

<b>Item No.</b> 5.1	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 28.04.04	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Council Assembly
<b>Report title:</b>		Members Question Time - March 2004	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Chief Executive (Borough Solicitor & Secretary)	

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

In accordance with Council Assembly Procedure Rule 3.8 Members' Question Time shall not exceed 30 minutes. During this time, Members may not question any one Executive Member or Committee Chair for longer than fifteen minutes.

Members are limited to one question at each meeting.

Questions shall be taken in the following order; the Leader, the Deputy Leader, the Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development, the Executive Member for Communication & Performance Improvement, the Executive Member for Community Safety, Social Inclusion & Youth; the Executive Member for Education & Culture. the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, the Executive Member for Resources; the Executive Member for Health and Social Care and the Executive Member for Housing. The order of questions is rotated by the Borough Solicitor & Secretary at every meeting (CAPR 3.8 (9) & (10)).

Executive Members and Committee Chairs have discretion to refer a question to another Executive Member if this is appropriate.

Responses to Members' questions are contained within this report

The Mayor will ask the Member asking the question if they wish to ask one supplemental question to the Member to whom the first question was asked. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. Therefore, questions to the Leader or other Executive Members are not free ranging.

No question shall be asked on a matter concerning a Planning or Licensing application.

**(NOTE:** In accordance with Council Assembly Procedure Rule 3.8 (9) & (10) (Prioritisation and rotation by the political groups) the questions have been prioritised by the Chief Whips.

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

The Leader stated at the Executive meeting of 2nd March in answer to the Downtown Defence Campaign deputation that the Mayor of London had to been invited to conduct a site visit to familiarise himself with the Downtown regeneration scheme area issues. The Mayor's office are unable to locate any invitation or recall any verbal invitation being made. To ensure clarity in this situation, could the Leader please specify how and when the invitation was made for Ken Livingstone to visit Downtown and by whom it was made?

**RESPONSE**

The invitation to the Mayor was made by Councillor Jeffrey Hook as Chair of Rotherhithe Community Council. In a letter dated 10th of November 2003 Cllr Hook invited the Mayor to attend a Rotherhithe Community Council meeting in early 2004 to discuss his views in light of the impending development at Downtown. The Mayor declined the invitation. His office subsequently offered to send a representative instead. The Mayor's representative was invited by letter dated January 28th 2004 to attend two Community Council dates, one in February and one in March. We have no record of a further response from the Mayor's office.

**2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN O'BRIEN**

Could the Leader comment on the Majority Opposition Group's referral of the new tenancy agreement, which contains new Anti Social Behaviour clauses approved by Tenants' Council, to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister?

**RESPONSE**

The Council and tenant representatives have been working since 2002 to modernise the existing tenancy agreement. A Tenant Working Party held a number of meetings to draft the original proposals and these were submitted to Neighbourhood Forums and Tenant Council for consultation. This process resulted in a number of changes to reflect the different views that were expressed. In addition the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee of the Council undertook a scrutiny of the review and met on three occasions to provide comments and views on the conduct of the process. The Council also undertook a formal consultation with each of its secure tenants to seek individual comments before the final decision was made on the proposed changes. Finally representatives of Tenant Council voted by majority to recommend to the Executive agreement to the final draft proposals.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to review the decision of the Executive and that Committee decided by majority that it was satisfied with the process that had been followed. The Council has now served formal notice to individual tenants to confirm that the new agreement will take effect from Monday 5th April 2004.

The new agreement places particular emphasis on issues such as anti-social behaviour. The agreement now makes is very clear in detail that this Council will not tolerate any behaviour that disrupts the lives of other people and that action will be taken to tackle such behaviour.

I am very disappointed therefore that the Majority Opposition Group has chosen to employ delaying tactics with regard to this very important issue. The tenancy agreement has not been reviewed for ten years and residents have long called for tougher measures to deal with anti social behaviour.

**3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAM ROWE**

Would the Leader of the Council please set out for 2003/04 and 2004/05 best estimates of:

- a. The gross costs incurred by the Council in supporting the Southwark Alliance (SA) – including the costs of Officer and Executive Member time, and all other kinds of support (for example use of premises at less than market rent).
- b. The amount of any recoveries of the above costs from the Neighbourhood Renewal or other sources.
- c. The net cost to the Council of support provided to the Southwark Alliance (i.e. a-b).

**RESPONSE**

Because we are a major partner in Southwark Alliance and a key service deliver, most of what the Council does and therefore resources directly contributes to the priorities and workplan of the Alliance. The Council fulfils its own leadership responsibilities for promoting economic, social and environmental well-being through utilising the role of Southwark Alliance, and its associated sub-partnership structures e.g. Crime and Disorder Partnership, Health Improvement Partnership, Neighbourhood Management Partnership, Sure Start, etc. It is therefore not possible to separately cost out Member and Officer time in delivering partnership activity that forms the business of Southwark Alliance, since there is no hard boundary between Southwark Alliance business and Council business.

Attendance at Board meetings by Council personnel who are Board members is part of core business. For the themed partnerships linked to Southwark Alliance, the costs of partnership attendance plus servicing and communications are born by Southwark Council, in conjunction with the police and Primary Care Trust. For Southwark Alliance, the government has allowed an element of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) to cover some of the servicing and communications costs, in recognition of the initial costs of start-up. Additional government resources are not available for the increasing number of LSPs in non-neighbourhood renewal areas.

Within Southwark, an NRF budget of £439,686 is used to cover the following costs associated with the work of Southwark Alliance that are

incurred by Southwark Council as the body with the lead policy and servicing role for the LSP:

Partnership Manager and Assistant Partnership Manager	£93,843	Responsible for the organisation of Board meetings, agendas, minutes, and progress-chasing issues between meetings
0.5 Communications & 0.5 Finance Officer	£40,000	Manage the website, publicity and NRF financial system
SA and NRF operating costs including communications, learning events, data,	£212,000	Costs of meeting facilities, awaydays, conferences, publications, recharge by Council for postage, photocopying, telephones.
NRF Delivery and Commissioning – 2 posts	£93,843	To oversee the integration of strategic interventions across the themed and area partnerships, commission and monitor the NRF activities

In addition, the Council benefits from NRF in service areas through contributing significantly to the planning and delivery of interventions that address the quality of life targets at both borough-wide and neighbourhood level.

As with all partnerships, the Council makes some contributions in kind in recognition of the benefits that accrue through partnership working. This includes strategic policy support to enhance the alignment between Alliance and Council priorities, and the use of one office for the Partnership staff.

**4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER**

Has a mistake been made on every council tax demand notice sent out for 2004-2005 ?

**RESPONSE**

I am happy to confirm that Southwark's council tax rise for 2004/05 was 3.4%, the second lowest in London, and not 7.5% as mistakenly appeared on some bills.

**5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MARK PURSEY**

Would the Leader welcome the news that the Audit Commission has agreed to a CPA reassessment in June giving Southwark the opportunity to climb the rankings to 'good'?

**RESPONSE**

We welcome the news that the Audit Commission has agreed to undertake a Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Corporate re-assessment, which will take place in June.

