

APPENDIX 3

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY (ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 28th JANUARY 2004

MEMBERS QUESTION TIME

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

Can the Leader outline details of any bids submitted by the Council for the Liveability Fund (piloting new approaches to improve environmental service delivery) announced by the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister last year?

RESPONSE

The Council submitted a bid to the Liveability Fund in August 2003 for £5 million in capital and £150,000 annual revenue support for a period of over 5 years. The bid was centred around Burgess Park and aimed to make it more appealing and accessible to users by creating improved links between its neighbouring communities and a "heart of the park" centred on Chumleigh Gardens. It aimed to establish a continuity of public domain design between the park, the Aylesbury Estate, and North Peckham areas. It also sought to improve accessibility and in the long term contribute to the objective of creating sustainable communities.

Burgess Park is the only major park in Southwark that is not eligible for Heritage Lottery Funding and this was an opportunity to secure some of the funding that the park requires to develop. Unfortunately, the bid was not successful and we do not know at this stage why this was the case.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS

I thank the Leader of the Council for his answer and would he agree that it is totally unsatisfactory positioning that the government did not give us the reasons for turning down our bid?

RESPONSE

Yes it is but it is also disappointing that the part that serves East Walworth Ward was given a slap in the face by a Labour Government. But I have to say slaps in the face appear to be part of the cause to what the Labour Party is offering East Walworth Ward.

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

Were any payments received by any member of the Executive for attendance at the "Peace on the Streets Concert" held last summer in Burgess Park?

RESPONSE

I have consulted my Executive colleagues on this matter. No-one received, nor was offered, any payment for attendance.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

I thank the Leader for his answer. Just to cover a couple of possibilities, were any payments asked for?

RESPONSE

They were neither solicited, asked for, given, received in kind, in cash, in cheque or whatever.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MARK PURSEY

How has the Council fared so far in the London Government Chronicle awards?

RESPONSE

Southwark has been short-listed in four Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Award categories, including the prestigious Most Improved Council category. The other LGC awards for which we are short- listed are:

- Finance team of the year
- Local Democracy initiative of the year for Community Councils
- Joined up Government initiative of the year for Safer Southwark Partnership

Southwark is one of very few authorities to have been short-listed in this number of categories.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MARK PURSEY

What did the Leader think when we were shortlisted for the Council of the year and how also did the judges visit go yesterday considering the Labour Group did not turn up?

RESPONSE

I think the Council was shortlisted for the first time ever as most improved Council of the Year Award because we were able to demonstrate real improvements in council services over a very short space of time. Those of us who had the misfortune to be in the last Administration will remember the huge amount of housing benefit casework that we used to get because of a totally incompetent housing benefit service which the Labour Group did little or nothing to repair. We now have the second most efficient housing benefit processing statistics in London and the only people ahead of us is the City of London who only have about 38 claimants in the first place. We had streets that we were ashamed of and which were an affront to the people who live in them, they are now vastly cleaner than they were and I think that it is being widely noticed and widely welcomed. The judges were very impressed by the scale in the ambition of the Council's regeneration plans by the evidence of real service improvements that they saw and I am sure that we are within shot of winning this award.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAM ROWE

In the light of the comments by Simon Hughes M.P. (a) in Parliament on 21st October 2003 and (b) as reported in Southwark News of 11th December 2003, appearing to call for a new tax on owners and/or occupiers of properties, including residential properties, benefiting from new infrastructure such as the Jubilee tube line, would the Leader of the Council please provide more detail of how the advent of the East London Line extension through Peckham and Camberwell would increase tax payable by owners/residents/businesses in those areas of the Borough (including housing and commercial properties owned by Southwark Council), should the legislation proposed by Simon Hughes be enacted?

RESPONSE

Existing legislation means that any increase in property value following nearby changes such as better transport links will not necessarily affect an occupier's Council Tax.

Council Tax Valuations are based on open market property prices as at 1st April 1991. Properties are not re-valued unless there has been a material increase in the building, this in general terms relates to any building works on the dwelling and a revaluation will only take place after a sale.

Council Tax properties are due for revaluation in 2007 – Council taxpayers then have 6 months to appeal their valuation. Any increase in property value will be picked up within this valuation regardless of whether there has been a sale.

Business Rates are due to be re-valued in 2005.

Simon Hughes referred to proposals for those benefiting from increases in land values due to changes in the locality (such as a new tube link). The proposal was those benefiting could contribute to the cost of the project.

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MOISE

Did Southwark Council charge the Mothers Against Guns organisation and anti fire arm campaigner Lucy Cope for the use of Burgess Park when M.A.G. held its summer concert in July 2003?

RESPONSE

There was no charge to Mothers Against Guns. External funding of £7,500 was secured from the 'From Boyhood to Manhood Foundation (FBMF)' through the Government Office for London.

FBMF is a programme which aims for boys to return to school, further training or employment. The programme was started in response to the growing number of exclusions and poor education attainment by black boys in school.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MOISE

I thank the Leader for the answer to my question but I am just interested to find out if he could tell me whether Southwark Council actually contributed in any way to the concert held by Lucy Cope on behalf of "Mothers Against Guns". I believe that you were at that concert and you made a speech that day. I am sure you will agree with me that it was a very good event and Southwark got a load of publicity out of it as well. It also raised the increasing awareness that most residents in the borough have concerns about gun related crime, which is on the increase by the way, and I would just like to know whether you actually supported the initiative by the Mothers Against Guns since currently they are operating from a council flat with no community facilities and no funding at all from this council. So I wonder if you could clarify any points that I don't know about in that area?

RESPONSE

The Council freely gave the use of Burgess Park to the event and we were able to bolt it on to the pre-existing Black Music and Latin American Music Festival which was due to take place that weekend and we should I think record our thanks to the Events Department and Paul Cowell for making that possible and getting it set up. I did indeed speak at the event and I was very pleased and proud to be able to do so. I will repeat what I said at that event that the Mothers Against Guns organisation is I think an inspiring example of a grass roots community campaign welling up from a community which is prepared to be brave enough to say that they are not prepared to put up with intimidation and with guns on the streets anymore and that front up a campaign to persuade people in their own community to put down the guns. I think that there is the question about voluntary sector funding and so on. I think this ties in with the concern that we had last year that it has been far too long since we had a root and branch review of the voluntary sector groups that we were funding. It is very difficult for new and emerging groups, emerging ethnic groups, emerging campaigns like the Mothers Against Guns organisation, to access funding from the Council which is why we institute a change to the way we

distribute voluntary sector grants this year precisely to make it easier for people who have been shut out of the process before to try and get money this time around.

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR DANNY McCARTHY

How many Council services/schemes have been short-listed for Beacon Status?

RESPONSE

Two of the Council's services have been short-listed for Beacon Status:

- Housing Renewal; and
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

The short-listing status is in recognition of the significant work that has been undertaken in these areas:

- Southwark is a leading London borough in the field of Housing Renewal. Its work has achieved recognition from central government, residents, and the local and national media.
- Southwark's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has a reputation for success. Its work has led to reductions in crime and in particular to a reduction in youth involvement in crime. This has been achieved through innovative programmes such as: the Youth Offending Team partnership programme, the School Beat Officer programme, the Youth Services Summer Programme, and the Karrot project.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DANNY McCARTHY

Can the Leader tell me how we fared in the Beacon's Status bids in previous years?

RESPONSE

In previous years unfortunately we were told that the Government did not want us to apply for Beacon Council status. It would be a waste of time to apply because we were not going to win anyway but fortunately they seem to have a more benevolent view of the Council since the last elections. They realise that we are now an improving Council, our CPA ratings has gone up from weak, which is the damning verdict of forty years of Labour rule. After just 20 months of the change of political leadership the Education Department are quite happy for us to come out of intervention because they recognise that we are a strong and renewed Council able to take education back in-house and it is good to see that this external validation for the many improvements which local residents have noticed in the shape of us being shortlisted for four Local Government Chronicle Awards and to two Beacon Council Awards and getting the improved status under the CPA.

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD

Given that an article on Islington Council in the Winter edition of the I&DeA's 'Modern Members' stated that –

“In turn Islington is able to send some help Southwark’s way, most notably in education.”

Could the Leader then please specify and quantify that ‘help’?

RESPONSE

In both Islington and Southwark new administrations are grappling with the failures of their predecessors which led to Government interventions in the management of the education service.

Both Southwark and Islington now use the same contractor, Cambridge Education Associates (CEA), to manage education provision.

Islington appointed CEA in 1999. Naturally, when CEA was listed as a possible Southwark education management provider, I informally sought Councillor Hitchin’s , Leader of Islington Council, view on his borough’s experience of working with CEA.

