

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 23rd JULY 2003

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE RULE 3.8 : MEMBERS
QUESTION TIME

(NOTE): In accordance with Council Assembly Procedure Rule 3.8 (9) & (10) (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 set out in the agenda).

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS

Would the Leader of the Council agree with Councillor Ian Wingfield that the Liberal Democrats were being very naïve to think that they were going to walk away from this (the Atkins Contract) without paying a penny?

RESPONSE

Cllr Wingfield's comments are not correct on more than one aspect. For a start, it wasn't the Council that chose to 'walk away' from a five year contract for education support services - it was W S Atkins. Furthermore, contrary to Cllr Wingfield's pessimism, the Council has managed to terminate the contract with Atkins on a much better basis than that proposed by the Government.

On learning that the shortfall between the financial settlement and compensation offered by Atkins and funding from the DfES was approximately £1.5 million - and given the clear commitment by Estelle Morris and others that the Council would not have to bear costs following a premature termination- the Executive was simply not prepared to terminate the contract on this basis.

The Executive therefore instructed the Chief Executive to negotiate improved financial terms and so discussions with Atkins and the DfES continued that week. Further to this, and a public appeal from me to the Government on the *Today* programme, the Executive was able to substantially improved terms which allowed us to terminate the contract with Atkins.

I am very grateful to Southwark's MPs who lobbied DfES ministers on our behalf. However, it's a great shame that having publicly talked of working on a cross-party basis on this issue, Cllr Wingfield has gone back on this. The plain fact is that Southwark schools will not have to pay for the failure of the Atkins contract.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS

Would the Leader agree that the only person who was naïve was Councillor Wingfield, if he did not think that his comments might be misinterpreted and could cost this Authority £1½ million pounds. Would the Leader of the Council further agree that this is yet another example of Councillor Wingfield's malignant obsession with doing Southwark down.

RESPONSE

I don't think Councillor Wingfield was being naïve because all the experience in the first intervention that we had in 2000 was that DfES always got their way in the end and did to Southwark what ever they wanted to do with Southwark and on past history it has to be said that in the past when ever DfES have told us what to do, we have done it and Councillor Wingfield could be forgiven for thinking that was the way things would go this time. I have to say as a result of the Executive deciding to stick to its guns and decided that it was unacceptable for us to negotiate with Atkins on the basis that would leave us £1½ million short on the Education budget and as a result of common sense prevailing with Ministers in the DfES, that we were able to reach a compromise agreement, which ended-up with us not having to take any money out of the Education budget; to take account of the fact that an Education contractor foisted on us by the Government on the terms of the contract drafted for us by the Government, was walking away because they did not like what was happening to their profit margin as a result of Government changes to the funding rules. I have to say I have not been terribly troubled so far in the last year by Councillor Wingfield as Leader of the Opposition and I don't anticipate given the current style he is going to make life any more difficult for us over the next year either.

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE

Does the Leader accept the findings of the Southwark Group of Tenants Organisation survey on the best value options for housing management as presented by the deputation at the last Council Assembly?

RESPONSE

I have not been provided with details of the survey carried out by the Southwark Group of Tenants Organisation and am therefore unable to comment on its findings. The presentation by the deputation at the last Council Assembly only provided verbal details of the survey, which does not appear to have been followed up by hard documented evidence. Certainly I have seen no evidence of the questions, the scope of the survey, the respondents nor the analysis of data other than what has been in the local press.

As Leader, I and the Executive have reached all decisions to date and will reach all future decisions based upon the wide ranging consultation, plus the other key Best Value elements of Comparison, Challenge and Competition.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE

I am very disappointed by the response from the Leader. He says that he has not been provided with details of the survey carried out by SGTO, whereas my colleague Councillor Colley has pointed out, this obviously means he has not read that latest edition of SGTO Messenger where the results are fully detailed for his information. Anyway my question is why should the tenants of this Borough or indeed any resident of the Borough trust him or indeed his Lib-Dem administration on any issue where they obviously don't listen except when it suits them.

RESPONSE

I think trust is an important word and I think it is something which politicians of all parties have to accept we need to demonstrate that we deserve and have to demonstrate that we earn and certainly recent national results, I think, show the difficulty that there is in any politician of whatever party getting up and saying trust me and I accept that. One of the interesting thing that happened after the Aylesbury Stock Transfer Result was the work that MORI did to find out why tenants had voted no in such large numbers and one of the survey findings which struck me was that people were effectively saying this: we can't trust the Council to get the simple things right; its not cleaning the street; its not mending the lifts; its not repairing the street lights; if you can't get simply things like that right, then why should we trust the Council when it comes round and says trust us we are going to demolish your home and build you a new one. I think the way for politicians to earn the trust, not just of tenants but of residents in Southwark is for us to very firmly set out our stall, make promises that we can keep, keep them, go back to people and point out that we have kept the promises make them a fresh set of promises and earn their trust that way. That's why at the start of the administration we set out our six to fix. Six key priorities for re-booting the Council and putting it on a path to improvement. Some of the worst things about the legacy that we had inherited from the failed Labour administration. So in the last year we have made the streets cleaner; people now stop us in the street and say the streets have never been as clean, it is widely recognised I think across the Borough,

we have set up Community Councils as we said we would and they have been a stonking, raging success as we said they would be. We have already had at Community Council's, bids going in for a million pound of street lighting, a million pound odd to the cleaner, greener, safer fund. Real people in communities making informed decisions about where they want the Council to spend money locally. We have introduced the tenants freephone repair hotline, as we said we would. We are moving towards a common admissions procedure. Debt is falling year on year.

Mr Mayor I am answering a question, the question was why should people trust me and I am answering the question and the answer is, I think people should trust us because we are delivering on promises we have made and I have given some examples of that. I know that in the last 40 years the Labour Group was unable to deliver on any promise they ever made and I know it is unusual for a Councillor to be able to get up in this Chamber and to point to successes as opposed to failures, but that is the case and I am sorry the Labour Party won't have the grace to admit it.

On the Housing Management Best Value Review, there has been extensive consultation, both during the Best Value Review process and since about what the best way forward is for tenants.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS

How does the Leader rate the strength of the education service a year on from the publication of the latest Local Education Authority OFSTED report?

RESPONSE

The LEA was inspected by Ofsted in May 2002. Having been found to be 'satisfactory' the LEA has been returned to the normal inspection cycle and therefore does not anticipate a further inspection within the next 3 years.

Outside of the quarterly performance reports to Executive no other performance reviews are available in the public domain. It is however clear that there have been increasing concerns expressed by parents and schools over the recent deterioration in education support services provided by Atkins and that these have led the DfES and the Council to agree to the termination of the contract with Atkins.

It is of course deeply regrettable that a government intervention stemming from the actions of the previous administration has led to such a sorry state where schools yet again feel that government policies in education disregard the true voices and interests of the local community.

We are united to ending this chaos once and for all and securing a robust and sustainable future for the long-term provision of education in this borough.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS

I am asking what he thinks about the strength of the Education Service, not about other published reports, not about the performance reports, I am asking what he thinks about the strength of the Education Service a year on.