We have demonstrated, through our recent CPA re-categorisation as a 'Fair' authority and through the very positive outcome of our recent IDeA peer review that we are improving services to local people and that we are a well led and well run authority.

The Audit Commission, in agreeing our corporate re-assessment, acknowledged the progress we have made, stating that "the evidence of significant service improvement coupled with the information provided on cross-cutting issues and the impact of these for local people justified approval of a corporate reassessment as an exceptional case".

A favourable outcome in the CPA corporate reassessment could lead to the Council achieving an overall 'Good' Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in December 2004, although this will also depend on the Council maintaining a good performance in delivering key services.

**6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN**

Can the Leader provide details of the attendance figures of all councillors on all the scrutiny committees within the Council, from May 2003 until 15th March 2004?

**RESPONSE**

As the member ought be aware, I am not responsible for scrutiny within this Council so I am in no position to respond to questions regarding attendance.

**7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR DR ABDUR RAHMAN OLAYIWOLA**

Could the Leader please comment on the present management situation at the Rockingham Community Centre?

**RESPONSE**

The Rockingham Community Centre accommodates a variety of activities aimed at improving the quality of life of residents on the Rockingham Estate.

The Centre premises are managed by the Rockingham Community Centre Management Committee. The Council is the freeholder. Service providers using the Centre make payments to the Management Committee in relation to their occupation. They are independent of the Management Committee, although the Centre's Constitution provides them with membership of the Centre.

Until September 2002 the Centre was supported financially by a Council grant from the Council Community Support Programme which is managed by the Social Inclusion Division of the Strategic Services Department. Prior to that date, relations amongst members of the Management Committee had broken down. Problems focussed over the role of the Chair, membership issues, failure to hold an AGM, failure to hold regular Management Committee meetings and a range of personal issues and conflicts involving individual members. Management Committee meetings which were held, invariably broke down in disarray and, on a number of occasions, the police were called to restore order and prevent breaches of the peace.

At about this time, the Centre Co-ordinator was suspended. He was subsequently summarily dismissed without consultation with the full Management Committee. Following his dismissal the former co-ordinator has taken out proceedings with an industrial tribunal against the Rockingham Community Centre Management Committee with a hearing date due in April. The Management Committee has called the Council as a witness. The case is being transferred to the Watford Regional Office.

Despite extensive efforts on the part of the Council to help the organisation bring some order to its affairs and warnings that grant aid would have to be suspended due to breaches of Conditions of Grant Aid, the organisation failed to respond adequately. Consequently in September 2002, grant payments were suspended.

The Management Committee was advised of a number of special conditions that would have to be met for further grant payments to be released. These were that the Management Committee should:

- facilitate a full review of the suspension and subsequent dismissal of the centre co-ordinator by the full Management Committee
- engage in mediation to help resolve the rift in the management committee
- review the Centre's constitution
- convene an annual general meeting.

Again, despite extensive support, the Management Committee failed to address these conditions. Funding for the remainder of 2002/3 was not released and, in January 2003, the Council's Executive resolved not to renew the grant in 2003/4.

In September of this year, the Council entered into a process of formal mediation with the Centre at the instigation of the Centre itself. A professional mediator was appointed and paid for by the Council. Unfortunately the process was abandoned unilaterally by the Chair of the Management Committee at the pre-mediation stage.

The Council remains committed to the provision of locally relevant services for residents on the estate and has earmarked grant resources for that purpose. The Council is also committed to the future management of those services by local people although in the short term they will have to be managed directly by the Council.

The Elephant Links Single Regeneration Programme has expressed a willingness to invest in the premises by undertaking urgent repairs to toilets in the Community Centre and the Nursery as well as more significant improvements to the layout of the Community Centre in order to improve its flexibility as a base for community activity. The repairs to the toilets were due to have been undertaken over the summer holidays. Unfortunately, as a result of threats to block the repairs, no works could be undertaken. Future improvement works are also currently on hold.

Currently, the services are at risk due to the loss of Council funding and uncertainty over the future of the Centre. The Council has therefore taken the decision to seek possession of the Centre premises, of which it is the freeholder, and has served a Notice to Quit on the Management Committee. Associated possession proceedings have now also been instigated. These proceedings have the full backing of Southwark Housing. There is no intention to use these actions to evict current users providing services out of the Centre.

Once the premises are back under Council management it is the intention to pursue the physical repairs and improvements planned by Elephant Links and to review services and occupation of the Centre premises to ensure that these are consistent with the needs of the area. The review will be in line both with a review of community services across the Borough that is to be conducted by the Social Inclusion Division and the priorities of the Elephant Links programme.

A Council manager will be installed on a temporary basis to

- run the Centre
- support the review of services,
- support improvement works to the Centre, and
- work towards returning management to the local community.

Unfortunately, these developments cannot commence until the premises are back under the Council's control. The co-operation of the Rockingham Community Centre Management Committee in ceding the premises voluntarily would greatly speed up implementation of these plans and would provide the estate and organisations delivering services out of the Centre with the necessary security about the future.

**8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN HUNT**

Is the Leader aware that plans for Queen's Road station and for development on adjoining sites impact severely on small, mainly ethnic, businesses and can he assure them that they will be treated with moral fairness as well as within the law, and wherever possible will be offered an opportunity to return when developments are finished?

**RESPONSE**

There are two commercial tenants in Council owned premises at this location. The legal process to determine one of the leases in September of this year has already commenced and negotiations with the second are

about to be opened. The Council will treat with tenants fairly in accordance with statute and the terms of the relevant lease agreement.

No definitive plans have yet been finalised for the site and the rehousing of the existing tenants within any new building will very much depend on the nature of the redevelopment and the parties involved. Where practical the Council will seek to relocate the tenants or forward the details to the new owner to offer terms.

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

Cllr. Pidgeon states in the latest Aylesbury New Deal for Communities (NDC) newsletter (Feb 2004) that: "it [the NDC] helps us to speed up the introduction of innovative new schemes that make a real impact to residents, such as neighbourhood wardens." While this backing for the Government's scheme is welcome, can the Deputy Leader explain the Executive's view on NDC schemes is and how that policy would affect the Aylesbury NDC scheme in particular?

**RESPONSE**

The Executive welcomes the opportunity the NDC programme provides to give residents greater control over decisions affecting their lives and formulating solutions that will improve the quality of services that they receive. To this end, we are committing time and other resources to ensure the Aylesbury NDC is a success and we will take note of any innovative solutions that that we may be able to replicate elsewhere in the borough.

**10. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK**

Considering the bold and welcome promise to provide a better deal for leaseholders can the Executive Member indicate any recent achievements in reaching this goal?

**RESPONSE**

Yes, Indeed. A whole raft of improvements in the services provided to leaseholders have been implemented in the past year or so. These changes are ongoing and further improvements are already in the pipeline.

The Leasehold Management Unit (LMU) is now headed by an experienced manager at divisional manager level who is a recognised expert in the field of leasehold management. With the Head of Housing Management he is in the process of reorganising the unit. The established staffing complement has already been increased to reflect the expanded Leasehold portfolio and recruitment to that establishment is attracting capable practitioners from other Boroughs.

