

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY MEETING)
WEDNESDAY JUNE 28 2006
MEMBERS QUESTION TIME

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

Does the leader agree with the findings of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions select committee that the “restriction placed upon [councillors and MPs] making representations against licensing applications” is “clearly a problem for councillors and MPs” and with the committee's recommendation that “the restriction placed on elected representatives... be lifted”? Can he outline what is being done by cross-party organisations, such as the Local Government Association and Association of London Government, to lobby the government for a change in the licensing laws?

RESPONSE

The matter of restrictions being placed upon councillors and MPs making representations against licence applications is indeed one of the matters that are of concern to this council under the Licensing Act 2003.

The Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) will shortly be launching a formal consultation exercise on the review of the guidance to the Act. The Association of Local Government (ALG) is represented in this review on a small sub-group and is discussing the issues that need to be covered under the consultation exercise. We have asked the ALG for this issue to be raised.

In addition the council's own mid-term review of licensing policy is proposed to be launched on the July 3 2006 and this too will consider the local arrangements for dealing with representations from “interested parties” made through local ward councillors and MPs to ensure that these arrangements allow such representations to be made as easily as possible. The council's review will also look at what matters the council should lobby the DCMS on, and if necessary, on the guidance issued by the DCMS after its review.

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR OLA OYEWUNMI

Could the leader indicate when he expects to reply in full to the following pieces of correspondence?

1. Letter of March 3 2006 from Val Shawcross AM re Bermondsey Street Antiques Market, plus follow up letters on the April 3 2006 and the June 6 2006
2. Letter of the March 3 2006 from Val Shawcross AM re shower installation at the Samuel Lewis Trust dwellings, plus follow up letter on the June 6 2006

3. Email of the April 5 2006 re recycling for Doddington Grove from Val Shawcross' PA, plus follow up on the June 6 2006.

RESPONSE

All of these pieces of correspondence have been, or are being, dealt with by myself and officers.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR OLA OYEWUNMI

The council set a standard of 10 working days for responding to correspondence but this item has been outstanding for months. May I know if these letters will be answered within the next 10 working days?

RESPONSE

Madam Mayor, yes some of these arrived during the election period. I think that hopefully Val Shawcross will have to wait a substantially shorter period of time for substantive answers than we have been waiting for the return of the fire engine to Dockhead fire station.

3. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BAICHO

Could the executive member for housing provide an update on the work agreed by the council on the Four Squares Estate in Riverside ward?

RESPONSE

Security works to the garages, stairwells, lift lobbies, estate lighting, external works and CCTV, are being funded jointly by the council and London Housing Board (LHB). The security works are now underway at New Place Square and consultation is taking place on the other three squares in relation to the scope of their security works and will draw upon the effectiveness of the current (phase 1) works. Both Southwark anti-social behaviour unit (SASBU) and the police are part of this consultation.

As part of our landlord's obligations, lifts have been renewed at New Place and Lockwood Squares (part of the 2005/6 lift package). The lift renewal packages for Marden Square and Layard Square are currently being procured and should commence later in the year.

A comprehensive report on the detail of each of these contracts and proposals was presented at the recent Bermondsey Area Forum.

The council is committed to meeting the decent homes target by 2010/11, and the work required for the Four Squares is currently being assessed to meet this standard, in terms of scope of works and cost. The programme for these works is being developed in close liaison with the tenants and residents association and included in Bermondsey's 5-year area investment programme to be presented to the housing area forum in September. Provisional dates for the start of this work will be late 2007/early 2008, completing in March 2011, subject to leasehold consultation and formal approvals.

4. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ANDREW PAKES

Can the executive member confirm whether council ever agreed the options appraisal before it was sent off to Government Office for London?

RESPONSE

Executive agreed the submission of the option appraisal to the Government Office for London (GOL) on behalf of the council on March 21 2006.

On June 7 2006, the chief executive was informed by GOL that the option appraisal met the criteria in their guidance 'Delivering Decent Homes – Option Appraisal'. Part of this 'sign-off' was that an action plan would be developed with members, staff and residents to review the delivery of decent homes.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANDREW PAKES

As my party shadow can I firstly welcome Councillor Humhreys to his new job and thank him for his answer that he has given me to my question.

My question was based on many things I was told by tenants and leaseholders representatives throughout the process of stock appraisal procedures. My supplementary question to Councillor Humphreys is whether he is willing to give a clear commitment tonight that in the development of the action plan and execution of the appraisal that there is a clear commitment that tenants and leaseholders and representatives from our estates will be truly consulted, that papers will be tabled on time, that consultation will be meaningful and tenants and leaseholders will be truly listened to by us as their representatives and by officers of the council so that we can work together in partnership to deliver the best to the people of Southwark.

RESPONSE

Mr Mayor, I would like to thank Councillor Pakes for the supplemental answer. I would like to say that first of all I have personally written to each member of the option appraisal process, actually thanking them personally for the work they did, recognising that a lot of that work was done on a very difficult timescale and also recognising, as Councillor Pakes was aware, I was at leaseholder council. I recognise the fact that a lot of paperwork was provided at a short timescale, clearly not satisfactory and also not satisfactory in getting meaningful consultation in terms of the process. Yes I do accept that it was not a perfect situation upon which we had to operate in terms of producing the option appraisal. I am certainly very keen and will be striving to ensure, that in terms of the work, that in developing the action plan that we do get meaningful consultation and partnership.

5. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON

Will the deputy leader confirm that a website for Southwark leaseholders is being planned and set out a timescale for implementation?

RESPONSE

The website already currently exists as part of the Southwark website but needs to be updated with information because most of which is there relates to the right to buy. Within the next three months the following information will be input:

- (a) leaseholders handbook
- (b) buildings insurance handbook
- (c) updated 'Your Service Charges Explained' leaflet
- (d) policies/procedures

To notify all leaseholders (and freeholders) of the publication of the Leaseholders Handbook a letter is to be issued which will inform leaseholders that the handbook is published on the website. Details of the website are also contained in the handbook itself and can be reached via the following link:

<http://www.southwark.gov.uk/YourServices/HousingandHomes/ServiceLeaseholders/>

Additional publicity will be arranged once the website is fully updated in order to ensure that all leaseholders will be able to access this improved information service.

6. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON

Is the executive member able to give a guarantee to the council that the experience of tenants on the Wooddene estate during the decant process will not be replicated on the Heygate estate? What measures will he be taking to ensure the security of tenants on the estate during the decant?

