

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY  
(ORDINARY MEETING)**

**WEDNESDAY 26th NOVEMBER 2003**

**COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 3.8 : MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

**1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARK PURSEY**

Does the Leader of the Council consider that honesty and integrity are important attributes for elected Southwark Councillors?

**RESPONSE**

Yes, I do agree that they are important attributes. Indeed, I am delighted to learn that the Standards Board for England has categorically cleared Cllr Margaret Ambrose of all the charges levelled against her by a member of this Council and anonymous members of the public.

However the Standards Board has since completed two other investigations involving a Southwark Councillor - and have upheld the original complaints.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MARK PURSEY**

If hypothetically a Member of Southwark Council was found by an organisation such as the District Auditors Office to have misused Council resources, for arguments sake say postage to send out political leaflets, do you think that the honest thing to do to repay the cost of that postage?

**RESPONSE**

Of course it is very hard to imagine any experienced Councillor could choose to fund party political propaganda out of Council tax payers resources, but were any Councillor to have done so and then to have found to have done so by say the National Standard Board for England and Wales then I think all Council tax payers in Southwark would be perfectly entitled to expect that Member to dip their hand into their pocket to repay what they took off Council tax payers promptly and forthwith and publicly.

## **2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS**

To ask the Leader of the Council to publish a schedule of costs falling on the Council as a result of additional duties imposed or encouraged since June 1997 by the Government without commensurate financial support, and in each case provide an estimate of the uncovered cost?

### **RESPONSE**

The government has added enormously to the burdens of local government in the past six years without recognition or financial compensation for these burdens. Even the local authority associations can no longer track and quantify the effects. I am unable to respond directly to the question therefore. What we do know however is that the government has added to the vast bureaucracy within local and central government through its obsession with bidding, short term programmes, inspections and interference in what we spend our money on. At the same time the government has chosen to largely ignore the need for a radical overhaul of the grossly inadequate system for financing local government and is instead showing every sign of fudging the issue and leaving local councils to manage with inadequate resources.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS**

I am grateful to the Leader for his answer, but I am disappointed at the brevity of the response and the inability of the Council to provide any estimate to the extra burden that Central Government are putting on Local Authorities I would be grateful if the Leader could give us an estimate even a rough estimate to how many millions he thinks have been added on the costs of Local Government as a result of additional duties imposed or encouraged since 1997 by this Government?

### **RESPONSE**

It is difficult simply because there have been so many, but we can do it this way, the Government has perfectly understandably and in my view perfectly correctly, encouraged Councils to take greater responsibility over for example issues like Community Safety and Anti Social Behaviour. Crime is an issue for this Council to deal with in a way that I don't remember being when I was elected in 1998, there was not a Council Committee that dealt with crime in 1998 you could not form a Council Cabinet or Executive now which did not have a Community Safety Portfolio holder, but there has been no real increase in Government funding for Anti Social Behaviour or Community Safety measures. The Government has continued to ring fence the Education funding although this year did not put the funding up enough and has chiselled away at both Social Services and the Environment Protection and Cultural Services sections to the budget in order to pay for that. We have of course this year the bizarre situation that Tessa Jowell has landed us with new licensing duties, but no extra funding to cover it and indeed probably reducing licensing fees so that we will make less out of licensing than we have in the past when we are going to be dealing with far more licensing enquiries. We have this year with Social Services the position where in order to meet the requirements of the Government on Child Protection we had to put an extra two an half million into Children's Social Services with no extra

funding from the Government to deal with that, which lead to some difficulties and of course we have a problem with the Government which is of course completely dishonest about its expectations on Council Tax. A Chancellor of the Exchequer and a Treasury who expect us to put-up Council Tax by 7%; a Local Government settlement worked out on a basis will put it up by 3.9% and a Local Government Minister who tells us that we should be putting it up by the rate of inflation which can not be greater than 3% and it does make any sensible financing system of Local Government a complete and utter lottery.

### **3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MOISE**

The amended Race Relations Act 2000 and the Crime And Disorder Act 1998 gives public authorities a new statutory duty to promote race equality and to work with the police to reduce crime and the fear of crime, in particular 'hate crime'. What action has Southwark Council taken, in conjunction with the Borough Commander, to detect and root out racism?

#### **RESPONSE**

Southwark Council and the police have a history of joint working around all areas of hate crime and racist crime in particular. The Council recognises the importance of tackling hate crime and has secured Single Regeneration budget funding to fund programmes and activities to reduce hate crime in Southwark.

The key partnerships are:

- Safer Southwark Partnership (SSP), through the Hate Crime Group.
- Single Regeneration Budget 6 Campaign Against Hate Crime, a community led partnership for which Southwark Council is the Accountable Body.
- Until March 2003 the Council supported the Police led project PPACTS (Police, Partners and Community Together in Southwark) that was responsible for The Targeted Policing Initiative, a Home Office funded project aimed at tackling Hate Crime by using a 3-pronged problem solving - victim, offender, location – approach. This model achieved Home Office 'Demonstration Status' and has given rise to a 'hotspot' approach to tackling crime. Bermondsey is one of the policing hotspots areas.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003 580 incidents reported to the police were flagged as having a racist element 17% of these were successfully detected. This is compared with the same period in 2001-2002 where the number of racist incidents was 997 indicating a reduction of about 417.

However it is recognised that there are significant levels of underreporting which is an area of concern. Both the Council and the police are working together to address this by increasing awareness, better coordination, increasing reporting and improving the quality of evidence.

The Best Value Review of Community Safety identified the following as key action points with regards to hate crime which will help to consolidate the work across agencies:

- The development of a hate crime strategy that includes agreed definitions and achievable targets
- Development of a robust data collection and case management system
- Increasing support to victims of hate crime
- Improve the effectiveness of the Hate Crime Sub Group

## **Cross Cutting Initiatives**

- Hate Hurts – is the slogan being used in Southwark to raise awareness of Hate Crime across the borough. The Hate Hurts brand was launched at the Tate Modern in April this year. The first of the poster campaigns has begun on billboards and bus shelters across the Borough supported by a leaflet delivered to all households in Southwark with details of the key support agencies. The aim at this stage is to raise general awareness of Hate Crime and its impact on victims. The publicity campaign supports the Safer Southwark Partnership's Communications Plan.
- Data Collection and Case Management – there are two Best Value Performance Indicators linked to racist incidents:

174 number of racial incidents reported to the Council

175 number of racial incidents that resulted in further action

Currently incidents are reported to the Neighbourhood Housing office, who then refer the case to the Housing Community Support team. Where the issue involves racist incidents the case is referred to the Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (SASBU). There is not as yet a single system to collect data across departments and agencies.

The Council is addressing this issue through the introduction of the SENTINEL system. This is a web based information /intelligence gathering and case management system. The pilot in Bermondsey will start before the end of this year.

- Assisted Reporting - a multi-agency initiative developed by the Police and the Anti-Homophobic Forum, It is now being rolled out across community-based organisations to help support victims of Hate Crime and increase reporting. Reports are confidential. With agreement of the victim the reports can be passed on to the Police in order for them to pursue the prosecution.
- Hate Crime Training Programme – a multi agency training programme that is aimed at increasing organisations' capacity to deal with Hate Crime. The Assisted Reporting training is included in this programme and includes training on the use of ICEFLO (Immediate Capture of Evidence by Front Line Officers) cameras and a section by the CPS and Witness Service. The training is coordinated via the Council's Community Safety Team.

## **Key Support Services**

- Police Community Safety Unit (CSU), based at Walworth Police Station, one of the largest in London provides specialist support to victims of hate crime seven days a week between 8am and 8pm. The CSU is a dedicated investigation unit with male and female police officers especially trained in victim care., with the wishes of the victim a priority throughout the investigation. The CSU has recently adopted a victim risk assessment model, which in conjunction with Southwark Housing acts as an assessment tool for access to emergency accommodation. Housing Community Support Provide support to all victims and witnesses of hate crime and offer a borough wide service.
- Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit

Provide support to victims and take action against perpetrators on a range of anti-social behaviour including race crime.

- SASBU, the Youth Offending Team and the police have worked together on several area/estate based initiatives to disrupt and prevent race crime taking place. This is part of ongoing work which involves a wide range of council departments and voluntary/community organisations to take a pro-active approach.

The Council, the Police and the Campaign Against Hate Crime all fund key agencies to deliver specific projects which contribute towards the overall provision of services:

- **Victim Support Southwark, Race Crime Project**, this project provides emotional support, practical information and advocacy to victims of race crime, the Lockfitting Project provides free locks and other security devices to victims of crime and elderly/ vulnerable residents
- **Bede House Hate Crime Project**, service provision to the Bermondsey, Rotherhithe area of the borough and outreach service to both the East Peckham and Central Bermondsey Sure Start
- **Southwark Mediation Centre Hate Crime Project**. This project provides a full time experienced mediator and a group of 5-10 local, trained volunteers to deliver a quick and effective response to those affected by Hate Crime in Southwark. It is the only service that works with both the victim and the perpetrator.
- **Southwark Racial Incidents Forum/SREC**. It was launched in October 2003 and aims to bring together representatives of black and minority ethnic groups, including businesses, to facilitate the provision of specialist support and advocacy to victims of racial incidents.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MOISE**

Given that the Labour Government has given this Council over 8 million in Community Safety funds to deal with all sorts of issues linking into anti social behaviour, 3 million that has gone into anti social behaviour across the departments and correct what the Leader was talking about earlier on the stats and what we are getting, but I will get to the question shall I. It's a lengthy response, but I am not sure whether it gets to the basis of the question. I was at the Safer Southwark Partnership yesterday. Councillor Porter was not there. They were talking about this very issue and I don't know if you are aware, but. I will get to the point, its very difficult but I will, I just want to ask if the Council is aware and Executive Member responsible for this area, that the CRE is actually going to write to every Chief Constable in England and Wales asking them what measures they have in place to ensure that no racist is allowed to wear a Police uniform. The CRE will ask what procedures they have in place for detecting racist behaviour on the part of serving Officers and to provide opportunities for colleagues to come forward with information. This is in light of the BBC documentary that shocked everyone, where they uncovered racial prejudice amongst police trainees. I welcome the action being taken by the two police forces involved in the racial issues.