Expanded office locations and substantial investment in back up resources such as IT and a new filing & monitoring system are in place.



In association with the Leaseholder Council several new/improved services have been agreed – new services that are needed by the rapidly increasing leaseholder portfolio. The Leaseholder Council has received reports on: buy-backs; service charge loans; the pre-assignment service and the postponement service. The buy back policy has been agreed by Executive, which doubled the anticipated funding to £500,000 for 2004/5. A report to the Executive on service charge loans is planned for May this year.

Over the next few months further new policies to assist leaseholders will come into place – these include: voluntary charges, waiving of service charges in cases of hardship and the purchase of the freehold interest of houses where all the constituent flats are sold. From a wider perspective, this Administration is showing its support for the aspirations of secure tenants to become owner-occupiers, by charging officers to bring forward a Cash Incentive Scheme – a scheme to give grants to secure tenants to buy property in the private sector thus releasing much needed council housing for waiting list, transfer list and homeless families.

As evidenced by the considerable investment made to date on leaseholder services and policies agreed and planned, this Administration is committed to delivering a quality service to the Council's leaseholders.

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

What do you envisage the relationship to be between Community Councils and Neighbourhood Renewal programmes and what is the formal basis whereby one can work with the other rather than the ad hoc and seemingly confused relationship we have at present?

**RESPONSE**

There are naturally several evolving relationships arising from the creation of Community Councils from the first pre-launch agreements with the PCT and Metropolitan Police to the current extension of Community Wardens and Street Leaders.

As part of the scrutiny review of Community Councils, the INLOGOV report specifically notes the absence of a national framework for area arrangements and poses the question of strategic fit, in particular in relation to the Local Strategic Partnership and Neighbourhood Renewal. This is to be subject to wider Member debate presently being arranged with INLOGOV and to be reported back to Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Southwark Alliance development protocol, whilst noting broadly similar objectives for improvements to life quality and community engagement, also highlights the lack of formal LSP recognition mechanisms of non-partner forums, including Community Councils. Arrangements are being pursued to discuss, initially with the Chairs of Community Councils, how they wish to feed into the development and review of Neighbourhood Delivery Plans.

The work of Community Councils is not however isolated from the aims of Neighbourhood Renewal. There are areas of shared and integrated resources, for example the support from the Community Involvement and Development Unit in managing NRF projects in Priority Neighbourhoods and promoting and facilitating community engagement in Community Councils.

Current and proposed devolved capital funding to Community Councils for the *Cleaner, Greener, Safer* programme is based to a large extent on the deprivation evidenced in Priority Neighbourhoods. Renewal Managers attend many Community Council meetings to present and update on the work of Neighbourhood Renewal. The level of integration of these programmes in both Peckham Community Council and Nunhead & Peckham Rye Community Council perhaps provides a sound model for other areas.

The recent I&DeA Peer Review also noted the evolution of the LSP as a key issue, in particular their role in connection with the Community Strategy, with evident links to Neighbourhood Renewal. Further work around the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) will need to address this.

In the first year of Community Councils considerable effort has gone into developing relationships with communities but I am not complacent about the need for closer links and practicable working arrangements within and outside the Council to deliver on programmes such as Neighbourhood Renewal. The three threads of Member debate on strategic fit, following up on the Southwark Alliance protocol and efforts around CPA should give a clearer understanding of the desired relationships.

**12. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR NEIL WATSON**

Could the Executive Member give details of any new or proposed developments in Burgess Park?

**RESPONSE**

There are a number of very positive developments either in train or about to be initiated in Burgess Park, several are to do with the health, fitness and recreation of children and young people including the following: The first phase of the Burgess Park Youth and Sports Pitches, namely, the Waite Street pitches (funded by NOF and the Council) will open for play officially in May of this year. This will provide enhanced grass pitches for junior cricket, mini rugby and mini soccer as well as cricket nets.

We have also recently received confirmation that our application for grant funding to the Football Foundation was successful and this will help us to provide over a £1 million for an artificial surface pitch with floodlighting which will go on site later this year for completion in 2005.

The Burgess Park Tennis Centre (co-funded by Sport England and others) which provides six full-size tennis courts has been completed and is due to open on 12th June 2004. This will provide young people in the

area with opportunities to develop their tennis skills on a very high quality facility with coaching and the involvement of tennis clubs.

A Masterplan for Chumleigh Village at Chumleigh Gardens is in the process of being finalised in full consultation with all interested parties. This includes the Surestart development, which will provide opportunities for younger children and their carers. Surestart will begin consultation in April of this year for opening in Spring 2005. Work is also underway on the business case and plans for the Community Organic Recycling Centre (CORE), with SEA and this will be the heart of the Environmental Futures Centre for which a funding structure is under development. There are also plans for a sculpture factory and improved facilities for the Chumleigh Gardens, "Gardens Officer".

**13. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR CATRIONA MOORE**

What progress is being made on re-opening the Borough Community Centre at 56 Southwark Bridge Road, and what opportunities will be offered to local residents to comment on proposals for the future use of the centre?

**RESPONSE**

The Elephant Links SRB Partnership has been developing a project to use this building to deliver employment and training in the creative media and arts industries and provide space for community activities.

This is a large and complex project with a number of different work streams, therefore, I would like to set up a ward members' briefing after the Easter break to go through the issues in more detail. I will contact you with the details of this shortly. In the interim I have summarised the key elements below.

To date the partnership has spent £250,000 on this project. The refurbishment plans have been finalised and a planning application for the change of use of the building has been submitted. This is due to be decided by end April. The partnership has agreed a further £3,309,426 for the construction work, which is due to commence on site in August 2004 and should be completed by December 2005. The refurbishment plans seek to balance the need of the Single Regeneration Budget to recoup its investment in the building by delivering its output targets, the need to build in financial sustainability and the desire of the local community to replace a disused facility. Although the first two, must be prioritised, significant areas of the building have been dedicated to community usage, including the large hall area on the ground floor.

The Partnership has established a Board Steering Group to over see the implementation of the project. Three of the 4 members of this group are community representatives, two of which have a longstanding involvement with the building (i.e. Anne Worsley and Ken Hayes)

Part of the group's work is to establish the vehicle that will be responsible for the future management of the facility. The steering group has agreed

that this vehicle will be a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. The steering group has also agreed the draft memorandum and articles of association and these are in the process of being submitted to the charities commission.

The charity will establish a board of directors. The structure of the charity allows for local residents to be appointed as directors. The board of directors will be responsible for the day to day running of the building and decisions about the how space is allocated and used. It will be the responsibility of the directors to engage the local community in this process.

The charity will be granted a lease for the use of the building by the Council. The lease will off set the SRB investment in the building against future rental charges, i.e. there will be a lengthy rent free period (amount of time still to be agreed). The terms of the lease will also ensure that the charity pursues its objects in the best interest of the local community, including ensuring that local residents have the opportunity to comment on how the community space within the building is used/allocated.