I understand that Councillors James Kempton, Islington’s Executive Member for Education, and Bob Skelly, also communicate regularly about the challenges of being responsible for an education portfolio within an Local Education Authority subject to Government intervention.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD

I would like to pick up on the supposed failures of previous political Administrations in Southwark particularly the new improved status since year zero in May 2002. What I would like to know is can he confirm that many of the stated improved services like street wardens are actually funded by Central Government?

RESPONSE

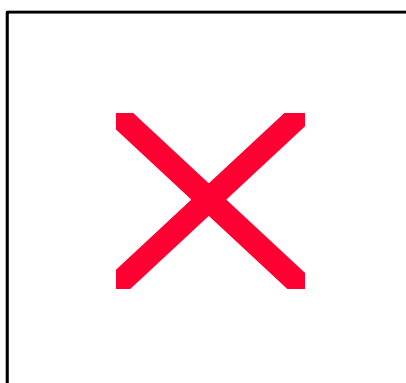
Some are and some are not.

8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN

How many other Councils went from 'Weak' to 'Fair' in the recent Corporate Performance Assessment?

RESPONSE

Twenty authorities were ranked as weak in the 2002 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Of those 20, eight moved from Weak to Fair in the 2003 CPA assessment. These authorities are listed below:



**Authorities moving from Weak
To Fair in the 2003 CPA
assessment**

Bristol
Bury
Enfield
Harrow
Milton Keynes
Nottingham
Southwark
Wolverhampton

Three of the seven London authorities ranked as Weak in 2002 moved to the Fair category as a result of the CPA 2003 assessment.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN

Can I ask the Leader why he thinks we were one of the very few London Authorities to go up a category in the short space of just one year?

RESPONSE

It's an interesting question Mr Mayor. I think modesty has to forbid so I shall say it must be due to the other nine Members of the Executive who provide a sense of political leadership and political dynamism which was sadly lacking before. Because we recognise the need to invest in the Council as an organisation through the modernisation fund gross bid

which we agreed in the budget last year and because I think the Council as an organisation is showing itself capable of responding to a strong political lead and because our priorities are the people's priorities - cleaner streets, getting tough on debts, street wardens to reassure members of the community to make them feel safer going about their business and so on. Concentrating on the bread and butter issues like housing benefit which Labour so badly let people down on. I feel confident that we will be able to progress up the CPA scale as we go on.

9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR TONY RITCHIE

Would the Leader Of Southwark Council please provide a break down of costs for all full and part time employees being paid out of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund with their job titles and a summary of their job description?

RESPONSE

Posts that are being paid for from Neighbourhood Renewal Fund in 2003/4, where the Council is the employer are as follows:

Job title	Section	Full Year Costs inc on-costs	Role
Partnership Manager	Social Inclusion	£60k	To manage the business of Southwark Alliance
Neighbourhood Renewal Commissioning Officer	Social Inclusion	£35k	To manage and monitor the NRF Service Agreements
NRF Finance Officer (O.5)	Strategic Services Support Unit	£20k	To maintain the financial systems for NRF including government returns
Renewal Co-ordinator – West Bermondsey	Regeneration (Elephant Links)	£50k	To develop and manage the N'hood plan for West Bermondsey
Renewal Manager (Bermondsey/Rotherhithe)	Social Inclusion	£65k	To develop and manage multi-agency neighbourhood plans for the priority n'hoods in area
Renewal Officer (B/R)	Social Inclusion	£35k	Admin for R Manager functions
Renewal Manager (Camberwell with Kingswood)	Social Inclusion	£65k	To develop and manage multi-agency neighbourhood plans for the priority n'hoods in area
Renewal Officer (CwK)	Social Inclusion	£35k	Admin for R. Manager functions
5FTE NR Community Development Officers	Regeneration (3 CIDU, 2 Peckham Programme)	£200k	To develop and implement multi-agency community development activity in priority neighbourhoods linked to NR plans
Youth Involvement Co-ordinator	Regeneration (CIDU)	£30k	To support the Community Cohesion Pathfinder programme with youth providers in B/R and C

Multi-faith Forum Co-ordinator- 0.6	Regeneration (CIDU)	£20k	To co-ordinate the Multi-Faith Forum and manage its work-plan
Employment and Enterprise Strategy Officer	Regeneration (Economic Development)	£35k	To project manage the implementation of the SA Employment and Enterprise strategies and task groups
Citizenship Project Officer	Community Safety	£33k	To implement the citizenship programme as part of the Youth Crime Strategy
2 x Domestic Violence Social Worker	Social Services	£70k	To enhance services to children in households where domestic violence
YOT Early Intervention worker	Social Services	£56k	To enhance the early intervention programme for young people at risk of involvement in crime
5.5FTE Youth Workers (detached & based in school)s	Youth and Connexions Service	£174k	To deliver gang disruption and preventative youth work programmes
3FTE Peckham Street Wardens	Environment & Leisure	£103k	To provide the full complement of Wardens for Peckham (match resources)
Street Leaders Scheme Co-ordinator	Environment & Leisure	£35k	To train and support volunteer street leaders to assist in improving the quality of the public realm
Community Learning Facilitator (Kingswood)	Education and Culture	£30k	To support parents and community to access education and learning and support family learning
Community Learning Facilitator (SBNL)	Education & Culture (Libraries)	£30k	To support parents and community to access learning opportunities
2 x Learning Facilitators + part-time tutors (The Blue & Nunhead Libraries)	Education and Culture (Libraries)	£90k	To co-ordinate and provide adult learning sessions, basic skills and IT in libraries and outreach

- The costs do not include the budgets for the operational activities that are linked to some of these posts.
- The posts listed above complement or enhance borough-wide mainstream service delivery, or target neighbourhoods falling outside the existing area-based special programmes such as New Deal for Communities and Single Regeneration Budget.

- Other NRF funded posts are based with Metropolitan Police, Southwark Primary Care Trust, and a range of voluntary sector organisations.
- 2003/4 is the third year of a three-year NRF spending programme. This package of posts may change for 2004/5 as a result of new programmes currently being commissioned.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR TONY RITCHIE

I would like to thank the Leader for his detailed reply. I wonder if the Leader can help me on a couple of areas quickly. First of all is he in a position to tell me what percentage of the figures he has given me tonight is the total NRF money available to Southwark and is he in a position to give me an indication as to what the breakdown for salaried Managers on the NRF will be and the PCT and voluntary sector post for 2004/2005 and if not when will he be in a position to give us that information?

RESPONSE

As a rough calculation this look like about an eighth, I think, but I will get back to you on that and I am afraid I will have to get back to you on the second one.

10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN FLANNERY

Does the Leader think this Council deserves to have its Corporate Performance Assessment upgraded from 'Fair' to 'Good'?

RESPONSE

The Council has a strong case for applying for a corporate re-assessment in 2004, based on its improved capacity to lead and manage its business as a whole.

The Council has achieved a significant amount in the last 18 months, both in terms of improvements to core services and improvements in infrastructure and corporate systems which support service delivery. The Council's achievement in improving core services was recognised in the 2003 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), which moved the authority to the 'Fair' category.

Southwark's overall service score in the 2003 CPA assessment might have been higher, but was affected by changes to the definition of some of the indicators in the environment block which have had a particular impact on urban authorities. Despite this, there is wide scale public recognition, highlighted by MORI, that Southwark is one of the few authorities that has not only improved street cleanliness, but also public satisfaction with the environment.

Southwark is proud to note that, other than in environment, all of the other services received a score of 3 in the 2003 CPA assessment, which is better than many authorities in the 'Good' category. For this reason and for the work that Southwark has undertaken in the last 18 months, Southwark deserves a corporate re-assessment.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN FLANNERY

I would like to thank the Leader for his answer. Does the Leader agree with me that the comments made by the Opposition in the aftermath of the announcement about the CPA and repeated this evening in the Council Chamber that we were only one point below fair last time, it wasn't that difficult to achieve the little achievement that the Council has made?

RESPONSE

Yes I do because if it was so easy for everybody to go up a grade this time we wouldn't have been one of a third of Councils who managed this particular jump. I think it does belie the very real change in the direction and leadership that has taken place since May 2002. This Council frankly was on a downward curb when we took over the Administration and the previous Administration had long since run out of steam, long since run out of vision and energy and I think that we have been able to renew that.

11. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID BRADBURY

Will the Executive Member state what steps the Council is taking to prevent the unauthorised use of council owned housing blocks to site illegal pirate radio transmitters, and whether these measures are adequate?

