

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY MEETING)**

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 15 2004

MEMBERS QUESTION TIME

**1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR
GRAHAM NEALE**

Has Southwark any plans to assist the government with the compulsory implementation of an identification card for its entire adult population, starting with immigrant workers, and those of non-UK status requiring health care?

RESPONSE

No. The identity card legislation is only in its early stages with the government publishing an identity cards bill in April 2004, which the House of Commons home affairs committee has since suggested major changes to. However, it is apparent from the draft bill that the legislation, if passed, will only have a limited impact on local authorities - that is that local authorities will be able to accept the cards as proof of identity. Local authorities will play no part in the implementation of the cards.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE
TO THE LEADER**

Thank you for the answer to the question that I put to you. I am relieved and I am sure we are all relieved that we won't be taking part in implementing this oppressive scheme. The Home Secretary and indeed the Prime Minister seem to think that this is a very important scheme. The Chancellor doesn't think that it is that important that he see fit to fund it. Estimates, and there are only estimates, no one really knows how much this scheme is going to cost, or what it is for in deed and why it has been forced upon us but estimate put the cost of this scheme at £1.5billion. I'll just ask the leader what he would spend the money on?

RESPONSE

That is a very good question madam Mayor and my attention was drawn yesterday to the publication of a wonderful document called 'Freedom Fairness and Trust' which is the pre election manifesto for the Liberal Democrats in which quite rightly in my opinion the party excoriates this as yet another attention seeking authoritarian gimmick, from a right wing authoritarian gimmick seeking Home Secretary. We think the money would be far better spent on front line policing. If people are worried about

security, if people are worried about safety then they would do well to borrow a leaf from Southwark council's book and put money into providing a uniform presence on the streets to help people feel safe as they go about their daily business.

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON

Would he publish the full text of his letter to the Southwark Alliance as requested by the amended standards committee report voted on by council assembly at its July meeting?

RESPONSE

As Cllr Robinson will be aware, I have raised the matter of councillor representation on Southwark Alliance on several occasions, to no avail.

In July, council assembly agreed the following:

“Council assembly therefore reiterates its request for the Southwark Alliance to amend its standing orders and requests the leader of the Council to raise this matter again at the next meeting and inform the Southwark Alliance Executive in writing that until this matter is resolved the Alliance will not enjoy the confidence of the majority of elected members in the borough in its governance.”.

I am happy to carry out this latest instruction however there has been no meeting of Southwark Alliance since July - the next meeting is scheduled for 18 November - and therefore there has been no opportunity thus far to raise the matter formally with the Alliance.

I will ensure the matter is raised at the November meeting and will then write to the Alliance as requested though I should add that I do not think that writing in such terms will soften the Alliance's stance on this issue, indeed I fear it will have the opposite effect.

Tactically, it may be better to wait for the outcome of the scrutiny that Overview & Scrutiny has established.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON TO THE LEADER

I thank the leader for his response to the question and whilst I regret that he hasn't had the opportunity to raise this matter formally with the Southwark Alliance, I understand that there was an opportunity to raise it informally at a recent away day that the Southwark Alliance had at tax payers expense in a hotel and I wonder if he raised it then and whether he thought it good value for money.

RESPONSE

I did think it was good value for money, it is part of the way any modern business is to do that kind of thing and I didn't think that tactically it was a very good idea to raise it there which is why I didn't. I am sorry that I keep having to make this point but I will go on making it. I have every sympathy

for the point of view of councillors who want more council representation on Southwark Alliance, I have argued the case for that on Southwark Alliance, I have tried my best to persuade other people on Southwark Alliance to that point of view, it is ultimately a matter for other members of Southwark Alliance what the membership of Southwark Alliance is so far I have been unsuccessful. If members are genuinely interested in wanting more councillors on Southwark Alliance as opposed to having cheap and arcane debating points for Southwark news which runs this to an extent I am beginning to find quite bewildering as I refuse to believe anyone else outside 63 councillors actually reads these articles, then that is one way of doing it. If you are more interested in the result, then I think the basis which I've tried to outline in the question is more likely to be fruitful.

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

Could the leader please list for me the following:

1) The number of attendances by each individual councillor at the tenants arbitration panel 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004.

2) Can he list and name on each occasion that councillors have cancelled (when they have been listed to attend) at forty eight hours notice or less and the amount of notice that has been given prior to cancellation on each occasion.

3) Can he list and name on each occasion when a councillor has failed to turn up and has failed to inform officers of the arbitration tribunal for a tribunal that they have listed to attend.

RESPONSE

Question 1.

The table below shows the total number of attendances for each councillor on the tenancy arbitration tribunal for the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004:

Southwark Tenancy Arbitration Tribunal - Attendance By Councillors 2003-2004

Councillor	Total No. Attended
Dixon-Fyle	32
Eckersley	21
Gibbes	15
Hargrove	40
Lauder	1
Mann	35
Ritchie	23
Ward	12
Watson	29
Yates	11

Questions 2 & 3.

Comprehensive information about the non-attendance of tribunal members is not maintained. File notes are usually kept of the circumstances under which any tribunal member gives notice that they cannot attend a scheduled hearing, but the priority is always to try to find an alternative member, if appropriate, and to let all those involved know the situation. If the hearing has already been part-heard, it is usually necessary to postpone the hearing so it is vital that we let all parties know this as soon as possible. There is no set target for tribunal members to give us 48 hours notice of their unavailability, although we do remind them to give us as much notice as possible. However, in total 12 cases were postponed due to the unavailability of one of the tribunal members during the period 1st April 2003 to 31st March 2004. This represents 2.8% of the hearings booked and compares favourably with the number and percentage of hearings that are postponed by the tenant (48 cases, 11.5%) and housing (22 cases, 5.3%) over the same period. The number of hearings postponed due to the unavailability of tribunal members is generally monitored by the arbitration and electoral services manager on a quarterly basis and I understand has been improving over the last few years. If the attendance of any specific tribunal member is of concern this will be dealt with informally initially with the tribunal member concerned, but neither the arbitration officer nor arbitration and electoral services manager have any role in taking any further action, in line with the tenancy agreement and tenancy arbitration tribunal rules. If a matter arose regarding a councillor which was of serious concern contact would be made with the relevant chief whip.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR TONY RITCHIE TO THE LEADER

Southwark arbitration tenants' tribunal is technically under the terms of the appointments to outside bodies, would it be possible within the annual report to have the attendances of all councillors appointed to outside bodies reported to council so council can know how their representatives to outside bodies are attending and representing them.

RESPONSE

That is an interesting suggestion and I am quite happy to take that away and look into the feasibility of doing that.

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

Would the leader join me in thanking the newly appointed resident members to the Southwark Alliance for the time and hard work that they will undoubtedly bring to the organisation, which can surely only be a good thing for Southwark and does he agree that it is unfair that these local volunteers have been vilified in the press by the opposition parties?

RESPONSE

There has been some misunderstanding about the role of the new resident members of the Southwark Alliance, and this has been reflected in recent media coverage. The residents' primary role is to provide a 'reality check' within the alliance, to ensure that our priorities and the initiatives we

propose to address them are the right ones. The resident members are not analogous to councillors, in that they do not have a formal 'representative' role, are not responsible for providing political leadership within the Alliance, and do not carry out surgeries.

The alliance sought to recruit a group of people with diverse backgrounds, skills and experience. The intention was to include both people who are active in the community and people who, for various reasons, would not normally get involved, as the latter have needs and perspectives that also need to be taken into account by the Alliance. I believe that the recruitment process we followed has enabled us to meet these objectives.

More generally, there are a number of superficially straightforward but actually quite complex issues relating to the relationship between the alliance and the Council, which seem to underpin some of the comments made in the local media by opposition group members. The alliance looks forward to discussing these with members of the overview and scrutiny committee, with a view to building a more fruitful relationship with members of the opposition parties than has been evident in recent weeks.

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

How much money will be spent servicing Southwark Alliance in the financial year 2004-05?

Could breakdowns be given for each of the following areas:

- Training and equipment for members
- Staff support for Southwark Alliance provided by the council
- Office space provided for Southwark Alliance by the council.

RESPONSE

In terms of cost to the Council of servicing Southwark Alliance, these are '*de minimus*'. With the exception of office accommodation, all servicing costs are covered by an allocation from the neighbourhood renewal fund (NRF), with the agreement of central government. This is different from the thematic partnerships where all accommodation, servicing and support costs come from the Council's core budget, from the police and from the Primary Care Trust.