RESPONSE

The council has learnt lessons from successive decants – most recently North Peckham, Linden Grove, Coopers Road, Elmington Estate and Wooddene. The nature of the Heygate decant will be significantly different from Wooddene in that Wooddene necessitated a single stage decant exercise using the general supply of accommodation for letting, whereas Heygate will be achieved largely by the development of new registered social landlord (RSL) housing specifically for the scheme. Those positive elements from previous decants including early referencing and dedicated housing staff will be replicated.

No guarantee can be given that unforeseen criminal acts nor squatting may occur but a community safety plan will be developed for the different phases on the Heygate, which will include the active involvement of wardens, police & other agencies. Security guards will be deployed where appropriate and the plan and performance against the plan will be consulted upon and regularly monitored with the Heygate T&RA and Walworth East Area Forum.

Security is particularly important for key areas such as essential utilities i.e. making sure that access to roofs/lift motor rooms and electrical intake cupboards are secure so that there is no theft/vandalism of essential equipment. These are currently checked on a daily basis and the level and frequency of checks will be increased as required throughout the life of the project.

A range of physical security measures are in place for individual properties and individual blocks including grilles, curtains and decommissioning of services but

because of the design of Heygate we will also be able to secure whole sections of blocks that are fully vacated as we progress the decant. Officers currently check the empty dwellings on a weekly basis to ensure that they are secure and have not been squatted or vandalised. In certain areas or blocks this frequency of inspection will be varied depending on the needs. In addition, decanted properties are being let as temporary accommodation units. This measure will prevent those properties from squatting and unauthorised occupancy.

These special measures will supplement the range of regular estate management functions which help to identify problems and address issues on decant estates. The frequency of all such routine activities including estate inspections, occupancy checks, home visits, and the service of fixed penalty notices as well as cleaning, grounds maintenance, lighting, lift inspections and works will be increased on those blocks that become partially vacant.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON

If I may ask the member why is it therefore on the Heygate estate we have blocks which have been left in a state of decay, where we have lifts that have been out-of-order for more 12 months, we have squatters who have been in place for more than 5 months, and not only that, we also have a situation over the weekends and late evenings - we are now experiencing people coming onto the estate and causing continual mayhem and distress to local tenants. This is a situation which has continued and we would like to know why this situation has not yet been addressed fully by this council.

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Councillor Seaton for his impassioned answer. I would like to first of all comment that obviously I thought his answer actually was more with Councillor McNeill's question rather than his own, which was on the decant process. I will try to address the issues of decant if he wants me to cover Councillor McNeill's – I note Councillor McNeill is unable to attend this evening, I wonder why.

First of all in terms of the decant process I believe that the answer is pretty clear in terms of the process there. The second point I will deal with is the issue in terms of Heygate heating and lifts. I would make the point that a lot of these matters are going to be dealt with at the next TRA. Councillor Seaton raised those points there, I am more than happy to take those issues up and I would be more than happy to attend that T&RA meeting to listen first hand to concerns of residents if he would like to provide me with the dates.

7. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR KIRSTY MCNEILL

Will the executive member for housing outline his plans to rectify the chronic failings of the Heygate heating and lift systems and guarantee that tenants will not be left without working heating and lifts for more than 24 hours at a time?

RESPONSE

The council is aiming to complete the decant of the estate in late 2009 or early 2010. This is subject to new housing sites being completed as planned. A specific programme of works centred on maintenance of the communal facilities including heating and lifts and health and safety provision is being developed. These remedial

works will ensure that these services are maintained throughout the life of the project but that all investment decisions are taken after full appraisal of the value for money given the impending demolition and after full consultation with residents and the Heygate tenants and residents association.

For day-to-day management of the heating service, a heating repairs and maintenance contract is in place. The council's heating inspectors also provide advice, support and deal with any day-to-day repair issues as and when they arise.

A strategy to maintain the district heating system at Heygate is in place already. This includes a range of short, medium and longer-term proposals around risk management of the boilers, plant, underground mains and in-dwelling components of the system. The principal risks to the system stem from antiquated underground pipe systems without the 'leak alert' facilities available on more modern pipework so inevitably an element of the response to failings in these areas will be reactive. The proposals have drawn from similar scenarios on North Peckham and Aylesbury Estates where similar district heating systems are in place. The investment implications are being finalised so that within the next few weeks the proposals will be shared with the T&RA and then the local area forum.

The lifts on the Heygate estate were installed during the early 1980's. There is a lift repair contract to respond to lift breakdowns. In addition to this, lift engineers make daily calls to inspect all lifts on the estate. The lift contractor and officers from the Walworth area housing office also undertake checks during the course of the day and checks are also made at the weekend and other public holidays.

The response times for the contractor to attend site is 2 hours, and in general defective lifts are put back into service within 24 hours. However if a particular part is required and is not readily available, this may take longer.

There are 2 lifts on the Heygate (Kingshill) which have been shut down because they require extensive works to the lift shaft including major asbestos removal. There are other lifts to this block that are in working order and all efforts are made to keep these available and they are given priority for repairs.

8. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES

Can the executive member for housing outline how decisions are made with regards to which blocks are given double-glazing?

RESPONSE

The determination of which blocks get new windows is based on condition, and as a key component of decent homes, where windows are in poor repair they will need to be renewed or repaired before 2010/11 to meet the decent homes standard

The stock condition survey and local knowledge provide an initial indication as to where new windows are needed. Housing areas are currently developing indicative five-year area investment programmes which will be submitted to area forums in September 2006. These will identify where it is anticipated that new windows will be required and when they are programmed to be installed. These decisions will be confirmed once full detailed scheme surveys have been carried out.

Although there is no requirement to fit double-glazing rather than single-glazed windows to meet decent homes standards, in most cases double-glazing will be installed as the increased costs are marginal and double-glazing is a key component to improve sustainability - improving thermal insulation, and the standard assessment procedure (SAP) rating of homes, and contributes to the council's best value performance Indicator - BVPI 64. In addition these windows can reduce fuel cost to residents and also cut down on noise pollution.

9. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

Does the executive member for housing believe that effective leadership can be achieved for the borough on a part-time basis?

RESPONSE

Yes.

Council executive places the highest importance in improving the perception and delivery of the housing service. That is why they have appointed me, as deputy leader, to take on this particular function. I would refer Councillor John to the comments of former Councillor Tony Ritchie in the letters page of Southwark News (1 June 2006), with regards to this matter. I would also like to suggest that Councillor John is confusing questions of time with those of ability.