RESPONSE

Pirate radio stations do cause a range of problems when their transmitters are sited, without the permission of the Council, in high rise blocks of flats. Southwark Council and other landlords within Southwark, as well as most other London boroughs, experience this problem. The transmitters are normally sited in the highest position possible and therefore high rise residential blocks of flats or buildings on high ground are seen as an attractive option. The problems for residents and the Council arise from:

- Damage to entry points to the building.
- The use of the Councils electricity supplies which results in a disruption to services such as lifts and lighting.
- Threats of violence made to residents and staff when confronting the individuals involved.
- Interruptions to television and radio services.

The access to roof areas of residential blocks is restricted to authorised personnel. Water supply tanks, lift motor rooms and electrical services are located in the top of the blocks and these services require ready access to allow for servicing and maintenance of the equipment. Access is also required by the Fire Service in emergencies. Consequently the Council has worked with its contractors and the Fire Service to update security to minimise the risk of unauthorised entry whilst ensuring access is possible at all times. A range of special (non-standard) locking systems are now provided, which does reduce the risk of unauthorised entry without compromising the speed of access required in certain circumstances.

In the event of a pirate radio transmitter being sited in a Southwark block of flats a co-ordinated approach is adopted by the Neighbourhood office, the local metropolitan police and the Department of Trade and Industry (Radio Communications Agency branch) to remove the aerial and other equipment. The Department of Trade and Industry has the legal powers to enforce the control of unlicensed use of the "airways" by use of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949 (Amended by the Broadcasting Act 1990). The Council will use its powers under the tenancy agreement if the unauthorised entry can be attributed to one of its residents.

There have been a number of successful joint exercises carried out in recent years to eliminate pirate transmitters although often perpetrators

re-erect them after initial dismantling and more than one exercise is needed before they are finally moved on or prosecuted.

12. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY

Would the Executive Member please state whether the tender for works to the Canada Estate (contract awarded to CJ Sims, now in receivership) called for the issue of a performance bond in favour of the Council; whether such bond was issued; and if not, why not?

RESPONSE

The Canada Estate project consisted of substantial external refurbishment and redecoration works to five low-rise blocks, which were undertaken by the Housing Department. The contract was awarded to C J Sims Ltd in 1998.

Southwark Housing did not have a performance bond with C J Sims Ltd at the time of commencement of this particular contract.

The issuing of performance bonds was discretionary up to 2001 and took into consideration size of contract, nature of works and standing of contractor. CJ Sims was a well respected local contractor at the time who had completed numerous successful major works schemes. It should be noted that a performance bond on the C J Sims contract would have had marginal difference in outcome as only 10% of the liability of the full contract sum is covered.

Southwark Housing would have been unable to apply the performance bond at a later stage – had it been in place - because CJ Sims went in to receivership without prior knowledge.

As a result of Southwark changing to the contract type GC/Works/1 1998 for all major works projects in 2001, Clause 66 allows the contractor to deliver the performance bond on all schemes valued at £100,000 within 21 days of the acceptance of tender. This usually fits in with the contractor's set up period, so the contractor is not able to start on site without the bond being in place.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY

Sadly Mr Mayor this answer is riddled with unsatisfactory points but I confine myself to two in the question. Evidently a judgement was made by the Council not to require C J Sims to issue a performance bond although contract terms could have required it. Is there any documentation justifying that decision and was it standard practice at that time not to require the issue of a grant, in other words was this an exception and if so, why?

RESPONSE

Thank you Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Eckersley. I missed that part because it sounded like a herd of elephants walking through the Chamber and I didn't catch it all. I would ask you to appreciate that we are talking about the contract that was let some six years ago. Obviously I did come on to the Council in May of 1998 and I wasn't involved at all in the Canada Estate. I am happy to take on board your supplemental question to try and find the answers for you as I don't know them now, I'll happily get them and pass them on and if you could later on clarify exactly what it is you need because I did miss half of that question, I will do that for you.

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

What is the Council's record in dealing with reported anti-social behaviour cases and has the Council secured any full anti-social behaviour orders yet?

RESPONSE

So far this year over 100 cases have been referred by neighbourhood housing offices and the police to Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (SASBU).

The unit uses a range of interventions from warning letters to legal action. Eighty-one cases are currently with solicitors with twenty-two tenants subject to injunctions and thirty facing legal proceedings for possession following service of notices this year.

Twenty-four 'crack houses' have also been closed down.

The unit has obtained nine (9) full ASBOs, which is the 2nd highest level in London and includes the largest bulk application for ASBOs in the UK.

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

Is it the intention of the Executive to close Rodney Road Housing office?

RESPONSE

Consultation is currently being undertaken with all Housing tenant & resident representatives through area meetings to discuss the rationalisation of offices as we move into the new Housing Management areas in line with the Council's wider proposals for face to face services. It is the intention that the Walworth Area will by 2007 have a One-Stop Shop which will offer a high tech facility in the best possible location to serve the whole of the Walworth Area for its housing face to face requirements and face to face provision for a range of other services. The purpose of the current consultation is also to decide the interim arrangements and through the Area meetings residents will be able to give their views on the location of the interim main office and any sub-offices. Whichever choices are made will be the subject of review in the next few years as the benefits of the Customer Service Centre and other forms of provision for customers come on-stream.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY

I would like to thank the Executive Member for her answer and I would like to ask if she would agree with me that as the area meetings are not at present part of the formally constituted housing consultation structure that the existing housing neighbourhood forums would be a more appropriate forum for the discussion about the face to face services?

RESPONSE

Thank you Councillor Colley for your question. First of all I answer that I do not agree with you, we are being criticised repeatedly by your party for not consulting. When we choose additional options of consultation, it seems that is not right either. We are not ruling out consultation with forums or anything, we are using area meetings and other forms of consultation. It is what you have been asking for all along, I thought that you would be happy.

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

Since the abolition last year of the house renovation grants, what has Southwark Council done to let vulnerable homeowners, particularly the elderly know about any new arrangements for accessing funds to help improve their homes?

RESPONSE

Since the ending of renovation grants the Council has taken a number of steps to make sure that residents are aware of the new forms of assistance agreed by the Executive last July.

Statutory Notices explaining the adoption of the new policy were placed in both the South London Press and Southwark News. These notices gave a brief explanation of the policy as well as full contact details. Members of the public were advised that a full copy of the policy was available for inspection at the Private Housing Renewal Unit in Bournemouth Road.

The Council has also produced a detailed summary of the policy as a leaflet. To ensure that this leaflet was easily understandable the Council referred the text to the Plain English Campaign and after consultation achieved a Crystal Mark for the clarity of the wording. This leaflet is made available to members of the public on request.

The policy was also discussed with the Management Committee of the Home Improvement Agency. The Committee includes representatives from pensioner groups across the borough.

Further promotion of the policy will take place following the consideration of the budget and resources and Capital Strategy in February 2004.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ALFRED BANYA

I would like to thank the Executive Member for her reply. The reason I ask this question is because a number of my constituents are actually having a lot of trouble getting information about the new scheme to support them in terms of private housing renewal. Under the previous scheme information about help was given through various avenues including the Town Hall and through voluntary sector organisations such as Help the Aged, but with this new schemes such information is not widely available. Can I ask why your information on the new policy is only available through private housing renewal and not through other channels?

RESPONSE

Thank you very much Councillor Banya for your question and there are various issues that I do hear about. What I would say to you, which I am sure that you already know, is that this was actually a government requirement for us to change the policy last year. Obviously we have done some distribution of leaflets and things and people are always welcome to ask for something and if there is a problem with them receiving this then tell me and I can deal with it. What I would say to you is that once the

budget has been agreed we know exactly what capital is available for the Housing Renewal Unit then there will be a much more concerted effort to distribute leaflets wisely in the area to let people know what is available and I have taken on board certainly your suggestion that we use places like Age Concern which many people may make their first approach.

16. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR BILLY KAYADA

How many lifts on the Heygate estate have been reported as out of order in the last 6 months?

RESPONSE

Our records show that of the 18 lifts on the Heygate Estate 12 had fewer than 1 recorded incident every fortnight meaning that call outs were mostly concentrated around 6 lifts.

This number of recorded calls is consistent with our experience on other comparable estates.

It is worth noting too that of these recorded faults on the Heygate, in approximately 15% of cases lifts were found to be working on arrival by our inspectors.

A large proportion of the calls relate to vandalism and doors being obstructed. It is estimated that of all recorded incidents, around 50% have been attributed to vandalism. It is expected that the new community wardens will help to alleviate this issue.

In addition, there was a power failure on the 28th August 2003 which caused all the lifts to go out of service; following the power being restored a number of the lifts had to be manually reset by the Lift Inspector.

The lift contractor Independent Lift Services carries out regular maintenance on each lift each month.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BILLY KAYADA

Thank you Councillor Bassom for the reply. In paragraph 4 you referred to vandalism as being an issue on the Heygate. Can you explain what steps are being taken to engage residents to address the problems of vandalism?