The budget for servicing costs covered by neighbourhood renewal fund for 2004/5 are as follows:

Item	NRF budgeted allocation (potential underspend identified against actual spend)
Equipment and expenses for non-statutory members	40,000
Members training	15,000
Staff (Partnership Manager, Partnership	94,000

Officer)	
Communications, including website & bulletin	53,000
Meetings, conferences, away-days	48,000
Recharge to Council for services	7,500

The only servicing cost carried by the council for Southwark Alliance is for the provision of one office in Central House accommodating four staff.

Through Southwark Alliance, the council is able to secure delivery of its own cross-cutting priorities. Southwark Alliance is responsible with the council for the development, implementation and monitoring of the community strategy priorities and targets. The Alliance lies at the hub of all the thematic and area-based partnerships and is responsible for ensuring there is synergy between objectives, and effective joint working across the whole public sector system. As a consequence a significant number of council officers responsible for implementation of policies and services both directly and indirectly support the work of Southwark Alliance. This is particularly the case for those focused on community strategy priorities related to crime and community safety, educational achievement, regeneration and social inclusion, employment and enterprise, liveability, and improving health and well-being. It is not possible to separately cost out their contributions to the council, to an associated thematic partnership, and to the overall goals of Southwark Alliance, as these are 'indivisible'.

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

Could I congratulate the executive, chief officer team and the staff of Southwark Council for the superb achievement in raising this authority's comprehensive performance assessment rating from weak in 2002 up to good in 2004. What does the leader feel has been the key to this success and how does he feel that we can improve even further?

RESPONSE

Southwark's fast track improvement from 'weak' to 'good' in just 18 months is a major achievement and a measure of our improvement across the board. This achievement is the result of a lot of hard work by members, staff and partners. We made our priorities clear and we have allocated resources accordingly. The report from the inspectors said "improvements have been sustained in core services like street cleaning, recycling, housing benefits and social services, as well as those provided in partnerships - particularly in areas of community safety, health and social care.

We are not complacent. Southwark is a complex place and the challenge remains huge. Our 'good' rating is an important step forward, but we will continue to strive for further improvements and we believe that we have the initiatives and the people in place to make our services excellent.'

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MICK BARNARD

What policies and internal memoranda relates to transfer requests by staff in sheltered housing units and what consideration is given to residents?

RESPONSE

Rotation of officers has taken place from time to time in order to stimulate and offer fresh challenges to sheltered housing officers, and to ensure a greater consistency of standards across the service. In order to address the increased turnover of sheltered housing staff, management seek to ensure that experienced staff will always form part of each sheltered housing unit team.

In operating both of these practices the interests of residents are taken into account and any request from a member of staff would be considered on this basis.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MICK BARNARD TO THE LEADER

Following the failure of the chief executive to respond within Southwark Council's 10-day deadline to a letter written on August 2nd 2004, can the leader of the council provide interpretation to the internal memo which I sent to all members of the council including the member for housing on the other side, in relation to sheltered housing units dated 31st August 2000 by Ann Catchpole?

RESPONSE

I think that Councillor Barnard and ourselves have some difficulty with all of this. I have seen a couple of emails from Councillor Barnard and I think I may have received something in the drop but it appears to be part of a conversation he is having with someone else and I'm afraid that I haven't been able to follow all of it. It is important to say that any correspondence between Councillor Barnard and the chief executive certainly hasn't been copied into me, to my knowledge, by anyone else and certainly nothing that the monitoring officer has done has been reported to me. Apart from urging the chief executive to comply with the member officer protocol by replying to any outstanding correspondence, there is little I can do. If someone wants to bring something more formally to my attention, then of course, they are at liberty to do so. I am not currently aware of anything that I can really help with.

8. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MOISE

Will the executive member outline to me what steps this council is taking to meet the current legal framework of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and how is it meeting the recommendations of the government report 'Excellence not Excuses' (2000)?

RESPONSE

The two key areas of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 currently in operation are a) Adoption Support Services and b) Inter-country Adoption.

a) An adoption support services strategy was put in place in June 2004. The strategy promotes a multi-agency response to support for adopters from Education, PCT, Welfare Rights and CAMHS. An adoption support worker and a senior practitioner are developing this service

Adopters' needs are identified during the approval process and support plans made when matching of potential adopters with specific children is considered.

b) Inter-country adoption is a growing part of the service's work. We have had over 30 enquiries this year and are actively involved with seven families. We have appointed a second practice supervisor who has specific responsibilities for this area of work.

The adoption service has expanded to meet the expectations of the adoption standards and the national minimum standards. We successfully obtained 37 adoption orders last year.

The service has fully participated in the Department for Education & Science consultation upon the Adoption and Children Act that has involved nine new sets of guidance.

Excellence not Excuses (2000) was a summary report of eight inspections of services for children and families from BME groups. Southwark was one of the Councils inspected. At the time an action plan was drawn up to ensure the findings of the inspection were fully implemented. This has since been further tested as race equality impact assessments (required by the Race Relations Act 2000) have been carried out. The impact assessment of the children's social work service has received positive feedback from an external challenge panel and has received recognition from the Commission for Racial Equality as an example of good practice.

9. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR SARAH WELFARE

Will the executive member agree to consider the East Dulwich community centre on Darrell Road for the siting of a new children's centre?

RESPONSE

The children's centre programme for 2004-6 was agreed by the council executive in November 2004, and subsequently approved by the sure start unit at the Department for Education and Skills. The Southwark children's centre revenue and capital allocation for 2004-6 is now fully committed, so it will not be possible to develop a new children's centre in the East Dulwich community centre area at this stage. The current children's centre programme does include the development of a children's centre in the East Dulwich estate area (South Camberwell Ward), based around Dog Kennel Hill primary school and other local provision.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR SARAH WELFARE TO THE DEPUTY LEADER

When the children's centre programme was agreed, because it says November 2004, what commitment is there for capital allocation for the East Peckham area, whether she is able to say that, give the location and name the recipient organisation.

RESPONSE

With regards to capital allocation, off the top of my head, I haven't got the details of that, but I will say that there will be a second round of children centre funding in financial year 2006 – 08 or there is every expectation that there will be and once the details of that are clear, we weren't unsympathetic to the representations that were made at council. Southwark education will consider the options for a children's centre in East Dulwich ward. Such a centre will probably need to be focussed around a local school, that would be the logical thing to do, but there might be a potential for other local providers to become involved in delivering that provision and obviously East Dulwich community centre might be the sort of local provider that might logically get involved in becoming a partner in the local children's centre. Southwark children centre's development manager, as far as I understand, has actually relayed this position to the chair of East Dulwich community centre.

10. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PIDGEON

Would the executive member lend his support to Walworth community councils sub-group looking into the possibility of extending 20mph zones within the community council area?

RESPONSE

Yes. I would gladly lend my support to Walworth community council to look into extending 20 mph zones. I support the principle of extending 20 mph zones throughout the borough and I have recently agreed a draft road safety plan for consultation which states that Southwark aims to be the first 20 mph borough in London. Currently about 40% of Southwark's roads are in 20 mph zones or traffic management areas and our aim is for 20 mph to be the default speed limit with the limit only increased where appropriate.

There are already 20 mph zones covering much of west Walworth (Newington Ward) and there is also the Sutherland Square home zone which has been designed to encourage speeds lower than 20 mph. 20 mph zones cover other parts of Walworth and a large new zone in East Walworth and Faraday wards is currently planned for 2008/9. The Walworth Project is examining how to improve road safety in the shopping area and a 20 mph zone is being considered for this main road through the area as well.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PIDGEON TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

We have since received a report at the community council on the draft road safety plan and in that as you state in your response, that you are looking at consolidating the 20mph areas within East Walworth and Faraday in the financial year 2008- 09. Could I urge you consider bringing that forward in light of this support that has come from the community to look at making the whole of Walworth community council area a 20mph zone?

RESPONSE

I would be very happy to ask officers to look into that. Obviously most of our funding comes from TfL for the borough spending plans so it would be subject to getting the money from TfL, but I'm sure officers could investigate pushing that up the programme.

11. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

How often are the trees in Riverside pruned and when is the next pruning session?

