

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY**  
**(ORDINARY MEETING)**

**WEDNESDAY 17th SEPTEMBER 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 confirm that he has noted the report of Professors Jones and Stewart (Local Govt. Chronicle 22/08/03) on the government's "*Balance of Funding*" review papers, in particular their criticism of the government's quoted statement that councils are "*accountable to central government for the delivery of certain services*". Would he agree that the government's statement is correct and, if so, would he specify, in respect of the activities of this Council, the services to which this government doctrine applies, and in respect of each such service, whether it is the Executive or an officer who must account to central government?

**RESPONSE**

I have noted the report of Professors Jones and Stewart on the government's balance of funding review papers.

Central government does have statutory powers to require information from local authorities (e.g. plans, strategies, performance indicators and other statistics). In extreme cases such as with our Education service it intervenes directly in the running of council services.

Does this mean we are accountable to central government? I would go along with Professors Jones and Stewarts' view that we, as a local authority and elected politicians, are accountable to our own voters and local taxpayers. The problem is that we depend upon central government for 80% of our funding.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR HUMPHREYS**

Would the Leader agree that with the exception of intervention and the expressed legal power and the statutory request for information Local Government is not accountable to Central Government.

### **LEADER**

That may be right in theory - practice suggests something different - I know for example that this week Council Tax capping has weired its head yet again. I have to say that I am pleased that the Conservatives have rediscovered the joys and virtues of Local Government whilst in opposition. There does tend to be a tendency for the two main parties when they are in opposition they suddenly think Local Government is wonderful and when they get into power they start knocking it and restricting its power as seem to recall that the last Conservative Government abolished whole Councils which he felt were unaccountable to it and which it did not like. I think it is very clear that local Councils ought to be accountable to the people who pay taxes to them and who are actual representatives to them I think its time this Government relax its ever-tightening grip on Local Authorities and it is peculiar to say the least that at a time when the Health Department is belatedly coming round to realise that you can't run the entire Health Service from John Reid's office in Whitehall that the Department of Education is trying to abolish local education authorities and nationalise the school service and run it all out of sanctuary buildings and I do think that this Government needs to have a rapid and radical rethink about its relationship to Local Government

## **2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR TAYO SITU**

Does the Leader not agree with me that the conference to launch the Multi Faith Forum on September the 3<sup>rd</sup> should be a genuine cross party event?

Could he please inform this Council then why only Simon Hughes MP and not Harriet Harman MP or Tessa Jowell MP have been invited to speak at the conference?

### **RESPONSE**

From the initial development of the Forum under the Labour administration to current support for the Forum under the Liberal Democrat administration the whole idea of the Forum was that it would eventually develop into an independent body – that is to say working closely with, but separate from, the Council.

At present, the Forum is at a stage where it is now autonomous but not yet fully independent i.e. it is fully managed by a group of individuals representing Southwark's faith communities who form the Executive Committee of the Forum. At the same time, the Forum's part-time worker is employed through the Council as the Forum is yet to set up a separate bank account, though it should have done so by the end of this financial year. It should be made clear that the work plan of the worker and key strategic decisions made are

those of the Executive Committee of the Forum and not of Council members or officers.

Therefore, the decision on who the Forum invited as key-note speakers was made by the Executive Committee of the Forum and not with any influence from the Council.

As for the event itself, a representative of each political group within the Council spoke at the event with each being offered an identical amount of time to speak. In addition, every individual Councillor in the Borough received an identical invitation to attend the Launch from the Chair of the Forum dated 6 August 2003 which explained the Forum's own reasoning for inviting Simon Hughes to speak and stressing that this was not "*from any party political agenda*" to quote the letter.

The Chair of the Forum at the event stated how grateful the Forum was for the support of the Council. To use the Chair's exact words,

*"We are very grateful for the support of Southwark Council which has been supportive in helping us to get this Forum up and running. This was the case for the previous Labour administration and current Liberal Democrat administration demonstrating a clear commitment from all local political parties to support faith involvement in wider society."*

Finally, both Harriet Harman and Tessa Jowell were invited to attend the launch as guests of the Forum but did not do so.

### **3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER**

Following on from the decision by Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell MP to pass responsibility for licensing to local authorities, can he confirm that financial compensation is being given to Southwark for this extra responsibility?

#### **RESPONSE**

We currently estimate the net cost of implementing the proposals to be £100,000 per annum. The Government indicated in July that "the fees will be set centrally and are intended to be set on the basis of full cost recovery" i.e that the income generated from the new responsibility should be sufficient to resource the function. However, early indications of likely fee levels offered by the initial White Paper suggest that this will not be the case.

Indeed, the fee levels suggested in the White Paper propose a fee of between £20 to £30 for a "Personal Licence" (necessary for any person wishing to be authorised for the sale of alcohol) and £50 to £150 for a premises licence (necessary for any premises used for alcohol sale / consumption, regulated entertainment or late night refreshment).

If the final fee levels agreed by the Government are in the region of those suggested by the White Paper these will represent a considerable reduction in the level of fees currently charged by the Council for Public Entertainment Licences. For example an annual public entertainment licence for a small premises begins at £783. Various bodies including the ALG, LGA and LGLF

have lobbied the Government on this issue and a working group continues to look at the matter. Advance word suggests though that while there may be some increase in initial figures these will still not approach the current level of public entertainment licence fees.

Regulations due under the Licensing Act in September 2003 will establish statutory fee levels. If the actual fees do prove to be inadequate to fund the new responsibilities then at present there is no promise of any additional monies being made available from Central Government.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL - COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER**

Would he agree with me that it must be obvious to virtually everybody that the proposed fees of £20 - £30 are going to be completely inadequate and will he undertake to make the strongest representations to the Government when they are considering the regulations for establishing these fees because this is just another instance of Government imposing further responsibilities on Local Authorities without apparently having any due regard to the financial implications and the impact on Council Tax.

### **RESPONSE**

I entirely agree and indeed as I was shaving this morning I was listening to the Today programme with the Government yet again bashing Local Authorities about bed blocking ..... insufficient resources to be able to help tackle the problem. It is a feature of Central Government and both major political parties that they are quite happy to pass the buck to Local Authorities but they are not happy to pass us the resources that we need to carry them out. The result in Southwark will be in Tessa Jowell gets her way with these that the Council will be faced with the choice between either cutting services to pay for the new licensing requirements which are obliged to carry out but not are allowed to charge full fees for or we will have to put up Council Tax to pay for them and I don't believe that's a fair choice for Southwark Council to be put in by the Government.

#### **4. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD**

In the light of varying attendances between meetings of Community Councils. Could the Deputy Leader inform us of the expenditure so far per Community Council in relation to advertising each meeting?

### **RESPONSE**

I have attended many of the Community Council meetings across the borough and note that councillors from all parties have asked for greater publicity for Community Councils. We have carried out much publicity to date.

Advertising for Community Councils falls into two areas, general advertising promoting Community Councils and targeted advertising provided for all Community Councils. An example of the first is the flyer delivered to all households giving dates and venues of the second quarter meetings. Examples of the second category are the leaflets produced publicizing the Greener, Cleaner, Safer Capital Programme and the accompanying newspaper adverts.

The total spent this year up to the first week of September was £19,500. This covered the 26 meetings to date and the equivalent amount per Community Council is about £2,400 (£750 per meeting).

During the remainder of the year £13,500 in total is budgeted for each quarter – it is expected that this will spent more locally in support of individual Community Council needs.

It should also be noted that considerable sums of money were spent on publicity for Area Fora under the last administration.

It remains early in the programme but early feedback from questionnaires indicates that 35% of attendees learn about meetings through publicity materials (excluding the website).

## **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION - COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD**

Thank you very much for this detailed response. I think you would agree that full community involvement is imperative if Community Councils are to be effective because I think you would also agree that not everyone goes to meetings and that special efforts have to be made to ensure that people with young families older people, people with disabilities, people from minority communities, communities that perhaps don't normally go to this kind of this meeting are attracted. How much of the budget that you have is dedicated to ensuring that this kind of getting to all when we mean all we mean all communities in the areas is dedicated to and also if I could ask if you are considering redesigning the material to make a more eye catching design that could be more appealing to everybody.

## **RESPONSE – COUNCILLOR PIDGEON**

I think you are absolutely right full community involvement is essential for Community Councils to develop and evolve and we have seen that happening across the borough in very different ways and we have seen Chairs and Vice-Chairs and other members of Community Council really trying to engage local communities in the whole process. That's actually Community involvement budget and I have detailed that here that's the communication budget that I detailed actually in my answer so I don't have a figure for how much is spent on community involvement. What I do know is that a lot of work is being done and particularly after the first quarter meeting a lot of work is being done by the ..... Unit within Regeneration going out trying to engage them and getting them engaged in Community Councils. A lot of work were done with specific groups such as the Care Forum ..... and chatted through how carers who may not be able to come to Community Councils could actually have an input and we are still working on that and with other specific interest groups. Community Development work is important and we will be looking at it in next year's budget to see if more resources should be allocated. The other important area is how this fits in with the Southwark community empowerment network and a lot of work has been going on there with SIDU as well looking to see how we might development Community Forum to be able to feed in and support Community Council so a lot of work is going on in developing and hope cross party will be able to work together to make sure that all the communities of our borough are fully involved in Community Councils. I would just like to add something that I did not have a figure for earlier in answering your question which is my second to last paragraph. I have actually got the sum of money that was spent on publicity for each of the Area Fora under the previous administration and that was just under £2,500 per meeting was spent on publicity. Nearly £50,000 was spent before the Area Fora actually launched whereas we are trying to do a more steadier approach building up momentum along the way

## **5. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER**

Can the Deputy Leader of the Council explain why none of the Faraday Ward Members were either invited to attend - nor even informed about -the meeting held to discuss East Street market held on Tuesday 5th August at 6pm in room A8 at the Town Hall, at which representatives from the East Street

Market traders were present, as well as Liberal Democrat Members Councillor Linda Manchester and Councillor Cathy Bowman, officers from the Environment department and market inspectors?