I am surprised that, given the amount of publicity that Councillor John has attempted to raise on this issue, how few letters have appeared in the local press about my position from 'concerned residents'. In fact, I have been inundated with calls from council tenants and leaseholders wishing to distance themselves from his comments.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

Thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you very much to Councillor Humphreys for his answer. I can tell by the touchy tone of it that he did dictate this answer at least, so I am very grateful to him for giving his time to that. I note that he has been inundated with calls from wellwishers and the test I suppose will be whether in 12 months' time he is still being inundated with calls from wellwishers, leaseholders and tenants alike. He indicated, I think in the press recently when of course I so viciously raised this issue, that he would be devoting 6 hours a day to his job as executive member for housing which is 30 hours if he is doing a 5-day week or 42 hours, if as I am sure that is what he is doing, a 7-day week - how is he doing on the time front, how is his timesheet looking?

RESPONSE

As Councillor John knows perfectly well I am working tirelessly in terms of that. I think he was quite surprised when I saw him just the other week, at the coffee shop just opposite the town hall, I think he was genuinely flabbergasted that he had seen me there. As Councillor John knows and council officers across the department know, the council working days starts at 8 o'clock for people in the housing department, if not earlier in terms of meeting me. Those meetings are ongoing, there will be another meeting on Friday. I am sure if Councillor John would like to raise some issues with me and come to one of my early morning briefings I am sure I would be delightful to meet with Councillor John. I am of course always willing to hear the views of Councillor John. I would like to just clarify, obviously he might like

to clarify in the future, as to whether South Camberwell is actually in Dulwich or in Camberwell because I am a bit confused on this matter Mr Mayor. It was suggested that the Conservative/Liberal Democrat administration arranged a grubby deal with a Dulwich Tory. I note the fact that the last executive member for housing from Labour was a socialist from Village ward, a champagne socialist with some very unique ideas that we all had to endure during very many council meetings, so when I hear the accusations coming out about grubby deals with Dulwich Tories I am going to take those with a pinch of salt Councillor John

10. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED

How many estates has the executive member for housing visited since he took over responsibility for housing management, and what are his plans to engage tenants and leaseholders in the good running of the housing department?

RESPONSE

I have visited the following estates:

Rockingham, Heygate, Tabard Gardens, Sceaux Gardens, Dickens, Southampton Way, Rye Hill, Neckinger, Mundania Road, Limes Walk, Lettsom, Ledbury, Kennington Park Road, John Ruskin Street, Herne Hill, Halliwell Court, Grosvenor Park, Gloucester Grove, Lordship Lane, Friern Road, Gilesmead, Neckinger, Glebe, Goschen, Falcon Point, Friary , Friern Road, East Dulwich Grove, East Dulwich, Kingswood, Croxted Road, East Dulwich Road, Denmark Hill, Crawford, Countisbury House , Comber, College Road, Champion Park, Sunray, Delawyck Crescent, Champion Hill, Castlemead, Brenchley Gardens, Brandon, Leathermarket, Aylesbury, Bells Gardens, and Acorn.

Southwark has had a long and nationally-renowned history of engagement in its housing, and currently uses a well-established structure of regular borough-wide and local meetings in order to do so. These include the housing partnership board, the tenants' council and the leaseholders' council, whose delegates are largely local tenant and resident association members representing the borough's 13 area forums.

The main current priority is to make sure that many more people have the opportunity to get involved in the ways that best suit them. In particular, the council needs to agree how to involve more young people and those for whom meetings-based engagement is not so attractive. A second priority is to improve both the information on service quality that tenants and leaseholders receive, and the opportunities available to them for influencing and improving it.

It is expected that these priorities can be addressed through the review and renewal of our borough-wide tenant and leaseholder participation compact this year and the establishment of further local compacts on estates and for specific issues and interest groups.

11. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR SANDRA RHULE

Does the executive member for housing believe that leaseholders are getting a fair deal from the council?

RESPONSE

This council has more policies than any other which are aimed at delivering pertinent, high quality services to leaseholders and to help them sustain owner occupation and to pay their fair share of the costs of providing services via their service charges.

In April 2006 the estimated revenue service charge invoices for 2006/07 were issued. In May 2006 the actual revenue service charges for 2003/04 were calculated and notified to leaseholders. In June 2006 leaseholder representatives finished their review of figures relating to the actual revenue service charges for 2004/05 work is currently underway to produce these accounts which should be with leaseholders by the end of July 2006. In July 2006 the audited accounts for 2005/06 will be produced and officers will commence calculation of the actual revenue service charges for 2005/06 which should be with leaseholders in October 2006.

Only recently two more policies: Independent Advice; and Gas Servicing for leaseholders, have come to fruition. These show that the council is committed to ensuring that leaseholders get a fair deal.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR SANDRA RHULE

I would like to thank the executive member for his reply and asks can the deputy leader assure us that the review will give value for money by including the issues of duplicate charging, overcharging, inappropriate charging and wrong charging which, he amongst others, raised before the general election.

RESPONSE

I believe it was before the council election Councillor Rhule but I would like to point out that raising these points before not only the last general election but before the general election before that, in fact the general election before that. It would have been interesting Councillor Rhule if I had seen you at leaseholders council when these specific points were raised. I don't remember actually seeing you at that meeting. I am absolutely clear in terms of the work that we have got to do in terms of leaseholders work. First of all there is going to be a significant step change, we have a range of additional initiatives coming – we have already mentioned about the independent advice and gas service and leaseholders and in addition to that we will have the leaseholders handbook coming out. The range of issues that the councillor raised, and those are absolutely essential, I will be addressing those and we will be looking to reach a more sensible working arrangements with prominent leaseholders in the borough.

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

How will the review of tenants' halls now be progressed? Is the executive member planning to ensure that close links are set up with the youth service as part of the review to ensure the high level of demand from residents for activities for young people in their immediate areas can be addressed by this review?

RESPONSE

The best value review of tenant halls highlighted the potential that these facilities have for use by the community. The report identified examples where some halls were not accessible to all sections of the community, including youth activity, and has

made recommendations to address this concern. It is essential that youth provision is given a high priority in the implementation of the review and this will include developing close contact between the youth service and residents to maximise the potential of these facilities.

During the next few months further discussions are to take place with tenant and resident representatives about how the recommendations of the report and any other proposals generated from outside of the review can be implemented. Once this is completed a report will be presented to the executive on the action that needs to be taken to modernise the management and administration of tenant halls in this borough.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD

Thank you very much indeed for confirmation that youth provision will be given priority in considering with tenants and residents for use of tenants halls in the future.