RESPONSE

All street trees in Southwark are pruned on a 3-year routine maintenance cycle. The trees in Riverside Ward were pruned in the last financial year (2003/2004) and are therefore next due to be pruned 2006/2007. With the exception of a small number of species, there is no specific pruning season and this work is undertaken throughout the year. However, risk evaluation in consultation with ecologists and legal protections is standard before any work is attempted. This includes spotting for bird's nests and bat roosts. In such cases work is suspended for individual trees until the end of the nesting season.

Trees in parks and on housing estates are pruned on a reactive, ad-hoc basis. Agreement is pending to fund a 3-year routine maintenance regime for housing in line with best practice. Similarly, parks are surveyed where problems have been identified and works issued where there is a significant risk (i.e. near footpaths).

12. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK

Could the executive member please explain to me how the current environmental difficulties happened at Surrey Water along with South Dock, Greenland Dock and Albion Channel. What measures are being taken to rectify the problem?

RESPONSE

All of the waterways within the Rotherhithe Peninsula – South Dock Marina, Greenland Dock, Canada Water and Surrey Water have suffered from algal blooms at some time during this summer. Algal blooms are naturally occurring phenomena of inland waterways. There are many species of algae and all of these react differently to environmental conditions. Although a variety of chemical and mechanical methods are available for the control

of this phenomenon, this is an inexact science and complete control cannot be absolutely guaranteed.

The main hazard posed by these blooms lies through contact with water affected by some species. In such circumstances, the Environment Agency will advise the environmental health department that an infestation is under way and that access to the water should be restricted.

As soon as this information was received, notices advising the public of the risk were put up next to the affected areas.

Upon their natural demise, algal blooms can absorb significant amounts of dissolved oxygen from the water, thereby undermining the viability of fish and invertebrate species.

During late July and early August, blooms formed in Albion Channel and these were treated through chemical means. This resulted in the death of the bloom and a consequent loss of dissolved oxygen in the water. These conditions were exacerbated by the failure of the borehole feeding Albion Channel, where the pump had failed, despite routine maintenance carried out earlier in the year.

Work was initiated immediately to remove decaying material from the channel and an aerator was brought in to force air back into the water through mechanical means. The water supply was restored through the replacement of the borehole pump. As a consequence of this bloom, a small number of fish were lost in the channel.

A further bloom developed at Surrey Water in mid August. In this instance, no chemical treatment was applied to the water and the bloom died very rapidly, possibly as a consequence of diluted sewage contamination entering from the Thames (to which Surrey Water is linked though tidal exchange).

Three large air compressors were deployed here to raise the oxygen level of the water. The Environment Agency also attended to add chemical to the water to raise the oxygen level in the water.

A significant number of fish were lost as a consequence of the development of this bloom.

Following dissolved oxygen tests at the end of August, all of the equipment deployed was removed because these tests revealed that oxygen levels were acceptable.

Officers are keeping the situation under constant review and should the situation deteriorate, measures will be taken to protect fish stocks through further re-oxygenation.

It is planned to re-stock the affected areas under the supervision of the Environment Agency in due course.

13. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN

What is being done and what is going to be done to improve the management of Surrey Water et al in order to ensure that the current problems with the water do not reach this stage again?

RESPONSE

Officers are currently in the process of recruiting a new waterways officer whose responsibility it will be to research, develop and deploy management plans for all of the council's water bodies (including those in Rotherhithe).

These management plans will be developed and implemented in full co-operation with members, local community groups, concerned organisations and individuals so that the correct balance is struck between the requirements of amenity and ecology in the management of these assets. Research and benchmarking will also be undertaken to ensure that the council benefits from the best advice available in respect of the management of such areas.

At the same time, officers are reviewing the deployment of resources in the Rotherhithe water areas with a view to re-directing resources into the management of the water bodies. One initial objective will be the implementation of new management procedures for South Dock Marina to render this facility more cost effective, thereby freeing up additional resource for the other sites in the area.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

I am particularly interested in the point he made regarding a review of resources for the waterways. Local residents in Rotherhithe have spoken of an agreement between the council and the management of the Surrey Quays shopping centre whereby monies from the leasehold of the land they occupy will contribute to the maintenance of the waterways. Would the executive member be able to look into this to see if this is a feasible source of funds to safeguard the future of the waterways?

RESPONSE

Yes. I know Councillor Rajan has been in touch with officers about this issue and as soon as we are able to appoint a new waterways officer, then that is what they will be able to start work on.

14. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MARK PURSEY

Could the executive member please comment on the recycling rates published recently in the Evening Standard and could he please clear up the confusion surrounding what is in fact a Southwark success?

RESPONSE

The recycling figures published in the Evening Standard (showing Southwark to have a recycling rate of 4%) were taken from the Municipal Waste Management Survey for England for 2002/03, published by Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The figures published were those returned by Southwark for recycling activity over the period April 2002 to March 2003. Given the historical nature of the information published in the Evening Standard, the significant improvements that Southwark has made in recycling over the past 2 years were not reflected. It is anticipated that these improvements will however be reflected in the 2003/04 DEFRA published data.

Southwark's recycling rate for July 2004 is 10.7% a near three-fold increase compared to our rate of 3.6% for 2001/02.

This substantial increase has been achieved by ensuring that it has never been easier to recycle in Southwark. Two hundred new recycling sites on housing estates throughout Southwark, an enhanced bring site infrastructure, a kerbside collection service for low rise properties for paper, glass and cans means that approximately 80% of residents now have easy access to recycling of three materials and this is set to grow to over 90% by the end of the year.

This year, we have also launched a new borough-wide collection of garden waste, adding still further to the recycling opportunities for our residents.

We have also extended the facilities at our re-use and recycling centre at Manor Place Depot, where residents can now bring a wider range of waste for recycling, including wood, metal, plastic bottles, batteries, and motor oil.

Underpinning the significant enhancement to the recycling infrastructure is an extensive education and awareness raising campaign that focuses on both the macro and micro level. At the macro level the 'I recycle because ...' campaign establishes the premise that everyone recycles for a different reason and sets the framework for bespoke scheme level awareness raising.

However, this is only the start as Southwark is one of the first boroughs in the country to be bidding for government funds to build a new state of the art waste treatment facility, of a type more commonly found in Europe, which will extract all recyclable materials before the remaining waste is converted into compost or fuel. The new facility will place Southwark at the forefront of waste management in the UK and will seek to deliver a recycling rate of 50% by 2020, notably exceeding government and regional targets.

Southwark may have traditionally had a low recycling rate but it's improving and is set to improve still further both in the short, medium and long term.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MARK PURSEY TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

The Environment Minister, Elliot Morley has a house in the borough and I wondered that considering he has obviously benefited from our newly

expanded curb-side collection schemes, I wonder if he has written to us either to congratulate us as a council on the service we're providing to Southwark residents and improvements we've made or written to congratulate us for assisting him personally?

RESPONSE

I don't know personally where the Environment Minister lives, but if he is benefiting from a service that wasn't ever offered to any Minister, MP or Joe public by the Labour Party when they ran Southwark council, then I am sure he is as pleased as any other resident is. No doubt that he will be rather upset that DEFRA figures that he publishes are always 2 years out of date and therefore reflect the abject failure of the Labour Party to ever make any priority of recycling what-so-ever and I'm sure he would join with the whole chamber, in delighting in the fact that recycling has trebled in the last 2 years since the Liberal Democrats took control of the council.

15. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY BASSOM

Will the executive member support me in my representations to Transport for London to get the phasing of the new traffic lights at the junction of St James Road and Southwark Park Road extended so that pedestrians have longer than 10 seconds to cross this busy junction?

RESPONSE

Yes, I will.

We have been advised by Transport for London that as part of their signal modernisation programme at the junction of Southwark Park Road/St James Road has now been completed. As part of this work tactile buttons for the use of the visually impaired have been introduced at this site. It has been established that the signal timings for these traffic lights allow a minimum of 13 seconds for pedestrians to cross the road during the green man pedestrian. The council has recognised that this junction is on an important route to shops and local facilities and will at its next meeting with Transport for London be requesting that they provide additional time for pedestrians.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY BASSOM TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

Could you see if funding can be sought to undertake an audit of all the junctions within the borough to see how many of them actually have a tactile cone for use for the visually impaired and also how long pedestrians are being given to cross the road?