#### **RESPONSE**

The meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> August 2003 in relation to East Street Market involved members and officers with a formal remit in relation to East Street and followed issues raised at the Walworth Community Council. Councillor Manchester attended in her guise as Chair of the Street Traders' Forum and Councillor Bowman as lead member for regeneration. Appropriate officers from Environment and Leisure also attended.

East Street market is split between two wards East Walworth and Faraday. Ward Councillors were not invited from either ward as all Walworth members had been involved in discussions that you may recall took place at Walworth Community Council in July.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION - COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER**

Would the Deputy Leader not agree that in order to ensure the most rapid resolution of the problems on East Street that a Cross Party approach is best and therefore Faraday Ward Councillors ought to have been invited to the meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> August as well as all other meetings on this subject.

#### **RESPONSE**

This issue has been discussed and dealt with across party at the Walworth Community Council in some detail and will be coming back to the next meeting. I don't think it is necessary, it is appropriate because you seem to be forgetting the fact that East Street Market is actually split between two Wards and technically you can say border 3 wards, Newington, East Walworth and Faraday and if we start getting Councillors from all wards involved in this it starts getting far too big a group to meet. It is very appropriate for me as Deputy Leader of the Council and other Executive Members to meet with market traders and officers and who we like to try and take this matter further and I would suggest to you that if you had approach that in a far more ..... actually invited Executive Members along to meetings in the market and others then this might have been dealt with in a way that you found to be more inclusive. I have not been invited neither colleagues to some of the meeting you have organised in the market and we are trying to deal with this in a professional way with the Chair of the Street Traders Forum and others I suggest that your input would be useful at the Walworth Community Council where you are a local Councillor.

#### **6. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM**

Does the Executive Member agree with me that recent Sport Lottery Funding secured to improve sports facilities in Mellish Field/St Pauls Sports Ground and Burgess Park will make a significant contribution to the promotion of sport in Southwark and the participation of young people. Can he also inform Council of the progress being made to complete the improvement works and of his satisfaction of the works completed.



## RESPONSE

There have been two recent lottery awards for Burgess Park which will improve sports provision in the Park and which will offer enhanced sporting opportunities for young people. The two projects are the establishment of grass sports pitches on the Waite Street site and improved tennis facilities at the Addington Square site.

The Mellish Fields scheme has not received Sports Lottery Funding. Funding for this project is being sought from the Football Foundation and Marathon Trust.

The Mellish Fields scheme will provide football, cricket and athletics facilities to a modern standard to address the shortage and known need in the area for facilities of this kind. For example, Docklands Junior Football Club, which has over 300 young members (boys and girls), most of whom live in SE16, have to travel to Eltham to play their matches, because there are no suitable facilities closer to home that they can use. This is identified as a high priority in the Council's Football and Cricket Development plans.

In recognition, however, that not all young people are into sports or easily persuaded to take it up, the proposed extension to Bacons College includes flexible space to maximise use and amenity value. A high priority will be programmes and activities for local youth groups, which would be provided in partnership with the Council's Youth Services and voluntary sector providers. The project plan in outline and indicative time frame for Mellish Fields is as follows:

Initial programme of consultation: April - July 2003  
Architects appointed: June 2003  
Planning consent: November/December 2003  
Funding approvals: April - June 04  
Works commissioned and commence by Autumn 2004  
Completion by summer 2005

With respect to St. Pauls the proposed provision of a more modern and better quality all-weather football pitch with floodlights on Mellish Fields creates an opportunity to consider an alternative, sports related use of St Pauls. This could be complementary to the proposed scheme to improve Mellish Fields in order to meet a wider range of needs and be viable in the long term.

The Waite Street scheme is largely funded by New Opportunities Fund Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces Programme.

The grass pitch improvements have so far involved installation of new fencing and gates, additional topsoil, re-levelling and re-seeding in order to provide

- 4 upgraded grass mini-pitches for mini-football and mini-rugby
- Cricket square
- Cricket nets

The new facilities will be used primarily by the local community including junior clubs, groups and schools and will enable the goals of Southwark's Sports Development Plans for Mini-Rugby, Football and Cricket to be taken forward.

Junior rugby pitches and cricket squares are currently non-existent in the north of Southwark, and Southwark's Football Development Plan identifies the provision of pitches as the main area of weakness for football in the borough. Furthermore, schools in the surrounding area currently have little or no access to playing fields.

The proximity of the site to Southwark's key target groups for sports development, and established links between Southwark Council (and the various junior sports clubs), and initiatives such as the Sports Action Zone and Aylesbury New Deal for Communities mean there is potential to deliver a range of important social benefits.

Works commenced on site in February 2003 and since then the following has been achieved:

- Removal of existing fencing and installation of new perimeter fencing
- Grading and seeding operations which involved importing 300 tonnes of clean topsoil and spreading this on portions of the field to assist with its levelling and improve its fertility.
- Aftercare (watering, weeding, square maintenance) with regular visits by Contractor specified in contract

There have been some issues raised regarding the quality of the pitch improvement works and as a consequence the Council commissioned an additional site visit from the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI). This highlighted the need to address a compacted/stony area of poor growth which forms a band stretching around the cricket square from west to south, and also suggested that the weeds on the cricket square needed addressing. However, in general the STRI report indicated that the outfield had established well with a good cover.

Following a site visit to monitor progress, Groundwork Southwark which is managing the project instructed further works on weed removal, watering and on the stones/compaction.

The STRI will inspect the site again on the 19th September to report on progress with implementation of their recommendations.

The Square is anticipated to be open for use for cricket by Spring 2004. The pitches are anticipated to be open for use for mini-football/mini-cricket by Autumn 2004

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION - CLLR A GRAHAM**

Can I apologise for that telephone

The main reason why I put this question forward is because there are three problems with the contract as noted in the report. The situation is that also the site will not be ready until autumn 2004 and at the moment young people are using it and are damaging the fence as well which they have not noted in this report. My question really is if there is a number for the scheme to be

implemented ..... Money that ..... and I just want some assurance that yourself or your Executive Member for Parks will give some importance to this and make sure that the money is not wasted as it has been in this case because the quality of work in terms of the finish of the park and the timescale which the park will be used again and there are other works to be completed under this programme and I just want some assurance that the contract will be better managed by yourself and your colleague will be on the ball a bit more.

## **RESPONSE**

Thank you very much for your supplementary, my colleague is ex Member for Environment who leads on parks and I have been working very closely on this issue and I can assure you money has not been issued at all. We did not sign off the work, we had the Sports Returf Institute come and do a site visit and works have been remedied as you would in any project. You have snagging in any major works in your ward similarly to this kind of project. We are very committed to putting more funding into Burgess Park and improving sports facilities in Burgess Park and throughout other parks in the borough and as you can see from this detailed answer a lot of things are already going on and we hope that once we manage to get much funding for some of them that we are developing at an early stage and for these projects once they are up and running there will be lots of sports facilities for young people and others in the borough. As for young people playing on the pitch already I mean that's very difficult for us to manage but I do know that officers are working with a local cricket club and they have been encouraging young people not to do that and that has been very successful by the Albrighton Cricket Club and others so work is already underway. The pitches will be ready hopefully within the timescales we stated and we will make sure the works are up to first class standard and I am particularly pleased that we will have coming on stream soon the new tennis courts in Burgess Park ..... someone who has used them and played where we do not even have a net I am delighted that we are getting money into the park to have first class tennis pitches and hopefully in the future we might actually get Tim Henman from the Inner City to play for England.

## **QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN FLANNERY**

Could the Executive Member update me on any action that the Council has taken in respect of the 24-hour bus route on Jamaica Road?

## **RESPONSE**

A number of representations have been received by the Council asking the rationale regarding the 24 hour operation of the bus lane in Jamaica Road.

Jamaica Road is a Red Route and Transport for London (TfL) is both Highway and Traffic Authority for this road.

These representations have been forwarded to Transport for London. A letter was sent on 14<sup>th</sup> August asking that TfL formally consider modifying the operational hours of the bus lane. The suggestion being that the hours of the lane be restricted to peak traffic hours.

In addition to the above the Council has requested that a meeting be held between Southwark and TfL to discuss this and a number of other bus issues. A response on this is awaited from TfL.

### **CLLR TAYO SITU**

I thank the Leader for his robust reply in response to my question which I don't think I agree with. As the Council is the major sponsor of the event does the Leader agree with me in the interest of fear and objectivities and free from partition politics that all the three MPs should be invited as the case in year 2000 when there was a seminar on African Organisation ..... yourself Mr Mayor and Councillor Wingfield were the speaker and also from the Leader's speech during the Multi Faith Forum you mentioned that 3 three Churches have Council financial supports and I mention them, St Giles, St John's and St Peters, I want to ask this question how many Mosque or other Christian Faith or any other Faith Group receives such financial support from the Council up-to-date and if not why

### **RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER**

I will repeat what I said in the answer. It was not up to the Council who the Multi Faith Forum invite to speak or why. We had no control over that nor would we week to. I am satisfied that there were quite enough speakers on the evening and every political party got to have a representative who spoke to the assembly meeting and Councillor Dixon-Fyle spoke on behalf of the Labour Group and I think left no one in any doubt about the Labour Group's support for the Multi Faith Forum. There are a wide range of Faith Groups that received for a wide variety of work from the Council and I certainly cannot list them right off the top of my head. The examples that I gave were ones drawn from recent capital decisions that the Council had taken both Community Councils and at Council Assembly but certainly there are a number of Faith base groups from different base which received revenue support grant for voluntary sector activities for example.

### **7. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE**

Could the Executive Member for Environment & Transport share with us any plans that he might have to improve travel options for the Camberwell area?

### **RESPONSE**

Travel to and from Camberwell has recently been improved with the introduction of service 148 to Victoria. The service has been brought in to provide additional bus capacity in support of the congestion charging scheme. The operation of the new route is being monitored and may lead to further bus service improvements in this location.