## **RESPONSE**

I'm still waiting for the question Mr Mayor.

#### **4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ALFRED BANYA**

How many staff does the Council employ who earn more than £20,000 per annum, and how many of these have received performance-related increments since May 2002? What are the comparable figures for staff earning less than £20,000 pa?

#### **RESPONSE**

Total earnings consist of base pay and a range of enhancements that may be discretionary, related to the input of the individual (e.g. casual overtime, honorarium etc.) or non-discretionary, related to the requirements of the job such as night duty or contractual overtime. Non discretionary enhancements vary considerably depending on the nature of the work. For refuse staff for example it is a very considerable proportion of total earnings.

In response to the question, in separating employees earning more or less than £20,000, we have considered only the basic pay element, i.e. the spinal column on which earnings are calculated.

The Council performance management scheme excludes school based staff and building workers. As at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003, covered by the scheme, were 2,701 employees with base salaries in excess of £20,000 pa and 1,588 with less. However, 14% of the first group were at the top of the grade and 23% of the second, making them ineligible for performance increments regardless of performance.

64% of those eligible in the over £20,000 group received an increment and 44% of the other group. Many staff with salaries less than £20,000 are from former compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) areas which retain the option to make one off payments to staff rather than consolidated performance increments.

All increments are made by departments based on affordability and overall performance.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ALFRED BANYA**

I note that while 64% of those in the higher earning bracket received increments according to the Leaders answer to my question, only 44% from the lower earning group actual got any increments. I would like to know what proportion of this 44% are manual workers. Would the Leader also not agree with me that the lower earning group, most of are likely to come from disadvantage backgrounds, are further disadvantaged by this kind of disproportionate increment. How does he intend to address this bearing in mind his party's manifesto commitment to tackling poverty and inequality?

#### **RESPONSE**

The performance management system was introduced by the previous



administration in 2000 and has been running ever since. What the figures show is that on both ethnicity and gender basis the increments system is working fairly across the Council; indeed women do disproportionately well under the increment system. It is probably right to say of the top of my head that most of the 44% will be blue collar workers. Clearly we need to evaluate the successes and failures of the performance management system which have now been in place for three years, to learn what lessons can be drawn about improving it in the future and will certainly be interested in doing so.

## **5. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY**

What steps have been taken to ensure that socially excluded groups can have their input into Community Council meetings?

### **RESPONSE**

There has been a broad approach to wider community involvement, especially to otherwise excluded groups, ranging from matters of access to meetings to encouragement and support for minority groups such as black and minority ethnic groups, disabled people, younger people and pensioners.

For example:

All known community groups have been contacted and specifically invited with support from officers in the Community Involvement and Development Unit (CIDU).

CIDU officers have been meeting with tenant and resident groups, black and minority ethnic community groups, the Refugee Network, the Disabilities Forum, the Pensioners Forum, the Youth Council, and community centres/settlements to explain the advantages for local people of getting involved in the Community Councils. This outreach work is felt to be the essential first step to an effective engagement of socially excluded communities.

Venues have been selected that are Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. All have wheelchair access, are fitted out with Induction Loops and individuals with mobility restrictions have been given transportation to and from meetings.

Carers can be reimbursed for the costs of any care they have paid for in order to attend Community Council meetings.

By request Southwark Community Care Forum have facilitated deputations by people with disabilities at meetings of Rotherhithe and Borough and Bankside Community Councils where decisions about improvements to pedestrian movements have been made, and the views of the deputations have been supported by the Community Councils.

Interpreters have been employed at Borough and Bankside Community Council when it has been known that people whose first language is not English will be attending the meetings.

Deputations by groups of young people have been facilitated by CIDU at the Dulwich Community Council, where the young people have argued for better services for their age group.

Coaches have been provided for residents of Kingswood Estate in the far south of the borough to attend their Community Council meetings – public transport from this area to the venue is particularly difficult.

Community Councils have been promoted at borough events aimed at multi-cultural and diverse audiences.

Venue rotation has assisted some Community Councils in encouraging more inclusive participation.

Recently posters publicising Community Council meetings have been placed in Job Centres.

Other work is aimed at continuing to improve community involvement:

CIDU and the Community Council Manager have investigated further steps that Community Councils should take to ensure the inclusion of all Southwark's people. Ideas have included setting up non-English language meetings to supplement the existing schedule of meetings and outreach workshops with those groups of people not yet attending Community Councils.

An Equality Impact Assessment is now underway (lead by the Social Policy Unit) into how the previous Area Fora tried to include socially excluded groups. The conclusions from this study may help shape how the Community Councils are developed.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY**

I Thank Deputy Leader for these comments, its helpful. The follow-up question is a point I hope she takes and hope not tries to make a party political point because I hope she will recognise when I was involved in the area forum type initiative I was concerned about engaging beyond the what people derogatory call 'usual suspects' and it is part of the concern that certainly Camberwell, and I suspect in others, that the Chairs can pretty much go around the room and name everyone in it, which is not a criticism of the people there. But I am just wondering if there is a strategy to go beyond that. Is the way to go beyond that is to actually break away from the meetings focus and is there a strategy or plan to break, I suppose two things; to get more than the usual suspects, a horrible expression, to come along and secondly to accept a lot of people will not want to come out in the wet particularly on a wet Wednesday night and how we actually engage them outside of the meetings and have a sort of route which they can be brought back in again. I think that's sort of critical problem that area forums, community councils and the like all over London are having problems with and I just wonder if there is any debate and discussion on that and where we are with it?

#### **RESPONSE**

Thank you very much for your question. I think this is the next stage in the development of community councils. Its quite clear that we need to look at how we engage groups and far wider than as you say the 'usual suspects', though having gone round a fair few community councils I have to say its interesting to see you are getting different people in depending what the subject matter is. As part of the INLOGOV Review and the work that Councillor Hargrove's Scrutiny Committee is doing I hope that they might make some recommendations on that I am sure that is one of the things we will discuss when I come and speak to scrutiny on the 17<sup>th</sup> December. There has been a lot of work going on, Community Involvement and Development Unit are going out talking to groups working with them and we want to

develop that further but I think its also how community councils look at working. Something that came up at the last Walworth Community Council was the idea that perhaps we meet at a different time of day perhaps in the daytime and actually a look at trying to perhaps have an olders people special looking at certain issues to try to engage a particular community like that and I think we need to look at innovative ways such as that to engage people, but I hope as you have seen from my answer we have being doing quite a lot to get different groups involved, facilitating deputations and different groups whether its through transport or through particular staff working with the groups, but I think that is the thing, there are all sorts of community forums out there that are starting to develop; there are different groups with special interests and we need to work with them. I've spoken with the Pensioners Forum, Carers Forum and others and they are very interested in finding ways in which they can engage which is not necessarily at the community council meetings themselves. If Councillor Friary has some positive ideas, we are looking at area forums, and I would welcome any suggestions.

**6. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR VICKY NAISH**

Can the Executive Member give the number of funded places at each of the community run day centres in the borough in April 2002 and the anticipated number following the assessment of each attendee.

**RESPONSE**

As Council Members we will be aware, the Council has previously agreed the application of eligibility criteria for adult services in line with the Government guidance 'Fair Access to Care Services'. In addition the Social Services Department is undertaking a review of day care services – which includes both an assessment of service users attending day care, the application of eligibility criteria (such that service users with low assessed needs will no longer have the service funded by Social Services and either alternative funding or services will be sought) and, ultimately, a strategic recommissioning of day care.

Of the service areas, 3 out of 4 have completed the assessments and the other, older people, is currently under way. The current situation is as follows:

**Physical Disability:** There are no community run day centre places funded by Social Services currently or in April 2002.

**Learning Disability:** There are no community run day centre places funded by Social Services in the borough. There are 17 service users using spot purchased day centre places out of borough in tandem with housing or residential placements. This is the same figure as of April 2002.

**Mental Health:** The figures and funding are complicated by both the throughput of the service user population and the pooled budget arrangements with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and South London & Maudsley (SlaM). There were 44 assessments undertaken in the four community run day centres (Crossways:13; Peckham Pop-In: 8; The Grove: 8; Open Door: 15). 32 of these service users remain eligible but of the 12 not eligible their care plans have led to discharge or other services – including where out of the borough funding has been secured.