I do have a supplementary which came up in a discussion this morning, while taking steps to modernise the administration of halls would you agree that part of this should include a formula agreeing between the youth service and T&RAs, putting together an agreement on payments and rates for use of tenants halls as this does not seem to exist at the moment and is causing some problems

RESPONSE

As those members of all groups that were at the last tenants council meeting will be aware the best value review of tenants hall is a sensitive issue. There is not a lot of unanimity, I must be frank, in terms of the proposals contained in that going forward. I think what is important is that we seek to work with those leaseholders and tenants that were in the existing working party to actually establish what are quick wins as part of that process. I would envisage as part of the quick wins we get a clear understanding in terms of wider community usage, in particular I want to see youth facilities being part of that process. Certainly for example in my own ward I recognise that there are often problems relating to that, so yes youth provision needs to be central in terms of that and I will be looking to take that forward with tenants and leaseholders representatives.

13. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM

Does the deputy leader agree that the leaseholders' council is an important forum which provides constructive discussion and consultation between the council and leaseholders and that this forum is valued by leaseholders? If this forum was to be abolished could the deputy leader outline how he would ensure the council properly engages with leaseholders about their homes on collective issues they wish to discuss with officers or members?

RESPONSE

Yes.

There are no plans to abolish leaseholder council.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM

Thank you Mr Mayor. Can I thank the executive member for his answer and by his standard I think this is a bit short on his answer so I would ask him to elaborate a bit more - if I say for instance there are no plans at present to abolish the leaseholder council or if I say that there will be no plans so long as you hold that portfolio or there are no plans within this administration, which one of those would you agree to?

RESPONSE

I am grateful to Councillor Graham for his answer. I thought the brevity of my answer actually dealt with the issue. There are no plans to abolish the leaseholders council, period. That's the end of the matter. There are no plans being discussed, there are no plans in the offing, we are not abolishing leaseholders council. I don't know where this idea has emanated from – there are no plans to abolish leaseholders council. Though I will be frank, Councillor Graham, that it is absolutely clear that we need both at tenants council and at leaseholders council we need to improve the attendance at those meeting. I was disappointed with the number of people that were actually at the last meeting of leaseholders council that I went to. We also need to essentially address in terms of both leaseholders council and tenants council the fact that there are a great deal of people that are not actually represented by the process and how we engage with those groups of people is something that this council as a whole needs to consider because it is simply just talking to the famous usual suspect, this is not necessary the only way to deal with this and if we are going to be successful in terms of housing management we are going to have to widen our engagement.

14. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS PAGE

Can the executive member for housing explain whether he is satisfied with the performance of current pest control programme on the estates in Camberwell Green ward - in particular on the Elmington Estate and the D'Eynsford Estate, and whether he will be working 'full time' to resolve ongoing problems?

RESPONSE

I can confirm that both these estates are included in the pest control programme, which provides periodic treatment at a number of estates across Southwark to keep pests under control.

Council officers and contractor staff attended the last Camberwell East Area Forum in mid-May, at which they were both thanked by local residents for the recent progress made in dealing with pests in Camberwell.

Separate meetings have been held with representatives of both estates where a range of issues associated with the programme were raised and the area housing office will be reviewing refuse collection and disposal issues, local public awareness campaigns and access arrangements to garages

The level of co-operation between contractor, area housing staff and tenant and resident representatives indicates that the pest programme in these areas is being satisfactorily managed but that there remain attendant issues that impact the main works to individual dwellings. These issues have been identified and are being put into a programme of supplemental actions.

SUUPPLEMENTAL FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS PAGE

Thank you Mr. Mayor and I would like to thank the executive member for his answer. He said in his answer that the pest control programme in these areas has been controlled in a satisfactory way. Last night I spoke to Alan Russell, chair of the T&RA on the D'Eynsford estate, and he does not agree with the executive member that the pest control has been managed satisfactorily. He said in fact it is actually the opposite - the timetables are not being kept to, the contractors are not coming when they are meant to, they are putting out notices and are coming at a completely different time which means that they can't get access to flats/ houses to actually treat the problems, they don't have keys to the boiler rooms, they don't have keys to communal cupboards so they can't get in and treat the problems. Tenants are increasingly frustrated, there is still a mouse problem, there is still a cockroach problem and I would like to know what action the executive member will be taking to try and tackle these problems because people on the D'Eynsford estate and across Camberwell are increasingly losing confidence in their Lib Dem/Tory administration to handle pest control in our council houses.

RESPONSE

I am grateful for the question from Councillor Page. In terms of the supplemental question from Councillor Page what I am more than happy to meet with him and the chair of the T&RA.

15. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE

Will the new executive member for finance stand by the policy proposals he made with his colleagues in February 2006 in an 'alternative budget' which proposed cutting £132,000 from Southwark's libraries and £45,000 from the parks service, in addition to cutting off council funding of the Peckham Partnership, and closing the 'events section' and the Tourism team. Is he willing to reduce his special responsibility allowance (SRA) from over £30,000 to £15,000 in line with this alternative budget?

RESPONSE

As you will be aware, the council's budget for 2006/7 does not include the "alternative budget" proposals referred to in your question. Officers will in due course bring forward budget proposals for 2007/8 for discussion by the executive but at this stage I am not in a position to comment on any future budget proposals.

With regard to the second part of the question, members should be aware that, with regard to members' remuneration, from 1 June 2002 the council has been following the recommendations of an independent panel established by the Association of London Government, with the exception that savings have been achieved, in comparison with those recommendations, because part-time executive members do not draw the full SRA attached to their post.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE

I would like to thank the executive member for his response to my question. I appreciate that's its too early to be outlining the budget for 2007/2008 but given the fact that the Conservative party appears to be having such a dominant role within the

marriage of convenience running this council I would have at least hope that he might be able to share with us at this point whether he still wishes to pursue those policies and budget reductions, if not be able to quantify them at this stage, that he set out in his alternative budget earlier this year. I would also like to ask him whether he would agree that it perhaps seems a little odd that he was seeking to reduce special responsibility allowances whilst he was in opposition but appears to have had a slight change of heart in recent weeks.

RESPONSE

Thank you Councillor Livingstone. I really look forward to answering the many questions you provide for the council agenda tonight and this does foreshadow many happy years in opposition for you. We all look forward to that. Indeed I also look forward to addressing myself to your supplementals and to any idea for sensible saving for our budget in the years to come from all parties in the chamber and with regard to the link between remuneration and posts I would suggest you address yourself to the position of the Deputy Prime Minister.

16. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH

How much money was spent during the financial year 2004/5 on taxis for council officers?