More radical improvements would take longer to effect but it remains the Council's intention and commitment that Camberwell should be served by tram. The current position with regard to the Cross River Transit tram scheme ('The London Tram') is that TfL are concentrating on the achievement of the core route (i.e. the alignment from Kings Cross and Camden Town to

Peckham and Brixton). This route was publicly consulted upon in autumn 2001 and the initial response was overwhelmingly in favour. The Mayor of London has recently made public restatements of his commitment to achieving an opening of this route by 2011.

A depot location is still required for the London Tram and the evaluation of site options along the line of route is currently underway. Once a site has been identified the Transport and Works Act [TWA] procedure necessary to give formal consent to the project will be initiated and it is estimated that this will take approximately 18 months to complete. Under the streamlined arrangement proposed, work on possible extensions will only commence once the core route is considered to be 'secure'. In practice this will be somewhere between the commencement and completion of the TWA process.

The Camberwell position is that it is agreed by TfL to be in the first category of extensions and modelling, feasibility and commercial viability studies will commence as soon as the 'secure' position referred to above has been achieved. This reflects a shared agreement amongst board members that until the core route is secure no extensions can properly be planned.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR HARGROVE**

I would like to thank the Executive Member for his informative reply. I wonder if he could tell us has he thought about anything to improve travel options for cyclists in the Camberwell area.

#### **RESPONSE – CLLR R THOMAS**

I can tell him as we have mentioned earlier that we have made a decision to merge the highways and the transport groups which would ..... us into two different departments and I hope that that will lead to rather more joined up delivery on cycling issues.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR FLANNERY**

Would the Member let me know the date of the meeting with TfL and I shall attend that meeting on behalf of TfL about this issue myself.

#### **RESPONSE**

I thank Councillor Flanner for his supplementary question and assure him that his complaints about bus routes in any parts of the borough but particularly on Jamaica Road is music to my ears and I want to keep them coming. I welcome a positive dialogue with him on these issues. I do not know when the meeting is. I have presumed it is only going to be an Officer-level meeting at this stage, I do not know whether member involvements is appropriate – we will have a think about that. We are going to consider a whole range of buses use and as it has been pointed out in other fields - if every ward Councillor came along it may get unwieldy but the point is we need to listen to Ward Councillors and make sure their views are fed in appropriately.

## **8. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR TONY RITCHIE**

Could the Executive Member please tell Council Assembly why so little preparation was made by the Environment Department to cope with the recent strike by the refuse collectors? For example giving residents of the borough advance warning that there was a strike coming in order that they were able to clear most of the rubbish away beforehand.

### **RESPONSE**

As Members will be aware the refuse collection service took industrial action for the whole of the week commencing 14 July 2003, including the Saturday.

The strike was not directly related to Southwark Council's own service but part of Unison's London-wide selective action over the value of London weighting paid to local authority employees. Therefore it was not within our powers to resolve this issue locally.

The Council received formal notification of the industrial action on Friday 4 July 2003. To ensure residents were informed as far as is practicable about the action a press release was provided to all London media contacts during the week commencing 7 July 2003 and was placed on the web site at the same time. The press release outlined the Council's position, asking residents to be patient and wherever possible use the Council recycling facilities and the Reuse and Recycling Centre at Manor Place Depot.

In addition, the Waste Management Service wrote to all trade waste customers during the week commencing 7 July 2003 advising them of the proposed action and detailing clear up arrangements following the period. All residents who had booked a bulky household waste collection for the week of action were also contacted and provided with revised collection dates.

In relation to tenants and leaseholders the Housing department wrote to all properties providing details of the action, again requesting that waste was minimised as far as possible.

In terms of operational preparation for the period of action, collections were made from a considerable number of properties served by bulk refuse containers on Sunday 13 July 2003 and again on Sunday 20 July 2003. In addition, Southwark Cleaning ensured that all waste around bulk refuse containers was removed during the weeklong action period and that any overflowing bulk bins were cleared to a manageable level.

To ensure any material that was dumped on the streets during the action was removed quickly and efficiently and that the cleanliness of the borough did not fall too much, Southwark Cleaning provided additional resources in terms of both teams and hours of operation.

Following the period of action additional refuse collection teams were deployed to ensure normal scheduled collections returned as quickly as possible. To facilitate this on housing estates Southwark Cleaning continued to work with the refuse collection service following the industrial action period to remove waste from around bulk bins.

The Waste Management Service put a considerable amount of time into planning for the action period and amending contingency measures during the period to ensure as far as was practicable the effects of the action was mitigated. This included preparing for the possibility of an extension of the action.

Whilst as with any industrial action of this nature disruption to services is inevitable, I feel the work undertaken by the Waste Management Service during the period significantly mitigated the effect and meant that the detraction in borough cleanliness was minimal. This when compared to other London borough's who have been through similar industrial action periods demonstrates how far we have moved on in delivering services since May 2002.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR T RITCHIE**

Would he accept from me that I and certainly my two fellow colleague Councillors from Camberwell Green .....fairly inundated with telephone calls asking are the dustmen on strike. That was the gist of it. Would he consider in view of the fact that this reply tends to indicate that he feels that it was widely known around the borough would he indicate to undertake a survey of the residents of this borough to see how many of them were aware that there was a strike on as it may help in any future planning and also in view of the fact that he has given an undertaking that refuse collection carried on in some form or other during that week is he in a position to give me in percentage terms the number of refuse operatives who took industrial action that week.

### **RESPONSE**

Lets thanks Councillor Ritchie for the supplementary question. I was not seeking to be self-congratulatory but I would certainly like to take this opportunity to congratulate the staff in Environment and Leisure and Southwark Cleaning I think did a pretty good job during that week. I think the extent to which they did a good job was shown when the unions called off the strike and muttered something along the lines of well there is not much point in carrying on because no ones noticed anyway. Of course there would have been problems in issues and it would have been extremely bizarre if no member of the public and no tenants had phoned in to say there is a problem here, there has been a strike and we have noticed something but the point is that we use Southwark cleaning to provide a much better service and to clear away the extra bags - I think they did a very good job - I want them to take a survey without knowing what the costs might be and I can't remember what the third part of the question was but I am sure the Strategic Director could answer that if you were to email her and copy me into that.

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

What progress has been made towards completing the sale of land at Queens Road Station to Network Rail and when do you expect the improvement works to commence?

**RESPONSE**

A recent planning consent granted on an adjacent private site has raised the possibility of a much improved wholesale redevelopment of this area, including other adjacent Council land, improving the station entrance and possibly, the private site recently granted planning consent.

The proposed sale of Council freehold land to Network Rail as it stands does not include any reserved rights in favour of the Council in relation to its adjacent land. In view of the possibilities for the better planning of this area on a wholesale redevelopment, the inclusion of these rights is essential if the full potential is to be realised. The Council's requirement to reserve rights does not prevent a sale to Network Rail proceeding.

At a meeting with Network Rail on Wednesday 10 September 2003 the Council's proposals for a more wholesale, enhanced scheme were discussed and positively received. Network Rail is now consulting internally. A site meeting has been provisionally arranged for Friday 30 September 2003 with Network Rail, Spacia, South Central, and Council officers, when the outcome of Network Rail's internal consultation will, it is anticipated, be clear. The issue of more immediate improvements to the station entrance, pending the wholesale redevelopment will be advanced at this meeting. In order to tidy the appearance of the site a hoarding has been erected across the front of 145-149 Queens Road.

With regard to the wholesale redevelopment, the Council has instructed architects to prepare sketch schemes for the land, including improvement works to the station entrance. These plans will not delay the proposed improvements to the station forecourt, which remains the primary goal in the immediate future.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR HAYES**

Thanks very much for your answer Councillor Thomas to the long running saga of Queens Road Station. I will sort of refer you to the last paragraph of your answer. These plans ..... proposed improvements for the station forecourt which remains the primary goal in the immediate future. Can you give us some indication of what sort of timescale we have got there because it is a very sort of nice answer but it still does not answer the sort ..... of the question which is when is all this going to happen

**RESPONSE – CLLR THOMAS**

I am afraid I have to disappoint Cllr Hayes, I can't give a direct answer to that question. I hope it will be as soon as possible. The problem with all these things is that we are relying on third parties to a larger extent but I will certainly look into that and write to him with the specific answer.



## **10. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH**

Could the Executive Member please inform Council Assembly as to when the work for a replacement public toilet in the Peckham town centre will start?

### **RESPONSE**

There have been a series of attempts to address public toilet needs in Peckham spanning a number of years.

A working group was set up under the Peckham Town Centre Management Group to explore the range of provision options including; exploring the council's capital and revenue funding; looking at opening up to public access the dozen or so toilets in private shops in the area; as well as looking at the possibility of using one of the Town Centre Management Group's own toilets.

Substantial work was and is still being carried out with McDonalds restaurant in an attempt to open up their toilets to the public but it is understood the company has ongoing concerns regarding drugs misuse which is still subject to discussion and development work with the Town Centre Management Group and the police.

It remains the case that new Council provision would have both capital and revenue costs for which there is currently no provision. A new prefabricated toilet would cost approximately £80,000 while a customised new facility could cost anything from £150,000 upward, depending on the size and quality required. Works to adapt existing facilities for public use might well be the cheapest option, but will need to allow for security and disabled access adaptations, so might cost £25,000 or more, depending on the site. Revenue costs will depend on decisions made as to supervision and cleaning. Full time supervision could cost £50,000, depending on the hours of opening. Regular cleaning would cost from £5-10,000 per annum

Toilet provision across the borough is currently the subject of a mini Best Value Review that is due to conclude in October 2003. The aims of the review are:

- To develop a strategy for the provision of public conveniences balancing value for money and wider social objectives
- To establish the options for improvements to current level, quality, costs and management provision.
- To determine the costs necessary to improve provision in terms of level and quality
- To seek alternative ways of providing and funding the service

I propose that following completion of this review officers will be asked to report to the Executive on recommendations on how to address the issues raised about public toilets in the borough in general, and within the particular proposals for Peckham. This should include clear timescales and funding options.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR R SMEATH**

Can I thank the Executive Member for this answer which has taken quite sometime in regards to Nunhead and Peckham Rye Council for several meetings for this information so it is good to get it at last but I note they can't find any money or there may be not be any money. Could he explain where £50,000 was found for the improvements to the East Street toilets please?