RESPONSE

Thank you very much for your question and for your supplementary. I am only too aware that across the borough we have a problem where a number of lifts are out of action as a direct result of vandalism. Obviously it is not always with a lot of other qualms to identify the perpetrators of that vandalism, but obviously where we can and do we will take action particularly if they happens to be a council tenant. I am not for one moment suggesting that it is council tenants that are causing the problem on the Heygate. Just as an example, I know recently that there were lifts out of action there and four of them had been so severely vandalised the doors had been repeatedly kicked. One door had actually been wedged open with wood and it was suggested that maybe this happened when people are moving because they do not want to keep calling the lift when they are going up and down, they are actually wedging the doors open. It

is obviously irresponsible and selfish because it means that although that person could use it then no one else can for the rest of the day or until we can repair it. What I will do is actually at some point is see if we can get a letter out to people across the borough because this is not just a Heygate issue but across the borough, I understand that if anyone is aware of who is causing the damage, they can let us know and we will try and take action against them.

17. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCROFT

What urgent steps is the Executive Member planning to take to address the vermin problem on the Heygate estate, which according to local tenants, has worsened in recent months?

RESPONSE

We have a measured term pest control contract in place that includes both block treatment (as a proactive approach to deal with infestations on blocks of flats that have historically had infestations) and individual treatment (a responsive service to deal with infestations that have been reported in areas that are normally not covered by the block treatment programme).

All blocks of flats on Heygate Estate are within a block treatment programme and therefore each dwelling receives a visit by our pest control contractor at least once every three months, for inspection. If during such a visit an infestation is found then treatment will start until the infestation is brought under control.

We also have a provision in the contract where all common areas are inspected once every six months. If an infestation is found during such inspection visits, then treatment will start and continue until the infestation is brought under control.

In addition to these planned visits, the Neighbourhood Office will liaise with our contractor to arrange an inspection visit if any tenant reports a pest problem in the interim period. If an infestation is found then that visit would be used as the first treatment visit.

Our records do not indicate that pest infestation has worsened in recent months on Heygate Estate. Our pest contractor and Rodney Road Neighbourhood Office have worked together to identify and carry out proofing works to restrict vermin infestations in the past year and the level of vermin infestation overall has, if anything, reduced because of this.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCROFT

I thank the Executive Member for her answer. I'll just follow up with the supplementary anecdotal evidence which is being fed back to the Labour Councillors from tenants make it clear that the infestation problem on the Heygate has actually got worse. My question actually refers to urgent steps. Can Councillor Bassom outline additional measures which the Council will employ to resolve this problem?

RESPONSE

Without being flippant in the long term demolition. There has always been a problem on the Heygate with pest control and I don't relish for anyone who happens to live there when there is a pest control problem. As I have already said in my answer we are doing block treatment on a routine

basis, we are also offering individual treatments on a responsive basis where tenants are telling us their additional problems and our records are showing or indicating that the infestation hasn't worsened. Officers keep records of the number of calls that come in, the number of complaints. Board Members, I am sure, are told as well if there are problems. I don't think is getting any worse, it's bad but obviously we are trying to get on top of it.

18. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER

What provision has been made as part of the future Elephant and Castle masterplan for residents facilities – such as tenants halls – if the Heygate estate is demolished?

RESPONSE

Throughout the consultation on the new plan residents have identified the need for new leisure and community facilities including: Swimming Pool, Leisure Centre, Cinema, Local community facilities, Arts Venues, Children/Young people's facilities, Museum, Theatre, Library provision.

There is provision in the plan for these facilities to be available to all residents in the area irrespective of tenure. In addition the plan contains a proposal for a new secondary school that would make facilities available to the wider community throughout the year outside core school hours.

No existing facilities will be lost within current Council housing areas other than those on the Heygate Estate. Of these, the Church will be reprovided through a 'Rule 5 Reinstatement', and the shops will be replaced by the much more extensive local facilities set out in the plan.

The new homes to be provided for Heygate households on surrounding sites will be within mixed tenure developments. Tenants will be involved in agreeing the procurement route for these homes and therefore a number of options will be available. One of these is the creation of a new organisation, possibly in the form of a subsidiary housing association, which would provide shared facilities for residents.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER

I would like to thank the Member for her reply. Will Councillor Bowman make a commitment this evening for a dedicated hall for all council tenants to meet in and will it be part of an estate's tenants and residents association and be included in the Elephant and Castle masterplan?

RESPONSE

I thank the Councillor for his supplemental question. Yes absolutely, I think the question, the actual answer on paper makes plain of course there is a commitment to make sure that there are suitable community facilities available for tenants and residents of the new housing that will replace both the Heygate and all new housing which will be built in addition as part of the masterplan scheme.

19. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES

Any demolition of the Heygate Estate will have an effect on the activities of the Heygate Tenants & Residents Association. What discussions has the Executive Member had with the Heygate TRA regarding the logistics of their association meetings and activities during the regeneration process, so that the TRA can effectively continue its work?

RESPONSE

The Heygate TRA is and will remain a hugely important partner in the regeneration process, representing both tenant and leaseholder views and directly influencing and participating in the development of the regeneration plans. The TRA will be given full opportunity to continue its work throughout the redevelopment process.

The first phase of estate demolition is approximately 2 years distant so the current working arrangements will not be adversely affected in this period. Thereafter the large estate hall will be scheduled for demolition, (although subject to decisions regarding the boiler house with which it shares a building) and it may be necessary to relocate larger tenant meetings to other premises.

This would have to be subject to agreement with the Heygate TRA but the broad range of public meeting facilities at the Elephant (e.g. the churches, the schools, the shopping centre, the university and college, commercial and council buildings and halls available to let) has meant that to date it has been relatively straightforward for the many meetings necessitated by the regeneration plans to be successfully accommodated.

The small meeting hall in Deacon Way, which is the base for the fortnightly Heygate project team meetings, will remain available under the plans until the last phase of redevelopment. This should mean these working arrangements will remain unaffected.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES

Can I thank the Executive Member for her response to my question. She mentions in her response that the Heygate TRA will be entitled to use other premises and that they will be made available to them cheaply?

RESPONSE

Yes.

20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION & YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE

Could the Executive Member tell us how much longer the people of Elephant and Castle area are expected to wait before they see community wardens on their streets?

RESPONSE

The recruitment, selection and security clearance of over forty wardens for existing and new Community wardens schemes is a priority for the Community Warden Service.

With regard to the Elephant and Castle a scheme manager has been appointed and the recruitment of wardens has commenced. We are currently reviewing the accommodation available in the shopping centre and putting in place the management systems for the scheme. The aim is to have the Elephant and Castle warden scheme live on the streets by March 2004.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE

I would like to thank the Executive Member for his reply and for his commitment to street wardens for the Elephant and Castle in March. However does he share with me his disappointment at the time lag between this scheme being first proposed and eventually being implemented?

RESPONSE

No.

21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION & YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR SARAH WELFARE

Can the Executive Member detail what meetings he has had in the 6 month period from June to December 2003 to improve safety in the Elephant & Castle underpasses?

RESPONSE

I have been to several meetings over the last year focussed on improving safety in the subways and also at street level, including meetings with officers about warden coverage, the London College of Printing and the police consultative group in the area. I am pleased to report a number of initiatives underway. I will continue to be actively involved to ensure that improvements in community safety continue in the Elephant and Castle area.

Lighting

The responsibility for managing and maintaining the subway lights rests with Transport for London (TfL).

The urgent need for new lighting in the subways has been raised with Transport for London. These discussions have taken place as part of the Elephant Links proposals for new street and tree lighting schemes (E-Light Project).

TfL have no budget or programming allowance in their current programme to take forward any proposals for upgrade / improvements of subway lighting. However, they have agreed to conduct an analysis into the costs of replacing lights in the subway compared to the continual repair / refit costs of potentially faulty / unsafe / ineffective subway lights.

We are still awaiting this total cost of upgrade / replacement subway lights from TfL. Once Elephant Links have this information a lighting design for the E-Light project can be produced and potentially funding from the E-Lights project could be used to fund new subway lighting. I have written to TfL to remind them we are still awaiting these cost indications and that the need for lighting is a very pressing one.

Community Wardens

The Elephant and Castle Community Wardens will be 'street live' in a couple of months. One of their roles will be to improve and care for the environment through identifying, reporting and enforcing enviro-crime issues, as well as providing reassuring presence in the area.

The wardens will be highlighting the fact that the Elephant & Castle and subways are heavily CCTV'ed as part of their reassurance role.