**Older People:** in April 2002 there were 383 Social Services funded places in community run day centres. These are broken down as follows:

<i>Day Centre</i>	<i>Day Places</i>	<i>Days Per Week</i>	<i>Day Places Per Week</i>
Early Invention Centres	90	6	540
Stones End	43	5	215
Black Elders Mental Health Centre	15	3	45
Mentally Frail	15	4	60
Black Elders Group Southwark	30	5	150

Golden Oldies	40	2	80
<i>Day Centre</i>	<i>Day Places</i>	<i>Days Per Week</i>	<i>Day Places Per Week</i>
South Asian	40	5	200
Southwark Cypriot	40	5	200
Southwark Irish Pensioners Project	30	4	120
Vietnamese	40	5	200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>383</b>		<b>1810</b>

Given service users may use only one or two days a week, there are at least 800 service users to be assessed. The process is well under way but will take 3-4 months to complete. It is anticipated that there will be a reduction in funded places.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VICKY NAISH**

I would like to thank Councillor Denise Capstick the Executive Member for Health and Social Care for her answer in this issue. Obviously this is quite disturbing to know that there could be forty or fifty people about disabled or elderly that will not qualify to go to the actual voluntary centres. Has the Executive Member had any input yet concerning people that are going to appeal against their assessments, Its maybe unfair at this particular time to ask this as because you probably won't know the answer, but obviously I would appreciate if you could let me know. I understand that there are lots of members who have been assessed and not been assessed correctly and are going to appeal against the decision. The other question is also there is a couple of things that I am really concerned about, not only with our people not being able to use these centres in the future but also the loss of jobs to the voluntary sector and also obviously their premises will be affected and also things like transport has also this been taken into consideration with the job losses and the sad thing when you look on the actual answer to the question that I gave the Executive Member, that lots of these people that go to these centres is the only place where some of them can only speak their mother tongue and some of them cannot speak English you know and this is an outlet to them where they go to these actual clubs and I am afraid that they are going to go. So could you give me your assurance please that you will keep us up to speed on this as I know that there are lots of disabled people and elderly people out there who are very anxious?

### **RESPONSE**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Naish for her supplementary question, there is quite a lot of small questions within that. Certainly as far the appeals go I am keeping tabs as far as possible. This question didn't involve the Aylesbury, but certainly I have got a meeting on Friday with Rod Craig about those persons who actually have been assessed as being low dependency criteria because I want to keep the tabs with the people who will not get the service and why. We don't know all the outcomes for older people yet is my answer but I am certain to keep tabs on that as well. I haven't got involved with job losses but what part of the answer says is that we are doing our utmost to make sure that these organisations can try and have access to other funds and I've got a meeting on Friday with the

Director of Southwark Community Care Forum to talk about other avenues of funding if it can't be from social services so hopefully that will try to address that issue as well. I agree with you totally on the issue of those clients who wont be able have access to centres where it's the only place where they can speak in their mother tongue with fellow clients. As you know I have always been a big advocate of prevention is better then cure and certainly I will be again working as far as possible to try and ensure that these organisations do actually get as much alternative funding as they possibly can. Certainly Vicky I am more then happy to keep you up to speed on any of these issues, as you know you have asked me questions in the past and I have got back to you as soon as I can and I promise you faithfully that I will continue to do that.

**7. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE 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**

Whilst I was Mayor, and since the completion of my year, I have tried to visit a diversity of services delivered across the community. Obviously since my appointment to the Executive post it is even more of a priority.

Over the last six months I have visited Southward Park Nursing Home, Tower Bridge Nursing Home, Evelyn Coyle Elderly and Mentally Infirm (EMI) Respite Unit and Camberwell Green Nursing Home. I have visited a number of Day Care Centres and plan to get around them all as soon as I possibly can do so. I am very familiar with the work done by Southwark Bereavement Care and have just stood down as the Chair of the Management Committee. I am attending Chumleigh Gardens Health Club next week and have made appointments to visit the Irish Pensioners (although I did not visit them as Mayor). Over the next six months I intend to visit as many voluntary groups as I can including the Christmas parties on Christmas Day.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Capstick for her reply and if I haven't already done so I would like to welcome you to your new portfolio. I would like to ask Councillor Capstick following the government's green paper Every Child Matters, when like other local authorities, are we going to have a Director for Children Services and a Cabinet Member with a similar responsibility?

**RESPONSE**

Basically we discussed our response to the green paper last night at Executive and what was said at the Executive and what was very apparent in Southwark was we have actually done a lot of work already towards integrating children's services both health & social care and education together. There is lots of evidence to suggest that and certainly the recent two star rating made a comment on that as well. As far as the Director and the Cabinet or Executive Member goes for Children's Services that is something that is still being debated. What we said yesterday at the Exec is that we feel quite strongly as the administration that the government, no matter who is in power should not be dictating to us who the Cabinet Member should be. Our important priority is to meet what should be the outcomes of Children's Services and if we meet that through having an Executive Member specifically for Children's Services then great, if we can meet it through doing a combination of the two roles it will be great as well. Personally I think it's a really good idea but I think the principal of it been dictated to us by the government is not a good one and its up to us the administration to work out how best we can actually serve children and families across this Borough.



**8. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR DANNY McCARTHY**

Can the Executive Member tell me how the social services department has fared in any recent inspections?

**RESPONSE**

The Social Services Department has recently been awarded a two star rating by the Social Services Inspectorate for performance in 2002/03. The judgements, which underlie the star rating, show that we are serving most adults and children well, and have promising prospects for improvement. This represents an improvement in children's services since the last judgement in 2001/2 when we were judged to be only serving *some* children well. We have also maintained our good performance on adult services.

I'm sure the Council will join with me in congratulating the staff of Social Services for the positive assessment of our local social care services.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DANNY McCARTHY**

I would like to thank Past Mayor, Executive Member for Health and Social Care, Councillor Major Denise Capstick, just in case I got it wrong, thank you for your answer. However I would ask does the Executive Member think this improved rating is due in any way to the extra money given to the children's services in last years budget by our party?

**RESPONSE**

Thank you for your supplemental Councillor McCarthy I mean yes absolutely we were advised by the Social Services inspectorate that more money had to be ploughed into Children's Services to raise up the standards obviously the £2.5 million did do a lot to do that. We still have a long way to go but we have actually made a lot of progress towards that long way and obviously as I said earlier that was reflected in our two star with the actual additional comment that was put on that two star rating by the SSI.

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

Can the Executive Member for Housing please outline the performance of the Bellenden Renewal Area team since April 2002 against the corporate targets for correspondence answering and complaints handling?

**RESPONSE**

In the period in question the Renewal Team, based in the Private Housing Renewal (PHR) Business Unit received 314 letters, of these 284 (90%) were responded to on time, in the same period 5 formal complaints were received all of which were dealt with on time.

The PHR members enquiries log for the period in question shows 114 logged enquiries of which 101 (88%) were responded to on time.

The Renewal Team is one of 5 teams making up the PHR business unit and is based in the middle of the Bellenden Renewal Area which consists of over 3,200 dwellings. The location of the office, at the centre of the area, enables many residents to call on a face to face basis and this creates severe pressure on what is a small team of 3 officers.

The Renewal Team is committed to customer focus, as are all of the teams in the PHR unit. This is demonstrated by low levels of complaints and high levels of customer satisfaction.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER**

Thank you very much for the Executive Members response as ever. What concerns me is the response paints a very different picture to the picture that we're getting, Councillor Simmons, Councillor Graham, myself in our communications with local residents who are saying that a large number of their complaints are not actually being addressed. What I ask is that you to accept that there is our concern on this particular issue and you to contact the customer feedback unit to find out what they have say about the level of response to the enquiries that are been made and the quality of the responses that they are receiving.

**RESPONSE**

Councillor Glover thank you very much for your question and your supplementary. Of course if you are telling me that you and colleagues have got concerns in that area I accept that and will happily look into it further. I will also talk further to the customer feedback team and try and find out exactly what is going on. I had understood this information was correct was relatively pleased with the target being meet in terms of letters and correspondence being answered within target times. If you do have any specific instances then please do feel free to discuss them with me, if there is a problem there then I would like to help get it sorted.

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

Can the Executive Member please provide the original estimated average cost for leaseholders for the heating works on the Consort Estate, the level of overspend on the project and the current estimated cost per leaseholder.

### **RESPONSE**

The contract to renew the heating mains on Consort Estate was originally priced at £2,598,326. In total 57 leaseholders were required to make a financial contribution to the cost of these works, as per section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

Contributions required ranged from £1000 to £25,390, dependant upon: (a) the cost for each block; (b) the number of units in each block and (c) the bed size of the individual property, which includes the bathroom, toilet, living-room, kitchen and hallway. The average estimated contribution can be calculated at £6,598.49, inclusive of professional fees and management costs.

During the course of the contract asbestos was found on site across a number of locations, while works were in progress. Unfortunately this could not be foreseen prior to the commencement of the contract. The presence of asbestos necessitated design alternation and additional works. The contractor (J.Murphy Ltd) has also made additional claims in relation to imposed delays and disruption to the works programme.

At present the only agreed additional spend is £115,000 but the consultant for the project is in negotiations with the contractor over their additional claims. At this point it is not possible to quantify the final outcome of negotiations nor, consequently, the likely increase to average leasehold contributions.

It is worth emphasising that the infrastructure works to these heating mains have already had a substantial benefit to the tenants and leaseholders of Consort Estate in reduced repairs and heating loss.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CHARLIE SMITH**

Thank you very much for the answer and I would like to ask my supplementary question which is given that these works were meant to be completed last year can you then inform the council exactly when the final figures will be available for the leaseholders?

### **RESPONSE**

Yes of course I can. I can't do that now as I have explained in my answer already the contract and the consult are in negotiations about the cost of the additional work. As I have previously explained it wasn't until work had actually began on this contract that asbestos was found and unfortunately I am told that there was no way of detecting that until the contract had started. Obviously we need to know and leaseholders living there need to know how much any additional works are going to be and as soon as that figure is available, I will make it available.

## **11. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD**

The demolition of Bramham and Badminton Houses on the East Dulwich Estate will require the forced removal of residents of those blocks, some of whom have lived there for nearly 30 years. Given the enormous emotional and physical upheaval that such a move will cause, is there any moral reason why the residents of these blocks should not be offered 'like for like' accommodation in any move, irrespective of their current housing needs?

### **RESPONSE**

The demolition and disposal of these blocks is needed to bring about a £20m investment scheme for East Dulwich Estate. The objective is to offer all tenants affected either a new Housing Association home or improved Council home on the estate. As part of the rehousing process, detailed discussions take place with every individual household in order to assess their housing needs including any medical requirements.