RESPONSE

I think it was patchy last year that was one of the findings of the Ofsted Report. Shortly after the Ofsted Report came out, which said there were more strengths than weaknesses, we got the Key Stage 2 results, which were very disappointing. I think they put us bottom of the league tables in the entire country. They have clearly been problems this year with key personnel leaving Atkins and not being replaced, but it would be absolutely wrong to say, as a local newspaper did, that schools are all in chaos because they are not. A lot of good teaching is being done and is still being done. It has to be said that overall, I think we should all be disappointed that three years after the damning Ofsted; three years after the Government came in with the intervention unit and said we are here to put things right, I don't believe that things are an awful lot better. I don't believe there has been a step change in improvement as the jargon has it in the last three years. I think everyone would recognise that the last year has been very difficult for all sorts of reasons and that is why we hope that Cambridge Education Associates will begin to turn things around. We have certainly been impressed by the speed and efficiency with which they have mobilised to take over from Atkins. I think the handover should be relatively orderly and relatively smooth, but we will obviously closely be monitoring the situation and hopefully this time DfES Intervention Unit Officials will be keener to monitor the contractors performance than they have been over the last three years.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR VICKY NAISH

Could the Leader update the Council as to what steps have been taken regarding domestic violence since the Council Motion of 26th March 2003?

RESPONSE

Domestic violence is identified as a key area of work for the Safer Southwark Partnership as part of the hate crime strand of the Crime and Disorder Strategy. The Best Value Review of Community Safety has identified the need for a borough wide strategy.

The Domestic Violence Forum has planned a seminar in October to map local need and to identify gaps in services and identify if they meet local need and minimum standards, based on the GLA's strategy and the government's proposal in the Safety and Justice Paper will be used as a starting point.

In March the Council agreed a motion to adopt a more holistic approach to domestic violence and to include homophobic and same sex domestic violence locally. The Council recognises the work of the Broken Rainbow Forum in trying to highlight such types of domestic violence.

Broken Rainbow LGBT Domestic Violence Service(UK) Community Safety Officers met Caroline Jones, a representative from Broken Rainbow Forum/ LGBT Network to look at the Borough's response to Domestic Violence and hate crime. As a resident of Southwark and LGBT Community representative she has offered support and agreed to advise officers on training within the Hate Crime Training plan.

A joint Council /LGBT Network seminar is also planned in October to launch the Community Needs Analysis which was carried out last year. This will inform the action plan on hate crime and domestic violence.

Since March the following areas of work have been undertaken;-

Domestic Violence Forum

The SRB6 Campaign Against Hate Crime funded Bede House to employ a development worker to support the DV Forum.

A steering group has been formed, made up of representatives of the community, LGBT Network/Broken Rainbow Forum, local authority (SRB6 programme manager) and Southwark Police to support the worker. In the last two months the steering group has been the focus point for feeding input into the Council's Homelessness Review/Strategy. It is also leading Southwark's response to the Government Paper 'Safety and Justice'.

Neighbourhood Renewal Initiatives

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund strategic gap funding is supporting a multi-agency project to Improve the response to repeat victims of domestic violence and support for families with children. This work is lead by Social Services and includes two specialist posts in Children's District Services, a Victim Support caseworker focusing on repeat victims, based at the police Community safety Unit and emergency out of hours home security.

SRB6 Funded Initiatives

- **Community Alarm Project** – this is a Joint Project between Victim Support and Southwark MPS. 10 monitored wireless alarms were purchased, aimed at supporting victims who may prefer to remain in the home, thereby increasing options. Having carried out a detailed assessment an alarm, connected to a central monitoring station to is fitted to target harden the property.
- **Evidence Gathering Project** – ICEFLO cameras for evidence gathering purposes have been provided by this project to Southwark Police. These cameras enhance the quality of evidence at court by the use of photographs of injuries at the point of reporting. To date 65 cameras have been provided to the police and voluntary community organisations. 20 organisations have received the training in the use of these cameras. A GP's surgery in Peckham will also be piloting the project in order to roll out the use of these cameras on behalf of the Health Authority.

This project complements the **Police Assisted Reporting Initiative**, where joint training with the police, local authority and community/voluntary organisations has resulted in the setting up of 20 non-police reporting sites for hate crime and domestic violence.

- **Domestic Violence and Alcohol Initiative** – This project will examine ways to enable Domestic Violence services and Alcohol services to work together more effectively.

Supporting People, a Housing Project is about to review the Domestic Violence and Hate crime services it currently funds and this will be completed by March 2004.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VICKY NAISH

I am sure the Leader is aware that there is a new Government Consultation document out, which has recently come out and that was also fed into the views of our motion on the 26th March 2003. Leader, I don't actually see where it is in your answer and how you are going to fit it in.

RESPONSE

I think fourth paragraph down beginning 'Broken Rainbow LGBT Domestic Violence', we are getting Caroline Jones who may be the speaker who presented the Deputation, to offer training and support to Officers. We are planning a seminar in October. I believe I am right in saying, but I'm open to question, that the Government itself has responded to the campaign and has announced proposals to widen the domestic violence bill to include same sex domestic violence which is hugely welcome and we certainly will be playing our part in fulfilling Government requirements on this.

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM

Given that the Caribbean Community is one of the larger Black and Minority Ethnic ('BME') groups in Southwark and Commonwealth Local Government Forum. The Caribbean Partnership is a worthwhile forum representing the Caribbean Community which connects local authorities in the UK and across the Commonwealth. Does the Executive Member agree with me that the Caribbean Community in Southwark, and the wider BME community, will feel let down by the Liberal Democrat Executive's decision to withdraw its support from this valuable forum?

RESPONSE

No, the Council received no discernable benefit from its membership of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. We took the decision to stop our subscription over a year ago and I do not believe it has had any effect on our work with the Caribbean Community in Southwark.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM

Can I thank the Leader for his question and I noticed he did not particularly directly respond to my question. He talked about the fact that the Council received no benefit from the Membership of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. I think I should remind them that the amount of money that we are talking about is some £610 in terms of the forum, Southwark does have benefit because Southwark does host a forum which is held at the ALG Offices. The other point is that between 8% and 10% of the population are from the Caribbean Community. The Race Equality Scheme points out that one outcome should be greater confidence in the Council in particular among the black and ethnic minority in Southwark

I am coming to the question, but I need to build-up on this because it appears the Leader does not understand my question and I really need to make a point here.

On the Council agenda this evening is a question about Zimbabwe, also on the minutes of one of the Commonwealth Forum there are items raised about the Commonwealth Forum and Zimbabwe. Is the Leader going to support the motion about Zimbabwe because he feels that it is in the interest of this Council and Southwark or is he going to support the motion because he thinks it is a good political band wagon to get on to at this moment in time, because we are talking about two communities which have large population in Southwark.

RESPONSE

I shall be supporting both the motion and amendment on Zimbabwe this evening. I have a longstanding commitment to Human Rights and Internationalism and I believe the motion and amendment both reflect that.

6. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID BRADBURY

Would the Deputy Leader agree with me that it is vital that councillors are properly trained in Licensing functions in order to ensure their full participation in the work of the Community Councils, and given the many demands on the time of councillors it may be necessary to offer members a number of dates to ensure that one suitable to them can be found, and will she state what steps she is taking to ensure that officers make further training dates available to those members who have not yet had a suitable date offered to them?

