

APPENDIX 2

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY (ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 28th JANUARY 2004

URGENT QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY GROUP LEADERS

1. **QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD**

Does the Leader agree with me that it is important that during the period of a by-election campaign, communications from the Council are seen to be entirely neutral and that probity and independence should direct the provision of council services?

RESPONSE

Yes. Following the issue of formal notices calling the by-election a guidance note on publicity was issued to all staff. Departmental Communications Managers were fully briefed on all requirements and are able to advise on what may and may not be published in the period leading to the by-election.

The full text of the Guidance issued to staff can be found on Outlook at:

Public Folders/Key Corporate Information/Legal Information/Information and Publicity

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD

I would like to ask the Leader of the Council could he confirm that street cleaners in the East Walworth area are now doing treble shifts and also could he confirm that news leaflets announcing the new street wardens on the Aylesbury Estate are being circulated on the Congreve and Avery Estates and is this any coincidence because there is a by-election on.

RESPONSE

I have never heard of the Avery Estate. I'm afraid my level of leadership does not descend to micro-managements and I don't know the details about street cleaning or leaflet distribution in East Walworth. But I have to say that I think with great respect that Councillor Wingfield is the last person that I am going to take any advice from about the probity of using Council Tax payers' funds to pay party political propaganda. I would say Mr Mayor, since I did not get a chance to say it in the Tributes earlier; that accusations were made that Councillor Ambrose was

guilty of criminal activity in this Council Chamber. She was specifically named and I think it would be fitting this evening if the Labour Group had the grace and the guts, if they are so interested about probity in West Walworth, to get up and apologise and withdraw those totally unfounded smears.

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

To ask the Leader of the Council if the Majority Opposition Group were invited to participate in the site visit to Southwark by the Judges in relation to Southwark's nomination by the Local Government Chronicle as the Most Improved Council of the Year.

RESPONSE

Of course.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS

I would like to ask him what approaches were made to the majority officers and the group and do you agree that it is extremely disappointing that they did not attend, it is like a slap in the face to thousands of hard working Council employees who are trying to strive to improve this borough.

RESPONSE

I understand that members of each political group were asked to attend a meeting with the judges who came to inspect us yesterday. I am sorry that the Labour Group felt unable to take part on what was a very successful visit. I think it was a great shame that those members of staff who freely gave up their time and waited until 7.00 o'clock to talk to judges did not see the level of cooperation and enthusiasm from all Members and I can only guess that the Labour Group for some reason do not want to be associated with a successful Council for a change.