## **RESPONSE – CLLR R THOMAS**

Not off the top of my head no I imagine its from a Council budget but if the Labour Party ..... well its stating the obvious I know but there you go. If the Labour Party position is now against East Street toilets then I would be very interested to hear that. I have said in my answer that we will seek to identify funding sources in the future as and when proposals come forward and that's clearly the sensible way forward.

## **11. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR VICKY NAISH**

Can the Executive Member for Environment please explain why such little effort had been made to contact relatives of residents buried in Southwark cemeteries regarding warning notices placed over head stones?

## **RESPONSE**

Following the tragic death of some children, the most recent being a 6 year old boy who was killed in Harrogate Cemetery in July 2002, guidance was issued from the IBCA (Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration) and the Health & Safety Executive which required that unsafe memorials be made safe. The Cremation and Crematoria section of Environment & Leisure then started a programme of inspections to identify the condition of memorials and any risk associated with poor condition.

Each memorial was inspected and details of condition recorded along with the details of the last known grave owner. Following these inspections all grave owners were written to informing them that there were issues with the condition of their memorial and asking them if they wished to either repair the memorial themselves or ring the cemetery office to discuss repairs.

Unfortunately in many cases the grave owners are now deceased and the family has not transferred the burial rights to a new grave owner. In addition families move away and do not provide the Council with a forwarding address. Unfortunately approximately 70% of the letters were returned as 'not known at this address'.

As well as writing to the grave owners we erected a notice on both sides of the cemetery entrance informing the public why yellow bags had been placed on the graves and a further notice was placed outside the cemetery office entrance.

In retrospect I agree that the yellow bag was perhaps not the most sensitive way of alerting the public to the possible risk of a memorial collapsing. I have

asked officers to investigate alternatives which are more sensitive which still allow compliance with health and safety requirements.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION - CLLR V NAISH**

I would like to thank the Executive Member for the Environment & Transport for answering my question. There are a couple of questions I would like to follow on from this which I would appreciate answers.

Do I take it that this is the first time that the yellow bags on the unsafe gravestone was ever done. I believe this is the first time but then I need to hear from you.

When were you first aware of this programme being done. How long were the notices outside the cemeteries or inside on the cemetery board and why wasn't there a notice put in the local press or in the local libraries which people use?

#### **RESPONSE**

I believe this is the first time but I would have to double check - that's certainly the first time during the period in which I have had responsibility. The answer to the question is when did I know about this. The blunt answer is when I came back from holiday because I was away and I believe there was a double check that this was done under delegated powers. I will reiterate what I have said though that it was extraordinary insensitive and there must be a better way of doing this.

**12. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY**

Why did the 'permit holders only' signs disappear from the residential parking spaces in Horselydown Lane early this year and why despite repeated residents enquiries to the Ward Councillors had they not been replaced by the beginning of September 2003 ?

**RESPONSE**

A number of signs in this area were removed illegally including the Council's signs. These signs disappeared during a period when building work was in progress in the area. Signs were replaced in this general area but this location was missed. It is true that there was an enquiry from a member on behalf of a constituent which went astray for a long period. An investigation has been carried out as a result and faults have been identified in the members enquiry system within parking in the Department of Environment and Leisure which have now been rectified. Enquiries to the housing system were sent to a misspelt name and the email therefore did not arrive. An order has now been raised for replacement of the timeplates and the work has been completed.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR JOHN FRIARY**

My follow-up is could he inform me as to whether any of the affected residents have been offered compensation or are likely to be offered compensation for the period which they paid for parking spaces and did not have it and secondly is he aware of any similar problems elsewhere in the borough?

**RESPONSE**

No I do not believe anyone has been offered compensation - we could certainly look at that if that is appropriate and there is a parking appeals process that people are free to go to. I am not aware of any current cases. No.

**13. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID BRADBURY**

What progress is being made in getting replacement ornamental ironwork fitted to the west elevation of Turney Road railway bridge to complete the restoration project?

**RESPONSE**

The work was originally programmed to be completed by the last weekend of August 2003. However the contractor was unable to carry out the work as the planned closure of the track by Network Rail was not implemented and Network Rail did not advise the Council of this. We have still not been advised why this happened despite requests for information.

We are now trying to reprogramme the work which Network Rail advise is likely to be between 29 September and 3 October 2003. If this period is agreed Network Rail will carry out the ironworks, the Council will arrange for the road closures and complete the installation of pigeon netting to the underside of the bridge.

**14. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAM ROWE**

When will the "Blue Box" re-cycling service be extended to collect items other than paper – and what other types of item will be collected by this service?

**RESPONSE**

Officers are presently investigating the options available and the associated costs for expanding the current service to collect glass and cans.

Funding for the expansion of the scheme is currently being sought from the London Recycling Fund. If the bid were successful a borough wide door-to-door collection service for paper, glass and cans would be operational during the final quarter of 2003/04. The outcome of the bid will be known by the end of October 2003.

Should the bid to the London Recycling Fund be unsuccessful officers have submitted a growth bid to the Council for 2004/05 with a view to providing a borough wide service for paper, glass and cans.

**15. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DERMOT McINERNEY**

Will the Executive Member outline the results of the green waste recycling pilot and publicly commit to its permanent extension?

**RESPONSE**

The green waste recycling pilot was initiated to see how much green waste can be extracted from the waste stream and how much it would cost the Council to do so. At this time, the pilot is still ongoing.

At the end of the pilot, in November 2003, an assessment will be made to determine the value for money element of a wider scheme in the longer term.

The assessment will involve analysing the tonnage reports, looking at the results of participation surveys and looking at costs and as a consequence of this review we will decide whether to extend the scheme duration and geographical scope in 2004.

## **16. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR MICHELLE PEARCE**

In her response to Councillor Robinson's question relating to costs of the LGA conference the Executive Member for resources stated 'as a result of this effort (attending the LGA conference and having a stand on liveability) the Council has increased its profile on the national stage'.

Can Councillor Zuleta inform Council Assembly on what basis has she reached this conclusion, and what form of public relations evaluation has she undertaken to prove it?

### **RESPONSE**

While it will never be possible to get an exact 1-to-1 correlation between profiling activity and actual performance, the activity at the LGA conference did get us extensive coverage in the Municipal Journal for the work we are doing and has started to build a reputation for us as an authority that is leading in the field of liveability. While not a scientific survey - if you type "liveability Southwark" into google.com you will discover 125 web sites where we get a mention - including House of Commons select committee minutes. In addition, the government has set up a £89M fund for liveability - for which Environment & Leisure is making a £5M bid. While we will not know the outcome of the bid until November, there is no doubt that having a national profile will support our case. If this bid is successful, the cost of the conference will seem small in comparison.

We are not proposing to spend money on undertaking research on the impact the attendance had, as this research is likely to cost more than the amount of money spent on sending delegates to the conference - however, it will be possible to review in 6 months if the cost has delivered any direct benefits to the borough.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION - CLLR M PEARCE**

Even if the Executive Member believes that the LGA Conference represented by value for money would she agree with me that it is not value for money when Officers and Members book places on conferences and then fail to attend. I recently went to a conference and found 6 places had been booked by Southwark Officers and a Member besides myself and 4 people failed to appear and that must have been about a £1,500 waste of money on one day alone to the Council. Would she therefore agree with me that it is perhaps time for attendance at conferences to be monitored and perhaps a scrutiny into whether we are getting value for money is advisable.

### **RESPONSE**

I am entirely in agreement with her that if people book places in conferences and don't show up that is a serious occurrence and I do believe that people should at least respond to the Council's for why they have not attended conferences which have been paid for. I would like to ask Councillor Pearce if she would let me have details of the conference where people were booked



in and did not attend and I would like the Chief Executive to give us an answer why this occurs because this is clearly a waste of money.

## **17. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY**

In the light of (1) the seriousness of the actuarial deficit in the Council's pension fund set out in the client briefing by Mr T N Lunn dated 17<sup>th</sup> June 2003 and addressed to the Chief Financial Officer, (2) the likely severe burden to fall upon local taxpayers and (3) recent agreements by employees of certain companies in the private sector to accept increased employee contribution rates, would the Executive Member set out fully:

- (a) what are the obstacles to this Council and/or local authorities generally (i) increasing employee contribution rates so as to spread fairly the burden of maintaining the current generous provisions of the Council's defined benefits pension scheme, and/or (ii) reducing such benefits;
- (b) if the obstacles arise from statutory or other legally enforceable provisions, what is the Council's policy towards seeking relaxation or modification of those provisions, and in that context what efforts has the Council, through its Executive or officers, made to achieve such change?

### **RESPONSE**

London Borough of Southwark is charged with administering the Pension Fund in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended). The Regulations cover eligibility, contributions, benefits and plan governance.

Regulation 12 specifies members' contribution rates and the Borough has no discretion in this matter. The Regulations, which cover all local authority pension funds in England and Wales, are set by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and are subject to approval by Ministers.

Regulations allow some discretion with regard to benefit levels. However, the degree of discretion is relatively small in the context of the overall benefit package. Measures that can be taken by local authorities, in order to manage the costs, without changing benefit levels include:

- Proactive investment management
- Controlling early retirement take up
- Management of ill-health retirements
- Overall control of the wage bill.

The Regulations are changed from time to time but prior to effecting any changes a consultation exercise is usually undertaken, and the Borough is one of many consultees invited to comment on draft changes.

At present the ODPM is undertaking what it calls a Stock Take of the Local Government Pension Scheme. As part of the exercise, a Discussion Group has been established to examine the various proposals. Tim Lunn of Hewitt Bacon and Woodrow, the current Southwark Fund Actuary, represents the Association of Consulting Actuaries on the Discussion Group and is, therefore, suitably placed to update us on developments. The ODPM initially issued a series of discussion papers for comment, and on 23 July 2003 some specific proposals were issued for comment. Proposed changes are likely to

occur in two phases. If approved by Ministers, Phase 1 is likely to be effective from 1 April 2004 and Phase 2 from 1 April 2005.