RESPONSE

We have just gone out to consultation on our draft road safety strategy and I can't, off-hand, remember whether that is included in the strategy but I will note that as your formal response and will perhaps be able to include that in

the work programme under that strategy as I think it is a worthwhile thing to do.

16. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE

Could the executive member tell me how much consideration there has been for partnership working with other boroughs with regard to Southwark's long-term waste management strategy?

RESPONSE

The Council did consider whether it could enter into partnership with local authorities in the region to establish a new waste facility. However, Southwark is one of only 12 unitary waste disposal authorities in London, 21 authorities form part of three joint disposal authorities in London, the North, East and West London Waste Authorities and the Western Riverside Waste Authority.

In terms of the neighbouring boroughs to Southwark, Greenwich and Lewisham to the east, both have long term contracts to deliver waste into South East London Combined Heat and Power (SELCHP). As a result these boroughs are not seeking alternative arrangements. Lambeth to the west is part of the Western Riverside Waste Authority, which awarded a long-term waste contract in 2000. The City of Westminster, the Corporation of London and Tower Hamlets to the north all have long term waste disposal contracts currently in place and the London borough's of Croydon and Merton to the south have existing waste disposal arrangements for the medium term.

It is therefore not possible for Southwark to enter into partnership arrangements in the medium term.

Several options are open to the council as a unitary authority in terms of how it delivers its waste strategy in the medium to long term. Some of the options would require the council to continue to rely upon securing capacity at waste facilities over which it has little or no influence. Nationally, and in London particularly, there is limited capacity at existing waste facilities.

In addition, the Mayor of London's strategy clearly makes the case for the need for new recycling and processing facilities in London and identifies that in future London cannot continue to export its waste to surrounding areas.

Furthermore, the government's planning policy guidance 10 and the new guidance for waste planning in local development frameworks places a requirement on each waste planning authority to ensure their unitary development plans contain sufficient suitable sites for the management of waste arising in their area.

It is therefore unlikely that the council would be able to secure sustainable capacity at an existing facility within close proximity of the borough to deliver its long term aims set out in its waste strategy. Equally, to rely upon the development of suitable facilities outside the borough to achieve its

targets for diversion from landfill would place Southwark at considerable risk of non-compliance with both national and regional requirements.

It has therefore been determined that the council must procure a new waste facility to meet its future waste management requirements.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

Has Southwark written to any of the following councils to ask them if they would be interested in partnership arrangements? That would be Lewisham, Greenwich, City of London, Corporation of London, Tower Hamlets, Lambeth, Croydon or Merton?

RESPONSE

No I can't answer that question. I will ask officers to write.

17. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCROFT

Despite repeated promises, Nunhead and East Peckham residents are still waiting for phase 1 of the improvements planned to Queens Road station (opening up the station forecourt). When will this phase be completed?

RESPONSE

The proposed improvements to the forecourt at Queens Road Peckham Station are partially on land owned by Network Rail. Accordingly, formal agreement to the proposals is required from Network Rail and the rail operator – Southern, prior to work commencing. This formal approval is expected in mid September.

The Council have engaged a contractor to carry out the proposed works and subject to agreement from Network Rail and various health and safety procedures being undertaken, it is hoped that work on-site will start in late September or early October. Construction is expected to take 7-8 weeks from the date of commencement.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCROFT TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

Could he briefly say what the position of the executive is to the possibility of council funds towards improving disabled access at Queens Road station and will he write to me to clarify what has happened since he gave his commitment at the meeting he came to a couple of months ago?

RESPONSE

Rather than write to Councillor Thorncroft, I'll give him the answer now. I went to that meeting and I can't recall ever mentioning a figure, though others in the room may have mentioned one. I will make the position clear as I did then. I do not think it is the role of LB Southwark to fund and

subsidise other public bodies to carry out works that they should be carrying out. I am very sorry that the Disability Discrimination Act doesn't cover railway stations, I think that is a disgrace, but whether or not it does, then Network Rail and the local train operators and anyone else who may have responsibility for the railways, should be investing in the infrastructure. What I did make clear though is that I don't have a theological view that we shouldn't ever spend a penny on these things and if the council can find a way to put in some money as a way of getting negotiations going with Network Rail et al then I think we should do that to lever in outside funding, but we certainly should not be handing over blank cheques to organisations who should be funding the investment themselves. Following on from that meeting I did write to Paul Evans as I undertook to do. I haven't seen a response, but I will chase that up as it is clearly well overdue.

18. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

It appears that a significant number of recycling collections have been missed in Faraday ward, increasing the amount of street litter as a result. What steps has the executive member and the environment & leisure department taken to improve the situation?

RESPONSE

The waste management & transport division has implemented a number of initiatives over the past two years to drive down the total number of missed collections of household waste, including recycling collections. These include:-

- Rescheduling collection rounds for recycling services
- The procurement of an entire new refuse and recycling service fleet with narrow bodies to aid accessibility
- Providing a new management structure and enhanced supervisory resources
- Working with housing and highways to eliminate access difficulties through the implementation of parking restrictions
- Working with parking to clamp and remove illegally parked vehicles
- Replaced over 800 old paladins to eliminate manually handling difficulties

The service is now larger than ever and undertakes in total over 1 million collections per month. In August 2004, only 741 of collections per 100,000 collections were missed which compared to the performance levels of 2002/03 and 2003/04 represents an improvement of 77% and 38% respectively.

In terms of door to door recycling collections specifically, only 152 collections were missed in August 2004, 18 of which were in the Faraday ward.

We are determined to maintain and improve this performance level still further and improve the general quality of the service experienced by users.

We are continuing with our concerted effort to address access difficulties and the introduction of global positioning system on vehicles is allowing us to identify persistent problems and take remedial action as appropriate.

The significant improvement in performance of the service reflects the new brand 'Making waste work'

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

There are still problems with getting these recycling bins emptied. I hope that you are determined to improve the service as you state.

RESPONSE

Yes of course we are determined to improve the service. I think it's worth mentioning that the service a) has been introduced and b) is improving but that doesn't mean that there aren't localised problems. I am sure that Councillor Lauder will have reported them directly to officers and hopefully they will be on the case in terms of that issue. Of course we will keep these things under review, if we need to invest more in terms of money, officer time, effort or more publicity, or whatever, we will keep all of those options open to ensure we hit our targets.

19. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MICHELLE PEARCE

When can we expect the investigation into the Dulwich floods to be complete and a report available for Village ward residents?

RESPONSE

As part of the investigation of the flooding the council has commissioned an engineering study of the drainage infrastructure in the area. This report is due to be delivered by the end of September. Once received it will be included within the full investigation report. This report will be available for The Dulwich Community Council in November.

20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER

There are a number of ground level car parks in Peckham which are very popular and an underused multi storey car park. Does the executive member have any plans to address the lack of use of the multi storey car park and if so, do those plans include closure of any of the ground level car parks?

RESPONSE

We are currently in the process of up-grading CCTV cameras in the multi-storey car park. This will help improve the security around the cinema entrance and stairwells. We are also aiming to achieve the standard of the "Safer Parking Scheme" an initiative of the association of chief police officers that replaced the secured car park scheme. There are also plans to

introduce promotional days with the Peckham traders, and town centre management. The proposed review of Peckham on-street parking is expected to increase use as it is anticipated that permitted parking will be focused on the needs of residents, their visitors and short stay parking. Those requiring longer stay parking, of two hours or more, will be encouraged to use the car parks.

Currently, there are no immediate plans to close either of the surface car parks. In terms of reviewing options for the multi-storey car park long-term proposals are subject to the proposed Tram route. Confirmation of the tram is expected from Transport for London and the Greater London Authority by November 2004 and until that is confirmed proposals are on hold.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

What are your targets for the numbers that you would like to see use the multi-storey car park in the future?

RESPONSE

Off the top of my head I don't have any operation targets and I'm not sure what Councillor Glover is directing that question at. Perhaps he could write to me with more details of what he is aiming at and I will try and help him as best I can.

21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BILLY KAYADA

Will the executive member explain to this chamber why Southwark has not signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change?

RESPONSE

The Nottingham Declaration on Climate change was launched on 25 October 2000 and committed its signatories amongst other things, to 'prepare a plan with our local communities, by December 2002, to address the causes and effects of climate change'.

It has been signed up to by 55 authorities out of 454 across the UK or roughly 12%.

I do not know why Southwark did not sign the Nottingham declaration at the time.