RESPONSE

The cost of taxis for officers was £265,000 for 2004/5.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH

Could I thank the executive member for his answer and also to welcome him to his new role. Could I ask what he is doing to ensure that this is the most cost effective way of providing transport for staff please?

RESPONSE

Yes, thank you. I did discuss this a bit with the officers earlier. There is now a single new contract for taxi provision and the information which is available from the relevant company will provide information on that and I would stress as well that the office accommodation review will begin to address some of the issues of these incidental expenses and the efficiency or inefficiency that afflicts us in terms of numerous 60 or 70 council buildings scattered about the borough. It will be a long-term process but in this particular aspect there is more information arising in relation of taxi use under the new single new contract for that purpose.

17. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY

I am frequently told by officers that the reason why the Nunhead & East Peckham Renewal project is falling behind schedule is that they have been unable to fill six vacant positions. What steps are you taking to address this problem and ensure that the team is fully staffed as soon as possible?

Note: The executive member for regeneration will respond to this question.

RESPONSE

The establishment of the renewal team is 10 officers. Of these ten posts four are currently vacant and a further two (the key posts of area renewal officer) are covered by temporary staff. Four posts were advertised in January but a very poor response rate meant that none could be filled.

The person specifications are currently under review and this may lead to some job re-design. There also appears to be a shortage of candidates with the appropriate technical skills. The placement of the job advertisements will also be reviewed with the aim of targeting specialist web sites and journals rather than the national and housing press.

Despite the difficulty in recruiting permanent staff, progress has been made in setting up the first street renewal (formerly group repair) scheme with the first public meeting having taken place on June 22. Progress has also been made on a community involvement strategy that has been sent to key partners for comment.

Two posts are now out to advert and are generating an encouraging level of interest and a further post is currently under offer. Job re-design of the remaining posts is underway and recruiting to these posts is a priority.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FOM COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY

I thank the executive member for his answer. I am increasingly concerned about the slippage of the Nunhead and East Peckham renewal programme. Although you mentioned in your answer that the job redesigned for the remaining post is a priority it has actually been with HR for more than 2 months. I understand from officers, and indeed since writing this question, that a further problem exists in that the housing department as a whole currently has no staff trained in the new housing rating system, which I understand was brought in April, so they can't even assess complete assessments for grants to owner/occupiers on low incomes. I have had some complaints about this from some pensioners. I wonder whether the executive member has had a chance to meet with the renewal team as yet, I understand he has not been in the job for very long now, if so does he share my concerns about the slippage in this project and if he has not had a chance to met with them yet, will he undertake to meet with them as a matter of priority.

RESPONSE

I am grateful to Councillor Colley for the question. Clearly there has been some slippage. I am concerned insomuch as any slippage is regrettable but it strikes me that over the course of the programme that is clearly recoverable and I note, it is in the answer here, some of the steps that officers are taking to try and recover the situation. I will certainly be meeting with the renewal team in the next few weeks and this is one of the topics I will be hoping to cover.

18. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR BOB SKELLY

Would the executive member for resources provide me with an update on the VAT situation with regard to institutions like the Salmon Youth Centre and the City of London Academy opening their buildings for use by the general public?

RESPONSE

It is well known that the VAT position of schools who wish to respond to the government's "extended schools" agenda is causing concern nationwide. Officers have raised the question as a matter of concern, given the number of academies there is going to be in Southwark and the desire of members and the academy sponsors is that the buildings are to be available for appropriate community use. Officers have asked the academies unit at the DfEs for an update and are awaiting a response

When this response is provided, I will ask officers to produce, for any member who is interested, a full briefing note on this matter. In respect of the two bodies mentioned in the question, I would welcome from them, directly or through Councillor Skelly, specific information on the concerns that are particular to them, so that the briefing may reflect their input. When the briefing note is ready, members will be in a position to decide the most effective means of lobbying the government on this matter.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BOB SKELLY

Could I thank the executive member for his answer, I actually mean it this time because I made truly Herculean efforts to get an answer to this question and all I would say is can he undertake to keep elected members informed of any progress on this matter and perhaps also inform us about how the council and individual members can help in solving this problem.

RESPONSE

Yes, thank you. I hope all members across the chamber will put appropriate pressure on the government to remove this inconsistent anomaly which is defeating their own policy.

19. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE

Does the executive member have any plans to say anything to the Mayor and Transport for London about the number 12 bendy bus?

Note: The executive member for environment will respond to this question.

RESPONSE

I understand that there are still concerns about the number 12 bendy bus and its use on roads that may be unsuitable, such as in Dulwich. This can have an adverse impact on traffic flow, safety and the local community, especially if they feel that their representations have not been satisfactorily dealt with by TfL (Transport for London) London Buses. In September, transport officers undertook to communicate with TfL London Buses on a number of issues, including the positioning of bus stands and a route extension to Forest Hill.

London Buses informed Southwark council that they thoroughly investigated the option of extending route 12 to Forest Hill in response to the results of our consultation but they disappointingly concluded that in their view there was no business case for extension because there are alternative routes (176, 185 and 197), which provide existing bus links between Dulwich Library and Forest Hill.

The TfL business case considered a variety of options, including those put forward by residents and councillors, and concluded that the only viable option was the bendy bus terminating at Dulwich Library. In appraising different options for bus services the business case assessed the following criteria:

- change in cost
- change in revenue
- change in passenger benefits.

TfL uses a benefit to net cost ratio to assess whether any scheme is possible by dividing the passenger benefits by the net cost. The ratio for extending route 12 to Forest Hill is 0.8 to 1. The minimum ratio for TfL to consider any such extension is currently 2 to 1.

Officers for the council have undertaken an independent review of this business case and have concluded that the TfL findings appear to be valid.

20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR ROBIN CROOKSHANK HILTON

Would the executive member for regeneration set out his plans for revising the planning brief for the Dulwich hospital site with a view to strengthening the key heritage features of the buildings?

RESPONSE

The council will continue to work with the primary care trust (PCT) to secure sensitive adaptation of those parts of the building that have architectural merit and ensure that the development overall makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the area. There are no plans to revise the planning brief.

The planning brief for Dulwich Hospital was approved by the planning committee on July 5 2005. The report to the planning committee noted that the main hospital building dates from the 1880s and presents an attractive and impressive façade to East Dulwich Grove and the railings fronting the site (along East Dulwich Grove) together with the street lamp in front of the main entrance building are also considered to be important features.

It was also noted, however, that English Heritage had recently concluded that the hospital buildings are not of sufficient historical or architectural merit to warrant inclusion on the statutory list of historic buildings and the site does not lie in a conservation area. This severely limits the extent to which the council can require the retention of buildings or structures on the site.