(see question 20 for more detail)

Rough Sleepers

There is a problem with rough sleepers in the area and the police, street population outreach team (SPOT) along with the street action team are aware of this issue.

There has been significant work around London Bridge, which has brought together all the relevant agencies, and is successfully tackling this problem. This work will be extended to the Elephant and Castle area and the wardens will have a significant role to play in this.

London College of Printing

I have been working with the student union at the London College of Printing to reassure students of the measures so far being taken to ensure their safety when travelling to and from college.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR SARAH WELFAR

I would like to thank the Executive Member for his reply. However I would like him to actually answer my question concerning the meetings he has attended in the last six months rather than this list of initiatives, some of which sounds promising but some of which have clearly got a bit stuck such as street lighting.

RESPONSE

The second paragraph outlines the meetings I have attended in respect of this issue.

22. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION & YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD

Can the Executive Member please explain why the Government for London office is seriously considering closing the Southwark Community Empowerment Network, withdrawing the remaining Community Empowerment Fund from Southwark and investing it in Community Empowerment Networks in other parts of London?

RESPONSE

As part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, the ODPM launched the concept of Community Empowerment Networks (CEN) in each of the 88 neighbourhood renewal areas. CEN's are envisaged as networks that (quoting from the NRU website) 'should bring together the full range of community and voluntary sector groups in an area, especially those from deprived neighbourhoods and the most marginalized groups (e.g. black and ethnic minority, youth)'.

Further guidance on CEN's states that involving community and voluntary sector organisations as well as community members and residents in a single overarching Network is a complex process. To support that process the ODPM set up the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF), and identified an accountable body in each area to kick-start the process of setting up and running a network. The expectation was that the process would start with outreach work to invite the views of all the community organisations in the borough about what and how a network should go forward, to set up some formal structure, and then move on to undertaking surveys, identifying community members for LSPs and other bodies, and providing a accountability structure for them back to the community.

The Accountable Body for setting up the Southwark CEN and managing the CEF is Southwark Action for Voluntary Organisations (SAVO), because of its umbrella role. SAVO is responsible to the Government Office for London. Neither the Southwark Alliance nor Southwark Council has any formal role in government guidance in the development and management of a CEN. A CEN is expected to develop a partnership protocol by March 2004 with its LSP and participating partner bodies.

In 2001/2, initial steps were taken to set up Southwark SCEN. With such a complex range of existing community organisations, umbrella structures and residents groups, the creation of a consensus about what SCEN is, and how it could best reflect all the different interests is testing. A co-ordinating/executive emerged and submitted a delivery plan for the CEF, which was approved. There are a myriad of views within the community as to why, by August 2003, the initial ambitions set out in that plan have not been realised. One key issue has been how far SCEN would become an 'independent legal entity' operating separately from a host Accountable Body or how far it would be a Network of existing structures and organisations similar to other partnership structures in the borough and supported through existing infrastructure. A second challenge has been how far SCEN should be a network of existing voluntary and community organisations, incorporating new ones as and when they emerge

organically, or whether a main role for SCEN itself should be to set up and run new structures at area and neighbourhood level, particularly for residents.

As the Council has no direct locus in SCEN, the Council's understanding of the matters regarding Southwark SCEN at this time are therefore as a result of Southwark Alliance being kept advised by the Government Office for London. Following a number of discussions between CEN members, SAVO as the Accountable Body and GoL, the Government Office for London decided that the tensions within the current arrangements were significant, that the roles and accountabilities were not clear, and that the ambitions in the CEN development plan were not being realised. This was not about apportioning blame but recognising that the task had been very challenging. This is the case not only in Southwark but in other parts of the country as well.

As a result, GoL advised that they would not release further support through the CEF and that an intervention/troubleshooting Neighbourhood Renewal Advisor would be appointed. Two Advisors have now been appointed. They are expected to report to GoL by the end of February on whether a Southwark SCEN is a viable proposition, and if so how best to move forward in a way that maintains the concept of an all-embracing Network across the voluntary and community sectors. If the prognosis is positive, it may then take some further months to reframe structures and processes to enable a network to be fully effective. Should the prognosis not be positive, then GoL will determine whether to redirect the CEF elsewhere.

GoL have advised Southwark Alliance that pending the Advisors' report, and final decisions on future CEF, it would be inappropriate for Southwark Alliance to make formal agreements with SCEN on any matters. If matters are resolved positively, then Southwark Alliance will be seeking to develop the joint protocol with SCEN along the lines of government guidance.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD

Thank you Executive Member for Community Safety and Social Inclusion for this extremely complex response. I think it actually demonstrates very well some of the problems associated with participation by the community in these kinds of structures. It was quite difficult to work out in the short time we had before this meeting. We know that some boroughs have been able to manage this process very well. How are community groups suppose to understand what process is taking place and how they can be involved in it as envisaged by the government and what assurances can you give that this community and empowerment fund will be available for the communities in Southwark as soon as possible?

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Councillor Ward for her supplementary. I think it is worth pointing out to her that the Government Office for London have actually intervened in the Southwark Community and Empowerment Network and are actually carrying out a review as we speak and the decision as to whether it continues or how it continues is actually going to

be made by the Minister for London as it is not a decision for the Council.

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

How many nursery day care places are at risk of closure due to the Executive's proposals to reduce the funding by £800,000?

RESPONSE

The Executive continues to recognise the risk involved in implementing the Best Value process and will continue to guide officers with the aim of ensuring there is no loss of nursery places in Southwark on financial grounds.

The Best Value Review set a saving target of £3.5 million over a five-year period to be achieved by efficiency savings, the rebuilding of new facilities and maintaining or expanding the number of childcare places.

The 2003/04 saving target was £618,000, 2004/5 target is £800,000 and the 2005/6 target is £500,000. The Executive were aware that they had agreed a high risk strategy, therefore directed the officers to provide three monitoring reports in the first year of implementation. Two reports have already been received by the Executive.

The first years saving target of £618,000 was achieved by efficiency savings by reducing the early years management and by increasing the weekly cost of childcare provided by the early years centres from £100 to £135 per week.

The second years saving target of £800,000 is to be reached by a combination of further efficiency savings in the maintained sector, a price increase of £135 to £150 per week for under 2's places in Early Years Centres and by a 50% reduction in the community grants programme.

At the start of April 2003, as part of the Best Value process a consultant was commissioned to work with the community nurseries and pre school groups to develop business plans to move towards them becoming "social businesses". The efficiency savings were first directed at the maintained sector on the understanding that the Council was better positioned to react to the changes in Government policy and maximise income from the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC). The community sector were advised of the approach recommended in the Best Value Review but were given a year to work with the Council to review their pricing policies and develop their business planning proposals.

It has become clear as a result of the monitoring reports requested by the Executive that some of the community nurseries and pre school groups are not ready to accept the full 50% grant reductions and require more time to capacity build their organisations. The trend that has been identified is that community nurseries with a large intake of children are more able to respond to the move towards a business approach.

From January 2004, officers are undergoing a process where they are meeting with each of the community groups to go through their business

plans and to assess the progress they have made towards implementing the changes proposed in the Best Value plan.

In February 2004, the Executive will receive a report of the level of grant aid recommended by officers and the expectations are that the grant reduction levels will vary according to the progress made by each community groups.

The Executive recognises the value of community nurseries and pre school groups in the delivery of pre school education and providing childcare that enables Southwark's families to attend work. A third monitoring report will be received by the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2004, which will allow Members to continue to monitor the implementation of the Best Value proposals.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH

Can I thank the Executive Member for his response. I am delighted to hear that no places are at risk. Could he assure us though that he will ensure that tight financial control will be imposed in this area so that some of the criticisms levelled by the Audit Commission in respect of the Early Years After School Service won't be repeated in this service as well?

RESPONSE

I should point out that the Early Years After School Service was highly praised in the report and it is a service we can all be proud of and it is a service that is showing very positive prospects for improvement and we hope it will be 3-star service in the future. Perhaps I could just say generally on the question that Councillors who saw an article in Monday's Evening Standard will realise that the charges that are being made in this borough need to be put in context, for example Camden charging £225.00 a week, Richmond £200.00 and Wandsworth £194.00 and there is one instance even our neighbouring borough of Lambeth has where somebody is paying £156.00 for three day a week. The average in London is £168.00 and as far as I am aware nobody here is charging more than £135.00 at the moment. What we are doing is the Head of Early Years is dealing in detail with each community nursery to work out a plan for each nursery and we are confident that there will be no closures and loss of places.

24. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR ALUN HAYES

Does he share the concern of parents whose children attend St. Mary's Pre-School in Nunhead that due to funding cuts to the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA), St. Mary's looks set to lose its special needs provision and PSLA development worker, which will have severe impacts on the excellent services St. Mary's Pre-school provides. Will he do all he can to ensure that any cuts do not effect vital services such as those provided by St. Mary's Pre-School in my ward. Finally, if cuts are absolutely necessary would he and his colleagues in the Executive consider plugging the gap with their recent £7,000 increases?

RESPONSE

Councillor Alun Hayes is referred to the Executive Members response to question 23 to provide him with the background to the implementation of the Best Value Review of Early Years.

St. Mary's Pre School is one of the organisations that is supported by the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) which is an umbrella organisation that is commissioned by the Council to provide support to 22 pre school groups.

The Council grant aids the PSLA to administer its grant aid programme using a formula process. St Mary's is unique as far as the arrangements that are currently in place; as they do not receive a grant from the Council they only receive support from the PSLA. St Mary's is recognised as a strong organisation that is supported by the church and is able to provide services without direct grant support.

As at January 2004, our records indicate that St Mary's have 20 three year olds and 5 four year olds. This makes them eligible for the Nursery Education Grant (NEG), which is a termly payment of £416 per child. This is the major resource that the Council provides to support pre school groups and their contribution to delivering the Foundation Curriculum.

Following the implementation of the Best Value Review of the management of grants and the recommended move to commissioning, it has been decided to move the PSLA arrangements from grant aid to a contract. The Director of Education and Culture is in the process of preparing a specification for the services he would like the PSLA to undertake in 2004/5.

The specification will take on board the recommended 50% reduction in budgets as per the Early Years Best Value Review and will change the way the PSLA provide services on behalf of the Council. This is subject to a consultation process.

The concern raised by St Mary's with regards to special needs provision will be considered as part of the specification and the current view is the PSLA will be asked to continue with this vital part of their services. Therefore subject to the PSLA response to this specification it is not

anticipated that St Mary's will lose their support for special needs provision.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ALUN HAYES

Thank you very much Councillor Skelly for your answer. I just need a little bit of clarification from your answer which concerns parents. Can you ensure that the vital services that are proposed to be cut are not and that finally you won't be plugging any gap in the funding with your and the Executive's increases?

RESPONSE

I think if I had to choose between spending it on this and a new striker for Everton I know which I would choose. However to be serious I am very committed together with the Early Years department we are really bending over backwards to make sure that we can continue in the new circumstances with a service which means no closures, I repeat no unnecessary loss of places, and I repeat what was said in this answer about this particular institution without losing those assets.

25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

How many streets (as a percentage) are now cleaned to a satisfactory standard?

RESPONSE

The number of streets cleaned to an acceptable standard has shown steady improvement since April 2003. The cleanliness of our streets is now above the London average according to external assessors.

Prior to the formation of Southwark Cleaning 72% of streets were of an acceptable standard. This has now risen to 86% by June 2003 and currently stands at 88%.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

I thank the Executive Member for his response. Does the Executive Member know whether this compares as well as with other London Boroughs?

RESPONSE

Yes I do know whether it compares well and the answer is it does compare well and we are now approaching being one of the better boroughs in London for street cleaning which I think is a good thing. I have to say that I think local people in Southwark are only concerned about one thing and that is their streets were a mess before and they are not anymore.

26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED

At the Walworth Community Council held on 7th January, local residents made plain their opposition to the disbanding of parks ranger services because of the problems with drug dealing and other criminal activity in Victory Park, Pelier Park and Burgess Park. Why is the Executive persisting with plans to disband the vital parks ranger service?

RESPONSE

The Park Ranger Service is being superseded by a Community Warden Service for parks precisely to deal better with the sort of anti-social behaviour described. The new Wardens will be recruited and trained to deal with anti-social behaviour and to use enforcement powers which the current Rangers do not have. They will also be fully police checked and will, therefore, have greater ability to work closely with the police sharing intelligence with them and working on joint initiatives when necessary.

In addition a new community outreach will be established and this in conjunction with the dedicated parks managers and the wardens will ensure we make strong links with the local community and work jointly with them to resolve their problem together.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED

Can I thank the Executive Member for the Environment and Transport for his answer and can I say that given that these proposals initially arose out of a recommendation of a number of surveys and dialogue with park users. I understand that further consultation exercises are being planned. Wouldn't it make better sense to wait until that consultation exercise was finished before these changes could be implemented?

RESPONSE

That would only make sense if we didn't think that this will achieve a step change in the way that people in Southwark perceive our parks. We made this decision to improve our park services by introducing a warden scheme precisely because the current ranger service was not dealing with the kind of issues which Councillor Mohamed so correctly identified. We are now going to a consultation period with Friends of Parks and others to work out how the new grounds maintenance contracts and the new system will operate.

27. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM

Will the Executive Member tell the Council if he is aware of the concerns the Friends of Burgess Park and local people about the possible delay in re-turfing the sports pitches in Burgess park with additional costs and what steps has he taken to address this?

RESPONSE

Concerns about the condition of the new pitches - in particular the number of stones appearing in the pitch - were raised last year. We are not aware of any further recent concerns. Officers have acted on any issue raised or identified and briefed members and Friends of Burgess Park on the remedial action required of contractors to rectify any faults identified before the Council accepts hand-over of the site from the Contractors on completion of the contracted works to the specified standard. There have been inaccurate rumours about cost over-runs of £500,000 which are completely false. The facts are that the budget for the project was £126,000 and the final out-turn will be £132,000.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM

Can I thank the Member for his answer. I was just saying that his last sentence seems to be a very bold statement considering that the project he referred to is not going to be handed over until October this year, but my question was specifically referring to the sport pitches on Burgess Park and that includes the tennis court which have been built, depending on pitches for re-turfing the astro-turf as well as the cricket pitches he referred to. I don't know if he could really expand a bit more on the amount of work that needs to be done. I know there is a delay on the astro-turf pitch because I think there are squatters on it at the moment. Can he expand a bit more if there is any likely delay and what the cost might be?

RESPONSE

I am very grateful to Councillor Graham for his supplementary question. I do not have any further details on financial information on me but I am happy to provide that and perhaps he can give me a nudge if I forget and I am very grateful for his interest in this project. I am sure he agrees with me that it's a worthwhile investment in Burgess Park and I hope that it will be completed very soon but broadly speaking to budget and that we will all be able to have perhaps a Mayor's charity football and tennis match as a way of opening the facility.

28. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

Would you please tell me why the noise patrol was not working over New Years Eve/New Years Day as 18 calls had been logged up until 3.38 am on 1st January 2004 and nothing could be done to rectify the noise because Southwark Council didn't have a service to offer?

RESPONSE

In the past when a noise service has been provided and enforcement action has been taken around New Years Eve the Courts have not supported Local Authorities who have taken legal proceedings in relation to New Year parties and have preferred to take the view that statutory noise nuisance goes beyond holding a party at this time of the year and such parties are a normal part of the culture within Southwark and the rest of the UK.

Therefore, there has been no provision for a noise team service on New Years Eve/New Years Day since the start of the current service in 1997.

I note that the Emergency Duty Officer (EDO) received 18 complaints and acknowledge that there was a break down in communicating to the EDO that the noise service was not operating. This matter has been investigated and procedures put in place to prevent a recurrence next year.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

I would like to thank the Executive Member for his answer to my question, but I would like to add, as anti-social behaviour is the top of your agenda why are we not running a 24-seven service throughout the borough.

RESPONSE

Mr Mayor, for the reasons set out in the first paragraph, the previous Administration 1997 took this decision and I have to say it is one that I agree with and I can't imagine it would be a sensible use of the Noise Team's time to go round party pooping on New Year's Eve. We hear enough from the Mayor of London, Labour's Mayor of London, about parties that do not really happen and the last thing we need is more politician raining on the people of Southwark's parade.

29. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR VICKY NAISH

Can the Executive Member guarantee that in future years the Council will keep the cemeteries and crematoriums open throughout the Christmas period?

RESPONSE

All the cemeteries and the crematoriums were open over the Christmas period.

There was never any plan to close the cemeteries or crematoriums. Some inaccurate rumours circulated but these never had any substance in terms of operational plans.

Cemeteries and Crematoriums will be kept open, as normal at this time and in all future years.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VICKY NAISH

I would like to thank the Executive Member for his answer but I can assure you that this was not rumours, this was actually facts. The officer in charge of the crematoriums and cemeteries did say that his staff were not working because I actually spoke to him myself. He said that he had problems getting staff to work over the Christmas period, but he assured me the week before Christmas that it was going to be covered, which was fine, but they had every plans of closing the crematoriums and the cemeteries over the Christmas period. Now I don't know if you are aware because of the hours of the opening of the crematoriums and cemeteries with the park rangers cutting down on their hours, that people, and there is a record and there is a file and a book in the office stating that people are getting locked in the cemetery and crematoriums within Southwark?

