

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY)**

WENDESDAY JANAUARY 25 2006

URGENT QUESTION TO THE LEADER

QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR WILLIAM ROWE

Is the leader of the council aware that several large "Welcome to Dulwich" signs have recently been put up and can he explain why the views of the Dulwich community council calling for the associated expenditure to be spent on the Cleaner, Greener, Safer programme instead have been ignored?

RESPONSE

The installation of such signs has been a long held ambition for the council as was agreed by the executive on the April 13 2004. We thought long and hard over the design in an effort to come up with something that both signposted "Southwark" and the community council areas. The designs were discussed at a meeting of the chairs of the community councils on the July 22 last year and there was general agreement to the design.

While I am aware that subsequently the Dulwich community council passed a resolution opposing their installation, the decision of the executive takes precedence, as the overall programme of signing the borough is a strategic decision.

I am aware that the installation of these signs could have added to street clutter which is why we are installing them on lamp columns where possible, and at the same time undertaking a general decluttering of the borough which has to date led to the removal of over 4000 items of redundant street furniture, signs etc.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

I'm grateful to the leader for his admission of guilt in his response. This is actually a question about the powers of members and community councils we do want to be listened to in community councils and we want to make sure that what we say does get acted on whether is in relation to the overall executive and council policy or indeed officers taking notice of the community councils. So could he give us some comfort that more and better notice will be taken of community councils views in future.

RESPONSE

Building on one thing that I do share with Councillor Wingfield, is an overwhelming confidence that there will still be a Liberal Democrat executive of this council in six month's time and members having to crowd over on that side of the chamber. There will be a bit of a bunfight because of the number of extra seats that we will need. I can promise that in the second, radical, overall majority administration we will of course be building on the huge success of community councils and we won't let the people of Southwark forget that the party opposite wants to scarp them either. They have been a fantastic addition and they have helped to engender that sense of community pride. And I would hope that, however grudgingly, the councillors opposite will agree that the new welcome signs do help build on that sense of

APPENDIX 1

neighbourhood identity, do help build on that sense of civic pride, and do literally put Southwark on the map.