Following extensive consultation with Neighbourhood Forums, Tenant and Leaseholder Council and Project Teams on estates including East Dulwich, in December 2002 the Executive agreed a Decant Policy which restated the position that tenants are rehoused on the basis of housing needed. In order to ensure equality of opportunity for all tenants affected by decant schemes across the Borough, there is a need for a consistent approach. The approach on East Dulwich Estate is in accordance with this policy. Any deviation to this policy would need to be approved by the Executive. It is the view of officers that adopting a like for like policy on East Dulwich Estate whereby tenants were rehoused on the basis of their current accommodation rather than housing need would not ensure equality of opportunity either for East Dulwich Estate tenants or tenants in other decant schemes in the Borough. The Under Occupation Policy, which will operate in parallel with the decant policy, may be able to offer tenants accommodation larger than their strict housing need.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD**

Thank you very much for the answer to the question. I think that the residents of East Dulwich Estate are still actually left with some questions though. As we understand it, there is no consistency of approach when we look at the detail in relation to Decant. We understand that there are different policies being pursued on the Elmington Estate and I would like to ask if you could look at that. Why would taking officers' advice on equality of opportunity really create any precedents for individual people? This implies that the Council is not looking at real need in a very distressing situation and which is not of tenants' making. Are you aware that the rooms in Goldwell House, which is what is presently being offered to residents from Bramham and Badminton, are much smaller than the rooms in those houses making it difficult to move all belongings unless there is some flexibility on this. Would you not agree that it is unfair to expect people to move unwillingly to much smaller properties when they are moving against their own choice? Do you not agree that it should be in the spirit of respecting people's needs and believe that the problems associated with this Regeneration Programme would have had a much greater chance of being resolved if negotiations with tenants and residents had been handled much more sensitively? Can I ask you whether the exercise again can be looked at in Decanting quite urgently?

## **RESPONSE**

Thank you Councillor Ward for your question and your supplementary. There was more than one and so I can't remember all of them. You specifically mentioned the Elmington, I could not quite hear you. If you are talking about Elmington, the different approach being taken, you will find that the scheme on the Elmington started long before I took on my responsibilities but I am happy to look into that for you. The position is that if we were to look at things differently on East Dulwich Estate then it would require a variation to the existing decant policy and that would need to be done by the Executive. What I have said in my answer, which I thought might be helpful, is that the Under Occupation Initiative which is currently in operation in Southwark will, I think, offer some scope to those families where they perhaps have given up a larger property where they may get a bedroom above needs. Just to say that you have in the past raised something in this Council Chamber and I am not knocking you for that the dire situation we have in this Borough with overcrowding so on the one hand your saying what are we doing about overcrowding on the next hand you saying that we should make properties available to people that are bigger than their actual housing need. We have to have some consistency and I am hopeful that we may be able to meet some of this through the Under Occupation Initiative.

## **12. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN**

Comprehensive tenancy checks have recently been carried out on the East Dulwich Estate prior to the start of the regeneration process. Some residents have complained of feeling intimidated by the manner and behaviour of those officers carrying out the checks. Can the Executive Member give us some assurance that any future tenancy checks will be conducted in a lawful and sympathetic manner?

### **RESPONSE**

A programme of comprehensive tenancy checking has existed in Southwark for 5 years having been agreed by Housing Committee following detailed consultation with Tenant Council. These checks involve a combination of personal contact and written pro formas and collation of other relevant data and are carried out annually by all neighbourhood housing offices. This process has been supplemented in the last two years with additional resources which have been targeted on certain estates, notably those in regeneration programmes, to help establish a clearer picture of the levels of unauthorised occupancy where doubt exists that tenants are in residence, and on individual dwellings where the community is confident that unauthorised occupancy exists but where traditional checks have not been able to establish that fact. The aim being that where unauthorised occupancy is established, the Council will obtain vacant possession of the relevant property.

Both neighbourhood and special exercises are conducted using a set procedure, which all officers engaged in the exercise are required to follow. A comprehensive list of questions is asked and a number of proofs are requested to verify the information given. A priority of the exercise is that officers conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in order to gain the trust of those persons from whom the information is being requested. The questions asked determine whether the property is occupied by either a lawful tenant or an illegal occupant and inevitably may be of a personal nature; where evidence is not forthcoming or suspicion arises, follow-up checks are made which may ultimately result in the service of a Notice of Seeking Possession.

Officers have investigated the claims in relation to East Dulwich Estate as a result of a separate written complaint and no evidence of intimidation was discovered.

I am satisfied that the agreed processes are being applied but am happy to investigate any specific complaint relating to officers undertaking any tenancy check exercises. However, it is a key objective of this administration that Council stock is occupied by legitimate tenants and to this end I expect officers to be as rigorous as possible in rooting out those who are not rightful tenants.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN**

Whilst its right of course the council must ensure legitimate occupation of its housing stock. It cannot be appropriate for officers to walk into lawful tenants flats on the basis of, in some cases, misleading warnings as to potential loss

of those tenants tenancies and whilst in those flats to pick up bills and other personal documents without authority or permission and to generally act in an overbearing manner which has left many residents, including several elderly residents on the estate, upset and intimidated. Given these facts will the Executive Member please order the immediate suspension of all further tenancy checks until further training of officers undertaking this exercise has been carried out and also until further advice has been taken as to the lawfulness of the current procedure which has been adopted.

## **RESPONSE**

Thank you very much for your question and your supplementary. The short answer to that is no, I am not going to suggest that we stop carrying out tenancy checks on the estates. Its important that we have a programme boroughwide carrying out tenancy checks and I am determined that where people are living in Council properties where they have no right to be that we get them out as soon as possible. I am not saying that's necessarily just on East Dulwich of course the problems across the whole Borough so I am not going to put a stop to the tenancy checks. What I will do is ensure that officers reinforce to those officers carrying out tenancy checks that they are going into peoples homes, it's people's private places and they need to respect the person that lives there and their belongings. I understand that you have made individual complaints which have been investigated, I am told without foundation. If you feel differently Councillor John, I will be more then happy to discuss that with you. As you know I am a tenant myself and I have had to have tenancy checks, I have always found that they have been reasonably straightforward. That does not mean that on occasions they are not straightforward and if you do have evidence then please speak to me about it and I will look into it for you.

### **13. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN**

I understand that the Council has been shortlisted for a UK Housing Award in the category 'Best Practice for Promoting Diversity'. Can the Executive Member give details of the work that her department is doing in this area?

#### **RESPONSE**

Southwark Council was short-listed for a prestigious UK Housing Award for good practice in promoting diversity for an innovative consultation project.

An Equality Impact Assessment of Community Housing Services was carried out which identified that there were gaps in information about the views of black and minority ethnic service users, particularly some of the harder to reach communities in the borough, including Somali and Bengali communities.

Therefore a project was developed jointly between the Housing Department, the Translation and Interpreting Unit, the Corporate Consultation Unit and Social Inclusion Unit to test new methods of communication. Community volunteers from the Somali, Bengali, Albanian and Bangladeshi communities were provided with training to be able to run consultation groups with members of their own communities in their own languages. The purpose of these was to gain more information on their views of specific housing services and translation and interpreting services, and how these could be improved.

An action plan has been developed acting upon the results of the consultation.

While the project did not ultimately win the award, Southwark was one of only four organisations nationally to be shortlisted.



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

Could the Executive Member tell me whether progress is being made on rent collection and could she provide collection figures for each year for the last five years?

#### **RESPONSE**

This administration is committed to tackling debt and increasing income across all sectors of the Council and specifically to halving rent arrears by 2006.

Significant progress has already been made towards achieving this target through the setting of challenging targets and clear objectives within a demanding improvement plan. This has resulted in performance exceeding both government and local performance indicators and commendation in the Audit Commission's 'Good Practice Guide' on rent administration. In addition, the rent strategy is strongly linked into the Council's anti-poverty strategy with specific exercises being undertaken to maximise income, tackle pensioner poverty and assist tenants with genuine financial hardship to pay their rent whilst taking a firm line with those who can pay but choose not to.

This strategy has seen the overall arrears that are owed to the Council reduce as a result of the improvements in rent collection performance.

Five years ago the audited statement of accounts showed that £28.583 million arrears were owed to the Council, now it's £17.470 million. In 1998/99 the collection rate (including arrears) was 97.95%, now it's 100.41%.

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

What ratio of small retail units to larger stores does the Executive Member consider to be appropriate in any future regeneration scheme at the Elephant and Castle?

### **RESPONSE**

The revised Framework for Development shows a generalised allocation of uses within the Elephant and Castle regeneration area. This proposes predominantly residential uses to the east, local retail along the extended Walworth Road and major commercial uses in the new core.

It does not at this stage show individual shop units and for the time being, such detailed design must await further commercial testing in collaboration with perspective developers and occupiers.

However, I can confirm that the framework will continue to reflect strongly the Council's commitment to focus on the retail and service needs of local residents in all of the early phases of the programme. The northward extension of the Walworth Road will continue the mix of smaller units directed to local peoples retailing and leisure requirements, interspersed with national multiples.

The existing shopping centre of course already reflects this mix, but in poor quality surroundings and diluted by the growth of office uses that have been attractive to the shopping centre by low rents in a weak retailing environment.

As the questioner will be aware, Southwark is currently losing 89% of all of its comparison shopping expenditure to other boroughs and the effect of this is to export jobs, services and high quality public environments to other parts of London. The framework will reverse this trend and bring back into the area the facilities that all of our consultation and research repeatedly confirms is demanded by local people.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES**

Could I ask what approaches if any London Borough of Southwark have made to large retail high street names to occupy sites within Regeneration Elephant and Castle Centre, if at all?

