

<b>Item No.</b> 4.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> March 22 2006	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Council Assembly
<b>Report title:</b>		Deputation requests	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Chief Executive (Borough Solicitor)	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That council assembly consider whether or not to hear a deputation from residents of Chamberlain Cottages.
2. That council assembly consider whether or not to hear a deputation from the Four Squares tenants and residents association (a copy of the motion received in advance of the February meeting is attached at appendix A).
3. That council assembly consider whether or not to hear a deputation from the LAS 2000 (Leaseholder Association of Southwark).

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. When considering whether to hear the deputation request, council assembly can decide to:
  - Receive the deputation at this meeting or a future meeting; *or*
  - That the deputation not be received; *or*
  - Refer the deputation to the most appropriate committee/sub-committee.
5. A deputation shall consist of no more than six people, including its spokesperson. Only one member of the deputation shall be allowed to address the meeting for no longer than 5 minutes. After this time members may ask questions of the deputation for up to 5 minutes. At the conclusion of the questions, the deputation will be shown to the public gallery where they may listen to the remainder of the open section of the meeting.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

### Deputation request from the residents of Chamberlain Cottages

6. The residents of Chamberlain Cottages state in their deputation request letter:

Chamberlain Cottage residents would like to speak to council assembly at their meeting on March 22, regarding our current problems with anti-social behaviour, and following a resident's deputation to Camberwell community council on January 18 regarding our proposal for the installation of a security gate at the entrance to Chamberlain Cottages, a cul-de-sac off Camberwell Grove opposite the Mary Datchelor school site.

A gate is urgently required following a succession of anti-social and threatening incidents which have left residents, two of whom are in their 80s and therefore particularly vulnerable, feeling actively threatened.

There is currently an average of at least one incident per week, day or night, resulting in residents' concern about their compromised security. Residents regularly have to clean up or dispose of rubbish; needles & other drug paraphernalia; vomit; urine; human excrement and litter/takeaway food. There is also increasing occurrence of residents being confronted, harassed or intimidated either walking to their homes, or dealing with incidents on their doorsteps.

Chamberlain Cottages is not a public thoroughfare and should, in theory, only offer access to residents and services. However, the cul-de-sac seems in fact to provide an out-of-sight location for a variety of illegal and antisocial activities.

The residents have written to councillors before Christmas, providing further background to the issue. Since the date of that letter, there have been further incidents of drug use, vomit, urine, human excrement and harassment in Chamberlain Cottages. In the early hours of Sunday, February 5 there was an arson attack on one of the properties. We have logged crime numbers for all incidents.

Residents have met, and have the full support of, our beat officer.

#### **Deputation request from the Four Squares tenants and residents association**

##### **7. The Four Squares tenants and residents association deputation letter states: -**

The Four Squares tenants and residents association would wish to bring to the attention of the council, the lack of maintenance and management of the Four Squares estate. We as a tenants association have to fight long and hard for the most basic of amenities such as the regular replacements of light bulbs on dark stairwells, and the proper collection of refuse. We are living in conditions that are seeing not only paint peeling from window ledges, but the actual window ledges falling away through both sheer negligence and lack of maintenance.

Pavements that are in pieces causing countless trip hazards, ground that is sinking with rat holes that are constantly being filled up with damp sand by pest control to prevent the rodents from surfacing and running around the estate. We have a rodent problem, as the regular dead rat carcasses will testify.

We also have garages by the score destroyed by fire and vandalism; also there is the problem of youths riding motorcycles up and down Drummond Road and through the estate. Although we have recently had a series of walkabouts on the estate with a group constructed of various units (Southwark council, SASBU, Police etc) which calls itself TAZ (together action zone). While some elements of this group have no doubt made progress, almost all of the recommendations that were put forward (cut back bushes that can hide potential attackers / hide drugs, improve lighting etc) have not been carried out. Now it turns out that we have been requested to put forward a "top ten wish list" of what we would like to see done. Surely this is insulting

when we are still waiting on the first set of recommendations to still be fulfilled?

It is well documented that the neglect of a property is the very fuel that is required to encourage the presence of undesirables. This in turn equates to crime, anti social behaviour, and therefore unnecessary distress to the many that have to dwell here.

Up until a few years ago, the four squares estate was a marvellous place to live. It was clean, quiet and the people had respect for each other. We wish to see a return to that. It is by no means impossible, but we cannot do it without the much needed support of Southwark council, and unfortunately we feel this is where it all falls down.

8. A copy of the motion submitted in advance of the February meeting in relation to the deputation is attached as Appendix A.

**Deputation request from the LAS 2000 (Leaseholder Association of Southwark).**

9. The LAS 2000 request states: -

LAS and leaseholder council have on many occasions raised the issue of the council serving incorrect services charges to leaseholders, and being unable to substantiate their figures and provide breakdowns of charges.

This has left leaseholders facing high service charge bills, with little explanation of exactly what they are paying for.

To date leaseholder council have raised the issue with the leader of the council (on March 26 2004) and successive executive members for housing, Beverly Bassom (December 6 2003) Gavin O'Brien (October 6 2004) and Stephen Flannery (October 7 2004, July 7 2004 and December 7 2004) and at overview and scrutiny committee (July 13 2004)

At the meeting on December 6 2003 the director of housing informed us that all 27 of our questions about leaseholder charges had been answered. Suffice it to say they were not, and some have still not been answered.