The Phase 1 proposals are unlikely to have a marked impact on costs. It includes such things as removal of the option to receive refunds of contributions when service is less than two years and the requirement to regularly produce benefit statements.

However the Phase 2 proposals include the possibility that new scheme members should pay a higher employee contribution rate from a future date and that the retirement age should be raised. The current proposals also include the abolition of the 'Rule of 85' (i.e. retirement is possible when age plus service equal 85) for new members, and phased out for existing members, ultimately bringing the retirement age for all members to age 65. In addition, the minimum age of retirement (except in cases of ill-health) will be increased from age 50 to age 55. These proposals would significantly reduce costs.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION - CLLT T ECKERSLEY**

Would the Executive Member confirm that it is not the Council's policy to oppose the Phase 2 measures described in her answer

#### **RESPONSE**

I do not envisage any reason why we should oppose measures that ODPM is expecting to take under Phase 2

**18. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE**

Will the Executive Member please inform me how many nursing and residential homes and how many voluntary groups supported by social services she has visited?

**RESPONSE**

Upon taking up office as Executive Member for Health & Social Care my immediate priority was to focus on children's services, in light of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry and the investment being made in children's services. My early visits were therefore to children's homes, district offices etc. I then made a number of visits to voluntary organisations with subsequent visits to day care provision to talk to staff and users about the review of day services. I have made fewer visits during the last three months due to my maternity leave but during this time I have kept in touch with a range of groups and individuals by phone and e-mail.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR D DIXON-FYLE**

Can I first of all wish Councillor Lauder the very best as she returns to the Back Bench and to her family. Thank you for your hard work .....

I am pleased to note from the reply from Councillor Lauder that she has actually made visits to and reduce the number of day services

Can I ask Councillor Moore what she would say to somebody like Charlie a man who I saw recently who told me that after very many years of attending Rouel Road Day Centre he was then moved right across the borough to Fred Francis Day Centre in Dulwich. Not is the distance and transportation an issue for him but also now at Fred Francis when he asks for a simple thing like a cup of tea he is actually charged 25p for it. What would she say to somebody like that?

**RESPONSE**

Regarding individual case if you want to send me further details about this specific case I am happy to ask Social Services staff to look into it. I was not aware that Fred Francis Centre is charging people for refreshments and I am very happy to look into that and find out why that is the case. With regard to transport arrangements I did not catch the exact details of what you said the problem was with that but if there is a problem then I am sure it is something that can be resolved but you are familiar with the background to this and they need to make best use of the resources that we have got and to make sure the people who do have an assessed need get the care they need so if the ..... Having a need and there is a place for him we just need to make sure that he is in a position to take advantage of that as best he can but if you want to send me more details I will make sure it is looked into.

## **19. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR ANNE YATES**

The Executive Member reported at the last Assembly meeting that the Council would be responding to the Government consultation paper on housing benefit sanctions.

Could the Executive Member please summarise the Council's response?

### **RESPONSE**

A summary of the council's response to the Housing Benefit Sanctions Consultation Paper is as follows:

Southwark Council is firmly committed to tackling anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder, by working in partnership with the Police and other key agencies. Our approach is multi-layered and includes preventative / diversionary measures, community capacity building, support for victims and rigorous sanctions, including a raft of legal remedies, against perpetrators. We believe that there are already sufficient legal remedies available to tackle anti-social behaviour and do not support the central principle of applying benefit sanctions. This position is shared by both the Chartered Institute of Housing and Local Government Association.

Southwark Council believes that welfare benefits are a safety net for the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society; they are not a reward for 'good' behaviour. Housing benefit is paid to households whose income is insufficient to meet their housing costs. Any reduction in Housing Benefit would therefore run counter to the Council's (and the Government's) anti-poverty strategy.

Furthermore, by targeting only those in receipt of housing benefit the proposal reinforces the erroneous stereotype that only social housing tenants are 'guilty' of anti-social behaviour.

The proposal is therefore inequitable and open to legal challenge, for example under the Human Rights Act. Further legal challenges could arise through the implementation of the proposal to apply Housing Benefit sanctions to a claimant in response to the actions of family or friends.

Should the proposals go ahead, we believe that they would not offer an effective sanction against anti-social behaviour, whilst still resulting in significant additional costs for local authorities. The most likely outcome is that sanctions would result in an increased number of evictions for rent arrears, thereby contributing to an increase in homelessness. This works against the Government's own policy streams on prevention of homelessness and increasing social inclusion.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION - CLLR A YATES**

Does the Executive Member agree that there are far more effective way of dealing with people under the anti-social unit than taking away part of the benefit. They can barely manage on the benefit as it is. Taking away some

of the benefit away its going ..... Crime instead of ..... banging doors and kicking footballs in ..... knocking you down to get the money to pay the fine to make up .....

## **RESPONSE**

Obviously it is something that I would not support to stopped for anyone who is causing anti-social behaviour and I think that the Council demonstrated very well in recent months how effective we have been at dealing with anti-social behaviour another example of that is the record number of anti-social behaviour orders that Southwark has got which is significantly different to the amount in previous years. There are lots of ..... In dealing with anti-social behaviour and stopping people's benefit I don't think is an answer and it implies that it is only people in receipt of benefit have anti-social children I think that's completely wrong and I think its unfair on anyone that is in receipt of welfare benefit.

**20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER**

Could the Executive Member confirm when Introductory Tenancies will be introduced and whether the actual agreement has been agreed yet?

**RESPONSE**

The Executive has approved the implementation of Introductory Tenancies with effect from October 2003. Officers in Southwark Housing are now in the process of putting in place the administrative systems, including the training of staff, to ensure its smooth implementation. This Administration is committed to developing initiatives to address anti-social behaviour and this is one of the key policy developments that need to be put in place.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION - CLLR MANCHESTER**

Although Introductory Tenancies will no doubt help route out illegal occupants can you tell us what other measures are designed to root out illegal tenants. Introductory Tenancies are I think going to be very popular. The other measures that are in place to deal with illegal occupation is to increase the number of tenancy checks but I think one of the things that will go a long way is our plan to introduce photographic IDs on Tenancy Agreements. In time all tenants will be required to have their photographs on their Tenancy Agreement and I think it is already in place for new tenants and hopefully that will help us to fight the number of illegal occupants that are taking up homes which are badly needed by people that have a right to live in them.

**RESPONSE**

I would like to thank the Executive Member for her very full answer to the question that was submitted with my full consent. I would like to ask the Executive Member further whether she expects on the Audit Commission results next year.

I am confident that we will do better and if you look at the result that were awarded it was with promising prospects for improvement and I can see the service leading to becoming much better so hopefully yes we will get a much better score next time although obviously I am happy that we have got ..... promising prospect this year.

## **21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN O'BRIEN**

Could the Executive Member comment on the latest Audit Commission inspection of the Housing Department?

### **RESPONSE**

The inspection of the Housing Management service took place during March

The service was scored as a 'fair' one star service that has 'promising prospects for improvement'.

The service was considered 'fair' because of a number of areas, such as:

- a range of customer focused services have been developed
- annual gas servicing at tenants' homes is very well managed
- there are effective procedures in place for rent collection and arrears management

The report also identified some areas where improvements are needed, such as:

- telephone responses in some neighbourhood housing offices are poor
- standards in customer services are inconsistent
- void performance varies markedly by neighbourhood

The service was considered to have 'promising prospects for improvement' because:

- senior housing managers and councillors have a strong commitment to improving housing services
- there has been some success in tackling weak areas of performance, most notably rent collection and the delivery of the housing benefit contract, reflected in improving performance on key indicators
- there are clear plans to address areas of weakness, notably leasehold management and tenant participation

Given the Best Value Review of Housing Management and the Customer Service Centre proposals, the council is already addressing some of the areas identified as requiring improvement such as poor telephone responses in some neighbourhood housing offices and inconsistent standards of customer care. Indeed, the inspection report summarised the Best Value Review as having reflected a professional, well-managed approach, with a clear commitment to learning from good practice elsewhere.

I believe the inspection was a reasonable reflection of the service and we will be using the details to improve our services for tenants and leaseholders



## **22. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK**

Is the Executive Member aware of the report on stock transfer by the Public Accounts Committee that says that if councils were allowed to borrow and improve council stock themselves then there would be a saving to the public purse of £1,300 per home? Could she please comment on this report?

### **RESPONSE**

The Report of the Public Accounts Committee, 'Improving social housing through transfer', was published on 2 July 2003.

It refers to hypothetical calculations by the ODPM that suggest the additional cost to the taxpayer of renovation of housing stock through transfer compared to the cost of renovation through local authority retention, is £1,300 per home over 30 years.

The additional cost partly represents the higher cost of capital in the private sector and the transaction costs of setting up a transfer. This is justified by the ODPM on the grounds of non-quantifiable benefits such as earlier renovation, greater tenant participation and satisfaction, and risk transfer from the public to the private sector.

The Public Accounts Committee highlighted a number of weaknesses in the model used and recommended that ODPM demonstrate more rigorously that the additional costs of transfer represent good value for money.

It is extraordinary that the Government continues to foist stock transfer on local authorities as the only option to bring homes up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard – especially when a level playing field could be introduced for councils and housing associations in regard to public borrowing.

It is even more extraordinary that the Government promotes this option when stock transfer doesn't appear to represent value for money - once again the taxpayer is forced to bear the cost for Government narrow-mindedness and councils are placed in an impossible position.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR HOOK**

Could you advise us further on whether Southwark has been overwhelmed by stock transfer request or if TAs have talked about that in principle?

### **RESPONSE**

To my knowledge no Tenants & Residents Association in the borough has made an application for stock transfer and certainly of all the conversations I have had with tenants and there are lots of those I have never once been approached by anyone who has asked me what to do about stock transfer or for my view on it so I don't think it is going to be a success and I think that people have already made their views loud and clear that they are not interested in stock transfer.