Whilst, I agree with almost all its content and applaud its aims it has no legal standing, or widespread buy-in from the vast majority of local authorities.

However, be assured that the key issues identified in the declaration are mirrored in our forthcoming sustainability policy, which will go to executive for approval in the near future.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BILLY KAYADA TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

You express surprise as to why Southwark did not sign the Nottingham declaration at the time. Can you indicate when it might do so?

RESPONSE

As I point out in the answer, I have no problem with almost all that's in the declaration. I'm not sure that signing something now, that details an action plan that should have been delivered 2 years ago is particularly worthwhile. While I was doing research on this matter, I was amused to note that I'm not sure how much this declaration was really aimed at getting the broader support going and that's because one of the bullet points was expressing delight that the new Local Government Act 2000 would give us the powers necessary to tackle climate change and I thought any authority where Councillor Eckersley had influenced perhaps that wouldn't have been signed up to. I think the important thing is that we accept that it is a real issue. I was pleased that both Michael Howard and Tony Blair made speeches on climate change this week and I think we need to put together a serious programme to show what we're doing about climate change. I am happy to look at the Nottingham Declaration and look at all the bullet points and make sure we're doing it and have some action.

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

In light of the government's mistakes with the 2001 census, which resulted in an understating of Southwark's population by 4800, would the executive member for resources please state when, and in what amount, the council will be reimbursed by the government for the consequent erroneous grant settlements for 2003/04 and 2004/05 and would she state how the executive intends to spend the reimbursement? (see Public Finance 16/22 July 2004 p.16)

RESPONSE

In May the government announced that they would be producing amending reports for the 2003/04 and 2004/05 settlements because of errors in the population estimates. The government can amend government grants up to two years after the settlement, however that amendment can only be done once.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) is expected to announce revised mid-year population estimates for 2001 and 2002 during September 2004. These revisions will include the increased population from the 2001 census and be taken into account in the amending reports.

The population increase of 4,800 should increase the total formula spending share (FSS) for Southwark both in 2003-04 and 2004-05. By how much it will increase is unclear, as the government has not as yet issued any exemplifications. An increase in FSS does not always translate into an increase in grant because of the floors and ceilings mechanism. In 2003-04 Southwark was at the ceiling, therefore any increase in FSS would just mean an increase in the gap between what we should have got if there was

no ceiling and what we actually received. In 2004-05 Southwark was just below the ceiling so there is capacity to have our grant increased up to a maximum of £416,000. We cannot say what the population increase would actually mean to Southwark's finances until the government has re-run the whole formula.

Given the uncertainty over how much if any we may get and when we may get it, any spending plans are premature. The earliest we could get the reimbursement is in the 2005-06 settlement otherwise it would be in the 2006-07 settlement.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

Please indicate whether any government body has communicated with Southwark and/or any other local authority with a view to reducing the risks of such regrettable errors in future and if so, what input Southwark has made so far to the consultation.

RESPONSE

I'm sorry I don't have information on that. I don't think the Office of National Statistics has consulted us but I will certainly discuss with officers and if any contact has been made, I will ensure that they let you know.

23. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR KENNY MIZZI

In light of the executive's decision of 6th July 2004 to earmark £1 million of the proceeds of the sale of Site D Bermondsey Spa for local purposes, instead of pooling the entire proceeds for the borough-wide capital programme, would the executive member for resources (a) please publish a schedule of all disposals where similar earmarking has been agreed, with information on progress in each case in effecting the disposal and (b) (if the proceeds have been received) in achieving the agreed earmarked purpose; and (c) would she set out what the Executive's policy is in agreeing departures from the normal "pooling" practice?

RESPONSE

- (a) The attached schedule lists disposals either completed to date in 2004/05 or approved but not yet completed in 2004/05 or later years. Notes are included from the Property Division on the progress of the planned disposals.
- (b) Of the completed disposals on the attached list, the Adys Road, Lyndhurst Way and Marsden Road items have all been earmarked for the East Dulwich Estate regeneration scheme. The two Bermondsey Spa items have been earmarked for the Southwark estate initiative scheme. Under both these initiatives the receipts have been earmarked and achieved in advance of substantial spend being incurred.
- (c) Of the planned disposals on the attached list, Bermondsey A, D S & U have been earmarked for Bermondsey Spa regeneration scheme. Bermondsey F and the Cobourg House disposals have been earmarked

for the East Dulwich Estate regeneration scheme. The Peckham Partnership receipts are being recycled back into the Peckham Partnership area. The two Gordon Road items are of small value, and will be used to finance affordable housing.

- (d) The effect of earmarking capital receipts from disposals is to maximise the amount the council can retain and spend for certain projects instead of paying over 75% or 50% of the proceeds to the government under the housing revenue account capital receipts pooling mechanism. Nearly all the earmarked disposals listed, completed or planned, are housing in nature.
- (e) The executive must be mindful of the pressures on the capital programme in general and the need for flexibility to respond to these. Our policy therefore is to consider in each case the merits of earmarking any capital receipts for specific projects.

FOUR YEAR PLANNED DISPOSAL PROGRAMME

Completed Disposals 2004/05

NO	SITE	VAL	WARD	INST No	CTTE	DWELL	OR OCCUPIED	TENURE	ACRES	HA	DECLARED SURPLUS	CTTE/DEL APPROVAL	Remarks / Progress	LEGAL COMMENTS
1	Adys Road, 29, SE15	PD	TL	1078	H	1	V	F			30-Jul-03	19-Feb-04	Freehold subject to long leasehold interest on 1st Flr. Gnd Fir VP. In negs with 1st fir leasidr	Completed 11th June 2004
2	Bermondsey Spa - Sites E & H, SE16	TT	RI		H		V	F	0.2			01-Nov-03	Part of redevelopment of Sites E, F, H, S & U	Completed 1st April 2004
3	Bermondsey Spa - Sites E & H, SE16	TT	RI		CPHA		V	F	1.63			01-Nov-03	Part of redevelopment of Sites E, F, H, S & U	Completed 1st April 2004
5	Lyndhurst Way, 41, SE15	PD	TL	1269	H	1	V	F			13-Jan-04	30-Mar-04	Sold at auction on 3rd June 2004	Completed on 29th June 2004
6	Marsden Road, 24, SE15	PD	SC	846	H	1	V	F			17-Apr-03	04-Jun-03	Sold at auction on 4th June 2003. Completion delayed due to defective title.	Completed 26th April 2004

Planned Disposals 2004-2008

NO	SITE	VAL	WARD	INST No	CTTE	DWELL	VACANT OR OCCUPIED	TENURE	ACRES	HA	DATE DECLARED SURPLUS	DATE OF CTTE/DEL APPROVAL	Remarks / Progress	LEGAL COMMENTS
11	Bermondsey Spa - Site A, SE16	CLM	GR		R			F	1			01-Nov-03	Planning permission granted. Drafting development agreement.	Legal instructed - Exchange due August 2004
12	Bermondsey Spa - Site D, SE16	TT	GR		H			F	1			06-Jul-04	Design being developed	
13	Bermondsey Spa - Sites S & U, SE16 HRA	TT	RI		H			F	4.5			01-Nov-03	Preferred developer selected. Hyde now developer	Legal instructed - contracts due
14	Bermondsey Spa - Site F SE16 HRA (SEI)	TT	RI		H			F	4.5			01-Nov-03	Preferred developer selected. Hyde now developer	Legal instructed - contracts due
24	Cobourg Road, 19, SE5	PD	EW	516	H	1	V	F			03-Dec-00	03-Feb-04	Sold at auction on 13th July 2004.	Legal instructed 29th June 2004
25	Cobourg Road, 49, SE5	PD	EW	1351	H	1	O	F				13-Jan-04	Possible sale to current tenants.	
44	Gordon Road, 111, SE15	PD	TL	868	H	1	V	F	0.08	0.03	11-Nov-02	14-Apr-03	Terms Agreed	Legal instructed 5th August 2003
45	Gordon Road, 113, SE15	PD	TL	869	H	1	V	F	0.088	0.04	11-Nov-02	14-Apr-03	Terms Agreed	Legal instructed 5th August 2003
80	Peckham Partnership Phase 6D/7B(i), SE15 Tranche 4	JO	PE		PP	0	V	L	4.08	1.65		09-Apr-02	Lease completed, but money to be received in phases and due 27th December 2004	
90	Peckham Partnership Phase 8a(i)	JO	PE		PP	0		L				17-Dec-02	Private Housing for sale site - Planning application 30th January 2004. Planning approval granted 27th July 2004	Exchanged on 24th December 2003

24. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAM ROWE

In the light of the increasing number of “partnered contracts” being entered into (e.g. Alfred Salter Neighbourhood, £19 million; executive 13 August 2004) allowing works to be ordered on a non-competitive basis, would the executive member for resources please publish a schedule of all such contracts entered into across the council to date showing:

- a. Basic description – e.g date of authorisation/contractor/value originally authorised/purpose of contract.
- b. Whether works are being (or were) carried out on time and to budget originally authorised.
- c. Any other information the executive member considers relevant to the overall duty to secure value for money.