RESPONSE

Much effort has been made to acquire the information necessary to accommodate the many demands on the time of councillors to ensure dates are provided which are suitable. This process has included constant examination of the Council Calendar, Ward Surgery schedules, Committee Memberships, Community Inclusion and Development commitments, responses from questionnaires and other information sources. Training dates have been offered on weekday mornings, weekday evenings, weekend mornings, and weekend afternoons in order to best capture the often scarce but valuable availability of councillors. 81% of the Assembly has requested Licensing training, out of which training is outstanding for only 3 councillors.

I understand that the Borough Solicitor and Secretary has drawn up further proposals for the delivery of training, and each of the remaining councillors has been contacted with advice that one-to-one or small group training will be organised before the end of the recess period.

7. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY

Can the Deputy Leader explain why she appeared to deny the responsibility for housing management being transferred to community councils at the last Council Assembly and again in the *Southwark News* on 3rd July?

RESPONSE

Housing management will not be transferred to community councils - hence my comments at Council Assembly and in *Southwark News*.

Consideration could be given to general housing matters as part of the review and phase 2 of the implementation of community councils. This could include issues such as private housing renewal and tackling empty homes/flats above shops.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY

The sentence concerning Community Council's in phase two was it in fact included in the original Finance and Sub report, the report that went to Overview and Scrutiny, the report that went to full Council and in fact this moment is included in the Best Value report going round the Housing forums. Can I ask the Deputy Leader, does she accept the sentence, the possible transferring of housing management functions, is included in all those reports and can she say that based on the first sentence is that in fact incorrect?

RESPONSE

The Housing Management Support for Resident Involvement Best Value Report states very clearly in it, it is not envisage that the Council's Housing Management function will become part of the responsibility of Community Councils. Now obviously Scrutiny considered lots of different areas that could be devolved to Community Councils, they agreed a first phase and later on in the year through two Scrutiny Committees they will be looking at what has gone well over the first year and what future functions, if any, they think should be devolved. That's a scrutiny issue which is cross party and not something obviously that the Executive will be involved in at that stage. I will probably be asked to give evidence, but I would say that its quite clear in the document the Housing Management Support Resident Involvement does quite clearly state the Council has no plans to extend the remit of Community Councils to include matters relating to Housing Management, and as I put in my reply it may well be appropriate in some Community Council areas for some issues such as private housing renewal to be discussed and for issues such as perhaps tackling empty homes and flats and looking at that on an area by area basis that may be appropriate. But I do not think having Housing Management dealt with at Community Councils is what Community Councils is about. Community Councils is about getting residents whether they are private, sector rented, whether they are home owners, whether they are council tenants, housing associations. Getting them all along as they are all part of the community, being able to influence decisions that affect their lives. So I do not think it is appropriate to have Council Housing as part of the remit of Community Council, because it will turn off all the people that we are trying to engage further that we don't actually engage properly as a Council, but Community Councils as you know through the huge attendance we are

getting at them and how they are developing and as we discussed cross party last night, are trying to achieve.

8. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD

Are you confident that Southwark Council's Marketing and Communications publicity meets the law governing communications in local authorities which is enshrined in the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988? Publicity may be illegal if it is part of a wider campaign which appears to be designed to affect support for a political party.

RESPONSE

Marketing and communications staff are appraised of the legislation governing their area of work as part of the induction process for new staff. Should any communications officer be unclear, they can check the guidance issued regularly by the Borough Solicitor and Head of Communications, or seek their advice directly.

All the marketing and communications activities of the council are expected to promote the services, initiatives and performance that fall within the overall policy framework adopted and confirmed by members of the Council. In common with all other local councils and the government of the day, Southwark's Communications team works closely with the Executive to ensure that local residents, media and other stakeholders are kept well informed about council services and policies and performance.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD

My question is in two parts if I may Mayor. Firstly obviously we recognise that all the communications in this Borough is not just to preserve the Executive of the Council it is also something which is available and is of use to all Members of the Council in pursuing there duties and responsibilities as the defined by there roles and I am hoping that she would agree with that and I give two specific example which I would like her to comment on:-

One is the one that was raised at last month's Council, about Simon Hughes being invited down to Peckham on the 'Mums Against Guns Organisation' the publicity event that was held outside the Library and the second one I understand that the MP for North Southwark and Bermondsey was recently invited, I believe with yourself, and I think Councillor Porter to address Camberwell Community Wardens. I want to know what remit the MP for North Southwark and Bermondsey has to address Camberwell Community Wardens. And finally Mayor, if I may, can she assure us that these new departmental press officers will confine themselves to factual reporting of the Council and its activities and not spinning the Liberal Democrat manifesto as six to fix.

RESPONSE

I would have though it would have been more appropriate if he had asked it of the Executive Member for Communication and Performance Improvement. On the particular issues that you have mentioned the answer is quite clear that the work that the Communications Team does, and it actually does work very closely with the Executive, because we are the administration as in the past they worked more closely with the Labour administration. In terms of the two particular events I am aware of the event in Peckham and I think it was actually organised by an outside organisation and they had invited the

Member of Parliament, but I am not aware of the details, can I finish my answer before I am being shouted at. The other issue about the MP I am not aware that the MP has been invited to address Camberwell Community Wardens, I believe the Leader and the Executive Member have recently met with all the Wardens in the Borough. The Leader could not attend and I attended and chatted and met some of them, but I am not aware of this event. If you have got specific issues I suggest you take it up through the usual channels or raise it with my Executive colleague. In terms of the departmental press offices as set out in my answer, they will work within the regulations and work as the current press office does and has in the past, and I am sure you would expect their procedures to be as vigorous as they were under your administration as they are under ours.

9. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD

Is the Executive Member aware of the serious shortage of nursery and primary school places in the South Camberwell area where three local primary schools are over subscribed?

RESPONSE

Nursery Places

South Camberwell

Population 0-4 yr olds: 790 (Census 2001)

Childcare provision

Provider	No. of places
Mothergoose Greendale Field Day Nursery	38
Camberwell Grove Early Years Centre	60
Bellenden Day Nursery	32
Dulwich Day Nursery	24
East Dulwich Community Nursery	20
Humpty Dumpty Nursery	17
Jean Adams Daycare Project	10
South East Montessori Daycare	18
TOTAL	219

NB: East Dulwich Community Nursery plans to open 40 new places in March 2004 under the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative

Total no. of childcare places in Day Nurseries / Early years Centres* = 219
 Approx no. of childminders = 25
 Max no. of childminder places = 75*

*No. of childminders x 3 (max. no of under 5's allowed in their care)

Total childcare places = 294

Childcare places per 100 children = 37

Southwark Average per 100 children = 18

Please note: Childcare places per hundred children are calculated using 2001 census data – ward projections not yet available. However, as population of 0-4 yrs is expected to rise, the number of actual childcare places per 100 children may be slightly less than above figure.

Primary Places

We are aware of significant pressure on places at Bessemer Grange, Dog Kennel Hill and Dulwich Village though these have eased recently as a result of appeals. The School Organisation Plan is the tool for identifying the need

for additional places within planning areas. Unfortunately school planning areas are larger than individual wards and often very local pressure points are balanced by surplus places elsewhere within the planning area. At present, there is an overall surplus of primary school places but our projection information suggests that the planning area covering South Camberwell will be at full capacity in 2007. The draft School Organisation Plan for the next five years will shortly be issued for consultation. This will provide all members and their constituencies the opportunity to consider and discuss all the issues affecting each of the planning areas and to engage in constructive debate about the short, medium and long-term options for the provision of primary school places.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD

Thank you very much to the Executive Member for Education for the very full and detailed response to my question. I know that this is causing anxiety for parents in South Camberwell Ward. Will the Executive Member commit to supplying full information on all of the Schools within the School Planning Area?