## **23. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER**

Does the Executive Member for Housing agree with the decision of the Tenant Fund Management Committee on 15th May 2003 not to fund the Atwell and Glebe Estate tenant groups?

### **RESPONSE**

The Tenant Fund Management Committee, which is a Sub Committee of Tenant Council, manages the fund on behalf of the Council, based on criteria endorsed by Tenant Council.

Details of the two funding applications are as follows:-

- Glebe T&RA: The application dated 8th April was received on 10th April 2003. The final closing date for last year was 20th March 2003.
- Atwell T&RA did not have the required documentation to attach to their application forms as follows:
  - Copy of Notice of AGM
  - Copy of Minutes of AGM
  - List of Dates on which the Committee met.

There is no right of appeal on the grounds of lateness.

However, a report on all T&RAs who do not meet the criteria for funding each year is presented to the Tenant Fund Management Committee for review. The TFMC reviewed the applications in question on 15th May 2003 and agreed that they did not meet the criteria for funding.

It is unfortunate that both associations did not meet the criteria and therefore were not funded. I have asked officers to ensure that both associations receive further guidance and assistance to enable them to submit successful applications in future years.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION - CLLR M GLOVER**

Does the Executive Member accept that all the documentation relating to the Atwell application was indeed passed to the Community Development Section before the deadline and on two different occasions it was lost. What is she going to do about it and how is that going to be investigated.

#### **RESPONSE**

I was not advised that documentation was lost that's something that I have heard now for the first time. I am more than happy to talk to you about that outside of this meeting to see if we can come to some resolution. My understanding was that they did not provide the correct documentation and that's why it was refused but if you are saying that there are other circumstances it needs to be looked at again and I would be more than happy to do that.

#### **24. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR ALFRED BANYA**

Could the Executive Member for Housing clarify whether Housing Revenue Account funds may be used to pay Neighbourhood Community Development Officers, and if so provide a breakdown by Housing Neighbourhood Office of the number of officers being paid out these funds, their salaries, their employment status (eg permanent staff or agency) and the turnover of staff in each neighbourhood since May 2002?

#### **RESPONSE**

The cost of Housing Community Development is a legitimate charge to the Housing Revenue Account. The budget for 2003/04 is £439,000 (excluding the Tenants Fund) and is held centrally in the Community Housing Services Division and is therefore not the responsibility of Neighbourhood Managers. The budget funds twelve posts and associated administrative costs.

Currently there are ten permanent staff, with two vacancies; no agency staff are currently employed in the section. Neighbourhood Housing Community Development Officers are paid in the salary range Hay 9, i.e. £25,533 to £30,267 including London Weighting. Three staff have left the Council's employment since May 2002, although two staff are currently seconded to other business units.

As the Councillor will be aware, this area of activity has recently been subjected to a Best Value Review entitled "Support for Resident Involvement", which the Executive will be receiving a report on in the near future.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR A BANYA**

Is about the two vacancies mentioned in the Executive Member's reply. I would like to ask if these two vacancies are community development posts and whether these posts will be filled irrespective of any reductions in neighbourhood housing areas?

## **RESPONSE**

My understanding is that there are two vacancies. There is not a freeze on those vacancies to my knowledge and there are certainly no plans to reduce the number of community development officers that are currently employed within the department.

### **25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY**

What are the Executive Member's views on the Council's proposals to make "the congregating of people (ie more than 3)" a breach of the tenancy agreement?

## **RESPONSE**

The Council has commenced a process of consulting with secure tenants to review the existing tenancy agreement.

Tenant Council nominated tenants to work with officers to develop a number of draft clauses and these have been referred to individual Neighbourhood Forums for consultation.

The working party of tenants and officers spent some time on the clauses relating to anti-social behaviour. One issue of concern has been the congregating of people in communal areas causing nuisance and annoyance to other residents. The wording in your question was proposed in the initial draft produced by the working party. Following consultation, this wording has been reviewed and an alternative draft has been prepared which I support. This will be referred to the next meeting of the Tenant Council for consideration.

The proposed wording is

"The tenant shall not cause or allow the communal areas of the block or estate to be used for purposes other than rest and quiet (unless otherwise designated) and shall not obstruct the communal areas, including common entrances to dwellings, blocks and the estate, by causing or allowing the congregating of people so as to cause or likely to cause a nuisance."

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – FIONA COLLEY**

I would like to thank the Executive Member for her answer and I would like to ask her if she could explain the apparent inconsistency between her support for this proposal and her Party's objection to the anti-social behaviour bill?

## **RESPONSE**

I am not sure that there is – what I am not sure that you realise is that the recommendations have been put forward by the tenants working group are recommendations that tenants have put forward themselves and at the end of the day because of the way things have been going over a number of years it will be Tenants Council that decide whether or not those recommendations go in or out. We are simply saying the reason I suggested the changing to these wording is because if you kept to a specific number in the Clause for e.g. 3

which was suggested by tenants then if you got less than 3 people causing a nuisance it doesn't have to be more than 3 people causing nuisance, one person can cause a nuisance that they are leaving themselves in a situation where they can't take any action against it. I think these changes just make it fairer and give the Council a tool to be able to deal with anti-social behaviour.

**26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD**

When will residents in the Pelican Neighbourhood Housing area know if their housing office will shut?

**RESPONSE**

There has been no decision made to close any Neighbourhood Housing Office.

On 29<sup>th</sup> July 2003 the Executive decided that there will be eight Housing Management Areas and also agreed to have a main office in each of those eight Areas. Furthermore it was decided that ongoing discussion should be held regarding the location of main offices and sub-offices and be linked to the Council's review of face-to-face provision.

As a consequence, and taking on board comments made by Forums, including the Pelican Neighbourhood Forum, two meetings of Tenant and Residents Associations located in each of the new Areas will take place. The first set of meetings will take place during September/early October 2003, to discuss the number of Forums in each of the eight Areas.

The second set of Area meetings will take place shortly after this, probably in late October/early November to discuss the location of main offices/sub-offices in each of the eight Areas. A report will then be presented to the Executive, following which a Newsletter will then be sent to all residents, in each of the eight Areas, advising them of the decisions of the Executive.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR I WINGFIELD**

If no decision has been made on the closure of the office why have the Pelican Housing Officers been advised that the office will close by the new financial year?

**RESPONSE**

If you have got knowledge that Officers have been told that it is being closed that's certainly not something that I have endorsed or sanctioned and if you are able to provide evidence of that to me I will certainly take that matter up. Its something I am not aware of. My answer is fact as far as I am concerned and if someone has given out incorrect information I would like to be able to deal with that.

**27. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR CHARLIE SMITH**

Could the Executive Member for Housing please give

- (a) the average service charge level for leaseholders for 2002/03
- (b) the average service charge level for leaseholders for 2003/04
- (c) the percentage increase in service charge level between 2002/03 and 2003/04

for the whole borough and for each neighbourhood housing area?

**RESPONSE**

The most consistent method of comparing estimated revenue service charges year on year is by reference to the boroughwide average because most elements of the estimated charge do not alter between neighbourhoods. The move this year (2003/4) to calculating estimated service charges for cleaning and grounds maintenance on a boroughwide basis means that any comparison of 2002/3 and 2003/4 estimates on a neighbourhood by neighbourhood basis would be anomalous because of the change in the basis of calculation over these two years.

(a) the total estimated debit for 2002/3 was £4,362,000. This reflects charges to the 9,131 service charge payers at the beginning of that financial year. This gives an annual estimated average of £477.71

(b) the total estimated debit for 2003/4 is £6,163, 606. This reflects the estimated charges to the 10,103 service charge payers at the beginning of the year. This gives an annual estimated average of £610.08

(c) this represents a 27.71% increase over the two years.

It should be noted that these figures reflect the position in respect of "service charge payers" (i.e. including the 700 freeholders on estates) but does not include "part year completions" (i.e. leaseholders who complete part way through any financial year).

## **28. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MOISE**

Could the Executive Member for Housing please outline the extent of the recent reductions in cleaning staff per neighbourhood housing area, the numbers of bulk refuse vehicles per neighbourhood housing area and any other reductions in service?

### **RESPONSE**

The Integrated Cleaning Contract (ICC) started in April 2003 and was designed to improve street cleaning and housing estate grounds maintenance and cleaning by providing all these services through one internal provider, Southwark Cleaning. Services will continue to improve and no reductions in service are planned.

Southwark Cleaning arranged for a 63% increase in staffing levels at the outset of the contract, to address identified problems and bring the Borough up to a universally high standard of cleanliness.

This created a positive knock-on effect for example, as fly-tipping is cleared promptly, there are fewer fly-tipping incidences and there is less need for clearance work. It was therefore anticipated that this backlog-clearing level of staffing would not be needed on an on-going basis.

In phase one of the contract, summarised above, staff were deployed across the Borough according to need. As the contract comes to the end of the first six months of operation, reductions in agency staff numbers are being arranged. This exercise has not been completed; when completed, the overall staffing levels will be 41% higher than those applying before the new contract started. Staff will continue to be deployed across the Borough to ensure the high standards in the contract specification are met.

The bulk refuse collection was addressed in the same way. Before the ICC contract, there were 5 refuse collection vehicles deployed across the Borough. In phase one of the contract, this was increased to 16. Following a detailed workload and tonnage analysis, 12 teams are now being used across the Borough, a massive 140% increase on the provision before the contract started.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR A MOISE**

Thanks for the detailed response. The only problem is in answer to the question you failed mention the reduction in the cleaning for neighbourhood area and also you haven't been really specific about the bulk refuse vehicle for neighbourhood housing area. O.K. you have given a percentage but really I think what I was looking for was a breakdown according to each area of when there is likely to be any reductions.

## **RESPONSE**

I thought that the answer was detailed and that I had given you what you had asked for. The number of bulk refuse vehicles was increased to 16 and is currently at 12. My understanding and perhaps Councillor Thomas – I don't know if it is allowed but might be able to clarify that they work across the borough and are not necessarily allocated to individual neighbourhoods but I can find that out for you – that's not a problem. I am being told that's true and with cleaning there has been a 63% increase in the number of cleaning staff before the contract started and everyone that I have spoken to out on the street have told me that they have seen an improvement in the cleaning and hopefully that will get better.