RESPONSE

The “Rethinking Construction” agenda has been championed by the department of trade & industry since 1998 and at the heart of that agenda has been the partnering contracts approach. In essence, the approach aims to bring together all parties involved or affected by the construction (from the council and tenants to the constructors & designers) to help achieve a more than satisfactory outcome for all, while ensuring that best value is still realised.

This approach still allows for open competitive tendering to take place at the beginning of the programme, in order to form the right strategic partnership to take it all forward. Although some elements of the programme may then be sub-contracted this is set against an already agreed “guaranteed maximum price”, for which there are often shared incentives to achieve savings against. The partnering agreements operate under an open book arrangement, which means as a client we have access to the contractors’ costs. The ethos of partnering also allows for an agreed element of profit. Best Value is ensured during the life of the contract by a robust monitoring set up which regularly reviews pre-agreed performance measures.

Southwark has to date entered into two partnering contracts: the first for the Alfred Salter Neighbourhood which came into effect in July 2002 under delegated authority by the strategic director of housing and was awarded to United Housing Ltd; and the more recent one was for the Peckham area which was awarded in May this year by the executive to Apollo London Ltd.

Both partnering contracts are for capital works in defined areas, and in the case of the Peckham area partnering it includes the regeneration of the Friary Estate. Indicative values in the OJEC advertisements were £7 million for Alfred Salter and £15.5 million for Peckham, both for a period of 3 years but with the option to extend for a further two years subject to the contractors’ satisfactory performance. There is no minimum sum for these contracts.

To date only the Alfred Salter partnering contract has completed works packages. For the packages we have data on, there was an initial delay in

getting contracts on site largely due to leasehold and tenant consultation – particularly Section 20 notices. In later contracts the time for pre-contract works was almost 50% lower than the target set. For the works themselves the data collected shows that the ‘time predictability’ is slightly longer than target (3 & 4% over), but compared to the durations on traditionally tendered contracts (31% over) it is still very positive.

All works have been completed within contract budget. However, variations can still occur where ‘reasonable and/or unforeseen circumstances’ or latent defects are identified which will increase the scope of the works and the subsequent cost.

As mentioned above, issues have arisen in relation to time and cost predictability. However, the partnering approach is still relatively new and Southwark Council is endeavouring to make sure that all lessons that can be learnt during the initial contracts are being taken fully on board to ensure the “partnering ethos” of continual improvement.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAM ROWE TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

The original Alfred Salter contract was advertised at an expected cost of £7 million according to this we are now up to £19 million authorised as maximum. Could you tell us more about it?

RESPONSE

The Alfred Salter NHO did come to the executive in May 2004, with a request for approval to extension on the contract because of latent defects which hadn’t emerged before and there was some over-spend as well and I must say at that time, the executive announced displeasure at being asked to endorse over-spends, but this is done on an open-book method and we are assured by officers that the money is well spent. I think that there could be more monitoring going on and I would hope that officers will bring reports to us on a more regular basis. In fact I will ask for it on how expenditure is going along with regard to the initial contract and when new works are added, because it is a partnering contract, then hopefully we can be informed and I am willing to share this information with everybody here.

25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

Following the government’s substantial cut to the ‘supporting people’ grant that is given to local authorities, could the executive member explain how Southwark has a) made the best of a bad situation and b) looked to make improvements to the service so that all vulnerable adults might benefit?

RESPONSE

Over the first two years of the supporting people programme the government has reduced Southwark’s funding by £813,524 and in addition did not increase the budget for 2004/05 in line with inflation.

The commissioning body has undertaken strategic reviews of older people’s, hate crime, learning disability and hate crime support services,

which have met the required savings targets and in addition in excess of £1.6 m will be redirected into new services. These include outreach and dementia services for elders, a new women's refuge and a service working with the victims of hate crime in the borough.

It is likely that further budget reductions will be imposed on the council's programme over the coming years.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT CARE

How will the new outreach service for the elderly work to improve the quality of life of those people who receive this service?

RESPONSE

Specialist outreach services will enable those groups of people to live at home for much longer by actually receiving needs-based support. Certainly in the past, the older people in the BME groups have not wanted to look at sheltered housing or residential care unless they really had to. Those people with dementia had been moved to nursing or residential homes quite quickly. These services will provide needs-based support which will allow these people to stay in their homes for much longer than they have in the past.

26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR TAYO SITU

How many full time staff were employed in the sheltered housing service in April 2002 and how many full time staff are currently employed?

RESPONSE

As at April 2002 there were 57 permanent staff employed in the sheltered housing service. As at 1 September, 2004 there are 53 permanent staff employed in the sheltered housing service.

27. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN FLANNERY

Could I please be updated on funding for the security measures for Lockwood and Newplace Square?

RESPONSE

I am happy to report that the £2 million funding for the security measures on Newplace Square is in place and the contract is due to start on site later this year. Further funding of £2.3 million has been awarded to the council for works to Lockwood Square through the London Housing Board, and the detailed scheme is currently being developed in consultation with the community.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN FLANNERY TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY

Through discussions, the executive member is aware that there is a shortfall in the funding for the proposed project for Lockwood Square. Would he assure me that he will commit officers' time to meet the shortfall?

RESPONSE

I will certainly instruct officers to come up with a resolution and investigate what can be done to ensure that this goes through.

28. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON

Could the executive member for housing please update me on progress with the housing allocations review?

RESPONSE

The draft lettings policy was agreed in principle by the council's executive committee in April 2004. Additionally, a programme of consultation was approved including presentations and briefing sessions to a range of groups, including neighbourhood forums, partnerships and council staff. Consultation documents have been sent to voluntary and community groups, faith and youth groups and a range of support agencies.

All applicants and tenants registered on the housing list have been informed of the proposed changes and their views invited via a housing options newsletter. Additionally, existing tenants have been invited to take part in the consultation via Southwark housing news. A total of 6 focus groups have been conducted with the following: two homeless peoples groups, African group, Caribbean group and two Somali groups. The aim was to examine participants understanding and awareness of allocations and to explore their reaction to the proposed advertising and bidding process and to identify accessibility issues.

The issues arising from the consultation process and support arrangements will be considered by the allocations policy review board later this month and early October.

The housing scrutiny sub-committee will then consider the outcome of the consultation and final proposals for the new lettings policy on 10 November 2004 and for final consideration by the executive on 30 November 2004.

It is anticipated that once approved, the new proposals will be implemented early in 2005.

29. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU

Could the executive member for housing and community safety please outline any progress that the council has made in providing a better deal for leaseholders recently?

RESPONSE

On November 4 2003 the executive received a report from the strategic director of housing outlining over twenty individual leasehold management services that were to be reviewed in conjunction with leaseholder representatives from the leaseholders council. Since that date the leaseholder council has received reports on the following services:

<u>Service</u>	<u>Date</u>
• Buy Backs	26/01/04
• Service Charge Loans	26/01/04
• Pre assignment Enquiries	24/02/04
• Postponements	29/03/04
• Voluntary Charges	14/06/04
• Insurance	14/06/04

Reports setting out recommendations in respect of buy backs and service charge loans were considered and agreed by the executive on 29th March 2004 and 4th May 2004 respectively. In July 2004 I agreed a new policy on the subject of voluntary charges through the individual member decision process. On 27 September 2004 the leaseholder council is to receive a report on `service charge reductions' setting out the council's approach to the secretary of state's directions and a second report on Insurance. The report on service charge reductions was considered by the leaseholder working party on August 9.

Southwark Council is committed to providing a full range of services to leaseholders that reflect their tenure and the needs of the rapidly growing owner occupied portfolio.