The planning brief also notes that the PCT consider that the existing buildings are not suited for use as a community hospital but that the council supports the sensitive conversion of the main hospital building to provide a community hospital on site where feasible. That remains the council's position.

21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET

Can the executive member for regeneration please provide figures for what section 106 money is ring-fenced and available for projects in the Rotherhithe community council area?

RESPONSE

Section 106 funds already approved to be spent in the Rotherhithe community council area:

- £30,000 on environmental projects including the Brunel Engine House - approved 2002.
- £17,500 on junction widening at Renforth Street and Albion Street - approved 2002.
- £300,000 on employment training at South Bermondsey Children's Centre - approved 2005.

Section 106 funds currently available in the Rotherhithe community council area:

- £10,000 available funds towards improvements to public open space or a local play area in the vicinity of Verney Road.
- £27,500 available funds to be used towards improvements to Durrands Wharf Park. £455,000 available funds towards employment initiatives.
- £12,000 available funds towards traffic/highways projects.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET

I would like to thank the executive member for his answer. Can I ask him to ensure that officers work with local councillors in Rotherhithe to ensure that a timetable is drawn up as quickly as possible to ensure that these funds are set to work to produce positive projects that the people of Rotherhithe deserve.

RESPONSE

The short answer is yes, Mr. Mayor.

22. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR SUSAN ELAN JONES

Could I ask the executive member to reassure the residents of my ward (Lane) that the Copleston Centre childcare facility will receive appropriate levels of funding to maintain its existence after August?

RESPONSE

Following the answer given to a similar question raised earlier this year, the executive member was presented with a funding model designed to ensure that all existing day nurseries received funding that was at least equivalent to the level provided in 2005/2006. This reflects the council's commitment to supporting the ongoing viability of the existing community nurseries. The then executive member asked officers to work further with these groups over the current year to ensure that the valued service they provide can continue into future academic years on a secure footing that is not entirely reliant on financial support from the council.

In line with the executive member decision taken in March 2006, the Copleston Centre has received an allocation of £65,779, which is equal to its allocation in 2005. The revised model provides a greater level of equity across the community nurseries. The on-going viability of the Copleston Centre is dependent on the centre attracting

sufficient interest from local parents to fill the places available. At the end of May the centre had 14 of its 24 places occupied. One aspect that may impact on the Copleston Centre's ability to achieve sustainability is that it only offers a service for fewer than 5s from 8.30-3.30 whereas the service specification attached to local authority funding requires wrap around care 8.00-6.00. The shorter hours on offer from the centre are less likely to be attractive to working parents.

The centre has been offered additional support to help address its sustainability including £2,350 to commission an independent feasibility study, £778 for advertising their provision and £1,032 for lighting and rewiring the premises. In addition, they have been offered support in developing their business plans and in attracting funding from sources other than the council.

The commissioning budget for community nurseries has been fully allocated on an equitable basis and the other settings are successfully planning provision for the current and future years.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ELAN JONES

Can I ask how the executive member would tally this with the remarks of former Councillor Bowman in March that she requested that the officers find additional funds so that no community nursery will suffer any financial hardship over the next year, not over the next financial year, over the next year as a result of us moving to a unit cost approach to funding a placement. How can she tally those comments with what is apparently the right answer to my question?

RESPONSE

Thank you for your slightly bizarre supplementary and approach to questioning in this chamber. Most people do know that I do very much work with people from all sides when there is issues in their wards and perhaps you would like to revise your tone in future.

We have got a debate on this later and I am happy to chat on this and the issues then, but the funding for this is exactly the same as last year so there has not been a lost to this particular community nursery. I think my answer does set out some issues but I would rather wait until later to go into more detail in the debate.

23. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR NICK VINEALL

Can the executive member provide an update into the preparation of a feasibility study into additional primary provision in North Dulwich given that the council's corporate plan states that task is to be completed by November 2006?

RESPONSE

The education department has been preparing a new set of pupil projections to inform planning of the Southwark schools for the future programme. These will be used as the basis for developing options for improving the whole primary estate. The projections are currently being shared with local schools in order to bring local knowledge to bear on the figures. The work carried out by the Dulwich community council is also being used to inform the projections, in particular the estimate for reducing the outflow of pupils to the private sector.

The initial business case for the development of the primary estate is due to go before executive in July 2006 with a more detailed set of proposals going at the end of the year. The overall pupil projections suggest that there is no shortage of places in the borough as a whole, but it is recognised that there are local issues that will need to be resolved through the programme.

In parallel with the preparation of pupil projections and estate evaluation we have begun the process of developing options for individual schools in a number of areas including North Dulwich and these will inform our proposals in the autumn.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR NICK VINEALL

Thank you Mr Mayor and can I thank the executive member for her answer. I ask her simply whether she can assure me that by September, the next but one Dulwich community council meeting, I will be in a position to report some real progress on this important issue.

RESPONSE

Thank you very much for your supplementary. You are absolutely right it may seem to date nothing has actually appeared but a huge amount of work is going on projecting primary places and other places in secondary schools around the borough. The work actually is in such detail and such excellence that it has been commended nationally as a model that other boroughs should use on how we are projecting places at primary and secondary schools. By September we should have far more information on this and I am sure there will be enough detailed information for you to report back to Dulwich community council and I will be more than happy to keep you up-to-date on the progress in this matter.

24. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR MICHELLE HOLFORD

What is the proposed timetable for carrying out the feasibility study to identify practical options and funding to satisfy youth provision in Dulwich as incorporated into the corporate plan and what plans will be made to include ward members and community representatives in taking this forward?

RESPONSE

A timescale between September and November 2006 has been identified to undertake a comprehensive feasibility study. This will include a mapping exercise of all the youth activities and programmes currently on offer and an identification of where gaps in provision are evident.

A process of consultation with young people, community representatives and ward members will be central to the study and young people will be invited to participate as researchers. Local focus groups will be arranged and during the forthcoming summer holiday programme a young people's satisfaction survey will kick-start the consultation period.

On completion of the feasibility study, and with the agreement of the chair of Dulwich community council, a presentation will be made by young people to the local community detailing their findings.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MICHELLE HOLFORD

I would like to thank the executive member for her answer to my question and I have a supplemental question which I would like to ask.

Could you please provide me with some details of the focus group which are to be arranged over the summer holiday programme so that I might attend? Also could you also satisfy me please that not only will the gaps in the current provision be stated but that practical options will be identified to meet the needs for youth provision in Dulwich as is stated in the corporate plan.

