

WEDNESDAY 25th JUNE 2003

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY)

URGENT QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY GROUP LEADERS IN ACCORDANCE
WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 3.11

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS

Can the Leader of the Council give any updates regarding enquiries involving Members and the Standards Board for England and the Commission for Racial Equality?.

RESPONSE

As far as I am aware the Standards Board is currently looking at 3 allegations regarding Southwark Councillors, and the Commission for Racial Equality is looking at one.

Given that these matters are currently being investigated I do not think it appropriate for me to comment on them in a public forum, although I will say I am concerned at the length of time the Standards Board investigations can take - in particular one allegation has been outstanding for over 8 months.

I am aware that regulations will soon be in force to provide for local determination of complaints by the Standards Committee, and I would hope that this will provide for a speedier process.

I should note that as Leader of the Council I do not have a specific remit in respect of Standards Board matters – rather that falls to the Standard Committee. Although the process has not yet been used, Council Procedure Rules do provide for questions in respect of the Committee's remit to be asked of the Chair of that Committee.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS

Is the Leader aware whether Councillor Pidgeon's letter to the Standards Board for England arising out of comments made by Councillor Vicky Naish at the last Council meeting when documents were going out in her name without her knowledge are also being investigated as part of this inquiry by the Standards Board for England.

RESPONSE

Councillor Pidgeon has not received a substantive response to that letter yet.