30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR ALFRED BANYA

It is rumoured that the auditors found evidence that Perronet House Tenants Management Committee (TMC) had been carrying out inappropriate repairs for leaseholders. Could the executive member confirm whether or not this is the case? If it is the case could the executive member set out what steps are being taken to redress this, in particular what steps are being taken to recover the funds?

RESPONSE

The recent audit has raised a number of issues of concern to the council and officers will be taking appropriate advice to protect the council's position, but that at this stage it is inappropriate to go into further details so as not to prejudice any future action by the council. Members should note that the strategic director of housing has recently served a notice of termination of the management agreement on Perronet House TMC and the properties will return to council management in October 2004.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ALFRED BANYA TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY

I acknowledge that it is inappropriate to give details of proposed actions, but could he give an indication of how soon he will be in a position to give a report to members to what actions have been planned to protect the council's position and what mechanisms will be used to report back to members on actions planned or taken?

RESPONSE

An outline will be done as soon as practicable. In terms of the update, the council will take over the running from October 1st. In terms of mechanisms and how this is reported back, I will be more than willing for this to be scrutinised by the housing scrutiny sub-committee or for the matter to be brought back to the executive.

31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH

Can you indicate why Brookstone and Nunhead Tenants & Residents Association have lost their funding allocation for 2004-05?

RESPONSE

Individual tenants and residents associations can apply for annual funding to the tenant fund management committee. In order to be considered for funding tenant and residents associations must comply with specific criteria which includes the requirement that an annual general meeting has taken place within the last 12 months (in compliance with the constitution of the tenant and resident association).

In the case of Brookstone and Nunhead Tenant & Resident Association an application for funding has not been awarded for 2004/05 because the annual general meeting that was organised on 5th February 2004 was not quorate

The council has offered to facilitate the organisation of another annual general meeting including assisting the association to increase attendance, but to date this offer has not been accepted. Until this takes place the association is not meeting the minimum criteria required for funding to be considered.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY

Given that the meeting was ruled in quorate, because a resident who had previously participated in meetings was unable to participate, does he agree that it is unfair that the T&RA has to re-run it's AGM and what is he proposing to prevent such errors occurring again in the future?

RESPONSE

I wasn't aware that the individual had previously been able to participate so that is indeed unfortunate. I will obviously discuss the matter with officers and will write to you in due course.

32. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD

Why at the time of submitting this question have leaseholders still not received their service charge bills for April and July 2004?

RESPONSE

During 2004, we have been addressing leaseholders' concerns over the accuracy of estimated service charge calculations. The project has now been completed, where possible identifying service charge costs at block and estate level. Leaseholder council have supported this initiative and leaseholder representatives have contributed to the process.

Service charges have previously been calculated on an averaged basis at either a borough-wide level or a neighbourhood level. This has resulted in wide differences between the estimated charge and the actual charge, which is based on specific costs for that building, estate or local housing management area.

The work of identifying costs at block and estate level has taken longer than expected and all leaseholders are being written to, apologising for the delay. The estimated charges are due to go out in October.

33. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS

Would the executive member for regeneration outline what measures have been undertaken to develop ideas to market the site occupied by the East Dulwich Community Centre since 1998?

RESPONSE

Housing department declared the property surplus to their requirements in April 2003, and it was passed to property. Prior to this date some informal discussions did take place with the adjacent doctor's surgery that had expressed a wish to expand their practice. This did not proceed any further than the initial stages however.

Ongoing discussions are taking place with the East Dulwich Community Centre Association (EDCCA) to provide a new community centre on the existing site, subject to development of part of the site for residential development to assist in the funding of the new centre. Recent discussions between officers and the EDCCA have proved positive and both parties are considering various options. It is anticipated that a mutually satisfactory agreement can be reached before the end of the year and that a formal proposal can be put to the executive early in the new year.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Could he give further details to the site of the adjacent doctor's surgery?

RESPONSE

We are in talks with the centre at the moment and there are a number of options being discussed. I believe the management committee have been approached by the GP surgery who are very keen to purchase part, if not all of the site. It is something I understand the committee are not keen to discuss further and negotiations are ongoing between myself, the community centre and officers to come to a satisfactory conclusion.

34. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY

Will the executive member ensure that a regeneration officer is given responsibility for the Queens Road area given that there is unspent environmental improvement programme funding, section 106 funds in the pipeline and potential for cleaner greener safer funding and consult with the ward members and the community and puts an improvement strategy in place?

RESPONSE

It is assumed that this refers to Queens Road Station: The environmental improvement programme (EIP) funding is earmarked for the station forecourt improvements. These works will proceed as soon as the management agreement is completed between the council and Network Rail. This matter is in the hands of the lawyers and is being treated as a priority. Section 106 monies will be forthcoming in due course from the redevelopment proposed to take place on the site adjacent to the station. This aspect will include further improvements to the station forecourt.

Consultation with the community council will continue. Ward members are being kept informed of progress and this will continue.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

I have grave concerns that there are no supplementary planning guidance for that area and that section 106 money seems to be divvied up on no particular plan and an opportunity to spend a lot of capital money is being squandered because there is no overall strategy. I would ask whether he would ensure that an officer was given over-sight of all the plans.

RESPONSE

I do agree that it may be an idea to look at some supplementary planning guidance for the Peckham area. There are lots of new developments within the area and the UDP within the Peckham area have been identified for further development in the future. In terms of Section 106 funding, I take

Councillor Colley's point officers are actually working on a Section 106 strategy, which I hope will be completed before the end of the year.

35. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR CHARLIE SMITH

Can the executive member outline the executive's current policy and strategy to ensure Southwark's housing stock meets the decent homes standard by the deadline announced by central government?

RESPONSE

All social landlords are required to meet the government's decent homes target by 2010 although predictably enough the Comprehensive Spending Review 2004 failed to provide any additional resources.

Our investment programme is designed to have the maximum impact on levels of non-decency within the stock: Decent homes is the main driver for all major works contracts; £25-£30 million per annum is specifically available for this standard; £2 million is allocated to meet decency where properties are void and an additional £25 million has been targeted at priority neighbourhoods in line with the neighbourhood renewal strategy. The major regeneration and redevelopment schemes also bring whole areas up to the decent homes standard, as well as addressing wider problems.

In total, between now and 2010, an estimated £438 million will be invested in Southwark's stock - the major part being targeted towards meeting decent homes.

Work is currently being carried out to look at the feasibility and opportunity of increasing resources through prudential and capital borrowing, as set out in the 2004/5 housing revenue account budget report to executive (February 2004).

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CHARLIE SMITH TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In reference to the third paragraph of your answer, can you tell me where the £438 million will be raised?

RESPONSE

The council is probably facing a shortfall of a quarter of a billion pounds in terms of bringing homes up to government decent homes standards. We are currently speaking to ministers about how that shortfall can be made up. Two points I'd like to make, during prime minister's question time, the PM was harangued by one of his own back-benchers about putting this onerous duty on local authorities to meet decent homes standards without providing any extra sources of funding. Another point is had this government not taken us to war in Iraq, the money that was saved would have been enough to bring every council home in the UK up to decent home standards, four times over.

36. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ALUN HAYES

Could the executive member explain why the decision on whether or not to declare a new renewal area in Nunhead and/or East Peckham has been repeatedly delayed? Could he also give a firm date for when the decision will be taken?

RESPONSE

There has been no delay in making a decision.

Government guidance is that before declaring a renewal area local authorities should undertake a complex assessment procedure known as a Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment or NRA. The NRA consists of a socio-environmental and economic assessment of the area under consideration. A key part of the process is obtaining detailed feedback from residents and other stakeholders on their views about the area.

The NRA in East Peckham and Nunhead has progressed well with nearly all of the physical surveying work complete. This has included both internal and external housing surveys and a full survey of local environmental issues. The consultation element of the NRA is now underway with the magazine 'SE15' being delivered to all households within the area over the next few weeks. This magazine includes three detailed questionnaires asking for residents' and stakeholders' views on a wide range of issues.

It is a lengthy and complex process, but it is hoped that the consultation element of the NRA will be complete by early October, with the remainder of that month taken up by analysing the data.

Following this the Council will be in a position to take an in principle decision.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ALUN HAYES TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Can I ask Councillor Porter to discuss this issue with the former deputy leader, Caroline Pidgeon, because it was her who assured me that a decision on this would be made in December 2002. Can I then ask him to formally write to me and apologise for the bear-faced lie that he has said in this response, saying that there has been no delay in making a decision?