RESPONSE

Thank you very much for your supplementary. I will get the details of the focus group and timetable to you that is currently being developed but it will cover everything - it will be a comprehensive review and will focus over the summer to get this work together, we want to make sure ward councillors are fully involved in that throughout the process.

25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR ANNE YATES

Can the executive member for children's services and education outline what support could be given to the local community in forming a new youth club for the Rotherhithe area?

RESPONSE

Local residents have raised various concerns about the need for youth activities in and around the Albion Road area in Rotherhithe which was subject to a youth dispersal order in May 2005.

A management committee has been formed and the Mayflower tenants hall has been identified as a suitable venue. The council's youth worker based in Rotherhithe has had an advisory role on the committee and has provided support with a range of advice in relation to setting up as a voluntary youth organisation including the criminal records bureau (CRB) process.

In order to support this provision the youth service will be able to provide 2 youth workers to deliver youth work sessions for 3 hours per evening /twice a week for a 12 month period. This resource would be directly managed through the council's area development team and would enable the club to open and for the management committee to apply to a range of funding sources in order to secure longer term financial support.

26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH

Can the executive member give the list of all parks and green spaces designated as metropolitan open land within the Southwark borough boundary?

RESPONSE

Appendix 10 in the draft Southwark Unitary Development Plan is a schedule of all parks and open spaces designated as Metropolitan Open Land. This is set out on pages 165

– 171 of the report to this council assembly on the modifications to the Unitary development plan (UDP).

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH

I would like to thank the executive member for her response but if I was not on the planning committee I would not have seen the plan so I would expect it to be printed on the sheet please.

RESPONSE

I would like to thank the councillor for her supplementary question. I understand that the maps that indicate where in the borough the Metropolitan Open Land is are absolutely huge so I apologise that they are not in our papers tonight. If she would like I can arrange for her to have copies of those maps. The information about which parks and open spaces are designated as Metropolitan Open Land are in other papers that we have with us this evening, namely the UDP, as indicated in the answer to the question pages 165-171, but I am happy to ensure that officers provide councillors with the maps.

27. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

Is the executive member for environment aware that the initial success of the council in preventing the abandonment of trolleys from Tesco's supermarket in Surrey Quays has now faded and that the menace seems to be returning? Will she review the position with a view to taking stronger enforcement action?

RESPONSE

The council has always taken a tough stance on the issue of abandoned shopping trolleys and adopted section 99 of the Environmental Protection Act to ensure that those responsible for shopping trolleys were made to pay for recovery costs that the Council incurred. The council has claimed and been paid over £33,000 from supermarkets within the borough. Tesco's management initially took the issue of abandoned trolleys seriously and introduced to Surrey Quays an electronic locking system at their Surrey Quays store. Since this change the incidents of trolleys being abandoned have been considerably reduced, although more recently there appears to be a problem with trolleys from Tesco's being thrown into the docks at Surrey Quays.

Tesco's recognise that there is a problem and have already suggested that they fit another locking wheel onto all trolleys in their Surrey Quays store as this is an improvement that has been successfully implemented at their Old Kent Road store. Officers have arranged to meet with Tesco's to discuss this proposal and the recent rise in incidents in the Surrey Quays area.

In addition to implementing these measures should there continue to be a problem with trolleys being thrown into the docks the council will place temporary CCTV at these locations to ascertain the perpetrators and prosecute them. New cameras are available and can be installed within a few days.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

Thank you Mr Mayor. Did the executive member like me see a letter from somebody called "Name and Address Supplied" in the Southwark News a couple of weeks ago which seems to suggest that having large a number of trolleys thrown in the water areas and left around the street was not a problem and would she agree with me that in fact it is a very much a serious environmental problem and that we should continue to pursue this until we get a satisfactory solution?

RESPONSE

Yes, I would entirely agree. I was most disappointed to read that letter that said that people throwing trolleys in the docks and in the waterways is not a serious problem. It is very unsightly and has a very detrimental effect on the wildlife, specifically Canada Dock, but it has been happening both in the docks and the waterways in Surrey Docks over the past years and it is a very serious problem. I have to say there are many local residents who are very upset about it and think it is something that should not just be glossed over. So yes, I would entirely agree.

28. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DANNY MCCARTHY

Does the executive member for environment have any plans to consolidate grass-cutting contracts in a similar way to the very successful street cleaning contract changes?

RESPONSE

Grounds maintenance (including grass cutting) in areas, which are not in parks, is already successfully integrated as part of a division within Southwark Cleaning from three previous contracts. Grounds Maintenance in parks is undertaken under a borough-wide contract with Quadron which was awarded in May 2004 for a period of five years (with an option to extending it to a further five years). This consolidated the previous situation of four and are considered to be working well. Although there have been some slight problems recently with grass cutting in parks (because of the un-seasonably wet late spring) teams have now caught up and the situation much improved. The parks contract with Quadron is performing well with consistently high monitoring scores, including top quartile scores for cleanliness (the latter being externally evaluated).

29. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR TIM MCNALLY

How many cleaner, greener, safer projects are currently outstanding in Chaucer ward?

RESPONSE

In the 2003-04 year five cleaner greener safer projects were approved; all of these have been completed.

In the 2004-05 year four cleaner greener safer projects were approved; three have been completed and the fourth project was cancelled.

In the 2005-06 year four cleaner greener safer projects approved, these are:

- Falmouth Road Park. This project has been completed.
- Lawson Estate. This project has been completed.
- Haddon Hall Estate. The initial project is complete. A further £10,000 has been allocated for the removal of a redundant playground and re-turfing. Orders have been placed for this work and this will be on-site in August to September of this year.
- Newington Gardens Ball Court. The floodlighting component has been submitted to the planning department. The amenity lighting component will be implemented in early 2007.

30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MACKIE SHEIK

Could the executive member for environment provide me with an update on the proposed traffic study of the area bounded by New Kent Road, Great Dover Street, Borough High Street and Newington Causeway?

RESPONSE

Borough and Bankside community council proposed to undertake traffic control measures in the area bounded by the roads mentioned above to consider an area-wide approach to road safety and the enforcement of a 20 mph zone. As a result, following consultation with local ward councillors, it has been agreed to suspend the implementation of all works, until such time as a full traffic study has been completed in the area. The scope, cost, timescales, consultation and the possible funding arrangements for a wider traffic study of the area bounded by Great Dover Street/New Kent Road/Borough High Street/Newington Causeway are currently being explored by officers and proposals will be submitted to the community council in September.