To date there has been limited formal consultation with local residents about the future use of the premises as we are still in the construction phase. A meeting was held with Friends of Borough Community Centre 19 October 2003. This was an open invitation to Friends of BCC to discuss general proposals for the site. Turn out was relatively low however those attending were generally supportive of the proposal to bring the building back into use.

The following consultation programme has been agreed by the Partnership:

### **Training**

Consultation with the Elephant Links Diversity and Programme Management Panels will take place in early 2004 to ensure the training model meets the respective inclusion and programme objectives championed by the panels.

After selection of the training provider a series of focused consultation activities take place. The local community would actively work with the provider, via pilot projects, to help shape the content of the training offer to the local community in the lead up to the opening of the building. Depending on timing this could begin in late 2004 / early 2005.

### **Management Body**

The make up of the management body will be determined by the Partnership. However the Partnership will consult on issues such as the details of resident representation on the new body. This will occur in early 2004.

Policies on community access to space and user charges will also be consulted on that a reasonable match between supply and demand is achieved. This will be driven by the development of the business plan and will occur late this year or early next year.

**14. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID BRADBURY**

Would the Executive Member for Regeneration please advise whether all aspects of the compulsory purchase of, and home loss payment in respect of, the former 3 Filton Court, SE15, have now been fully settled; and outline her proposals for avoiding such delays and perceived injustices in respect of the proposed Elephant & Castle regeneration?

**RESPONSE**

Payments to both the owner and tenant of 3 Filton Court have been made. A final payment to the owner is expected to be agreed shortly

As regards the leasehold acquisitions at Elephant and Castle the Council is obliged by statute to pay market value for each and every property it acquires under Compulsory Purchase powers. Each leaseholder will be able to appoint a valuer and solicitor acting for them paid for by the Council. If the purchase price cannot be agreed the matter will be referred to the Lands Tribunal for determination as was 3 Filton Court where the Court agreed with the Council's figure.

Each Leaseholder will receive a further payment of 10% of the purchase price if it is their main home together with a series of other disturbance payments such as costs in buying a new home including legal, surveyors and lending fees, stamp duty, removal costs etc.

**15. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN**

The Executive Member will be aware of Ken Livingstone's stated intention of 'crushing' "NIMBY" local authority opposition to his new homes policy (Evening Standard, 16/03/04).

Would the Executive Member agree that the Mayor's statement: a) smacks of desperation born out of a failing policy; b) fails to reflect this Council's record on affordable housing; c) will undermine the spirit of co-operation between his office and London's boroughs

**RESPONSE**

We have an excellent record on delivering affordable housing over the last few years using planning gain and public subsidy. We have developed a new formal policy in our second Draft Unitary Development plan which explains how we will deliver one of the highest targets in London for affordable housing. This is fully in line with the Mayor's policy in the adopted London Plan. The Mayor should be congratulating us on providing such excellent support.

**16. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON**

Could the Executive Member update Council Assembly on the development of the Borough wide planning policy on mobile telecommunications masts and publish a table of how many masts in the borough are available for “*mast sharing*” as requested by Council Assembly on 17/09/03?

#### **RESPONSE**

The second draft for deposit of the Southwark Unitary Development Plan to be considered by the Council Assembly at this meeting contains a policy on telecommunications: Policy 3.24 - Telecommunications. This sets out the criteria for considering applications for such equipment which are intended to prevent proposals that are unacceptable by virtue of siting or design.

We do not possess information of sites in private ownership and cannot state whether these could be shared.

In respect to Council owned property the majority are suitable or are already in multi use.

**17. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN**

Could the Executive Member outline the timetable for the Bermondsey Spa regeneration – in particular, when work is going to start on Giles, Carton and Darnay Houses?

#### **RESPONSE**

Bermondsey Spa is a 10 year regeneration programme which started in the year 2000.

Many of the important project steps have been completed, including planning applications submitted or approved and contracts for land sale and development under negotiation or actually completed.

Giles, Carton and Darnay Houses form part of Sites E,F,H,S and U which are being sold to Hyde Housing Association. An outline planning application was submitted in January for the redevelopment of these sites.

Giles, Carton and Darnay are still occupied by tenants and provision has to be made for their decant. New housing will be provided on sites E and H. Subject to planning permission being given, building work for the new housing could begin at the end of this calendar year. These homes could be ready for occupation in early 2006. Decant of Giles, Carton and Darnay Houses can then begin, with redevelopment of these blocks commencing soon after. Redevelopment of these blocks is also dependant on re-purchasing, whether by agreement or compulsion, the long leaseholders who have bought their flats under the Right-to-buy legislation.

**18. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON**

When does the Executive Member expect the first new homes in the Elephant and Castle regeneration area to be completed?

## **RESPONSE**

The preparation of the Development Framework for the Elephant and Castle, which was formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) last month has generated strong interest in the development markets and is encouraging many new schemes other than those directly promoted by the Council. In the area west of the Walworth Road two schemes of housing are currently on site, one for students and the other aimed at affordable owner occupation but also containing social rented units which will be allocated to Heygate tenants. The first of these units will be available in the beginning of 2005.

Further applications in this area are expected to be submitted in the next few months including a new application relating to Castle House. These schemes alone will generate over 300 new units of which more than 25% will be rented units potentially available to displaced Heygate tenants. These units should begin to become available in late 2005.

The London Park Hotel is also currently changing hands and the Council's development team have been working closely with the developers to secure a large mixed tenure scheme containing still further affordable and key worker units to be directed in the first instance to meet Heygate demand. These units should begin to become available during 2006 onwards.

Housing Association developments are already underway on the New Kent Road and further applications are in negotiation for the development of more units, predominantly social rented and shared ownership, which will provide further opportunities to demonstrate the qualities of sustainability and high quality demanded by the SPG. The first of these units should be available for allocation later this year.

The first of the Council's directly sponsored developments will take place on Wansey Street and selection of scheme architects and developing Housing association is now underway following the completion of the adoption process. The target date for completion is early 2006.

Overall the take up of development opportunities has commenced earlier and in greater quantities than was anticipated than when the current process was commenced in 2002 and is undoubtedly reflective of the huge upsurge in confidence resulting from the Council's leadership role in establishing a comprehensive planning framework for the whole Elephant and Castle area.

**19. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED**

Could the Executive Member outline the Executive's strategy, as distinct from the Aylesbury NDC's, to ensure the stock on the Aylesbury estate meets the Decent Homes standard by 2010?

## **RESPONSE**

The Council works very closely with the Aylesbury New Deal for Communities. The Deputy Leader is a member of the Board. There is therefore a joint strategy for the regeneration of the area, including improvements to the housing. This has been set out on a number of occasions most recently in the paper appointing the consultants for the work in the South West corner of the Estate.

Final analysis of the survey into the condition of the Borough's housing and the associated investment implications, including the Aylesbury, is being undertaken and this will be taken into account in the further work looking at the longer-term options for funding the improvement of the whole estate.