### **RESPONSE**

I think it would be a little premature of us to start having anything approaching formal conversations with large retails bearing in mind that we are at a stage where the three month consultation towards developing Supplementary Planning Guidance. The assessment that's been done as a result of the consultee responses is just about to be published so we haven't been in anything like formal conversation with large retails up to this stage.

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

Could the Executive Member please explain why the Council has made a u-turn and put in a bid to the London Development Agency (LDA) for a new tourist information site in the Pool of London area following the closure of the heritage centre and further confirm that the reason for the closure of the heritage centre was that a tourist information site was not needed in the area.

**RESPONSE**

The closure of the heritage centre was not directly a matter for the Council. The Council has never said that a tourist information site was unnecessary in this area. We have said that the best location to focus Southwark's main provision is currently considered to be Bankside and have agreed funding through the London Development Agency (LDA) to progress this. The Council has also put in a bid to the LDA to fund some temporary buildings in the Tower Bridge area, which could accommodate a variety of uses as yet to be determined. It has always been the Council's intention to supplement any main visitor information provision in outlets throughout the borough as far as possible.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR SARAH WELFARE**

I would like to thank the Executive Member for her answer. I would point out however that the closure of the Southwark Heritage Centre, whether or not it was a direct matter for the Council, the Council could have quite easily helped to prevent that closure as the Labour Group highlighted in Council earlier this year. I just want to ask the Executive Member if she agrees that since the closure there is quite a gaping hole in the provision of tourist information illustrated by the fact that the Southwark Heritage Association are themselves receiving numerous calls, not just from the public, but from Council Offices themselves.

**RESPONSE**

Thank you Councillor Welfare for your supplementary. I have to say that I disagree that the Council could simply step in and hand over money to an organization without going through some rigorous processes. You would be the first, and rightly the first, to complain if we handed out lots of money to every organization that wanted it. We took the application of SHA very seriously and among many other things, the leader of the Council, the leader of your group, myself and senior officers meet with representatives from SHA. I am afraid it became apparent over the course of conversations and that meeting that they actually weren't in a position to simply receive a cheque of money from us and nor did they indicate that they were particularly willing to go through some of the processes in terms of getting a business plan together that would have allowed us just to give them funding. I think it is regrettable that they had to close. I am confident that Council tried hard to help them. We did give them a grant of money to set up a website and to develop a business plan which will allow them to apply for funding in the future. With regard to the current lack of tourist information again I think it is regrettable that there is not any. We have a short term plan in place which offices are currently working on which hopefully will mean we will have a tourist information outlet up and running in the Bankside area by December 2003. That is a result of agreed funding with the London Development

Agency. In the midterm we are embarking on a feasibility study to work out the best strategic place to build a proper permanent tourist information centre, again that's jointly worked up with the LDA and with the tourist organizations in the region. In the longer term we hope that that tourist information centre will be opened in Bankside and will be able to serve very fully the needs of the many visitors who come to our Borough every year.

## **17. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNICATION AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID BRADBURY**

With regard to the establishment of new posts of departmental communications managers would the Executive Member please state:

- a. now many new posts have been created and the full-year cost thereof;
- b. how many posts have consequently been deleted and the full-year savings there from;
- c. the net effect on expenditure in the current year.

### **RESPONSE**

Three new communications manager posts have been established in environment and leisure, education and culture and strategic services (although half of this post is dedicated to promoting the work of the Safer Southwark Partnership and part-funded by the police). The full year cost of these is £122,400.

These have been funded by redeploying existing resources. All of the posts were filled from a single recruitment exercise and did not result in any other posts being deleted or made redundant. The net costs this year will be approximately £60,000.

These changes will result in a communications manager in each department of the Council. They are in response to weaknesses identified in the Council's internal and external communications functions in recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Best Value reviews. The aim of the changes is twofold. Firstly, we plan to achieve a step change in the responsiveness and quality of the Council's communications functions. Secondly, we aim to ensure that the resources deployed in communications across the Council are used efficiently and effectively. The intention is that the net effect on expenditure will be that waste can be identified and eliminated and better value for money achieved. A first step in this process will be to accurately identify existing expenditure.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID BRADBURY**

Could I thank the Executive Member for his answer. Could I in supplementary ask firstly whether since it appears that no posts have hitherto been deleted when the key aspect of this work is to identify waste, how many posts he anticipates will be deleted in the coming financial year and secondly whether he does not agree with me that it is frankly disgraceful that it would appear from his answer we have no accurate idea precisely how much money is spent on this function.

### **RESPONSE**

Can I thank Councillor Bradbury for that incisive question, I think I have been as frank as I possibly can in the response I have given. There is a motion as well that deals with this issue and it is of some concern to me as an Executive Member for this as you say that there hasn't been a suitably accurate way of calculating across the Council where all its communication spends are. This is

precisely the role that is envisaged that these Communication Managers will be doing for us and they will be delivering better efficiency and greater value for money in those expenditures that we make and I hope in due course that will equate to savings of some substance in the way in which we carry out our communications. In terms of that equating to a view I might have for then it being staff posts that are reduced as a consequence of this; that is not my intention Mr Mayor that that should be the outcome of it, rather that the efficiency savings I am envisaging are better spent publicity, better targeted, better resourced and better able to meet the Councils many and very demanding communication needs.

**18. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNICATION AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON**

In the light of the report in the latest issue of "*Staff Voice*" of the staff barbeque in Southwark Park starting at 3.30pm on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2003 would the Executive Member please state;

- a. how many staff attended this event during working hours?
- b. how much the event cost and to whose budget the cost has been charged?
- c. any plans for similar events in the future?

**RESPONSE**

Staff Voice reported the fact of the activity organized by Council's staff social committee, chaired by Gill Davies. The details sought are:

- a) Approximately 700 staff attended the event on 17<sup>th</sup> September with the majority attending after core hours of work.
- b) The costs for the event equated to each department of the council contributing £1,250 to the event.
- c) I am not aware that there are any further plans at present for similar events in the future.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON**

I would like to thank the Executive Member for his answer and I would like to ask if he knew what core hours of work for Council staff are and perhaps he could define what the core hours for the new Communication Managers are going to be?

**RESPONSE**

Mr Mayor the question was tabled to me and the answer published is the one that came from me so if I might answer that supplementary.

It is all very difficult because I am answering a question that comes to me because we reported it in Staff Voice. The core hours I believe referred to our are that the event started after 4 ' 0 clock so there are some members here I know who are also present, I believe you were there Mr Mayor and if I was wrong you can inform me of that but that's when the meeting started.

The core hours of work would be the large chunk during the day 4'0 clock was deemed to be the outside of the core hours. Core hours for Communication Managers I would say are the same as any other staff with the exception that the people in the press office work substantial hours outside of those core hours in terms of passing on those shifts. Communications Managers would be employed on the same basis as any other member of staff.

**No.19** - *There is no Question 19.* -



## **20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR KENNY MIZZI**

How many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been issued in Southwark since their introduction (by year and age of offenders); how many are currently being applied for and how many overall have been breached (in numerical and percentage terms)?

### **RESPONSE**

The policy on anti-social behaviour (ASB) requires the initial investigation to be carried out by the neighbourhood housing office (NHO). Many cases are resolved at this low level often with the assistance of mediation who successfully closed over 90% of the cases referred to them last year.

SASBU (Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit) is the delegated body of the Council for resolving cases of ASB where local interventions have not resolved the situation. As such it works closely with partnership agencies including the police and Youth Offending Team (YOT) - having officers from both within the unit - and has close links with the mediation service and neighbourhood housing offices.

ASBOs are at the top end of an escalation of interventions which are used by SASBU to tackle anti-social behaviour which range from mediation and warning letters, to Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and legal action under the Tenancy Agreement which can result in eviction.

In 2002/03 one (1) ASBO was obtained against a 14 year old which was subsequently breached resulting in criminal proceedings. In the current year eight (8) interim ASBOs have been obtained against perpetrators ranging from fourteen (14) to seventeen (17) years of age with seven of those orders subsequently made into full Orders (the eighth, which was breached, is due in court in early December).

In total therefore nine (9) ASBOs have been obtained of which only two (or 22%) have been breached.

A further six (6) perpetrators are currently being considered for ASBO applications.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR KENNY MIZZI**

I would like to thank Councillor Porter for his response and also take the opportunity to highlight some of the good work that the Anti Social Behaviour Unit have been doing in recent years. The question was actually put after I saw an investigative journalist report programme by the BBC a few weeks ago. I am not sure if other members actually had the opportunity to see the programme. The independent report actually suggested that there was a chronic failure in the monitoring of anti-social behaviour orders throughout the country and the figure of 22% which Councillor Porter has actually indicated in his response seems to be in line with what other Council's report throughout the country. The independent report suggests that often the reality was up to two thirds of antisocial behaviour orders were actually being broken

whether there was the failure in the monitoring of them and that's why they were not being picked up. I just wondered if Councillor Porter could try and ensure the Council and the community that Southwark and its partners were actually effectively monitoring the antisocial behaviour orders and that the figure of 22% is a sort of realistic figure or if he believes there is other work that needs to be done to improve that, to ensure that the figure is correct?

## **RESPONSE**

Mr Mayor I would like to thank Councillor Mizzi for his supplementary question. I think it is worth highlighting that since the Liberal Democrats took over the number of ASBO's that we have achieved have increased significantly there was just one when we first came to power that's going up shortly hopefully to fifteen if we obtain these six latest ASBO's . In terms in whether or not they are being properly enforced and in particular enforced when there's a breach. I know that neighbourhood offices are made aware once an ASBO has been granted; also the local police are made aware of who the perpetrators are, to keep an eye out for them. We had some discussions recently about whether or not ASBO's should be made public knowledge to wider members of the community and I think in common with many other London Borough Councils we don't think it's a good idea for very young people to have their faces put out because of the potential dangers for vigilante attacks on them. I am confident that SASBU and the local authorities including the local police are doing everything they can to ensure the ASBO's aren't breached. If he has any further concerns I would invite him to come and visit the unit which is very successful has a new manager and I am sure will put many of his concerns to rest.