RESPONSE

It is certainly possible to provide that I will make sure that is done. I think unfortunately, as with so many areas of the Borough, its not so much that all the schools are full and there are no surplus places, but that the schools which parents want to send their children to are full and the ones which they are not so keen on have got surplus places. I am afraid that this is a kind of a fact of life, but I will try to make sure that the full information on all the schools is sent to you.

10. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR NORMA GIBBES

What plans does the Council have for the provision of high quality playing fields for the Charter School?

RESPONSE

The Charter School uses the nearby playing fields of St. Saviour's and St. Olave's School. A successful bid has been made to the New Opportunities Fund for major drainage works to the pitch to allow all-year round use of the facility. On the assumption of NOF approval of the detailed scheme, the work has been scheduled for mid 2004.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR NORMA GIBBES

I note that the high quality is missing from the answer that the Executive Member has given, but playing fields is an issue in the South of the Borough. In my own Secondary School for example there is such an extensively protracted and extremely wearing discussions with the Council over this matter of playing fields that we have had to engage the services of a Solicitor. So since the St Saviours field from your answer will not be ready until September 2004, will the work on the land surfaces within the Charter School grounds be complete by September of 2003. Further, what regular reviews and/or monitoring is in place to ensure that the Council is dealing fairly with schools over the matter of access to good quality playing fields and I would like to add a third point to it also, it would be good to know how many schools in Southwark actually have access to good quality playing fields.

RESPONSE

I agree that playing fields is a big issue and playing space. There is one secondary school in the Borough that does not even have a playground let alone playing fields, it is a big issue. My understanding is that its not that the Charter School cannot use the fields at all until that date but there are difficulties because of the state of the fields. I understand also that James Allen Girls School has been very generous in allowing both Charter School and Bessemer Grange Primary School to use there fields, perhaps Councillor Eckersley can confirm that and I hope that they will be able to continue to do that. I can certainly find out for you the information about how many schools at present have playing fields.

11. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR KENNY MIZZI

Would the Executive Member state whether he is satisfied with the admissions procedures operated by community and primary schools in the Dulwich and Camberwell areas, and would he state whether and when any audits of the procedures of any such schools will take place?

RESPONSE

Implementation of admissions arrangements can be a complex matter for schools. Generally when powers are delegated there is a duty to ensure that they are being executed properly. Work has been undertaken with several schools in this respect, particularly when there is doubt about implementation. Any concerns arising are quickly progressed with the schools concerned in order to seek to avoid repetition.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR KENNY MIZZI

I was wondering if he could possibly elaborate slightly on the type of complaint that may have been made re the admission procedure over some of the schools in the area and I am thinking back to a particular case in January etc of last year, and what type of work is being undertaken and to address some of those problems and although I don't suppose he would have the information now I was wondering if he could possibly write to me with information over the number of complaints of possible irregularities that were made against schools in the area of the past two years.

RESPONSE

I have in my head a number of the quite detailed nefarious practices that sometimes go on which I don't intend to repeat here in case the Head of Schools read the Council Minutes. However there are always a certain number of complaints about admissions procedures and I do have a supplementary from the Head of Admissions to the answer that was given, which says as follows:- I am satisfied, (this is the Head of Admissions), that admissions procedures are being carried out properly by Community Primary Schools. All over subscribed schools have appeal hearings from Reception and I will be able to pick up on any errors or concerns according to the schools paper work. If there appears to be a concern about a school then I will personally visit them or do an audit. At the moment I have only one primary school out of over forty community schools that require such an audit, which I will be undertaking this September. Parents often feel that because they do not get offered a place at their preferred school, that other parents are admitted over them. This is not the case and if such an error has been made it would be obvious from appeal papers and the panel will be able to admit the appellant under maladministration. Only two cases of maladministration have ever been found on admission procedures at primary schools in two and half years and we have around 100 plus primary appeals per academic year. So I am aware that certain thing that are alleged to go on, but I am satisfied that the Head of Admissions is on top of it.

I will write to you.

12. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH

What provision has the council made for the safe transport of pupils attending the temporary Bermondsey Academy based at the old Waverley school site?

RESPONSE

The transportation of pupils attending the City of London Academy is a matter for the Academy and we are informed that the City Corporation is providing a bus service.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH

Will the time table for this bus service allow for all pupils of the school to participate in after school activities.

RESPONSE

The answer is, I have no idea, because we have to recognise that the Paterson Park Academy and the Academy at Peckham are independent schools. They don't have to supply any information at all to the Council and all I can say is that I would certainly hope that they would. If my own teaching career was involved with schools that run buses and coaches and in my experience they were always two runs to make sure that people who want to go home immediately get a bus and that there is a further service for those who stay for After School activities because the extended school days are so important in the case of Academies I cannot imagine them not making that provision.

13. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED

Can the Executive Member please outline the details of the consultation undertaken for the revised SEN policy?

RESPONSE

Atkins Education has carried out the consultation and preparation of the SEN policy in accordance with the guidance issued by the DfES. The main consultation took place between 9th and 20th June 2003. The groups consulted were: Headteachers and SENCOs in all Southwark schools, Headteachers of Pupil Referral Units, Chairs of all Governing Bodies, Diocesan Boards, Trade Unions, Contact a Family, and Managers within the Council and Atkins Education.

20 responses were received and where appropriate, the recommendations have been incorporated into the revised policy.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED

Given that some of our major stakeholders are volunteers such as Governors and that it seems no parent groups have been consulted according to this answer, is the Executive Member satisfied that the consultation was adequate and it is also noted that only eleven days were allowed for that consultation on what is a very important education policy document. Could the Member comment on this state of affairs and how this can be improved for the future.

RESPONSE

No I was not satisfied with it and neither were the Executive. The plan was due to come to Executive but it was pulled. There are a number of questions about it which have been asked by the Legal Department and the plan is going to be worked over again and will come back again to Executive in the Autumn.

14. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN

Can the Executive Member please update Council on the latest position with regards to Southwark education?

RESPONSE

The Chief Executive wrote to all Councillors on 1st and 10th July 2003 to update them on the latest position with regards to Southwark education.

The Executive met on 14th July and agreed to the Council entering into clarification discussions with a lead bidder for the education interim strategic management contract. Discussions took place that week and on 21st July the Executive agreed that, in accordance with the proposed Direction to be issued by the Secretary of State, the contract for education interim strategic management be awarded to Cambridge Education Associates (CEA), subject to the agreement of contract terms and conditions with CEA that are satisfactory to the Borough Solicitor & Secretary. It is expected that the contract discussions with CEA will conclude by the end of this week.

CEA began mobilising on 21st July. Senior CEA staff attended a meeting on 21st July with the 10 senior managers who will transfer from Atkins to CEA, and following that meeting met with all education staff. It is anticipated the contract with Atkins will be terminated on 31st July with CEA commencing its contract on 1st August.

Officers have meet with the Office for Public Management (OPM) on several occasions since they were appointed to undertake the review of options for long-term arrangements for education in Southwark. OPM will be contacting Members in the near future. OPM have set up an email address for correspondence on the review: southwark@opm.co.uk.

15. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BILLY KAYADA

How does the level of graffiti in the area covered by the Peckham Street wardens compare to a year ago?

RESPONSE

Regrettably, prior to the commencement of the Peckham Wardens, there was no baseline data kept specifically for the Peckham Wardens area that related to all reports of graffiti.

However, I can report that there was data collated for reports of graffiti removed from private property in the Peckham area. Reports from September 2001 to July last year showed that there were 59 graffiti disclaimers sent to private properties, of these the Council received 47 disclaimers back whereby the graffiti was removed.

The Peckham Wardens record incidents of graffiti on all property, irrespective of ownership. From September 2002 to June 2003 the wardens have recorded 174 incidents of graffiti all of which has been removed.

In terms of how we are currently combating this form of antisocial behaviour in addition to removal, the Council is running a pilot scheme that rewards those providing intelligence on people committing this form of envirocrime entitled "Shop them and Stop them".

As part of this pilot, the Council has already received a name and address of a suspected graffiti vandal and we are working with the Metropolitan Police to further the investigation and assist in the Council taking a prosecution.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BILLY KAYADA

Could he explain why he is not aware of the base line survey of graffiti that was carried out over a year ago and why he states incorrectly all the recorded incidents of graffiti have been removed. A walkabout in the Peckham area will clearly show that is not true.

RESPONSE

If there is information that Councillor Kayada has that has not been made available to me I would be very grateful if you could share that with me. He will not be surprised to know that I don't spend my whole time wondering the Borough personally checking every single incident of graffiti to see if it has been removed. I don't think that's the best use of my time. He obviously does have the time to do that and I am very happy that he has time to do that.

16. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ALUN HAYES

Could the Executive member outline what progress Southwark has made under his stewardship with regards to recycling – particularly in Nunhead ward?

RESPONSE

The progress we have made on recycling since May 2002 has been substantial, introducing some significant new schemes, which offer greatly improved recycling opportunities to a considerable number of residents. In terms of the effect on increasing the recycling rate we have moved from 3.6% in 2001/02 to over 6% for June 2003.

Some of the initiatives implemented include

- Introduction of a door to door paper collection to approximately 47,000 street based properties
- Development of a Re-Use and Recycling Centre at Manor Place Depot
- Introduction of recycling in over 70 schools
- Provision of subsidised Home Composting units
- Introduction of Brimington Estate door to door multi material recycling service
- Refurbishment of garden tools through a partnership with the Conservation Society
- Securing external funding to redevelop Manor Place Swimming baths turning it into a mini Materials Recycling Facility
- Securing external funding to deliver estates recycling to over 250 locations and rationalise & refurbish the Council's existing bring sites
- Delivery of a pilot Green waste collection service to 10,000 homes

In addition to the above initiatives which are predominantly borough wide in the Nunhead Ward we have;

- Extended the door-to-door paper collection service to the Barsest and Tappesfield estates in March.
- Delivered a presentation to the Tenants & Residents Association of Cossall estate regarding recycling.
- Shortly to deliver a paper bin recycling service to residents of the Pioneer building (private flats) who have requested this.
- The Education Support Centre on St Mary's Road is part of the schools recycling scheme and took part in the recycling achievement day.

17. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR SARAH WELFARE

What is the performance target for the time taken for the removal of graffiti and what proportion of graffiti is being removed within this time?

RESPONSE

The Integrated Cleaning Contract has two Performance Targets relating to graffiti removal:

- For racist or obscene graffiti, removal is within four hours of it being reported to the Southwark Cleaning administration team
- For normal graffiti, removal takes place within 24 hours of it being reported.

The performance targets are as follows:

Period	Racist/Obscene	Normal
First Quarter	90%	90%
Second Quarter	92%	92%
Third Quarter	95%	95%
Fourth Quarter	95%	95%

Contract performance since April 2003 is as follows:

Month	Type	No. of Reports	Performance
April 2003	Racist/Obscene	2	50%
	Normal	121	54%
May 2003	Racist/Obscene	0	100%
	Normal	107	57%
June 2003	Racist/Obscene	4	25%
	Normal	177	62%

First Quarter Average:

Racist/Obscene	58.33%
Normal	57.66%

The performance figures are not as high as might be hoped but this is due to delays caused by the need for property damage disclaimer forms for all private property to be received prior to works being carried out.

The reporting system used is being adjusted to allow reporting to be split between public and private properties. Once this is operational, future performance figures will accurately reflect the true response times that demonstrate approximately 85% of compliance with contract performance standards.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR SARAH WELFARE

I would like to thank the Executive Member for this useful information and I just say that I do wander around my ward and report graffiti and I hope that doesn't make me too sad, but I would like to say on these figures that I am actually quite surprised how high they are, because I have not come across any incidents of any graffiti being cleared away within 24 hours that I have reported and I have had many constituents complaining that it has taken five or ten days to get any movement at all. I appreciate what you say about the reporting matters, but I would just like to ask whether you would agree that this does reflect generally poor performance on cleaning away graffiti and also secondly would you be able to provide me with a break down for the figures in East Dulwich Ward please.

RESPONSE

I am not sure we have a breakdown for East Dulwich Ward, but if we do I will be very happy for Members to see that. It is very difficult to judge on the basis of my personal experience I know that I have reported graffiti and it has been cleaned away. If Councillor Welfare has got specific examples of where that has not happened in contradiction to these figures then I would be very happy to see them. I think the key point is we are making progress. Southwark Cleaning has only been in existence for three months and we are aware that more progress needs to be made, but I think we have made a good start.

18. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE

Could the Executive Member provide us with a breakdown of claims and reports of pedestrian accidents and injuries year by year since 2000, arising as a result of defective footpaths and carriageways?

RESPONSE

The table below shows the number of claims received in each financial year since 2000/01.

It should be recognised that an individual has three years from the date of an accident to register a claim. Hence it is possible that additional claims will be received for all the years listed below. This also explains the apparent decrease in claims indicated by the data below.

Year	<u>No of Claims Received</u>	<u>Claims Closed/Refuted</u> <u>No cost</u>
2000/2001	247	147
2001/2002	233	115
2002/2003	88	22
2003/2004	6	0

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE

I thank the Executive Member for his response and thank the Officers also for the work they have gone through to compile these figures.

Would he agree with me that these figures seem to suggest that people are becoming more tolerant and less litigious and would he share my concern that there may be a statistical blip here, all be it very much welcome the fact that it appears that people are having less accidents, but would he share my concerns that there is a statistical blip and give a commitment to me that he will follow this up and report back and find out whether or not there is some inconsistency with the ways these figures have been compiled.

RESPONSE

I was going to thank Councillor Hargrove for offering me the opportunity to use the word litigious, which is my favourite word and was obviously John Humphreys favourite word before the word 'sex up' was invented but he beat me to it, so congratulations to him for that.

I think the problem with these figures is that they are probably not wrong it just reflects the fact that people take a while to get their act together in order to try and sue the Council. My understanding is that our society is getting increasingly litigious. That does not mean the roads have got worse it may mean that people are standing up for their rights more, well that's their doing, but certainly since the Wolf report they has been an increase in people taking action against the Council. The key figures that were missing here are figures on the amount of cash involved in all this which we are hoping to get from our

insurance company and I have asked that Councillor Hargrove will be informed of those figures as soon as they come through.

19. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MICHELLE PEARCE

What are the performance targets for removal of domestic bulk refuse and for removal of fly-tips? What is the actual performance for these services?

RESPONSE

The Integrated Cleaning Contract has a Performance Target relating to removal of bulk refuse and fly tips of 24 hours from the time it is reported to the Southwark Cleaning administration team.

The targets are as follows:

First Quarter	90%
Second Quarter	92%
Third Quarter	95%
Fourth Quarter	95%

Contract performance since April 2003 is as follows:

Month	Report Incidences	Performance
April 2003	3105	91%
May 2003	1493	89%
June 2003	254	94%
First Quarter Average		91.33%

It is interesting to note that the levels of reported fly tipping has significantly dropped since the inception of Southwark Cleaning.

In terms of the collection of bulky household waste the present target is set at collection within 5 working days of the request being made. Performance for the first quarter of the financial year is 91% compliance.

However since the transfer of the function from Waste Management to the Customer Service Centre demand has increased significantly as a result of increased access. This has caused some slippage in the collection performance of bulky household waste.

To endeavour to address the current delays officers are investigating the possibility of having an additional vehicle collecting the bulky household waste and it is hoped to bring this target back on track by the middle of August 2003.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MICHELLE PEARCE

I thank the Member for his reply and I have to agree with him that fly tipping in my ward has dropped enormously and the refuse recycling centre is clear almost all the time which gives recycling a better name than it had before. So I do thank him, but I think that in the second to last paragraph of his answer 'some slippage' is perhaps understating the case. One of my constituents had a settee that she wanted removed because she was getting another and

there was not room for both and she was told it would take her three weeks or she could get trade waste to take it away, they were willing but it was going to cost twenty eight pounds 50 and so it sat because she had a garden, in her garden for quite a long time. My question is that would he not agree with me that until we can bring into line the performance targets for both domestic refuse removal on request and fly tipping, what he has created is a fly tippers charter - its actually encouraging people to dump, especially those who don't have gardens.

RESPONSE

Firstly can I thank Councillor Pearce for her positive remarks at the beginning. I disagree with the second part unsurprisingly. I think its clear that when you create a demand for a service you have to then make sure you can keep up with that demand and that's why there has been slippage, but we have got an extra truck on as of next week coming on stream to try and address that, but no I don't think cleaning the Borough generally does give people a charter to fly tip. On the contrary the hope is that it will create a vicious circle because all the evidence is that the more people see a dirty Borough then the more they see fly tipping then the more they will abuse their environment and join in with that despicable behaviour and so hopefully we can create that vicious circle, but I am very aware that we need to keep on top of it to make sure that happens.

20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

Could the Executive Member tell me what plans the Borough has to promote and fund further Home Zones in the Borough?

RESPONSE

The Council is extremely supportive of the concept of Home Zones and is currently developing a Home Zone in Sutherland Square with Department for Transport (DfT) funding. I understand that we are also planning Home Zones in new housing developments, including for example, Bermondsey Spa.

Currently, Transport for London (TfL) has no specific bidding category for Home Zones in this year's Borough Spending Plan (BSP). However, Southwark considers this to be an area of high importance and we are actively pressing TfL to identify Home Zones as a separate category for bidding, which can support road safety initiatives.

Notwithstanding that there is no specific category for Home Zones this year, we are including several bids for Home Zones under the 20 mph Zone Category of the BSP. This is being done to encourage TfL to place these Home Zones on their agenda and budgetary allocations for future years.

The areas that are being put forward as part of the BSP will build upon neighbourhood renewal and regeneration work that has been undertaken in recent years and 20 mph Zones that are also being bid for. These Home Zones include:

- (1) Coopers Road
- (2) Melford Road
- (3) Fream Street Area
- (4) Alscot Road Area
- (5) Grosvenor Terrace

The BSP is to be submitted on 1 August and it is anticipated that boroughs will be informed of their funding allocations in November.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

Can I thank Councillor Thomas for his answer which in fact provides some encouraging news because Home Zones are very popular in parts of the Borough certainly in South Camberwell where several areas where Home Zones are sought and would be appropriate and certainly other parts of the Borough, but of course this answer is dependent on funding from outside agencies and other sources, - is there anything that Southwark can do, I am sure there is - as a Borough on its own. Will he be lobbying his colleagues for money in the next budget for Home Zones within Southwark, out of Southwark's own budget.

RESPONSE

Somebody is saying in my ear, 'you can try'. I am very supportive of Home Zones and I was pleased I was in Holland last week and was able to take the opportunity to look at the great number of Home Zones which are called 'Woonerf' in Dutch so there, the minutes can note that, but the blunt answer

is no Home Zones are massively, massively expensive and they are even more expensive to retrofit than if you are building a new development. To give an example the Sunderland Square Home Zone, which is relatively small, is going to cost about three hundred and fifty thousand. That's an extremely large amount of money to spend on one area and whilst I very much wish I could turn the whole Borough into a Home Zone residential area overnight, we are not going to be able to do that without outside funds. I think the way to go is to try and get those outside funds where we can put money into twenty mile an hour zones, which are often a precursor for Home Zones in the first place but importantly via Councillor Bowman and the work in her department, we can look at creating Home Zones when we build new developments at the Elephant and Castle. At Bermondsey Spa I believe one is being planned and I think that's the way to go to really get a decent number of Home Zones in the future.

21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY

Would the Executive Member state the date on which the first of the badly needed road safety improvements in Red Post Hill near the Charter School will be implemented?

RESPONSE

A site meeting is to take place in July with the Metropolitan Police, the school and local people to look at Red Post Hill. From this meeting it will be possible to identify improvement measures and following this it will be possible to set a time table for their introduction.

22. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN FLANNERY

Is the Executive Member aware of Westminster Council's 'on-the-spot' fines for those who cycle on the pavement? Can he advise whether this approach could be considered for Southwark?

RESPONSE

The power to deal with such offences lies with the Police under the Highways Acts. However the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill currently before Parliament is proposing to amend the Police Reform Act 2002 to give powers to the new Police and Community Support Officers to stop cycles and serve Fixed Penalty Notices for such offences under the Highways Act and this is currently being piloted by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Between 1 April and the end of June this year their PCSOs have served over 60 FPNs of £30. The Act also makes provision for these powers to be made available to "accredited" Local Authority Officers i.e. Wardens, at some point in the future."

23. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCROFT

Will the Executive Member be responding to the Nunhead Community Forum on the issues raised at the NCF Environment Sub-Committee meeting which he addressed on 13 March 2003?

RESPONSE

A number of issues were raised by the public at the Nunhead Community Forum Environment Sub Group which I attended. Officers from Environment & Leisure have been taking these matters forward. I have checked progress on all the issues and a formal response summarising actions has been sent to the Forum.

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

Could the Executive Member please provide a detailed briefing on why the Council overspent by £1.5 million in the last financial year and what steps have been put in place to ensure that this does not happen again?

RESPONSE

I trust you have seen on the agenda tonight the Council's accounts for 2002/03. I am pleased to say they demonstrate this administration's sound stewardship of the Council's finances. Sound financial management is something we see as important after the record of previous administrations in managing the Council's budget.

Far from overspending by the £1.5m referred to, the Council has only overspent by £129,000 on its budget of £346m, a minute fraction of a percentage difference. I see it as a great success for the Council and this administration that we kept spending under control while delivering improved services to our residents.