## **29. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS**

What is the length of the waiting list for garages on the Clifton Estate and what is the process by which garages are allocated to tenants and leaseholders resident on the estate? Is the Executive Member happy that the correct policy has been followed for all tenants and leaseholders who have requested a garage?

## **RESPONSE**

Currently there are seven applicants registered on the waiting list for a garage on the Clifton Estate.

Priority is given to tenants and leaseholders who live on the Clifton Estate and who do not already rent a garage.

Allocations are based on the registration date.

Tenants and leaseholders are informed when they register that the rent or service charge account must not be in arrears as this will preclude them from receiving an offer.

When an empty garage becomes available for renting, the first person registered will be offered the garage (subject to checking rent / service charge amounts). If there is no suitable resident from the estate, tenants & leaseholders living nearby who have applied for a garage on the estate will be made the offer, again in date order and subject to arrears. If again there are no suitable applicants, priority is then given to those residents requesting a second garage. Failing that any other persons living or working in the borough may be allocated the garage.

The only exceptions for allocations out of priority are for people with a disability in receipt of a mobility allowance and those residents suffering sustained harassment including vandalism of their car. The only exemptions to the rent arrears rule are those tenants or residents in receipt of a mobility allowance.

I am satisfied that we have a policy. If the Councillor considers that this policy is not being met I would be happy to look into this if he provides me with the appropriate details.



### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – COUNCILLOR SIMMONS**

I would like to thank the Executive Member for her reply. I was rather surprised that it was not actually a full reply and it did not answer my question. I was asking very specifically about whether or not there were any problems with the allocations so I was expecting to get a reply to that answer. One of the leaseholders in particular has been told by officers from Acorn that there is obviously problems with the allocations and that she should have been provided with the garage if she was top of the list so can I ask again why is there no answer to my question and why has no investigation being taken despite supplying the question in more than adequate time for an investigation to be carried out.

### **RESPONSE**

Again I thought your question had been answered. There is a lot of detail there in the answer but have specifically said that if you consider that the policy is not being adhered to and you can provide me with details I am happy to look into it. I do claim to know a little bit about most things but I don't have a crystal ball and if I don't know which know which tenant or leasehold you are talking about I don't know I can be expected to answer a specific question.

### **30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON**

Would the Executive Member please state the aggregate amount by which the purchase price of dwellings bought under the Right to Buy in the last three financial years has been reduced by virtue of applicants availing themselves of the statutory provisions for such reductions (equivalent to rent paid during the period of delay) in the event of delays on the part of the Council, and would she explain how such amounts have been treated in accounting terms?

### **RESPONSE**

The aggregate amount of the reduction over the three years in question is £206,000.

This comprises £60,000 in 2000/01, £102,000 in 2001/02 and £44,000 in 2002/03.

The amounts have been charged to the Housing Revenue Account.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR ROBINSON**

I would like to thank the Executive Member for her reply and my supplemental is what targets have been put in place to reduce these void or costs in future?

### **RESPONSE**

This whole issue is something that I am very concerned about obviously. I don't know about specific targets in terms of percentages but what I can tell you is that the Leasehold Management Unit has recently had a new manager

appointed who came very highly recommended from another London borough and already great progress has been made in dealing with the very large number of applications that had been made. I can try to find out for you what the percentage targets are but all I can say with confidence is hopefully we will get a lot better and soon.

### **31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES**

Councillor Bowman stated recently when explaining the Liberal Democrat Executive's decision to appoint Barratt as the master developer for the Downtown redevelopment, that their proposal '...addressed the needs of the local community.' Can the Executive Member for Regeneration set out in full on what grounds the Barratt proposal was chosen over that of Ampurius, and how exactly Barratt's proposal meets the needs of local people?

#### **RESPONSE**

The main issues highlighted from the public consultation both from the exhibition and from the local elected advisory panel were that Barratts addressed more effectively the following points:

- Providing better thought out access to the school.
- Providing open space for use by residents not as hang out for local youth.
- Fewer residential units and lower density.
- Bringing the Health Centre and Community Hall on stream in the first phase.
- The build period was shorter.

The Ampurius proposals were well developed whilst the Barratts proposals remained at masterplanning stage and were therefore more schematic. The Ampurius scheme was considered more attractive to look at by most of the Panel members who were evenly split in their recommendations but they felt that Barratts had responded much better to their concerns during the consultation process. Barratts have been required to address concerns about design quality as they progress to a detail design and have been required to work with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and take on a signature architect to ensure this.

The public responses from the exhibitions showed 39% against any development, 37% in favour of the Barratts proposal and 25% in favour of the Ampurius proposal.

The Primary Care Trust who control the Health Centre examined both schemes and came down heavily in favour of the Barratts scheme for the following reasons:

- Security
- Car Parking
- Traffic Access

Southwark's Development Control section and Planning Policy section looked at both schemes. In Urban Planning terms they felt that the Barratts scheme worked better and was more appropriate for the site. Concerns were expressed over the design of the Ampurius scheme. This feeds into the Council's concerns about deliverability of the scheme it chooses and for this reason it was felt that the Barratts scheme would face fewer problems at planning stage and therefore more likely to be delivered.

The Governors of the adjoining Redriff Primary School came down in favour of the Barratts scheme as it addressed much better their concerns on:

- Vehicular and pedestrian access to the school
- Enhancing the security of the school

Governors were concerned with the Barratts scheme showing buildings closer to the school, however this would be considered by Planners.

The financial offers comprised both cash and community benefits such as the new Community Hall that are part of the bids.

The Barratts bid is considered best consideration under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **32. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MARK PURSEY**

Could the Executive Member comment on the Council's recent success at the London Tourism awards?

#### **RESPONSE**

At this year's London Tourism Awards Southwark was successful in two categories. Borough Market was voted "most totally London experience" by the listeners of BBC London, and Bellenden Renewal Area won the Local Tourism Initiative award for which Bankside Street Action Team was also Highly Commended, 3 out of the 4 shortlisted initiatives for the Local Tourism Initiative award category were nominated by Southwark Council, the nominations were Bellenden Renewal Area, Southwark Young Pilgrims and Bankside Street Action Team (the fourth shortlisted entry was from Islington Borough Council).

The Council continues to work to support tourism in the borough that is becoming increasingly important to the success of the local economy. This award honours Council-led initiatives and achievements which are creating a better place for tourists to visit. Bankside continues to be a major visitor attraction. The recognition of Bellenden Renewal area and the work of the Street Action Team demonstrates how the integration of work across the Council can successfully support tourism in Southwark. This work has been supported by officers in Regeneration but has been largely delivered by officers in Housing and Environment.

The Council is actively involved in a number of initiatives to promote the benefits of tourism and support visitor attractions throughout the borough. These include promoting the borough both nationally and internationally at trade fairs and conferences, and promotional material such as the "Walk this Way" series of promotional walking tours.

The Council recently hosted a tourism seminar in Bankside as part of the Bankside Open Day on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2003. Local attractions and sub regional representatives were included in a well attended event which provided an opportunity for the London Development Agency, Greater London Authority and Visit London to engage in a discussion about how tourism can be supported in Southwark as part of their proposals for a London approach - I chaired the event.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION – CLLR P BATES**

Recently I met with the Downtown Defence Corps who expressed deep concerns about the regeneration Downtown. One of the criticisms that was made to me was that no member of the Liberal Democratic Executive had bothered to go down there and discuss their concerns with them and I understand that former Councillor Partridge has made similar criticisms. Does the Executive Member intend to visit that site in future.

## **RESPONSE**

I thank Councillor Bates for his question. I am afraid that it is untrue to say that I am not familiar with the site. I have visited the site on a number of occasions and discussed site development plans in situ with Ward Councillors and its through the Executive process I have met with a number of representatives from the Downtown Defence ..... I think they would rather to be called the ..... actually

### **33. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR SARAH WELFARE**

It is regrettable that Southwark heritage and the tourist information centre had to close its doors to the public. This is a significant loss of the tourist information centre, which is critical in the promotion, and success of the council regeneration strategy in the implementation of a vibrant tourist industry in Southwark.

Could the Executive Member tell Council Assembly what effect the loss of these valuable services will have on the local economy and what plans the council has to assist local tourism in the future.

#### **RESPONSE**

The Council recently hosted a tourism seminar in Bankside as part of the Bankside Open Day on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2003. Local attractions and sub regional representatives were included in a well attended event which provided an opportunity for the London Development Agency, Greater London Authority and Visit London to engage in a discussion about how tourism can be supported in Southwark as part of their proposals for a Londonwide approach. I chaired the event. Visitor Information Services were discussed as part of this event which provided an opportunity for these Londonwide organisations to present their ideas about how information could and should be provided in the future.

Southwark is now working with the London Development Agency (LDA), Visit London and the Corporation of London to prepare a business plan for a visitor information service to be delivered in the Bankside area. This is now part of a London wide review to establish how to deliver the best possible and most effective visitor information service. This review will look at face to face, dedicated centres, provision within and through attractions, and will explore the best uses of visitor information technology to support these services. This work review will inform the specification and delivery of visitor information across the capital.

Impressed by Southwark's desire to respond quickly to its growing status as an important London destination, the LDA have brought forward its timetable for this review and have agreed to work with Southwark to achieve an early proposal for Bankside. This work should be completed within the next six months. In recognition of the delay this may cause in the implementation of a Southwark service, the LDA is currently considering a proposal to provide visitor information services locally in Bankside in the intervening period. A decision on this is expected in early October and the Council hopes to be providing a service before Christmas.

The value of the loss of the specific services through the Southwark Heritage Centre is difficult to quantify as this was not a service commissioned by this authority and records of visitor numbers and any assistance visitors have received is not available. However, since the closure, there has been no discernable increase in demand on other visitor services reported to the Council or directly through the Council.