### **20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ALUN HAYES**

Many residents of Nunhead and East Peckham are keenly awaiting regeneration/environmental improvements in the area of Queen's Road station. Can the appropriate Executive Member confirm:

- When will contractors begin work on phase 1 of the scheme (the station forecourt)?
- Is it correct that the council owned properties at 151/153 Queen's Road will be acquired and demolished as part of phase 1?
- What consultation, if any, has taken place with local businesses/residents affected by phase 2 and phase 3 of the scheme?

## **RESPONSE**

With regard to Phase 1, work will begin 6-9 weeks after formal approval has been received from Network Rail and South Central.

The properties at 151 and 153 Queens Road will not be acquired and demolished, or directly affected by Phase 1 (the station forecourt scheme).

Phase 2 refers to the possible redevelopment, subject to planning consent, of the land at 151-155 Queens Road, possibly to include the private site at 157-163 Queens Road, if an agreement can be reached with the owner. It is understood that 157-163 Queens Road is vacant. The Council land at 151-155 Queens Road has two commercial tenancies, and it is confirmed that the Council is in contact with both tenants. At this stage no other adjacent businesses/residents have been contacted although a public meeting was held in January at which all these proposals were discussed. However, once a planning application is submitted local residents and businesses will be consulted as part of the planning process.



Phase 3 refers to further improvements to the station forecourt as part of the Phase 2 redevelopment. This aspect will form part of the Phase 2 planning application.

Plans of the proposed forecourt have been circulated to the press and public.

Plans and proposals will be available for inspection once a planning application has been submitted.

**21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR CHARLIE SMITH**

Could the Executive Member please confirm how much Southwark Council will have to pay in the first year for the space it is renting from Vinopolis to house the Tourist Information Centre?

**RESPONSE**

The costs of the year-long pilot project are funded by the London Development Agency.

The space has been rented for one year initially and Vinopolis is charging £3,000 to cover service charges for electricity, gas and security.

**22. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH**

Would the Executive Member advise what action is being taken to complete the agreement with One Tree Hill Allotment society?

**RESPONSE**

Heads of Terms have been agreed and all but one clause of the lease relating to Trustees liability has been settled. Property are awaiting the tenants agreement to a compromise offered in this regard.

**23. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES**

In her response to my question at the 17th September 2003 Council Assembly, the Executive Member stated that she had personally met with representatives of the Downtown Defence Campaign to discuss the regeneration proposal for the area as part of the 'Executive process'. Can the Executive Member specify the *precise* dates, times and venues at which these meetings took place?

**RESPONSE**

To the best of my knowledge the meeting took place at the Executive of Tuesday the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2003 at the town hall when the Downtown Defence Corps presented a deputation.

**24. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION & YOUTH FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MOISE**

Would the Member for Community Safety please provide a break down of violent crime, robbery, street crime, sexual offences and "violence against person" offences, such as assault and murder by Ward in the Southwark Police Sectors, from May 2002 to March 2004?

**RESPONSE**

The breakdown for the categories of crime are set out below. Owing to a change in the crime reporting system the data for January and February 2004 are in the process of being processed. The figures for March 2004 are not available at present. Therefore the figures available at present are May 2002 to December 2003.

<b>WARD NAME</b>	<b>Robbery</b>	<b>Street Crime</b>	<b>Sexual Offences</b>	<b>VAP</b>
<b>Brunswick Park</b>	293	308	26	540
<b>Camberwell Green</b>	664	757	43	796
<b>Cathedrals</b>	279	413	57	573
<b>Chaucer</b>	251	290	49	560
<b>College</b>	91	93	17	309
<b>East Dulwich</b>	122	119	21	282
<b>East Walworth</b>	412	551	54	761
<b>Faraday</b>	379	483	37	536
<b>Grange</b>	215	233	38	543
<b>Livesey</b>	240	238	41	774
<b>Newington</b>	323	384	39	574
<b>Nunhead</b>	194	192	31	466
<b>Peckham</b>	325	385	48	668
<b>Peckham Rye</b>	103	101	12	289
<b>Riverside</b>	182	225	39	424
<b>Rotherhithe</b>	134	146	27	490
<b>South Bermondsey</b>	95	108	17	396
<b>South Camberwell</b>	154	165	27	325
<b>Surrey Docks</b>	129	134	30	305
<b>The Lane</b>	453	593	50	843
<b>Village</b>	160	162	8	166

The crime within the category Violence Against the Person (VAP) are:-

1. Dangerous Dogs Act offence.
2. Assault - Section 18.
3. Actual bodily harm.
4. Common assault.
5. Assault on police.
6. Assault – Section 20
7. Murder.
8. Threat to Murder.
9. Protection from Harassment act offences.
10. Child neglect.
11. Child abduction.

**25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS**

Does the Executive Member for Education believe that the Council should use its Compulsory Purchase Order powers to buy people's homes in the East Dulwich and Nunhead area in order to build a new school there and would he consider this to be a good use of public money?

**RESPONSE**

Current proposals to increase the provision of secondary education in the East Dulwich and Nunhead area are based on the use of existing school sites and therefore the question of compulsory purchase does not arise.

**26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU**

Could the Executive Member confirm that the City Academy is still due to open on St James Road in September 2004?

**RESPONSE**

The delivery of the City Academy is primarily a matter for its sponsor, the Corporation of London. I am pleased to report that plans are well in hand for the Academy to transfer from its current site at Peckham Rye to St. James Road this September.

**27. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR ALFRED BANYA**

Have any key members of staff indicated they will be leaving the Early Years service?

**RESPONSE**

One member of the service's senior management team, the Children and Families Development Officer, has recently accepted a promotional positioning to another authority; the specification of this post is currently under review.

The wider structure of the service has recently been reviewed, which has identified the need for an additional two senior posts: an Early Years Education Strategic Advisor and a Children's Centre Development Manager. These posts are currently vacant and will be recruited to in the next three months.

The front line services have generally remained unaffected by recent changes and the vacancy levels are at their normal percentages. There is an indication that we may have difficulty in recruiting front line staff due to the general expansion of children's services across London. The service has one vacancy for one of its Early Years Centres which has been long term and has proved difficult to fill. A temporary solution has been found through employing an acting up arrangement.

As part of our commitment to increasing the quality of early years education, we have established ten new posts of advisory teachers. We have recruited to 3.5 of these posts and are currently interviewing for the remaining vacancies. It is difficult to find the early years teachers and it is anticipated that it will take the remainder of the year to fill all these posts.

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

Could the Executive Member please update me on the operation of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) panel ?

**RESPONSE**

Prior to Cambridge Education Associates commencing in Southwark all SEN decisions regarding requests for statutory assessment and allocation of SEN resources were made within the SEN Special Services section. A termly moderation exercise was undertaken by way of validating decisions after they had been taken. This involved a group of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) reviewing the decisions that had been made by Special Services and “checking” that they were reasonable. There was however no involvement of other professionals such as educational psychologists or school representatives in the decision to initiate a statutory assessment or the allocation of resources once it was judged that a Statement was appropriate.