RESPONSE

Mr Mayor, I thank Councillor Naish for her supplementary but I can reassure her that these were rumours whatever the source of those rumours were I don't know, she obviously clearly thinks that she knows best but there were no plans to shut the crematoriums and the cemeteries over Christmas and we did not do so.

30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR CHARLIE SMITH

Can the Executive Member tell me what extra provision he has put in place so as to avoid the chaos that was caused last winter during the period when, after heavy snow fall, it took between two to three days for the main roads to be gritted and that the majority of the side roads and pavements were not gritted at all. Can he assure me and my constituents, many of whom were unable to leave their homes because of the treacherous conditions, that they will be able to walk the streets of East Dulwich safely if heavy snow and freezing conditions occur again this winter?

RESPONSE

Whilst there were some difficulties last year with the first fall of snow Southwark was one of the few boroughs which coped well with the second heavy snowfall last winter. The winter maintenance plan proved very effective and positive feedback was received from the public and press. Whilst there are inevitably difficulties in such conditions the statement that no main roads were gritted for two to three days is clearly incorrect. The five day weather forecast indicated severe weather conditions and pre-gritting was carried out before the snow arrived.

The Council publishes a winter maintenance policy (summary below) which governs the operational procedures, priority routes and areas which will be gritted. This plan has been reviewed, revised and re-published since last year, taking into account all lessons learnt. The Council then needs to adhere to this plan in order to avoid liability for accidents and subsequent insurance claims. Obviously resources are directed to primary routes in the first instance and then onto secondary routes.

All staff and external contractors are on standby and mobilised once snow is forecast.

Summary of Winter Maintenance Policy

The winter maintenance policy sets out procedures for dealing with severe weather and the gritting of roads and footways.

The main objective of the winter maintenance policy is to keep pre-defined and prioritised carriageways, footways and other specific locations free from ice and snow, as conditions and resources will allow.

There are three main aspects to treating the highway:

- (a) Precautionary salting to prevent ice and slippery conditions forming
- (b) Post salting to melt and disperse ice and snow already formed
- (c) Snow clearance.

Priority routes have been defined to take account of both strategic and local needs as follows.

Priority 1 Roads

These include principal roads and main bus routes through the borough.

Priority 2 Roads

Local distributor roads, secondary bus routes and steep hills and other hazardous locations.

Frost Susceptible Roads

Roads with a steep gradient, often north facing in the south of the borough.

Footways

Major pedestrian routes, town centres and routes to hospitals, medical centres, day centres, residential homes, footbridges and other specified critical areas.

Cycle Routes

Cycle routes will be pre-salted as part of the prioritised carriageway and footway route. Those not on priority routes will be treated when required depending on weather and local conditions.

Gritting is carried out whenever the weather conditions indicate falling temperatures and ice or snow is forecast.

Weather reports are received from the London Weather Centre four times daily with additional five day forecasts on Monday and Thursday. These are received via e-mail to operational staff and senior managers. A telephone service is also available.

Co-ordination of winter maintenance services is maintained with neighbouring authorities and Transport for London whereby details of proposed action is shared between authorities on a daily basis.

All contractors and in house operational staff are on standby should additional resources be required during severe weather.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CHARLIE SMITH

Can I ask the Executive Member if he agrees with me how timely my question is considering it started to snow at 5.30 pm this evening – I have got God on my side I hope – if nothing else.

My question is really tonight as the snow began to fall I took the opportunity just to go out from where I live and look at a couple of the grit bins that are on pavement – these plastic yellow bins. I opened two of them, small one was about half full of grit, the rest was full of rubbish. The next one by the Goodrich Primary School was a large one and was a quarter full with grit and then was totally full up with rubbish. Can I ask the Executive Member that tomorrow morning his first job would be to talk to officers to ensure that the grit bins all over this borough have sufficient grit and salt in them otherwise those people sent out to grit the pavement will be unable to do so?

RESPONSE

Yes I can agree that it is extra-ordinarily timely if Councillor Smith knew something we did not know I would have been grateful if he let us know because the MET office confidently told us to expect to start gritting at 7.30 p.m. and at 5.45 p.m. I had a phone call from Des Waters saying that the MET office had got it wrong but he was sorting it out and within 30 minutes of the snow falling all the teams were out. If it continues then we will divert staff in the normal way but yes he is absolutely right but one of the things we will have to do is to make sure that there is adequate supply of grit and salt and we do have an adequate supply of salt. We have got it stored in, it is not called a salt salad - there is a more technical term for it, but we have a very big supply of salt.

31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MICHELLE PEARCE

When will the much delayed Walworth Controlled Parking Zone finally be in place?

RESPONSE

I presume that the question refers to zone M2, rather than the existing zones E, J and M1.

I am not aware of any undue delay on the M2 project, though it should be noted that the introduction of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) is generally a lengthy process.

There were 5 CPZ's associated with the congestion charging scheme and funded by TfL. It was the wish of TfL that those nearest the Congestion Charging Scheme boundary be implemented first and that the others would follow on. The Grange and Bermondsey Zones were introduced in February.

To deal with objections to the scheme at an earlier stage it was decided that more extensive consultation should be undertaken in the M2 (East Walworth) area to engage as many people in the process as possible. Consultation was undertaken in May and June and a number of issues were raised by people which were worked through with them. A request was then made to Transport for London (TfL) in early October for the implementation money to introduce the scheme. TfL released the money in November.

Work started on Monday 12th January with the laying of carriageway markings. The works will take approximately 8 weeks to complete subject to weather conditions. An implementation date has provisionally been set for the end of March.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MICHELLE PEARCE

Can he tell me whether the new money from TfL will extend putting pay and display units in the parking zones around Darwin House for instance?

RESPONSE

I presume she means Darwin Court and I am very grateful that Councillor Pearce now takes such an interest in East Walworth Ward.

The answer to the question is no I do not know specifically whether that money will run to those machines in that particular area of East Walworth Ward but I am very happy to find out for her. What I can assure her is that the plans have been consulted upon thoroughly with local people and I believe that they are broadly contented with them.

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

Could the Executive Member publish a table detailing the cost in pounds by council tax band to the residents of Southwark of the mayoral precept levied by the London Mayor Ken Livingstone for each financial year since his election?

RESPONSE

Please see appendix A attached.

Cost in pounds by Council Tax Band to the Residents of Southwark from the GLA Precept

		No of dwellings		Tax band £		BAND		No of dwellings	
						Total paid to GLA £'000			
A-	0	68.32	0	4	83.82	0		22.7%	
A	9,079	81.99	744	9,208	100.59	926		22.7%	
B	28,548	95.65	2,731	27,918	117.35	3,276		22.7%	
C	24,290	109.32	2,655	24,210	134.12	3,247		22.7%	
D	13,523	122.98	1,663	13,757	150.88	2,076		22.7%	
E	8,389	150.31	1,261	8,540	184.41	1,575		22.7%	
F	3,442	177.64	611	3,596	217.94	784		22.7%	
G	2,745	204.97	563	2,826	251.47	711		22.7%	
H	324	245.96	80	326	301.76	98		22.7%	
			10,308			12,693			

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON

Does she agree with me that it is hypocritical of the Labour Party to be attacking the Administration in Southwark for Council Tax rises when they have just welcomed back as a member of their party someone who has presided over a 29% increase this last year?

RESPONSE

Of course I agree with him.

33. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK

How does the Executive Member rate performance in council tax collection so far this year?

RESPONSE

2002/3 outturn 92%
Contractual target for 2003/4 92.5%.

As at 16 January the collection rate was at 83.71% against a month end target of 84%, therefore against the collection profile the council is on target to achieve 92.5%. Liberata will be striving to achieve over and above the contractual target.

This year arrears collection has surpassed previous years with collection reaching the 3% cash collection target (net collectable debit as at year end) £1.9 million. Current cash collection stands at £2.1 million i.e. 3.25%, the aim is to collect £2.85 million by year end.

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

Has the processing of housing benefit claims improved this year?

RESPONSE

The processing time for Housing Benefits continues to improve. In terms of processing of new claims the outturn for 2002/3 was 50 days, quarter 2 statistics issued by the Department for Work & Pensions confirm that Southwark is now second in London (behind City of London) and in the national top quartile based on year to date figures. The average processing time for new claims is currently 32 days.

Processing of Changes of Circumstances, another key indicator, also continues to improve with Southwark remaining in the national top quartile. Quarter 2 figures confirm Southwark is third in London with 7 days, just behind Lewisham (6 days) and the City of London (4 days).