A report on tourism in Southwark has been requested by the Council's Executive and is currently programmed for the November meeting.



### **34. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN**

What steps will the Executive Member be taking to ensure a viable future for current small businesses at the Elephant & Castle Regeneration project?

#### **RESPONSE**

In setting out consultation proposals for the Elephant and Castle the Council has had close regard to the interests of local businesses. We recognise that a broad range of services continue to be provided to local people by businesses that have traded in difficult circumstances.

We intend:

1. To plan a new town centre.
2. To assist residents and businesses already in the area to manage the transition in a way that brings them the maximum benefits.
3. To protect the current trading position
4. To involve town centre interests in the development of the plans currently being consulted upon.

#### **To plan a new town centre**

The development plan proposes to create a vibrant urban centre with a wide range of small and large shops. This involves re-establishing Walworth Road as a high street along the straight-line route to the Elephant that was lost when the previous development took place. The plans propose an active frontage of busy mixed-use units along the high street leading up to a central commercial core and transport interchange. The plan also provides for new spaces within bridge viaducts and arches for market stalls and small retailers of the kind that are proving so successful at Borough Market.

#### **To support local businesses to manage the process of transition**

The phasing plan will direct our efforts to supporting local interests first. Early developments on the Walworth Road will give opportunities for businesses directly affected by the demolition of the shopping centre to plan their moves ahead of time. We are actively working with current businesses and landlords to offer the Council's assistance with this.

#### **To maintain business and services in the meantime**

The case for regeneration is firmly established and we are actively working with current businesses and landlords to manage the area effectively. The warden scheme is being extended to cover the central Elephant area and the shopping centre itself. The Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funded lighting scheme is addressing public concerns about safety and will introduce architectural lighting to enhance the appearance of the Elephant in the evenings.

Officers from the project team are also discussing with St Modwens (the shopping centre owners) and central businesses how a combined marketing effort can help to maintain the customer appeal of the area right up until the redevelopment programme begins.

In addition to these measures the SRB project is funding the Business Extra initiative through which independent advice is available to all affected businesses.

### **35. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR BILLY KAYADA**

Could the Executive Member please comment on the current state of Peckham Flaxyard?

#### **RESPONSE**

The site in question, on Sumner Road, Peckham was cleared and grassed over in 2001/2 by the Peckham Programme, through a one-off Neighbourhood Renewal Fund grant to deal with what at the time was a derelict eyesore site used by drug dealers and for fly tipping.

The grant was used to clear the site, install lighting and infrastructure for CCTV which is in place and monitored through existing Town Centre arrangements. Since the grass has taken the site has been looked after by Leisure Services as a temporary open space accessible to the public.

Prior to its renovation, residents and local school children were involved in a series of meetings at outset to discuss the scheme and expected outcomes. Over the past year links have been maintained with local schools resulting in the planting of spring bulbs involving local children, which took place last winter. As a result daffodils were on show across the grassed areas in spring this year generating a series of very positive response from the local community.

Final use of the site is yet to be determined, in part as a consequence of discussions concerning the potential impact to the site of the Peckham part of the route of the London Tram about which discussions are still taking place. However, given its location the site continues to be seen as a key site, to be developed as part of the on going regeneration of the Peckham Town Centre.

As such present policy is to work jointly with Environment and Leisure to maintain the grassed areas and ensure ongoing supervision through the work of the Peckham Wardens and use of cctv to minimise any anti-social behaviour and ensure that the refurbished site does not deteriorate. Anecdotal evidence from comments received from local residents and the local school is that the area feels much safer and the environment has improved.

Progress on this will continue to be reported to the police and at regular Peckham Town Centre co-ordination or Community Council meetings.

**36. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY,  
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE**

Will the Executive Member join me in welcoming the news that work is about to begin on the Millwall walkway?

**RESPONSE**

Following a recent meeting between the Assistant Chief Executive and Railtrack, it is now anticipated that work on the walkway will be able to commence on 29 September. We look forward to the speedy completion of the project.

This is just the news that people living in the local area have been waiting for. The walkway will allow us to separate rival home and away fans, which will help to alleviate the tension and disorder in the local area on match days.

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

Can the Executive Member please give his comment on Southwark's GCSE results for this year?

**RESPONSE**

At GCSE the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A\*-C has continued to improve. Provisional figures indicate that approximately 40% of Southwark pupils achieved 5 + A\*-C. This is the best result we have had in Southwark at GCSE. It exceeds the Education Development Plan targets set for 2003 (38%) and meets that set for 2004 (40%). The results also indicate that in Southwark, the rate of progress exceeds that achieved nationally.

Performance between schools is however, varied, ranging from 18% to 73%, with all but one school showing improvement since 2002. Seven schools have met or exceeded individual targets for 2003, two were close and one school was well adrift of the target. Four schools performed well above last year's national average of 51.5%. Significant improvements should be noted in Sacred Heart, St Michael's, Archbishop Michael Ramsay and Notre Dame.

We are aiming to build on the overall success and over the next two months will be in discussions with schools to determine if they are likely to exceed their targets for 2004 in the light of this year's results. Revisions will be used to modify the aggregated LEA target as appropriate.

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

Could the Executive Member for education please comment on the report in the South London press of 15<sup>th</sup> August 2003 entitled "Law lords criticise Council over girl" and indicate how many similar cases there are?

**RESPONSE**

On 11 August 2003 there was a permission hearing before a High Court Judge. The Judge made an Order under the Children and Young Persons Act imposing reporting and identification restrictions. The only other Order made was one adjourning the application for permission.

The hearing on 11 August was not before the House of Lords and the matter has never been before the House of Lords. Permission was and has not been granted. There was no legal argument and the Court did not criticise the Council or make any comment about the unacceptability or otherwise of the situation. There was no 'victory' for either party. The child was not 'turned away' by a school. The matter is currently adjourned whilst discussions continue to take place to resolve what is a complex case. We are not aware of the origin or source of the article.

Currently there are five cases that are to be considered at Judicial Review. While there are some similarities, each case is unique. Most of the cases result from an inability to meet the child's needs within borough. In some cases there is a lack of agreement between the parent and the authority in terms of what is deemed "appropriate" provision for the pupil.

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

What targets would the Executive Member for Education like to be set for SATs and GCSEs for next year?

**RESPONSE**

Schools and governing bodies set individual school targets. The School Improvement Division team reviews these targets with the schools. This is done in order to evaluate the extent to which the targets are sufficiently ambitious and aspirational. It enables the LEA to ascertain the extent to which the schools' targets are close to those targets set by the LEA in its discussions with the DfES. It also ensures that there is aspirational challenge for every school on the basis of the particular year group's prior attainment and taking into account the additionality provided by the Primary Strategy, the Key Stage 3 Strategy and Excellence in Cities and other school improvement activities based in Southwark.

These are the targets published in the Education Development Plan and the Best Value Performance Plan.

**Southwark's Published Performance Targets Summer 2004**

<b>KS2</b>	<b>EDP</b>	<b>BVPP</b>
L4+ English	83	83
L5+ English	32	32
L4+ Maths	80	80
L5+ Maths	28	28
<b>KS3</b>		
L5+ English	65	65
L5+ Maths	65	65
L5+ Science	60	60
L5+ ICT TA	75	65
<b>GCSE/GNVQ</b>		
5+A* - C	40	40
5+A* - G (including English & Maths)	90	90
Average point score (uncapped)	37.5	
1+ A*-G		98

Whilst allowing for some improvement in performance in our lower performing schools we must also be wary of fluctuations (not uncommon) due to cohort differences in our better schools. This could easily bring down the aggregate

figure. Any revised targets will be fully informed by the individual discussions with schools and governors, which will take place over the next few months.

There will be a full debate on the variances at the annual education performance report scheduled for Executive in December 2003.



**40. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCORFT**

When will the feasibility study on a new school for the East Dulwich and Nunhead areas be completed?

**RESPONSE**

The feasibility study for a boys' school on the Waverley Lower site is due to come to Executive on the 4th November.

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

Would the Executive Member for Education agree there are shortcomings in the traditional methods of assessing adequacy of primary school provision (which are used in the current reports to the Executive and the School Organisation Committee), in as much as those methods are insufficiently sensitive, for example in respect of the size of, and location of schools within, the Dulwich area and in respect of the dynamics of parental attitudes and needs; and if he so agrees, would the Executive member state what changes he proposes?

**RESPONSE**

The School Organisation Plan (SOP) uses the traditional method of assessing adequacy of primary school provision, which is based on DfES guidelines. The DfES Basic Need criteria has up to now required an LEA making a case for additional primary school provision to confirm that there are no projected places available within any primary schools in the borough within 2 miles of the area where pressure for places is being identified. (The DfES Basic Need allocation will, from this year, be a formula allocation based on the projected growth in the borough, with the projections taken from the borough's Surplus Place Return)

The projections are prepared for Southwark and other London boroughs by the Greater London Authority using a common method based principally on school roll information moderated by information on births, migration and confirmed housing starts. The GLA projections have been accepted by the DfES as providing a suitable level of accuracy and are included in the Borough's annual Surplus Place Return to the DfES.

This year's draft SOP shows that for the Herne Hill and Dulwich planning area, which includes the Dulwich area, there are projected to be places available for the overall projected pupil population for the foreseeable future.

It is recognised that the projections do not always fully reflect parental demands and aspirations as regards specific schools.

I am therefore asking officers to look at the extent to which the school roll projections should take this into account, as part of the review of primary planning area boundaries now to be undertaken. This will include assessing whether the planning area boundaries reflect the current school catchment areas, and will take account of the impact of the new ward and Community Council boundaries on the planning areas. Because ward based projection data will not be available from the GLA until next year's projections are prepared, the review of the new boundaries will be published in next year's school roll projection assessment.

**Lead Officer:** Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager  
**Report Author:** Kevin Flaherty, Constitutional Officer

Background Papers  
Members Questions

Held At  
Room 315,  
Town Hall, Peckham Road,  
London SE5 8UB

Contact  
Kevin Flaherty  
020 7525 7236