RESPONSE

I am certainly not aware of any bear-faced lie appearing in the answer. I am always delighted to speak to Councillor Pidgeon and will be happy to catch up with her sometime tomorrow to discuss the situation. In terms of the decision being undertaken it is true that the whole neighbourhood renewal process places a very onerous duty on local authorities to undertake huge amounts of surveys and huge amounts of research in areas that tell us things like its really poor in Peckham, people don't have enough money and education is not good enough. We have to work

through what the government tells us to do and we're in the process of doing that but I'm happy to look into the point you raised this evening and write to him.

37. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES

Can the executive member explain what is the executive's - as opposed to the Aylesbury New Deals for Communities - preferred policy of housing management for the Aylesbury estate – retention of the status quo or another option?

RESPONSE

Since the decision not to proceed with the stock transfer of the Aylesbury Estate, the council has been exploring options to bring in the significant investment needed for the estate. As members are aware the council was successful in securing over £11 million of London Housing Board funding for the south west quarter of the estate. At present there is no agreed option for the estate which would involve the transfer of housing management from the council. As part of the reorganisation of the housing management service it is being ensured that there is a dedicated neighbourhood management focus for the estate.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

While it's certainly true that the ballot on the Aylesbury estate in 2001 certainly did prefer wholesale stock transfer, it is widely known the Aylesbury NDC scheme is now considering alternative options for managing the stock. One of those alternatives is an arms-length management organisation. Could the executive member please tell me and the chamber what the executive's view on ALMO's is?

RESPONSE

ALMO's is one of the options that the government has asked us to look into in terms of us bringing homes up to decent homes standards. There is a duty on us to consult the tenants on the ALMO option but not necessarily to hold a ballot. I think before we've had the chance to consult the tenants it would be premature for us to say what our preferred option is.

38. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNICATION & PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR JELIL LADIPO

How many outlets will accept cash for council services following the implementation of the 'face to face' review?

RESPONSE

In total there are 266 outlets (including post offices) at which it is now possible, using swipe cards, to pay the council in cash. This is in addition to the remaining cash offices. After only three months, the extension of the swipe card service indicates a real success:- there have been more

transactions by this method than within the cash offices. Furthermore, when they open, the council's citizens will be able to pay by cheque, credit and debit card at the new one-stop-shops when they open.

39. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNICATION & PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE

Can the executive member set out the cost of production and publication of the first two editions of the members newsletter, as distributed from the borough solicitors office to all councillors?

RESPONSE

The actual publication costs for each of the first two issues was a little under £700.

Member feedback has so far been positive and the style and content are evolving to better reflect the needs of members.

The bulletin was introduced in part as a response to the Forward@Southwark process following the comprehensive performance assessment report to support councillors in all aspects of their council work. It also links with the wider Member Development Programme in providing a vehicle for updates on issues and highlighting learning opportunities.

We have obtained £170,000 from the office of the deputy prime minister capacity building fund to implement the accredited member development programme in partnership with South Bank University. We are currently seeking agreement that the member bulletin costs can be included in this programme, which will eliminate any direct cost to the council for the publication.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JELIL LADIPO TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNICATION AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

You mention the accredited member programme in partnership with the South Bank University. I'd like to ask how many councillors have actually taken part in this programme, how much is it costing the council and if in his view, the programme is giving value for money to this council?

RESPONSE

I am not responsible for resources and those issues so I cannot give you the precise response. I can tell you that participation is unlikely to be high in that scheme as it hasn't started yet. I am blindsided in being able to provide specific answers to this question. I thought the event the other weekend which sounds to be very efficient judging by the performance of the councillors involved this evening was run by the IDEA and I didn't realise that was part of the course run by South Bank university. The communication with councillors about these sorts of things was actually specifically requested for us when we had our own survey of what members wanted.

40. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID BRADBURY

Further to the letter of 21st May 2004 from Paul Robinson, chair of the Association of London Chief Education Officers to the department for education & science student finance divisional manager, reporting a collapse in confidence in the capacity of the student finance support system to work in time, can he update council assembly on the situation in Southwark?

RESPONSE

There have been a number of issues nationally with regards to student finance predominantly brought about by the change to an internet online processing system. Because the systems were running very slowly it became very difficult to process applications which are often complex and therefore time consuming. Regrettably this does mean delays. However Southwark has recruited extra staff, made information and communications technology adjustments and are using both the students loan company and another local education authority to process the backlog. This includes Saturday working. Where students have provided all the relevant information on time (the government deadline of July 2 2004 interim payments, pending full assessment, are being arranged. This is the case not only in Southwark but also, I believe, in 40 other LEAs

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID BRADBURY TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

Would he be able to let the council know, what steps are being taken to improve the situation for future so it will be unnecessary to repeat some of the rather expensive panic measures which have been needed this year and are detailed in his response.

RESPONSE

The difficulties this year have been national difficulties that are not unfamiliar when new software is introduced to deal with a new problem. There was a local difficulty when the whole operation was moved from John Smith House to Spa Road the network wasn't "robust" enough but that was put right very quickly. The team has been beefed up it's not really in our hands what happens over the national software and the national computer programming for the whole thing but one would certainly hope and I know that the chief education officers as a whole have made their feelings very plain to the government over this one.

41. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS

Can the executive member please comment on this year's key stage 2 results?

RESPONSE

Current results are still being analysed and comparative national data are not yet available for a full analysis. However, overall the results are disappointing.

For English overall results have fallen by 2 percentage points from last year (whereas nationally there has been a rise of 2 percentage points). This means that the gap between Southwark and national results has increased from 5 to 9 percentage points.

For mathematics overall results have increased by 2 percentage points (as have results nationally). Therefore the gap between Southwark and national results remains at 9 percentage points.

Aggregated English results are 7 percentage points below the education development plan (EDP) target.

Aggregated mathematics results are 10 percentage points below the EDP target.

This overall pattern masks a considerable variation in the performance of individual schools. 40 (out of 69) schools failed to reach the targets set by governors in English, while 45 failed to reach them in mathematics.

34 schools had lower results in 2004 than 2003 in English and 24 schools had lower results in mathematics.

The expected rate of progress throughout key stage 2 is two national curriculum levels. 45 schools achieved this or more in English, and 25 achieved this or more in mathematics.

The support for schools to improve results is extensive and developing further in response to the current low levels of attainment. The first area of support is from literacy and numeracy consultants (funded through the standards fund) who support schools in the implementation of the national primary strategy. This is particularly targeted at schools with areas of weakness. Last year 30 schools were supported by literacy consultants and in 19 of these English results improved. 30 schools were supported by numeracy consultants and in 21 of these mathematics results improved.

The primary consultant leader programme uses effective head teachers to support the development of leadership teams in schools where this is an identified need and there is the capacity to develop. 13 schools were involved in this programme last year, and in these schools 5 improved English results and 10 improved mathematics results.

The intensifying support programme is targeted at those schools where there is an urgent need to raise standards and previous interventions have not been successful in this. The first cohort of 16 schools was introduced to the programme during the spring term (less than 5 months before the national tests) and it is difficult to measure the impact of the programme (which continues) after so short a period. However, 9 of the schools had improved English results and 14 improved mathematics results.

Schools individual results are a major factor in the categorisation of schools by the department. This categorisation leads to differentiated intervention, challenge, monitoring and support by officers. A detailed analysis of results is already underway in order to set the work programme for officers to bring about improvement in this year.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER EDUCATION

According to the figures I've seen, Southwark has slumped to being the worst performing borough in the whole country at KS2. Does the executive member believe that the school improvement team within the LEA are good enough or do we need a radical re-think on what they're doing and whose doing it?

RESPONSE

I don't know what figures he's looking at but the information he claims to have seen isn't yet available. However, I would not wish to disguise the fact that we will be either 149 or 150th yes that is true. Basically the answer to your question is no I'm not satisfied, neither is the chief officer or the senior management team and measures are being put in place to make sure that the school liaison officers and the link advisors are of the high standard that we require. I would say that today we had the primary strategy conference which was a great success. All but a tiny handful of the primary heads were there which in itself is a triumph. The message there from both outside speakers and from the Chief officer and myself is that something has got to be done. I know he takes it very seriously, I take it very seriously and we are putting in place measures which will ensure that it is rectified.