenue expenditure is on staff. In the current financial situation Southwark residents and employees will want to be assured that the council's spending on staffing is fair and prudent. How much will the council spend on consultants in the present financial year? Please itemise your answer by department. How much did pay rises for the top 10% of employees cost the council last year?

28. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ANDREW PAKES

How much does the council spend every year on legal fees for lawyers from external firms who are not council officers?

29. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY

How much was spent on decorating offices last year (including all new furniture, paint, etc)? How much of that was spent on offices that will be vacated by the council following the move to Tooley Street?

30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER

What was the insurance value of the council's ICT equipment when it was sold to Serco for £1? Under the contract does the ownership of all new ICT equipment bought by the council until 2012 default to Serco?

31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR TAYO SITU

How much is spent on all travel expenses (including car allowances) for executive members?

32. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH

How does the executive member propose to bring down spending on refreshments? Would moving from bottled water to the more environmentally friendly filtered tap water save the council money?

33. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM

What assistance including possible extra funding has the council given to the Southwark Pensioners Centre to ensure that it stays open and provides vital services to older people in the borough?

34. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY

Would the executive member please confirm that the Elephant & Castle regeneration will safeguard the existing Bakerloo Line tube tunnels extending a short way South East from the Elephant & Castle, and will not in any way prejudice the eventual realisation of an extension of the Bakerloo Line to Camberwell and/or Peckham?

35. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

How much does the executive member's department estimate the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) along the Walworth Road have lost financially as a result of the disruption caused by the redevelopment project? What proportion of this will the council give back to those SMEs in compensation?

36. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR DANNY McCARTHY

How does the executive member think that the end of the multimillion pound neighbourhood renewal funding will affect his department and the community?

37. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR GORDON NARDELL

Does the executive member think that scrapping the F and G grades at GCSE would help struggling school children in Southwark?

38. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON

Could the executive member ascertain from Transport for London (TfL) why the Highwood Barracks bus shelter has not been reinstated, six months after a TfL statement that they are "working to re-install the much needed shelter as soon as possible" and despite repeated requests from council officers and ward councillors?

39. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR JENNY JONES

Will the council set up specialist recycling facilities in the borough both for low energy bulbs that contain mercury and require specialist recycling, and for tetrapak type cartons?

40. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD

What are the future plans for the Arbitration Unit? Can we have assurances that this important service will continue to provide an accessible means of compensation and redress for those tenants suffering from unacceptable delays in getting urgent repairs carried out?

41. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES

Can the executive member please quantify in full the gap in funding faced by Southwark Council to finance decent homes works?

42. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR KIRSTY MCNEILL

How would the Executive Member characterise the quality of the in-house pest control service? Is he content with the service delivery standards at present?

43. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD

What was the total cost of the "Changing for the Better" programme, including staff time on consultations, redundancy costs, consultancy costs and costs associated with design of a logo and communications activities? Please itemise each cost individually and provide a total figure. Are there any ongoing costs?

44. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR OLAJUMOKE OYEWUNMI

How many vacancies are there for staff posts within what was the housing department? How are these gaps being filled? What is the cost to date of these interim measures within this financial year?

45. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCROFT

What percentage of stock on the Aylesbury estate is 'non-decent' according to the statutory standard? If the Aylesbury estate was not to be demolished, how would the executive member propose to bring these properties up to the decent homes standard by the legal deadline?