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

Can the Executive Member give the total costs of resourcing planning and licensing applications for the past 3 months as compared to the same 3 months a year ago.

RESPONSE

Planning

The table below shows the gross expenditure costs (income generated is not included) of planning applications for September to November for 2002-03 and 2003-04:

Year	Including costs for setting up the new Acolaid system	Excluding Costs for setting up the new Acolaid system
	£'000	£'000
2002-03	360	313
2003-04	387	376

Licensing

3rd quarter expenditure (income excluded) on resourcing licensing in 2002/3 was £96,593. The comparable expenditure for the same period in 2003/4 was £84,963.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY

I am just wondering if she envisages increased cost for licensing and in planning over the next year and if so has she factored that into her budgetary preparations?

RESPONSE

There are increased charges where we are allowed to and any increase in charges for whatever reason are in line with inflation unless there is a reason not to do that. If you need specific details I would be pleased to circulate them to you before the next Council.

36. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS

What allowance is being made within the council's revenue and capital budgets to ensure that none of the options currently being consulted on for the future of Galleywall School are effectively ruled out by the budget process, thus pre-empting the results of the consultation?

RESPONSE

Council Assembly will consider a report on the 18th February following recommendations from the Executive.

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

Question withdrawn.

38. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR KENNY MIZZI

How many “unaccompanied” children were presented to the London Borough of Southwark in the last two years (listed numerically and by country of origin/ethnic origin) and how many of these children were found foster homes with families of the same ethnic origin? Will the Executive Member also outline what initiatives the Council and other agencies take to try and ensure that the parents of such children are traced?

RESPONSE

Unaccompanied Minors Presenting

The influx of unaccompanied minors is historically a seasonal process. Through the summer months, June to September, the numbers presenting are relatively small, one or two per week. This increases from October through to January to between five and nine per week, this is dependant on the refugee council rota system and those that have specifically settled for a number of days, if not longer, in the Southwark area. Young people regularly present alone, stating that the agent they travelled with has left them in the borough and they have no supports in this country. This is similar across all London authorities.

The number of young people below the age of sixteen that have been provided with a service over the period 2002-2003 is eighty.

- External Foster Placements = 21 (ie Private & Voluntary placements)
- Internal Foster Placements = 59 (ie Southwark fostercarers, most of whom are in Southwark but some are out of Borough)

The ethnic Nationality - origin of those provided with a service over the period 2002-2003 is as follows;

Origin	Nationality/Ethnic	External	Internal	Total
	Angola	6	9	15
Albanian	Kosovan –	5	17	22
	Romania	2		2
	Somalia	2	1	3
	Eritrea	1	5	6
	Rwanda	1	1	2
	Ivory Coast	1	1	2
	Bangladesh	1		1
	Nigeria	1	5	6
	Zaire	1		1
	Ethiopia		8	8
	Turkey		2	2
	Afghanistan		1	1
	Sierra Leone		3	3
	China		2	2

Pakistan		1	1
Uganda		1	1
Vietnam		1	1
Serbia- Montenegro		1	1

Approximately 43% of the young people placed with internal foster carers are closely matched ethnically. We are unable to obtain information on the ethnicity of the external placements at this time. Language and religious persuasion is also a deciding factor when placing unaccompanied minors as communication and support is essential. Many of the young people provided with a service have a common language such as French, Spanish, Portuguese and English. This assists when seeking a placement as although it may not be possible to place within the same ethnic origin, it is sometimes possible to place with a carer who speaks the same language. Additionally, many churches have connections in the countries in which the young people have fled, this assists with support as the young people are able to socialise with persons often from their hometown.

Service users aged sixteen years and above have been placed mainly into semi-independent or independent units. These young people have not, until recently, been considered "looked after" in the Children Act 1989 sense of the term. They have however been assisted under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and are provided with accommodation and subsistence. The total number accepted and placed in semi – independence during the period 1st April 2002 to 5th December 2003 is two hundred and sixty three, breakdown as follows;

Nationality – Ethnic Origin	Numbers
Kosovan – Albanian	83
Sierra Leone	24
Eritrea	21
Angola	20
Uganda	16
Ethiopia	13
Somalia	12
Iraq	12
Former Yugoslavia	8
Vietnam	8
Rwanda	6
China	6
Nigeria	4
Liberia	4
Zaire	4
Afghanistan	3
Macedonia	3
Moldova	3
Ivory Coast	2
Serbia and	2

Montenegro	
Congo	1
Sudan	1
Pakistan	1
Togo	1
Cameroon	1
Romania	1
Zimbabwe	1
Unknown	1

As with those accepted into foster placement, it should be noted that despite the variety of ethnic origins, many of the young people assisted have common languages such as French, Portuguese, Spanish and English. The asylum service endeavour to place young people in units that have others of a similar language and ethnic origin. Genders are not mixed and units are monitored to ensure no abuse of the service users or the accommodation provided.

Initiatives

The Red Cross is currently the main agency used when attempting to trace parents of the young people we assist. This is a long drawn out process, often made more difficult due to some parents no longer being alive and others who have no wish to be found. It should be borne in mind that parents will have sent their children with an agent to this country to improve their chances of survival. The young people we assist are often advised by the agent who transports them and their parents not to give out any information regarding the whereabouts of their family (if any are still alive).

The asylum service has, however, assisted young people to re-unite with family members via networks within the service and perseverance with the young people. Some of the churches that the young people attend are in contact with family members in the young persons home country, via the church network. Although this is an area that is difficult to penetrate, work continues in an attempt to break down some of the barriers.

In addition, the various ethnic groups based in Southwark are, by their very nature, small communities that have contacts with similar ethnic groups in other parts of London. Working with these groups has been useful in finding relatives via the informal networks and contacts, which in turn has assisted the department to place young people with extended family members.

39. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR NORMA GIBBES

Could the Executive Member for Health and Social Care please explain why so many Black and Minority Ethnic Day Care Centres are currently under threat of closure and whether the implications of potentially leaving BME older people isolated have been thought through?

RESPONSE

The Department currently provides 14 day centres for older people, five directly managed by the Council and nine managed via agreements with the voluntary sector. Five of the voluntary sector centres provide for people from specific Black and Minority Ethnic communities. The services being provided at all 14 centres for older people are currently being reviewed as part of a wider review of day care for people with community care needs. Service users at all these centres are being assessed in relation to their needs and therefore their eligibility to receive services funded by Social Services.

The Assessment process is designed to take account of individual service-users' and carers' needs, and arrangements are being made to ensure that translation and interpretation requirements are met. Close liaison with all centres is being maintained so that the assessment process and the implications of the assessment is explained as fully as possible to those involved.

Direct consultation via focus groups is also taking place with service providers, service users and carers and other stakeholders to ensure that future services are designed with direct input from those most closely involved in services. If current funding levels cannot be met from Social Services because they do not meet the eligibility for resources, we will work with the provider assist them in any way we can to find alternative funding where possible.

The outcome of the review, consultation and the individual assessments will be incorporated into a report on the commissioning of future day services for older people, including those from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, which is scheduled for Executive decision in May 2004.

40. 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

Councillor Dixon Fyle asked me this question in November 2003. Since this time I have visited the following:

The Irish Pensioner's Christmas Party
The Pensioner's Party at Roben Suite, Guy's Hospital on Christmas Day.
People Care Christmas Day Party at Dulwich College.
Evelyn Coyle EMI Resite Unit/Day Centre Christmas Day Party.
Tower Bridge Care Centre
Southwark Park Nursing Home
Meeting with the Management Committee of Irish Pensioners
Yalding Day Centre

I have also visited a number of "front line" social services to meet staff and service users. As I have said previously I would welcome invites from voluntary organisations and will visit as many as I am able to do so.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE

At the last Health & Social Care Scrutiny meeting last week we discussed the modernisation of day care service again and the officer that was there finally admitted that there have been a number of elderly people who have not received the day care places they require and some people actually could not appeal against the refusal for their day care services. I want to ask you whether or not you actually know of the numbers of elderly people that made an appeal against refusal of their service?

RESPONSE

I do not know the exact numbers but I do know that there are appeals going on and certainly I have had some concerns around the information being gathered at the assessment and because of that I requested all the documentation that is used by all the assessors. I have also requested information on the background of the assessors because I believe that there are some very good ones out there but I think there are some who are of lesser understanding of the needs of vulnerable older people who do not always put their needs in answer to questions that have been asked of them and unless you get the right question you are not always going to get the right answer and certainly some of those older people need a lot more prodding than has been given. So no I do not know the exact amount of appeals but I am actually going through those with the relevant officer, and as I have said I have already asked for all

documentation so that I can look at exactly how the assessments are being carried out because I am not 110% happy and that is what I am addressing.