**21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD**

Can the Executive Member please provide details of all parks and open spaces which currently have faulty lighting?

**RESPONSE**

All lights in parks are scoured for faults on a monthly basis and current records show no major faults with the exception of Peckham Rye Park where the pathway on the common has four lighting columns out of action owing to vandalism which are now beyond repair and need replacing.

This work has been issued to our contractors and the columns will be replaced within a maximum of six weeks.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD**

Thank you Mr Mayor and I would like to thank the Executive Member for his response. Can I also say to the Executive Member was he also aware that there have been faulty lights in Brunswick Park, Lucas Gardens and St Giles Churchyard over the previous month. Indeed the lights have now been repaired at St Giles Churchyard. I must admit and they are so well lit you can now see the graffiti very well despite the repeated requests to get it removed, I just wondered if he knew of those faults?

**RESPONSE**

I wouldn't as it does not form part of my portfolio. Its actually part of Councillor Thomas portfolio.

**22. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER**

How does the Executive Member rate the standard of lighting on the Aylesbury Estate?

**RESPONSE**

The standard of lighting on the Aylesbury Estate has been a cause for concern with residents. The Community Safety Working Group (Aylesbury NDC) & the Taplow Neighbourhood Office in 2002 proposed lighting improvements to staircases in Wendover, Taplow & Missenden. Also localised external lighting improvements in the vicinity of Gayhurst, Hambledon, Gaitskell, Danesfield, Latimer, Missenden, Wendover, Aylesbury Youth Club and Northchurch. A contract was awarded in the sum of £223,026.00 and work started in March 2003 and was completed in September 2003. The project was largely funded by the NDC (with a £20K contribution from the neighbourhood's major works budget).

The neighbourhood office together with the Aylesbury NDC (and the Tenant & Resident Associations) are in the process of identifying further areas that would benefit from upgraded or additional lighting. Once this is done a further contract will be let to undertake these works.

Poor lighting on other parts of the Aylesbury is still a problem, particularly the SW corner – Chiltern, Bradenham & Chartridge. Works were not undertaken to this part of the estate because of the plans for the NDC/Council regeneration scheme. It is difficult to give a rating for lighting – but I am confident that on the Aylesbury Estate officers and residents are working together towards improving the standards where any concerns are identified.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER**

Could I thank the Executive Member for his answer. However Councillor Porter is correct to say that local tenants and residents on the Aylesbury are concerned about lighting. On Wendover block, for example, whole rows of lights are broken, increasing crime and the fear of crime. It is clear that Councillor Porter is aware of the problem on a large number of Aylesbury blocks. Will he therefore make additional emergency money available to make the Aylesbury much safer?

**RESPONSE**

Mr Mayor, I would be more than happy to take up any concerns in relation to lighting with the local neighbourhood housing office. Nearly a quarter of a million pounds, I understand, has been allocated to improve lighting on the Aylesbury and I suggest its something they also take up through the NDC which I believe her colleagues sit on.

### **23. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR TONY RITCHIE**

An NOP survey commissioned by the DRC (Disability Rights Commission), found that disabled people experienced difficulties using everyday services because poor access and building design effectively barred them. When asked to name the two biggest obstacles disabled people faced the survey found:

- 45% said steps at the entrance to buildings
- 9% said being unable to use the disabled parking spaces.

The Disability Rights Commission joined forces with the Local Government Association (LGA) to warn local authorities to start making preparations for the introduction of new access routes in 2004 or risk facing prosecution. Can the Executive Member for Community Support, Social Inclusion and Youth let me know what preparations this Council has made to date “?

#### **RESPONSE**

The Council is well advanced in the preparation and implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Compliance Works Programme to its operational portfolio of 116 buildings

Disability access audits have been completed for the entire portfolio. An access strategy has been formulated and we are now about to embark on the implementation phase of the programme.

We are proposing to commission works to all municipal buildings to make the specific adjustments to public access buildings and provision of services that must be implemented by October 2004 under the DDA Act. In particular these works relate to the accessibility to services and facilities at ground floor level to which the public may require access. These works fully address the physical works enabling disabled access to these buildings.

Further work will be undertaken after October 2004 on access for staff and visitors to the other parts of the buildings.

**24. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER**

Can the Executive Member give his view on the Government's intention to exclude faith-based organisations from the sexual orientation discrimination legislation coming into force in December?

**RESPONSE**

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, laid in May 2003 and coming into force in December 2003, prohibit direct and indirect discrimination in employment on grounds of sexual orientation, by way of victimisation or harassment. The regulations are a long overdue step that will go some way to protecting the rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people at work.

The Regulations do however, permit discrimination in two circumstances, following amendments by the Government. The first of these is where being of a particular sexual orientation is a genuine and determining occupational requirement. This exception is broadly common to the race and faith/religion regulations, which also permit discrimination on these grounds, and is necessary to enable organisations (not necessarily faith based) to carry out specific work with specific groups.

However, the Sexual Orientation Regulations carry a broader exclusion where the employment is "for the purposes of an organised religion." In these cases an employer who applies a requirement related to sexual orientation to comply with the doctrines of the religion, or because of the nature of the work and the context in which it is carried out to avoid conflict with the religious convictions of the religion's followers, can discriminate against someone who does not meet the requirement.

On 17 June 2003, Lord Lester attempted to remove the government's opt-out for religious bodies in their regulations banning discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. He was defeated by 85 votes to 50.

He stated "it is quite surely wrong as a matter of principle that a person in an administrative role within a religious organisation would be excluded from employment because they do, or do not have a particular sexual orientation. To require a person applying for the position of a church cleaner to be heterosexual when that has absolutely nothing to do with whether he or she can wield a mop and bucket not only flies in the face of reason, but is clearly against the spirit of the directive."

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER**

I would like to thank Councillor Porter for his reply. Would he agree that its highly incongruous for the government to say on the one hand that they are determined to outlaw discrimination yet say on the other that its alright to discriminate against certain people and is he also aware that Unison and a number of other trade unions are taking a very firm stand on this and would he associate himself with their actions?

## **RESPONSE**

Mr Mayor I would like to thank Councillor Hubber for his supplementary question. I think it is worth highlighting first of all this legislation has come into force because the government refused to introduce any legislation. It is actually EU legislation which is now being incorporated into British legislation as of the 1<sup>st</sup> December. It does seem ridiculous that this amendment has been put in I know its supposed by many people in the Labour Party not least the Labour campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Its another cynical ploy by the Labour Government who will never go the full hog in giving people equal rights and I welcome the moves by Unison, the TUC and various other trade unions in trying to rectify this.

**25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK**

Could the Executive Member confirm how many wardens are currently operating in Southwark and how this compares with numbers pre-May 2002?

**RESPONSE**

Prior to May 2002 only the Bermondsey scheme was operating, with a complement of eight wardens and a supervisor.

Forty-two wardens are now operating, deployed across five schemes, as follows:

Bermondsey - 11  
Camberwell - 10  
Aylesbury - 8  
Peckham - 10 (by March 2004 this scheme will also cover Nunhead)  
Bankside – 3

A further twenty-four posts are being recruited to and it is anticipated that by the end of the year a total of sixty-six will be deployed, with a completely new scheme operating covering East Street & Elephant.

In addition to the wardens, four scheme managers are now in post. Additionally, our service manager has been appointed as a regional champion for warden schemes in recognition of the impact that our wardens have had on community safety, and officers from Southwark gave presentations on the scheme at a recent national conference.

I am also pleased to report that we have received national recognition for best practice for our warden recruitment practices and we will be hosting a major conference for women wardens early in 2004.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK**

Thank you Mr Mayor and Councillor Porter for your answer. Could you advise us to what other schemes you are planning in the near future?

**RESPONSE**

Mr Mayor I think it is again worth highlighting the massive increase in wardens since the Liberal Democrats came into power. We said that we would introduce warden schemes throughout the Borough, we are working towards that at the moment. Our priority for next year will be Community Safety in terms of budgetary commitments and we hope to have several new schemes commencing next year as well.



**26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER**

Can the Executive Member update me on the recent visit by Lord Harris and the Metropolitan Police Authority to Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

The recent visit by Lord Harris, Chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA), is a regular annual visit by the MPA to each of the London boroughs. The meetings provide an opportunity for the MPA to find out about local partnership achievements and discuss with boroughs any concerns or issues. Following the Police Reform Act 2002 the MPA is a statutory partner in the Crime and Disorder Partnership; the Safer Southwark Partnership, the nominated member is Cecile Wright.

The Safer Southwark Partnership presented examples of local partnership and innovation and outlined plans for the future. The Safer Southwark Partnership set out the principal achievements as; -

- A 21% reduction in youth offending, and a 12% reduction in re-offending
- The establishment of 6 wardens schemes
- The closure of 26 Crack Houses'
- 500 visits to elderly victims of crime by the Eldercare Team
- Successful Youth programmes such as Karrot, School Beat Offices and the Agencies Supporting Schools.

The future plans for reducing crime have been based on the Police Superintendent heading the joint Police and Community Safety Teams, implementing the Best Value Review of Community Safety and drafting a borough-wide anti-social behaviour strategy based on community reassurance.

The three key issues for the future were identified as anti-social behaviour, reassurance and youth.