During the autumn term it was judged that the decision making process should be strengthened. An Educational Psychologist was included in the panel as well as a senior member of the Inclusion Team who has extensive experience in working as a SENCO. This was seen as an interim arrangement until a more complete review of the process could be undertaken, new guidance for schools developed and consultation with SENCOs and Head teachers could take place.

From the beginning of the summer term there are to be two SEN panels. The Assessment Panel will consider requests for statutory assessment and decide whether there are grounds to proceed. This panel will include senior members of the Access and Inclusion Team and representatives from schools from each of the sectors, on a rotational basis.

In summary the role of the Assessment Panel is:

- to consider evidence about individual children’s needs;
- to consider what has been done so far to try to meet those needs;
- to ensure that the criteria for starting an assessment are consistently and vigorously applied;
- to make clear decisions to proceed or not with statutory assessment;
- to clarify to referring schools and/or agencies strategies to support pupils at Early Years/School Action Plus when statutory assessment is not to proceed.

The second panel will be the Resource and Placement Panel and will also include representatives from schools and senior Access and Inclusion

Managers. It will consider whether there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a child's needs require provision to be determined and funded by the LEA and, if so, issues a Statement and allocates resources. This panel will also consider other cases involving:

- Significant changes arising out of annual statement reviews (e.g. large variations in funding, destatementing)
- Placement recommendations in and out of mainstream education
- Other complex cases needing to come to the attention of the panel as deemed by the professional manager for SEN.

The remit of the Resource and Placement Panel is:

- to consider the evidence gathered during the statutory assessment;
- to decide whether to make a Statement or to issue a note in lieu of a Statement;
- if a Statement is issued, to make appropriate provision to meet the child's needs;
- to consider information submitted following certain Annual Reviews and ratify the level of resourcing;
- to consider recommendations of significant change of educational placement - e.g. mainstream to special school - and reach a decision;
- to determine if application is to be made for joint agency funding for a pupil with a statement in the light of severe care and education needs;
- to agree provision for children with a Statement who move in to Southwark

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

What is the percentage of Southwark primary schools without a permanent head teacher?

**RESPONSE**

There are six primary schools with acting headteachers. This represents 8% of primary schools in the borough. Currently, five are progressing through the recruitment and selection process to appoint substantive headteachers; one awaits the outcome of a Council consultation on its future.

**30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER**

Could the Executive Member report on how the supermarket trolley collection scheme has operated since its adoption by the Council?

**RESPONSE**

Following a statutory consultation period the Council adopted section 99 of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 in October 2003.

Adoption of section 99 of the EPA allows the Council to remove and store shopping trolleys found on the public highway. Owners of the trolleys are then contacted to advise of their seizure.

A collection charge of £25 per trolley and a storage cost of £2.50 per day per trolley is charged to the owners for their return. Failure by companies to collect trolleys within 28 days of notification results in their disposal.

Since October 2003 over 500 trolleys have been collected and stored at Manor Place Depot and the Waste Management Service to date has received over £35,000 for the return of trolleys from major supermarkets in the area. This money has been re-invested in Envirocrime education and awareness raising.

The success of the scheme is demonstrated by the fact that fewer and fewer trolleys are now being seized from the borough's roads and some major supermarkets have since introduced a deposit system for trolleys to discourage their removal. In addition, supermarkets are in the process of initiating a collection regime of their own accord to endeavour to ensure that any trolleys removed from their property are collected prior to the Council seizing them.

**31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE**

Is the Executive Member for Environment & Transport in a position to explain the duration of two large trenches in Peckham Hill Street beside Peckham Library and their safety implications for pedestrians.

**RESPONSE**

The holes on Peckham Hill Street were caused by the works of an electricity company. They were filled by the company last week, the work was brought forward by three weeks at the Council's request.

The vast majority of holes in the road are caused by utility companies - around 22,000 in the borough every year.

In this context, we are always grateful for the vigilance of local people, Councillors and street leaders. Where holes are reported as dangerous, we do everything within our powers to ensure that they are filled as soon as possible - problems can be reported to the environmental call centre on 020 7525 2000. Sadly however, we only have a monitoring role. Responsibility for making surfaces good again and putting up adequate barriers and signage while holes are exposed lies with the utility company themselves.

We do, however, continue to take a tough stance on utility companies who over-run on work by charging them and then pursuing the debt.

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

Many residents in the borough are unclear about the Council's policy in respect of urban foxes. Will the Executive Member for Environment and Transport confirm:

- Does the Council have any policy for responding to residents who seek assistance in removing urban foxes?
- Has the Council identified a contractor to deal with issues around urban foxes?
- Has the Council considered whether it is right to help defray the costs of urban fox removal for poorer residents?

## **RESPONSE**

Local authorities are not obliged to control foxes and the Council has no existing policy for responding to residents who seek assistance in removing urban foxes. However, by custom and practice the Council endorses the London Wildlife Trust's Fox Code so that people and foxes can continue to live together.

The killing, trapping and transportation of foxes should never be undertaken to solve a nuisance. This is not only cruel, but will usually not work since other foxes will quickly take over a vacant territory. It follows therefore that the Council has not identified a contractor to deal with the issues around urban foxes and accordingly has not considered whether it is right to help defray the costs of urban fox removal for poorer residents.

Where foxes are causing a nuisance, it is better to take sensible, deterrent measures, which include being careful with food waste, keeping small animals safe and fencing gardens.

Further information on living with urban foxes can be obtained from the London Wildlife Trust's website at:

<http://www.wildlondon.org.uk/wildinfo/probfox.htm>

### **33. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR SARH WELFARE**

Will the Executive Member for Regeneration and Transport agree to set up a cross-party Parking Commission to investigate "parking fine madness" in the London Borough of Southwark ?

## **RESPONSE**

The Council has a robust approach to parking enforcement as part of the overall policy to restrict the use of private vehicles and enhance traffic flow.

Parking Attendants issue penalty charges where they have reason to believe that a contravention of the Road Traffic Act 1991 has occurred. The Council employs a number of officers to consider formal representations against the issue of any penalty charge notice as required under the Act. Where such representations are made in accordance with

the legislation they are fully considered including any mitigating factors raised by the appellant.

If the recipient is unhappy that the Council has rejected a representation against the decision of a parking attendant to issue the penalty then he/she also has the right for a review by the London Parking Appeals Service who's decision is binding on both the appellant and the Council. This is clearly explained in all letters of rejections issued and an appropriate form for this purpose is provided.

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

Could the Executive Member please provide a breakdown of how much money Southwark Council has spent on road maintenance within each crematorium and cemetery in the past year?

**RESPONSE**

With the exception of lottery funded work, referred to below, repairs to roads and carriageways have been limited to health and safety issues and essential work for the last three years as a result of limited capital funding. As part of the restructure of parks (which now manage cemeteries and crematoriums) a review is being undertaken of repairs and maintenance budgets in general and the needs of the cemeteries and crematoriums in particular. The long-term refurbishment of the roads here will be quantified and included as a capital bid for the 2005/6 year.