The home ownership unit has been carrying out open-book accounting for the service charge accounts, with LAS 2000 and the leaseholder council. The problem we are facing is that statistical information is being presented from local area housing offices daily which is unchecked and not monitored until it reaches the home ownership unit.

To date LAS 2000 have discovered £1.5million of mistakes in the accounts. We have presented the latest audit we have produced (of the 2003/4 revenue service charge accounts) to councillors in a briefing.

LAS 2000 are concerned that since we presented the report, no action has been taken by the council.

We would like to bring a deputation to council assembly because we have exhausted all other avenues, both through executive members and council officers to resolve this important issue.

LAS 2000 ask what action is going to be taken to reconcile this ongoing issue, what action is going to be taken against the officers for the gross inefficiency and maladministration, and who is going to be responsible for carrying out this action?

LAS 2000 would also like to raise the issue of the breakdown on charges between for the integrated cleaning contract. This issue was first raised on April 1 2003, but to date neither LAS 2000 nor leaseholder council have received an accurate breakdown of the split between housing and public highways.

LAS 2000 request that councillors process the issue to its conclusion through a public enquiry.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

#### **Comments from the strategic director environment & leisure – Chamberlain Cottages**

10. To Follow

#### **Comments from the strategic director housing – Four Squares Estates**

11. To Follow.

#### **Comments from the strategic director housing – LAS 2000**

12. To Follow

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Deputation Request File	Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB	Lesley John 020 7525 7228

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Team Manager
<b>Report Author</b>	Lesley John, Constitutional Officer
<b>Version</b>	Final
<b>Dated</b>	10.03.06

## APPENDIX A

<b>Item No.</b> 4.2A	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> March 22 2006	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Council Assembly
<b>Report title:</b>		Motion – Four Squares Estate	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Chief Executive (Borough Solicitor)	

The deputation request concerning this motion was withdrawn from February 22 2006 council assembly with the request that it be resubmitted to the next council assembly. Therefore, the motion that arose from the deputation request also stands referred as below.

The motion was received in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.7(9) (ix) (subject of deputation not on agenda). Therefore, debate on the motion and any subsequent amendments is limited to 15 minutes. The mover of the motion or any amendments shall speak for a maximum of three minutes and the seconder and other speakers shall be allowed a maximum of two minutes.

### **MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN**

Seconded by Councillor Charlie Smith

Council assembly notes the serious problems suffered by residents on the Four Squares estate, including

- Antisocial behaviour and crime, ranging from vandalism and graffiti to arson and drug dealing
- Poor basic maintenance of housing and communal areas, leading to an environment in which crime can flourish
- Inadequate refuse collection and pest control
- Nuisance noise and the risk of accidents from motorcycle riders on the estate
- Nuisance noise from temporary tenants of absent leaseholders.

Council assembly notes that executive councillors and officers have carried out numerous “walkabouts” on the estate over the past 6 months. These followed the recommendations of the community council meeting on the September 7 2005, and included the walkabout on the October 18 2005, attended by Councillor Nick Stanton, and subsequent walkabouts on November 21 2005, the December 20 2005, and the January 26 2005.

Council assembly notes that after the first “walkabout” by councillors and officers, an action plan was drawn up which listed urgently needed improvements. These included replacing light bulbs, cutting back trees, and emptying rubbish chutes. Council assembly notes with concern that resident’s report that four months later, few if any of these proposals have been carried out. Council assembly also notes that the

Together Action Zone also produced an action plan on the October 26 2005, calling for urgent improvements including mobile CCTV and an 'action plan and timescales for estate repairs and maintenance'.

Council assembly notes with concern that despite repeated reports of serious crime such as arson, the Four Squares estate has no CCTV system in place.

Council assembly believes that the current situation on the Four Squares estate is unacceptable, and that urgent action must be taken to improve residents' quality of life.

Therefore, council assembly calls on the executive to

- Urgently implement all of the recommendations arising from the walkabouts, including installing additional lighting, fixing rubbish chutes, and making sure that police and community wardens are working together. Residents should be given a list of the planned improvements, with a deadline for when each will be completed.
- Urgently implement the proposals from the Together Action Zone action plan.
- Aggressively use the full range of anti social behaviour powers available, and give local residents information about the names of recipients of anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs), and the conditions of the order where appropriate, for example, in helping to enforce orders where offenders have been banned from certain estates.
- Install a CCTV system on the estate as soon as possible.
- Review and improve routine cleaning and maintenance across the entire estate
- Introduce regular warden patrols, in liaison with local police if possible, across the whole of the estate, and not just in 'fringe' areas.
- Instruct officers to report on a range of future measures to deter motorcycle riders from using the estate, such as chicanes, trees, barriers and textured pavements.
- Work with the police to aggressively enforce the current range of powers that can be used against illegal and antisocial motorcycle riders, including applying for acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs) and ASBOs against youths persistently riding motorcycles in an antisocial manner.

To enforce the terms of tenancy and leasehold agreements, to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance noise from tenants of the council, and of leaseholders.