The MPA took the opportunity to discuss the "step change" programme for introducing more beat officers into the boroughs to deliver community policing. The MPA also intend to review the allocation formula that is used to decide police numbers for each borough. This review will take place over the next year to be agreed prior to April 2005.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I thank the Executive Member for his answer. How would you compare the performance of the Council's Community Safety under this administration compared to the previous one?

## **RESPONSE**

Mr Mayor, I'd like to thank Cllr Manchester for her supplementary question. I think it is quite important to realise there have been some massive changes in the Community Safety Unit over the past couple of years. It really was a failure of the last Administration to deal effectively with the problems. It is ironic that they are the ones who go on about how we are failing to deal with anti social behaviour so effectively now.

Yes we've made massive progress in Russian Docks. Thank you for highlighting that. 25% reduction in crime in Rotherhithe over the past few weeks since we have decided to deal with that issue after having it raised by local Councillors. Yes there has been a significant improvement in the Community Safety Unit.

**27. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN O'BRIEN**

Can the Executive Member please explain what he is doing to ensure cross-border cooperation on community safety issues?

**RESPONSE**

As the lead member for Community Safety, I have initiated a Cross Border Community Safety Forum. This met on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2003 and was attended by Community Safety representatives and police officers from Lewisham, Lambeth & Southwark. The Forum agreed to meet on a regular basis the next being scheduled for January 2004.

The meeting was very useful for all participants and the following objective was agreed:

To improve cross border communication to reduce crime, to develop joint approaches on key issues with a view to commissioning programmes that reduce crime and improve community safety across boroughs.

In addition the following actions were agreed :-

- To share best practise in developing ASB strategies
- To work more closely on protocols in relation to crack houses
- To exchange information of youth issues and gangs
- To work together on joint cross border information sharing protocols
- To conduct cross border problem solving activities and initiatives.
- To look at the successful Eldercare Project in Southwark as best practise for replication cross borough

This innovative forum is supported by Government Office for London (GOL) and is seen as ground-breaking co-operation in the field of community safety.

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

Does the Executive Member believe that the Council took the right step in Fresh-Starting the then Grove Vale primary school (now Goose Green primary school)?

**RESPONSE**

Grove Vale was deemed a failing school in 1999. The quality of teaching was judged unsatisfactory and the management weak. Despite strong supportive intervention, it was concluded the school did not have the capacity to improve and the school was Fresh Started in May 2000. Central funding supported the development of the new school to optimise its chances of success.

In curriculum and attainment terms Goose Green Primary is now a rapidly improving school. The Headteacher was previously in an acting capacity but became the substantive Headteacher in October 2003.

Since opening as Goose Green Primary School the percentage of unauthorised absences has consistently fallen and attendance is now higher than it was in 2001.

The average points score in attainment at end of Key Stage 1 in reading and writing has shown a steady improvement but the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 in mathematics has fallen slightly. Benchmark grades of average points scores for 2002 show C for reading, C for writing and D for mathematics against similar schools.

With regard to attainment at Key Stage 2: in 2003, 59% of pupils achieved Level 4+ in English compared to 23% in 2001; mathematics results for pupils achieving Level 4+ has risen from 16% in 2001 to 56% in 2003 and science results for pupils achieving Level 4+ has improved from 35% in 2001 to 75% in 2003. The number of children achieving Level 5 + has moved from 0% in all subjects in 2001 to 13% in English, 19% in mathematics and 31% in science in 2003. Benchmark grades of average points scores for 2002 show C for reading, C for writing and D for mathematics against similar schools.

The school was Fresh Started as a 2 forms of entry establishment. Although the school roll has steadily increased (from 355 in 2001 to 373 in 2003), it has not risen at the rate initially anticipated. In order to address this, the school is now planning a restructure in order to move towards becoming a 1.5 form entry establishment.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH**

Can I have the Executive Members response and ask given that the fresh starting at Grovevale seems to have been so successful why he is not considering this for Gallywell School?

**RESPONSE**

Thank you for the supplementary. The situation of the two schools are rather different. I agree with him that the Grove Vale/Goose Green Fresh Start has

been a great success and although of course the school roll has not gone up as quickly as we hoped it had, nevertheless the school has made tremendous progress. However there are factors in Gallywell which mark it of from Grove Vale as it then was. However I hasten to assure him that the decision has not been taken and he may very well be right.

**29. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS**

Could the Executive Member for Education and Culture please provide details of the total number of children out of school in Southwark in the form of a table broken down by school year and by the number of hours of alternative tuition being provided, including those children with no alternative provision.

**RESPONSE**

Since commencing at Southwark, Cambridge Education Associates (CEA) have identified a significant number of pupils without a school place. The pressure on school places is identified within the School Organisation Plan 2003-08.

The following table summarises the best current estimate of the number of pupils who are currently without a school place.

Numbers of Students				
School Year	Total Number in Year Group	Previous Southwark Secondary School	No Previous Southwark Secondary School	
			From Overseas	From Out of Borough
11	173	31	125	17
10	36	10	15	11
9	24	3	9	12
8	15	2	5	8
7	0	0	0	0
Totals	248	46	154	48

Permanently Excluded Pupils		
School Year	Total Number in Year Group	Average Hours Alternative Tuition
11	17	22
10	22	24
9	6	17
8	3	22
7	3	20
6	1	25
5	1	25
4	2	17.5
Totals	56	

CEA are addressing the issue as a matter of urgency. Interim provision has been established while a more sustainable solution is developed in partnership with schools.

### **30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE**

What level of cuts is the Executive Member proposing for the Early Years service for 2004/05?

#### **RESPONSE**

The Early Years Service undertook a Best Value Review, which commenced implementation on 1 April 2003. The key principles that were agreed as part of the Early Years Review are as follows:

- To maximise income following the introduction of the revised Working Family Tax Credit (WFTC) (1 April 2003).
- To recognise the funding that is required to support vulnerable children as defined by the Children Act (estimated to be 280 children in Southwark). To continue to provide free day care provision for vulnerable children and families as per statutory requirements.
- To implement £3.5 million worth of savings over a five year period in the provision of day care services and to redirect the savings to support vulnerable families and children.
- To recognise the importance of Early Years education and to direct funding to support the Raising Achievement programme (£250,000 growth budget to employ additional early years teachers).
- That there will be no substantial loss of day care places as a result of implementing the Best Value Review.

The first years saving target was £618,000, 2003/4, this was achieved through efficiency savings from the reduction of senior management and an increase from £100 per week to £135 per week for day care provision provided by the Council's nine early years centres.

£135 per week is the recommended fee level that allows for maximum take up of the WFTC (childcare element) for low-income families. It should be noted that low-income families are eligible for up to 70% of the fee.

The second year savings target is £800,000 for 2004/5. This saving target is made up of a 50% reduction in the community grants programme of £650,000 and a further fee increase for day care provision for under 2's in the nine early years centres. These savings are again intended to be redirected to the Social Services Department to support the development of their family support teams.



**31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM**

Does the Executive Member accept that the cuts applied to the Early Years service were too severe ?

**RESPONSE**

The Best Value Review of Early Years requested officers to work with the ten community nurseries to introduce business-planning techniques. This is to maximise their income from the Working Family Tax Credit (WFTC) whilst supporting them to move to social businesses (not for profit organisations).

The Executive recognised the risk involved in implementing the 50% reduction in grant aid and requested officers to provide three monitoring reports in the first year of the Review. Therefore, during the first year of implementation of the revised WFTC the grants programme for the community nurseries remained unchanged.

Officers were asked to measure the impact of price increases, review the effect on vacancies, survey the parents leaving the community nurseries and to monitor the income levels of families using the service. This information is being used to inform the Council of the impact of the revised pricing policies and will be used to consider the grant allocations for 2004/5.

The Executive remains committed to providing services for children and families in need and to ensure that there is no substantial loss of day care places as a result of implementing the Best Value Review.

### **32. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COUNCILLOR MICHELLE PEARCE**

At present the No 37 bus is one of only two bus routes which permits east-west travel in the south of the borough. It is the only bus route serving Dulwich Hospital. The No 37 bus service is seriously erratic and gives rise to a very large number of complaints from my constituents who are forced to depend on it. One reason for its poor performance is the bottleneck in Melbourne Grove caused by illegal parking.

Will the Executive Member undertake to investigate the problem caused by this bottleneck, and will he consider directing additional parking wardens to Melbourne Grove frequently enough to ensure illegal parking ceases to impede the No 37 bus?

#### **RESPONSE**

Melbourne Grove allows access for the No. 37 bus to East Dulwich Station, providing an important interchange facility for public transport users. Due to insufficient off street parking for residents in Melbourne Grove, the Council has provided footway parking bays whereby vehicles are allowed to park half on the footway and half on the carriageway. This is designed to maximise carriageway width.

Double yellow lines have been installed at the junction of Melbourne Grove and East Dulwich Road and single yellow lines extending from Jarvis Road to Grove Vale, preventing waiting from 8am – 6:30pm Monday to Friday. This is designed to keep this area free of parked vehicles during daytime periods to assist the passage of buses.

Further enhancements for Melbourne Grove are proposed for the next financial year under the London Bus Priority Network (LBPN) Route 37 bus priority proposals. It is proposed that additional parking restrictions be introduced to provide further passing places for buses and to ensure that carriageway pinch points are kept free of parked vehicles. Consultation on these proposals will be undertaken early in 2004.

Over the last month a total of 16 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) have been issued in Melbourne Grove to vehicles that were parked illegally. The enforcement contractor has been instructed to ensure the road is visited on a frequent basis by mobile patrols during the day and at differing times so as to ensure that offenders are moved on. The parking section will monitor the visits made by the contractor to ensure they are carried out appropriately.

**33. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCROFT**

Can the Executive Member for Environment and Transport give any assurances on the possible introduction of traffic calming measures to residents of South Nunhead (Limesford and Harlescott Roads in particular) in the light of the significant increase in traffic associated with the housing developments at Borland Road and adjacent sites.