Refurbishment works to roads and pathways within Nunhead Cemetery was undertaken in 2001/2 as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund Project. The total cost of the refurbishment works within the cemetery was £1.25 million of which £125,000 was allocated to roads and pathways.

**35. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR DERMOT McINERNEY**

The Executive Member will be aware of the ongoing saga in respect of Imperial Gardens and the enquiries and litigation it has engendered. She will also be aware of the role that the Council played in this. Will she accordingly state:

(i) the total cost to the Council of the report by the District Auditor in respect of the planning application concerning Fairview Homes and its impact on Imperial Gardens;

(ii) the total cost to the Council of the report by the Local Government Ombudsman in respect of the same matter; and;

(iii) the total cost to the Council to date of the legal proceedings (including Court appearances) to which Mr Raymond Stevenson is a party?

**RESPONSE**

The figures requested are as follows:



- (i) £145,706.66 to February 2004
- (ii) £3,368.40
- (iii) £14,129.29

**36. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR BILLY KAYADA**

Could the Executive Member inform the Council why suitably experienced black led companies are excluded from the Council's procurement process - contrary to the aims of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) and the Council's Equalities Statements?

**RESPONSE**

Companies, regardless of their directors' ethnicity, are not excluded from the Council's procurement process as this would be in breach of the NDC and the Council's own equalities statement. Such action would also contravene the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

As part of the Council's commitment to ensuring procurement achieves best value, improves the quality of services it provides and meets the needs, both social and economic of the local community, on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2003 the Executive agreed Southwark's Procurement Strategy and Delivery Plan 2003/06, which is available to the public from Southwark's website and sets out its aims and objectives.

The document outlines the Council's plan to promote and support all small and medium enterprises, as well as the black and minority ethnic (BME) companies, to access opportunities to bid for Council contracts. There is a "Guide to Bidding for Council Contracts" produced in conjunction with Business Links London which is available to everybody and provides guidance for businesses interested in bidding for council contracts. This guide is regularly updated to keep in touch with the needs of all enterprises in the Borough without prejudice. In addition, the new strategy will seek to directly produce guidance on 'Doing Business' with Southwark Council. Work on this is ongoing and is expected to be completed and available through various media, including the Council website, by September 2004.

The Council's policy sets out and gives all enterprises opportunities and a level playing field to bid for contracts. We also ensure that a risk assessment based approach is carried out to make smaller contracts available to small and medium enterprises including those led by black and minority ethnic directors by setting standards appropriate to the size of the business, whilst at the same time protecting the Council's interest.

Further work is underway to support BME businesses in bidding for contracts from both the Council and others.

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

Since the transfer of appeal hearings, how many appeals to the Appeals Service against housing benefit and council tax benefit decisions were heard in the absence of Council representation and what percentage is this of the total number of appeals heard?

**RESPONSE**

There have been 180 hearings heard by the Appeals Service since the transfer. 17 cases (9%) were attended by a presenting officer. Full submissions were completed by Liberata on behalf of the Council for each case.

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

What is the total value of housing benefit and council tax benefit claims that have been determined by the Appeals Service against the decisions of the Council (including both claims put into payment and overpayments disallowed)?

**RESPONSE**

The total value of benefit granted following a decision against the Council by the Appeals Service is £149,388. The majority of this relates to backdated assessments for which the Council currently receives 50% subsidy. The overpayment figure equates to £1,200.

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

At Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit appeals tribunals when the Council has been underrepresented how many claims have been successfully appealed?

**RESPONSE**

Of those we did not attend:

- 42% - 75 cases were found in favour of the council
- 47% - 85 found in favour of the appellant

Of the remaining appeals 4% were part successful in favour of the appellant, the others were adjourned for further information.

**40. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR TONY RITCHIE**

Since housing benefit appeals were transferred from the Council to the Appeals Service, what percentage of housing benefit and council tax benefit appeals to the Tribunal have been successful?

**RESPONSE**

In total 46% have been successful.

**41. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER**

Can the Executive Member make a statement on the future of the Yalding Day Care Centre?

**RESPONSE**

Arrangements have been made with Age Concern (Southwark) for the continuation of services at Yalding.

As Councillor Manchester will be aware, older people who use the Yalding and Nunhead Early Intervention Day Centres run by Age Concern (Southwark) have been assessed with respect to their Community Care needs. This is as a result of the Council agreed policy with respect to the application of Eligibility Criteria in line with the Department of Health guidance – Fairer Access to Care.

Previously these Day Centres received funding in the form of a grant from Social Services. The Community Care assessments have indicated a smaller number of older people with eligible Community Care needs than currently use the service. Funding from Social Services will continue for eligible service users. This left a potential shortfall in funding.

Age Concern, assisted by the Council, has however secured alternative funding from a variety of sources to meet the gap. This allows both centres to continue their valuable early intervention roles – providing day activities and services to older people in the community.

**42. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM**

Does the Executive Member agree with me that the fears of elderly people not being safe in their homes can have a damaging effect on their health and quality of life?

**RESPONSE**

Without doubt, crime and the fear of crime does have the potential to damage the health and quality of life of all Southwark residents – this is especially true of vulnerable groups such as older people. Tackling crime and the fear of crime is one of the Council's key priorities and considerable progress has been made by agencies working together and through the Safer Southwark Partnership. Initiatives have included:

- The introduction of the Street Warden Scheme
- Early intervention work by the Youth Offending Team
- Better co-ordination of victim support services
- Nationally recognised initiatives to target and close 'crack' houses
- Improving the cleanliness and context of Southwark streets and open spaces

The range of services and assessments provided to older people by statutory and voluntary agencies take into account the overall safety of older people. Multi-agency work is co-ordinated by the Older People's Partnership Board. Services that reduce crime and the fear of crime include:

- Wardened and sheltered housing
- Community Alarm Scheme
- Joint Security Initiatives, such as the lock fitters scheme and the provision of other security devices
- Home-Shopping services
- Strict use of identity cards and passwords
- 'Handyman' pilot scheme
- Advice and support from voluntary agencies

Allied to this schemes such as the 'Fire Angels' scheme that has already provided 30,000 homes with fire detectors are making dwellings safer not only for the elderly but for all walks of life.

Whilst security issues are very serious it must be stressed that overall crime rates are falling in Southwark and that victims are much more likely to be young, or involved in criminal or drug cultures, or know the perpetrators.