25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON

Would the Executive Member publish a table detailing the total expenditure by the Council related to the LGA Conference in Harrogate? This should include a breakdown of totals of travel, hotel accommodation, exhibition stand hire, conference passes and any other payments connected to the Conference.

RESPONSE

The total expenditure incurred by the Council in respect of the LGA conference in Harrogate 1-4 July 2003 was approximately £13,422.06 made up as follows:

Conference cost	£7,360.00
Travel	£927.28
Hotel Accommodation	£2,584.72
Exhibition Stand Hire	£2,411.34
Conference Passes	-
Subsistence/Incidentals	£138.72
Total	£13,422.06

A number of officers and members attended the event. Member delegates and representation were agreed by Council Assembly. Indeed, I understand that Cllr Eckersley was a star speaker at the LGA General Assembly. about the extent to which the council engages.

Southwark's Corporate Assessment stated that the Council is "perceived to be an internally-focussed organisation by members, staff and external stakeholders" and is "not doing enough to actively seek good practice from other organisations and authorities". As part of the strategy of responding to the CPA criticism, the Environment department sought - on behalf of the Council - to make a presence at the conference by having a stand. Several other authorities do this.

The stand was themed around liveability – a major strength for Southwark. As a result of this effort, the Council has increased its profile on the national stage.

26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR ALFRED BANYA

Can you please provide a breakdown by Housing Neighbourhood, of the number of applications for private housing renewal grant received by the Council in the last 12 months, the numbers of grants awarded, and how many of the properties repaired have been the subject of complaints about the contractors' quality of work?

RESPONSE

There are no figures for renovation grant applications and approvals at Housing Neighbourhood level as this is a centrally delivered service with no input from Neighbourhood Housing Offices.

In total in the last 12 months 233 formal applications for assistance have been made resulting in 184 grant approvals. These figures exclude many informal enquiries made by telephone that have not been pursued by the enquirer.

In the same period the Private Housing Renewal Unit received only 8 complaints. Of these 5 related to renovation grant works. Two complainants logged two each of these complaints and so there were only 3 complainants from 233 applications and 184 approved schemes.

This means that only 1.6% of residents who received grant approvals logged complaints.

These figures reflect the high overall quality of the work being undertaken.

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

Can the Executive Member give details of the consultation on the Best Value report on the future of tenant participation in housing including the number of tenants actively involved at every stage.

RESPONSE

I presume the Member refers to the “mini” review on the support for Tenant and Resident involvement which originally formed part of the Best Value review of Housing Management before being separated out in November 2001 as a stand-alone review, which then linked up to the other “mini” review of the Tenant Fund in October 2002.

In line with the Council’s Consultation arrangements for Best Value reviews, the Consultation Unit organised the following:

- Focus Group set up in late Summer 2001, inviting 30 random representatives of T&RA’s - no attendance. Further Focus Group set up inviting all T&RAs – 8 attended;
- Questionnaire sent to all T&RA’s in Summer 2002 – 31 responses received;
- Focus Group set up in May 2002 with Tenants not active in Community Groups – 8 attended (12 invited);
- Focus Group as above with active members of T&RA’s – 11 attended (12 invited);
- 3 Focus Groups set up in February 2003 from invites to 42 Tenant and Resident Associations (2 groups from T&RA’s funded and recognised and 1 group from T&RA’s not funded and recognised). £20 expenses granted to attendees – 7 attended;
- Focus group set up in February 2003 of past and current members of the Tenant Fund Management Committee – 6 attended (11 invited).

In addition the proposals for the Support for Tenant and Resident Involvement have been discussed with the review Project Team and/or Head of Housing Management, at the following meetings:

- Stakeholder Forum meetings since 25th November 2002, which included representatives of both Tenant and Leaseholder Councils, then included jointly with the review of the Tenant Fund from January 2003.
- Tenant and Resident Panel meetings since 25th November 2002, which included nominated representatives from 16 Neighbourhood Forums, then included jointly with the review of the Tenant Fund from January 2003.

An information pack, which included the summary of proposals for Supporting and Developing Resident Involvement was sent to:

- All Secretaries of T & RA’s and Chairs of Neighbourhood Forums on 30th December 2002.

No information available, as to the extent of T&RA discussion on this. Despite the fact that Officers had offered to attend individual Tenant and Resident Association meetings, only one T&RA requested a presentation, which was carried out on 11th February 2003.

Further consultation was carried out as follows:

- Neighbourhood Forums during January/February 2003 received a report which included the proposals for Supporting and Developing Tenant and Resident Involvement.
- Tenant Council received a similar report on 13th January 2003.
- Leaseholder Council also received a similar report on 20th January 2003.

No information available, as to the extent of T&RA discussion following these reports. No T&RA requested a presentation by an Officer.

- Newsletter sent to all individual Tenant and Leaseholders (56,000 in total) in June 2003 summarising the current position of the Support for Resident Involvement Review (and the Tenant Fund) and publicising the Fun Day on 14th June 2003.
- Funday held for all Tenant and Residents on 14th June 2003 which included seeking views on how people want to become involved. 130 households attended with 72 questionnaires having been completed. Analysis of questionnaires currently being undertaken. Outcome of the consultation will be used to supplement Neighbourhood Forum and Tenant and Leaseholder Council feedback and inform the proposals contained in the Draft Vision for the Support of Resident Involvement and Tenant Fund to encourage wider participation methods.

Consultation currently ongoing on the combined draft Vision for the Support of Resident Involvement and the Tenant Fund.

- Report to all Neighbourhood Forums in June/July 2003.
- Consultation Day arranged on 19th July 2003 with copies of the Draft Vision and supporting documents having been sent to all T & RA's plus Neighbourhood Forum delegates.
- Special Tenant Council meeting provisionally proposed for 1st September 2003.

Executive are due to consider an item on 9th September which hopefully will be informed by all the individual T&RA's, Neighbourhood Forums, Funday, Consultation Day and Tenant and Leaseholder Council feedback.

28. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES

Now the details of the tenant survey to be held on the Heygate estate with regards to the Elephant and Castle regeneration have been made slightly clearer, can she confirm that tenants will have the opportunity to refuse all the options she outlined in her response to my question tabled for the June Council Assembly? Will tenants and residents have the opportunity to say no to the proposals, as they did on the Aylesbury estate in December 2001?

RESPONSE

We would be obliged to hold a ballot if we were proposing to transfer people's existing tenancies over to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). Instead we are proposing to build new homes in partnership with RSLs and then offer them to council tenants. People who don't want to live in RSL homes will be offered council homes elsewhere in the borough with their council tenancies intact. This process does not constitute stock transfer and so we do not need to hold a ballot.

We have a duty to provide Heygate residents with decent and affordable homes. After considering every option we believe that the only way we are able to do this is to work in partnership with RSLs. To renovate the estate would cost well in excess of £50 million and is financially unfeasible. Government policy makes it difficult for the council to build new homes on the scale that is required at the Elephant. For every two homes that RSLs are able to build using available funding, Local Authorities are only able to build one.

Failure to move this proposal on will in effect leave Heygate residents living in substandard homes. We cannot allow this to happen.

29. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNICATION & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAM ROWE

Would the Executive Member please provide a brief summary of progress and timetable on the Customer Service Centre (CSC) specifying:

- a. The number of expressions of interest received from potential suppliers.
- b. The timetable for the remaining steps towards appointing a contractor.
- c. The scope and timetable of proposed member scrutiny of this process and executive decision-making.

RESPONSE

A full update report is on the Executive agenda for 29/7/03.

Fourteen Expressions of Interest (EOI) were received from individual companies and consortia. One company then withdrew its EOI before evaluation commenced, leaving 13.

The timetable for the CSC procurement is currently scheduled as follows:

- Announcement of tenderer shortlist, 18 August 2003
- Invitation to Negotiate issue, 6 October 2003
- Pre-tender clarification period, October 2003 to January 2004
- Receipt of tenders, 2 February 2004
- Evaluation and Negotiation period, February, March, April and May 2004
- Contract award, June 2004
- Start of service provision, January 2005.

The Executive will consider the CSC business case in autumn 2003 (probably in October) and will award the contract for the CSC in June 2004.

The Senior Project Manager attended the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9 June 2003 and proposed a numbers of issues that could be in the work programme for 2003/04. These were:-

- The CSC business case process
- Management of the major risks associated with the CSC procurement
- Assessment of contact centers as an effective means of service delivery to the customer

A timetable has yet to be agreed with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR CHARLIE SMITH

How does the Executive Member rate the customer focus of Southwark Anti Social Behaviour Unit?

RESPONSE

SASBU's performance is primarily measured by a customer focus performance indicator of the number of cases successfully 'closed'- defined as 'no further complaints by the victim against the same perpetrator'.

Last year a 57% success rate was achieved- this year the target is 62%.

In addition a range of area-based pro-active operations are carried out by SASBU resulting in respite to local communities. In June 2003, following a major evidence gathering operation in the north of the Borough, eight members of a gang are now subject to interim Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) to control their behaviour –the largest bulk application for ASBOs in the country.

SASBU and Neighbourhood Housing Offices have also published Service Standards for customers which include agreed Action Plans with timescales and further improvements planned include regular feedback before closure and an annual sample survey. Each victim has a named contact officer and an agreed support package including the services of a Southwark Victim Support Officer.

SASBU has a high profile and further resources have been allocated to the unit to increase its activities to achieve the overall objective of supporting victims and its customers, by taking effective action against perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.

I rate SASBU's customer focus as high with further successes to come.

31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MOISE

Could the Executive Member please give a break down by ward of the aim, current status and impact of all schemes funded under the £6 million programme of community safety works?

RESPONSE

It is not clear from the question what is meant by the '£6 million' allocation, however, a capital resource of £8m was allocated for expenditure on community safety projects between 1995 and 2002. The aims of the programme were:

- To reduce street crime and fear of crime.
- To reduce concerns arising from poor design/environment.
- To address fear of crime through a positive promotion policy.

The programme has addressed the following themes:

- Safer Parks and Open Spaces
- Safer Stations
- Safer Routes (safe routes to schools and access to public buildings)
- Safer Housing Environs
- Safer Shopping
- Safer Streets
- School Security
- Town Centre and Mobile CCTV

The programme has involved working across council departments and led to joint funding and external funding for schemes.

An evaluation of the programme, which took place in 1999, showed significant outcomes in relation to:

- Resident satisfaction (especially parks);
- A study of two small local parks showed that vandalism and graffiti had decreased, complaints to the park rangers reduced by around 50% and usage was up by around 28%;
- Reduced fear of crime in stations;
- Tenant satisfaction with work undertaken on housing estates;
- Increased public safety (street lighting);
- Positive feedback from parents, pupils, school governors and teaching staff;
- Insurance claims reduced by 60% from 1996/97 to 1997/98 (school security);
- A breakdown of projects by ward is attached as appendix A.

32. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN HUNT

Has the Executive Member tried to make contact with the police service in Peckham, either in person at the station or by phoning the crime desk?

If so he will be aware that there is inevitably a long queue, thereby discouraging citizens from informing the police of crime or culprits. Can he give any indication of whether the police will give more resources to help the long-suffering and overworked police officers attempting to provide a proper service?

RESPONSE

The Peckham Police Station front reception office is currently staffed by five members of the civilian staff, Station Reception Officers, one for each response team. The five reception staff provide 24 hour cover working to a shift pattern. If the civilian staff are not available for any reason (refreshments, annual leave, sickness etc) the reception office is covered by police officers from the respective response teams.

Southwark Police are currently reviewing the service delivery at all of its Station Reception Offices. This review is being conducted by Inspector Peter Turner and he is examining ways of improving the level of service provided to the community. The police recognise that the waiting times may be longer than desired when there is a high level of demand, and that this may result in unavoidable queues. One option being considered is the use of volunteers, this option has already been discussed with community groups in regard to the Rotherhithe Station.

There is a telephone in the reception area at Peckham, where contact numbers are displayed for other units, in particular the Telephone Investigation Unit. This unit can take a telephone report of crime direct from members of the public and pass on urgent information to the control room.

Reporting of some types of crimes can also be done on line through the Metropolitan Police web site, there is a link to this from the SSP website safersouthwark.org.uk

33. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

Can the Executive Member tell whether steps are being taken to improve the amount of youth provision in the Borough?

RESPONSE

There is considerable evidence of growth in both the direct service provision and in the development of youth work provision within the voluntary sector. In total, the Service now manages directly 8 youth centres and 10 projects and 4 detached teams (2 of which are delivered through voluntary organisations).

This administration has continued to strengthen provision in existing centres such as the Youth Club for the Blue (YC4B), the Langbourne Youth Club and the Damilola Centre. We have enhanced existing projects such as those on the Aylesbury estate, the Travellers Youth Project, the Peckham Young People's Magazine Project and the Youth Participation Development Project.

Over the last two years our commitment to further development of facilities for young people is evidenced through the opening of the Brandon Youth Centre, the Faces in Focus Connexions One Stop Shop (2002) and the Dulwich 2000 Youth Club. We have also extended detached youth work provision in Camberwell and Nunhead as well as Bermondsey and Rotherhithe. We have developed projects such as the Post Box Youth Projects, the Three Hills Youth Project as well as establishing Personal Advisers in schools our very successful Connexions Service.

During this same period, the Service has registered over 70 voluntary youth organisations and brought into the scope of the grants programme many small youth groups through its 'Small Grants' programme. In 2002/003, through the grants programme, we provided direct support to 28 voluntary youth organisations and have on our register in excess of 80 groups. The Service continues to support smaller voluntary youth organisations, especially uniformed organisations who find it difficult to secure premises and training and also the funding for young people to enable them to undertake leadership training programmes such as those offered by the uniformed organisations.

In addition, the Service has been at the leading edge of some key interagency partnership development:

- Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP);
- 16+ Uproject (New Opportunities Fund);
- Connexions Service development;
- Mad About Football (with the Youth Offending Team);
- London Towers Basketball Academy at Damilola Taylor Centre;
- Neighbourhood Renewal support;
- Co-ordination of Borough-wide summer activities programme.

The development within the Youth Service has been matched by the level of participation of young people. In 1997, the Service was in contact with 7% of the 13 –19 year olds in the borough and at the end of the 2002/003 year, the Service reached 25% - an 18 point improvement over 5yrs (the national target is 25% by 2006). Attendance rose from 39,000 in 1997 to 120,000 in 2002/003 (207% increase over the 5 year period).