**RESPONSE**

Limesford and Harlescott Roads are within the developing Waverley 20 mph zone. Further treatments are required to consolidate this zone. A bid has been made to Transport for London this summer in the *Borough Spending Plan, Transport 2004/5 - 2006/7* for further money to complete this work. The Council will know the outcome of this bid in late November 2003.

### **34. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY**

We learn that plans for the area around Queens Road Station have changed again. Can the Executive Member set out the new plans in as much detail as possible? By what date will a management agreement be confirmed for the land immediately adjacent to the station? What is the target date for clearing and bringing this land into operational use for passengers?

#### **RESPONSE**

The grant of a planning consent on an adjacent private site has raised the possibility for a much-enhanced scheme as part of a wholesale development of the station entrance and adjacent land. This proposed scheme will greatly benefit the local community in that it will provide better station forecourt facilities than originally envisaged as well as being in the best consideration of the Council in terms of the value of its estate. Architects have prepared drawings to provide a comprehensive development of mixed residential and retail fronting Queens Road as well as to the station forecourt. A revised scheme for the station forecourt has been agreed in principle with Network Rail and a first phase, consisting of opening up the area; paving and provision of lighting is shortly to commence, subject to written confirmation from Network Rail expected imminently.

Subject to detailed negotiations with the adjoining owners it is envisaged that a comprehensive scheme can go forward for planning consent within the next few months.

If we are unsuccessful in agreeing a joint development then the Council will submit a planning application for the land within its ownership.

There are, therefore, three stages to the development. The first phase has been described above, and both Network Rail and the Council officers are working hard towards progressing this matter at the earliest opportunity. The second phase will involve the construction of an adjacent development to the east of the enlarged forecourt (which will be delivered in the first phase). The estimated timescale for the second phase is approximately two years and the Council will seek to ensure that existing retail uses are retained (e.g. dry cleaners, newsagents) as they complement the station environment. The third phase will involve making further enhancements to the station forecourt on completion of the building works, including soft and hard landscaping. The Council will encourage Network Rail to open up the arches for retail use as part of the third phase, as this will make a more attractive and safer environment for residents and users of the station.

### **35. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ALUN HAYES**

What action is the Executive Member taking to raise awareness of the dangers of poor air quality in the Peckham area as recommended in the Air Quality Strategy?

#### **RESPONSE**

In accordance with National Air Quality Strategy, Southwark has undertaken a technical review and assessments of air quality, which led to the declaration of an Air Quality Management Zone extending across almost the whole of Southwark southwards to include the South Circular (A205). Measures to address air pollution are set out in Southwark's Air Quality Strategy & Improvement Plan in Chapter 6 and are detailed in appendix A of this document. This plan includes Peckham along with the rest of the Borough.

The 'Improvement Plan' was adopted by the Council in January 2003 and is published on the web, is available as a CD, hard copy, and a leaflet has been distributed to Council public access points. The plan contains some 80 measures which are to be delivered over a period of years, through direct regulatory processes, transport policies and traffic management, planning policies and education.

Examples of programmes that have been undertaken to raise awareness of the problem of air pollution include:

- Roadside vehicle emission testing / penalty scheme
- Requiring new developments to have a green travel plan as part of planning agreements
- Putting information from the Council's monitoring station onto teletext and the Council's website

**36. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BILLY KAYADA**

Given that £50,000 was found to go towards works to the East Street toilets, when will the same sum be allocated for works to re-introduce toilets in Peckham Town Centre?

**RESPONSE**

The provision of public toilets in the borough has been the subject of a mini Best Value Review, the results of which will be reported to the executive later in the year. The review seeks to address the following vision:

*‘To provide clean, well maintained, safe public conveniences in areas of the borough where there is identified demand, that fully comply with the needs of the disabled and meet nationally acceptable standards at a cost that demonstrates value for money against other authorities’.*

It is intended that the outcomes of the review will provide a framework in terms of both provision and funding to deliver improved public toilets in areas that they are required.

In terms of funding being made available for the East Street toilets, the key constraint to public toilet provision generally is the resourcing of the running costs. East Street differs from the general provision as its running costs are met from the Street Trading Account paid from market trader's fees. The facilities for East Street are now in such a poor condition owing to under investment that they cannot be effectively maintained.

It has therefore been decided to allocate a one-off spend from the existing budgets within the Environment & Leisure Department. The work has been tendered and is due to start prior to Christmas 2003.

### **37. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN**

I understand that the door-to-door recycling scheme is about to be expanded. Could the Executive Member please give me further details about this and indicate the likely impact of this scheme on recycling targets?

#### **RESPONSE**

In September 2003 the Waste and Transport Division of the Environment & Leisure Department submitted a successful bid to the London Recycling Fund for £265,000 to add glass and cans to the Council's existing door-to-door paper only service provided to all properties that receive a wheeled bin refuse collection service.

The new service will commence early February 2004 and will mean that all residents in the borough either receive a door-to-door collection of three recyclable materials or, for estate-based properties, have access to facilities for recycling three materials at a density of one facility per 350 dwellings.

All properties will be given a reusable sack for the storage of paper and a divider for the existing blue boxes to facilitate the storage of cans and bottles separately between collections. The collection frequency will remain at once per fortnight, as is currently the case with the existing paper only collection.

It is anticipated that the project will result in, approximately an additional 2,000 tonnes in 2004/05 and 2,500 tonnes in 2005/06 of waste being recycled. This will increase the borough's recycling rate by around 2% by 2005/06.

The new service will significantly contribute to the Council meeting its 18% target for recycling of household waste by 2005/06 and is part of a what has been a step change in the provision of recycling opportunities for the residents of the borough over the last 18 months.

### **38. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR TAYO SITU**

What action if any, has been taken by Southwark Council since the release of the District Auditors interim annual report to have effective reconciliation of schools cash balances?

#### **RESPONSE**

The management of budgets and accounts in Southwark maintained schools has until recently (31st July 2003) been managed under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) contract with Atkins Education Services from 1 April 2001 as part of the overall delivery of education services on the Council's behalf. These services transferred back to the Council on 1st August 2003 after the Atkins contract was terminated. Schools budgets and accounts are now being managed by Cambridge Education Associates (CEA) under an interim strategic management contract from 1 August 2003 to July 2004. Atkins were therefore responsible for the closure of schools' accounts and ensuring that schools cash balances were reconciled properly for the end of the financial year 2002-3.

Overall, future action to address the weaknesses identified in the District Auditors report is being implemented by CEA in agreement with the Council as they currently manage the education finance function and will be expected to manage the closing programme for 2003-4 for those services they manage including schools accounts. Consequently, CEA are proposing the following management action to remedy the deficiencies identified in the District Auditors report for 2002-3:-

- Ensure greater consistency in the provision of financial returns from schools by requiring all schools to submit returns on a quarterly basis to ensure better reconciliation procedures and processes within and between schools and the Education Dept during the financial year rather than at the year-end. Some schools will be required to submit returns on a monthly basis where there are concerns with the financial management at the school. This work has already been started by CEA.
- Posting schools' income and expenditure from the quarterly returns to the Council's accounting system every quarter so that the Council is regularly updating their financial management system with schools' information. This will make the year-end procedures a lot less complicated and easier for the accounts to be closed and reconciled.



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

Would the Executive Member please state her understanding of the circumstances in which the Government is threatening to cap council tax levels, and include details of the timing of possible Government actions in this regard?

**RESPONSE**

The Government in a recent statement, Council Tax – The Facts, has made it clear that it is prepared to use its targeted capping powers in 2004/05. No announcement has yet been made on the timing or the way in which these capping powers will be used. It is therefore not possible to say at what level of council tax increase capping would apply. However with regards to timing it could be assumed that the Government would only act against a Council after it has formally agreed its budget and council tax.

#### **40. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAM ROWE**

Does the Council have a full and accurate schedule of all the land and property it owns, together with a detailed plan for disposal of surplus property in an orderly manner to achieve the best profit for the Council?

#### **RESPONSE**

Details of the Council's land and property assets are held as follows:

##### **a) Non-operational properties and properties held leasehold**

The Council's Manhattan database, maintained by Southwark Property contains details of all non-operational properties, and all assets held leasehold.

##### **b) Operational properties**

In addition, a basic schedule of all operational properties is held by the Council's Financial Management Services in a corporate Asset Register. A more detailed schedule of these properties is replicated in the Manhattan database.

##### **c) Land**

The Council holds details of all registered land in its ownership on a Geographic Information System. This information is accessible as a dataset through the SMart GIS system currently being rolled out across the Authority. Most land and properties interests have been digitised and a further programme is underway to identify, register and digitise unregistered interests.

##### **d) Housing Assets**

Details of residential premises owned by the Council are held in a separate database maintained by Housing Department.

Further background about the information held and data management generally may be found in the "Data Management" section of the Council's Asset Management Plans 2001 and 2002.

The Council annually sets out a programme for disposal of property assets to comply with the policy in respect of targets to achieve capital receipts. The disposal programme is subject to monthly review and changes may occur subject to market conditions, time required to achieve a completion and Council redevelopment / regeneration projects. The Property Department is required to seek and obtain best consideration for all property transactions.

**41. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE**

Following the Local Government Association's announcement that Councils are facing an £800 million funding shortfall next year, is the Executive Member concerned that local taxpayers will have to pick up this tab?

**RESPONSE**

The Local Government Association in a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister has set out the potential £800 million shortfall between the need to fund services and planned government support. It has requested that the Revenue Support Grant should be increased to cover this deficit. The Council would not automatically pass on any shortfall to our local taxpayers, we would first fully explore all savings and efficiency options through the Policy and Resourcing Strategy.