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

The Government has identified obesity as a health issue to be tackled as a matter of priority. What measures is the Council taking either independently or through its partnerships to work with the government to reduce this problem in Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

There are three main aspects to the Council's contribution to the prevention of obesity:

1. **Education and empowerment of children and young people** – providing the knowledge and skills to understand the links between what they eat and drink, and the exercise they get, and the problem of overweight. Learning comes in the science part of the curriculum, the PE (physical education) element and the PSHE (personal, social and health education) element, as well as non-curricular initiatives such as after-school activities and clubs (including cooking skills, and various sports). Cambridge Education Associates are working with the Healthy Southwark Partnership to ensure that these elements are well coordinated and supported.
2. **A health-promoting environment.** Members will be aware that the main focus of the Government's concerns are children and young people – particularly the increase of child obesity and the alarming appearance of type 2 diabetes in a growing number of very young children. The Parks and Sport Division has worked closely with a number of agencies and partnerships including the Healthy Southwark

Partnership and Fusion to combat this trend. Over the past three years the numbers of 11-19 year olds attending a leisure centre has increased by several hundred percent and are contributing to the Council's Youth Public Service Agreement targets. The Sports Development Team has over 80,000 visits a year and Southwark was very successful in last years London Heathrow Youth Games (9<sup>th</sup> overall and best inner London Borough). This year the launch of the Mayor's Southwark Community Games aims to focus the whole of the borough on children's participation in sport for now and the future. Over 8,000 children will be involved in the first year (over 30,000 coaching hours) and the aim is for this number to grow considerably in future years.

With regard to school-age children, a high proportion of Southwark schools are working with the Healthy Schools Initiative to achieve the National Healthy Schools Standard which takes a 'whole school' approach to health improvement, including such aspects as healthier choices with school meals, breakfast clubs, and sports and games provision. Education and Leisure in particular have been engaged with the Healthy Southwark Partnership in obtaining Neighbourhood Renewal funding to enhance the physical activity opportunities in Southwark's participating primary schools. The Council, partly through its regeneration programmes, is working to provide safer routes to school and work in order to encourage walking and cycling. Security in parks and open spaces has also been improved. The number of pavement cycle racks has also been markedly increased.

3. **Encouraging adults** to eat a healthy balanced diet and lead a more active lifestyle. The Borough's leisure programme, operated by Fusion, has worked closely with the Primary Care Trust to provide and publicise a wide range of active leisure opportunities. The Healthy Living Centre at the Peckham Pulse is a good example of strong links with health services, eg. through its Exercise Referral Scheme whereby patients can be referred for remedial exercise by their General Practitioner. A Healthy Walks scheme for adults, run by the Park Rangers, has achieved useful take-up mainly by older people. The particular needs of Black and Minority Ethnic groups regarding diet and exercise is specifically addressed through voluntary and community involvement in The Healthy Southwark Partnership's Food & Health and Active Lifestyles programmes.

**44. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE**

Will the Executive Member welcome with me the large investment going into the Friary Estate and would the Executive Member indicate at what stage the project currently is?

**RESPONSE**

I am pleased that we have been able to direct much needed funding to target the poor stock condition of this estate and kick start the regeneration of one of the most deprived areas of the borough. The approach to Friary follows the excellent example of Kingswood Estate, which is the first estate to be made decent in Southwark.

The current position is that tender invitations have been sent out to builders. A partnering working group which includes resident representatives has been formed. It is anticipated that detailed scheme consultation will take place over the Summer with an anticipated start on site in May 2005.

Over the next 5 years extensive improvements will be carried out to 860 homes on the estate.

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

How many tenants have benefited so far from the Council's free Fire Angel installation programme?

**RESPONSE**

I am pleased to report that the installation of smoke alarms to Council dwellings is proceeding extremely well.

To date 38,901 Fire Angel smoke alarms have been fitted in over 30,000 homes (some having multiple installations) with 8,503 tenants refusing because they have their own stand alone system or the properties have been hard-wired previously. Approximately 4,000 further alarms will be installed by the end of July 2004 to complete the programme.

**46. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR JELIL LADIPO**

Could the Executive Member indicate the level of funding that has gone into the Brandon estate and how much is ear-marked for investment in total?

**RESPONSE**

I am pleased to report that since 2002 £2.8 million has been spent on refurbishing the tower blocks on Brandon. In future years it is anticipated that a further £13.6 million will be spent on the estate. This additional investment includes funding for a range of safety and security works which have been identified as a priority by local tenants and residents.

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

When will the repairs on the Bells Garden Community Centre be completed?

**RESPONSE**

On 28<sup>th</sup> October 2003 a fire occurred in the kitchen on the Bells Gardens Community Centre and this caused significant damage to the facility. The fire occurred as a result of an accident. The repair works to the Centre have been split into two elements. The first stage of the remedial works has now been completed. This concentrated on ensuring the structural

integrity of the building as well as repairs to the electrical and security services. Works have been completed satisfactorily and subject to clarification that no insurance issues remain, the Southwark Group of Tenant Organisations should be able to return to the Centre before the end of March 2004.

The second element of works is currently out to tender and it is expected that these works will be completed in early Summer 2004.

**48. QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY**

Would the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee please explain why Article 6.05 (e) of the Council Constitution appears to be unimplemented?

**RESPONSE**

Article 6.05 (e) provides for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to raise issues for debate at Council Assembly. I have taken the view that this is an option for Overview and Scrutiny Committee, rather than a duty on the committee but I am very happy to discuss with scrutiny sub-committee chairs whether they wish to make more use of this opportunity to promote scrutiny's concerns.

**49. QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR DANIEL McCARTHY**

Can the Chair tell me:

- (a) How many planning applications in Cathedrals ward have there been over the past twelve months?
- (b) How many were taken at Member level bodies and how many were agreed under delegated authority?
- (c) How many have been referred to the inspectorate?

**RESPONSE**

[a] From 1st April 2003 to the present date 224 applications have been received that count in our Office of the Deputy Prime Minister performance targets and 53 applications that do not count towards the targets.

[b] In the same period decisions were made on 21 applications by Members [18 by Planning Committee and 3 by Community Council]. N.B. This figure only relates to actual decisions issued and does not include those applications considered by Planning Committee or Community Council where the decision was to grant permission subject to a legal agreement and where that legal agreement has not yet been completed and signed.

168 decisions were made under delegated powers: 137 were approved and 31 refused.

[c] In the same period appeals to the Planning Inspectorate were made in respect of 8 applications, of which 7 were in respect of applications decided within that period.

This information is now available for all wards and also for each Community Council.

**50. QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN FLANNERY**

Could the Chair of Planning outline how the Council is faring on enforcement on illegal advertising hoardings?

**RESPONSE**

In the past, the Council has not had the resources to deal adequately with the proliferation of unauthorised advertisement hoardings across the Borough. Moreover, these have been tackled on an ad hoc basis. Recently, however, Planning officers have met with English Heritage to develop a strategy to effect the removal of unauthorised hoardings which affect listed buildings and conservation areas and their settings, including those on key corridor approaches into Central London.

Rather than to seek prosecutions under Section 224 of the Town and Country Planning Act, officers are now using Section 11 of the London Local Authorities Act 1995. Unlike the Town and Country Planning Act, these powers are direct and simple to implement. The 1995 Act allows the Council to take action itself, or through its appointed contractor, to remove a hoarding and to recover the costs from the advertiser. This should also have a deterrent effect.

This new procedure has been used twice, once in respect of the Sainsbury's headquarters site on Blackfriars Road/Stamford Street and once outside St Olave's Church at the mouth of the Rotherhithe Tunnel, although the second is slightly complicated by judicial review proceedings.

We believe that this new approach should lead to more effective enforcement against unauthorised advertisement hoardings in the future.