31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR JENNY JONES

When will you begin the installation of solar panels, photo voltaic cells or wind turbines on all Southwark council properties and council housing and how long will the process take?

RESPONSE

There are currently no plans to install solar panels, photo voltaic (PV) cells or wind turbines on all Southwark council properties and council housing. Not all council buildings, housing or otherwise, are suitable and in any case the capital cost of such a programme would not currently be affordable. To fit solar thermal, PV and wind to the roughly 50,000 council homes in the borough would cost in the region of £11,000 per home at current prices i.e. a total capital expenditure of £550m. By utilising national grant programmes this could be reduced but these programmes are insufficient to allow a significant programme in Southwark. To put this in context the current low carbon buildings programme is worth just £25m a year for the whole of the UK. However there are a number of initiatives the council is involved in which make a significant impact on climate change.

The council will be spending approximately £0.5 billion on meeting the government's decent homes criteria and these targets do not include the provision of alternative forms of energy or, indeed, basic community safety measures (such as CCTV or secure door entry systems). It is mind boggling that the government can, on one hand, be so keen on green issues and, on the other hand, be so prescriptive over its decent homes targets.

With limited funds, it is essential that the council invests in the most effective means of reducing CO₂; i.e. we adopt the measures which provide the highest reduction of CO₂ per £ invested. In general, these measures are as follows - in order of most cost effective:-

- Energy efficiency - e.g. insulation, better heating and lighting controls etc.
- Efficient energy supply - e.g. combined heat and power (CHP), condensing boilers etc.
- Renewables.

Because of the density and mix of buildings across Southwark, combined heat and power (CHP) offers one of the most cost effective ways to reduce CO₂ across the borough. In addition, much of the council's housing stock is already heated via district heating networks. For this reason, the strategic director of housing will be bringing a CHP strategy to executive this year which proposes a gradual expansion of CHP across the stock. The other major proposal is for a CHP based energy services strategy at the Elephant & Castle (this will also include renewables). The Elephant and Castle scheme will be establishing a special body to provide investment in the systems, this could also be rolled out to provide similar services for the Aylesbury redevelopment. Both these initiatives would result in major carbon savings. Its also worth pointing out that CHP based district heating can easily be converted to renewables when they become cost effective.

For existing buildings, retro-fitting renewables is typically only economically feasible with external funding. This funding is limited, and even then, the payback times are still long. But, of course the council will continue to seek out and secure external funding for renewables projects.

For new build, incorporation of renewables can be more affordable, as systems can be 'designed in' - e.g. solar PV panels integrated into roofing or glazing units. The council's main lever for achieving this is our planning policy which requires 10% of energy demand to be met from renewables in new buildings over a threshold size.

Other initiatives currently underway include:

- EU Concerto funding of £1.7m is helping deliver one of the largest single applications of renewable energy in London including building mounted urban wind, a biogas CHP plant, and biofuel (CHP) connecting up to 3000 council homes.
- Southwark has already run a number of schemes to fit solar PV and thermal to its own housing stock as part of renewal projects in the Bellenden area.
- Southwark was the lead borough in the Solar for London scheme to promote solar thermal to private householders across London and continues to provide grants for householders participating in the scheme.
- Wind turbines are being trialled in a number of areas, both on council blocks and in renewal areas on terraced properties. These systems hold significant potential but many designs are in the prototype stage of development and require trialling

to ensure that the noise, output and building mounting issues can be overcome satisfactorily before they are used on a large scale.

- The council is also developing a strategy to ensure that homes fed by community heating are fed by CHP.
- Southwark has also supported the retrofitting of solar thermal and PV systems to seven schools.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JENNY JONES

Thank you very much for the answer. I do note with interest all the things that have been done and I am delighted about them. It is just a matter of concern for me and the rest of the world actually that climate change is happening much faster than we have ever thought. Southwark is particularly vulnerable and therefore I am very anxious that this is too little and too slow and so I am going to ask you if you would commit to two things. I have read what is happening in the UDP, I think there is some excellent stuff in there, I think though there are a lot of areas in which we could go faster. We could go faster as a council, so there are two things I would you like to settle with – would you set a renewable targets of 30% by 2010? Its happening at other places I can give you where it is happening, its happening with much poorer councils than Southwark. I think if they can do it we can do it because of course there are gains of the economics of size. I understand on the East Dulwich estate the regeneration there does not include any micro generation of renewables. Could we test options for funding that? I think there could be funding out there if the officers could give some portion of their time to finding it. I think if we could do it on that estate we could do it on a lot of other estates and do it relatively cheaply.

RESPONSE

Thank you Mr Mayor - Thank very much for your supplementary question. Just to deal with the East Dulwich estate regeneration part of it first. I am currently unaware of the specifics on that but I am happy to look into and test options for funding as you have suggested and perhaps I can get back to you after this meeting about that. On the renewable targets obviously we have been going through the UDP process and there is another part to that tonight and the targets are different to what you have suggested. I would be very interested to hear the experiences of other boroughs where they have made 30% their renewable target by 2010. Anything we can do to increase our renewable energy I would be most interested in and very supportive of and perhaps that's something that we can start a dialogue on between ourselves over the coming weeks.

32. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CITIZENSHIP, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITIES FROM COUNCILLOR TAYO SITU

What will be the structure of International Development Services in Southwark and does it include the long standing Southwark Twinning programmes and how can it be funded?

RESPONSE

The international development service, re-named the international partnerships programme to better reflect its remit, has been operational since October 2005. The programme currently works with the council's existing, formalised international partners: Clichy-la-Garenne (north of Paris, France); Langenhagen (north of

Hanover, Germany); and Koidu (in Kono, Sierra Leone). The programme seeks to actively complement existing civic and ceremonial exchanges organised through the Mayor's office, with a range of new initiatives. These initiatives will share a focus on the involvement of a mix of Southwark's residents, staff, council members and businesses in international partnerships.

The long-term goal of Southwark's international partnerships programme is to create a better quality of life for the residents and communities of the borough by engaging with and learning from a range of partners around the world. In pursuit of this goal, the programme will work to achieve three broad objectives, expressed as the desired outcomes of this work:

1. Opportunities are provided for Southwark's young people, its residents, businesses, council members and staff to learn from people in other countries;
2. Models of good practice within Southwark are shared with its international partners; and
3. Southwark's young people, its residents, council members and staff understand and are engaged in the global effort to ensure timely delivery of the millennium development goals

It is anticipated that in the course of this financial year, Southwark will seek funding from external sources for this programme. If external funds are secured, the programme may use them to finance further partnerships with countries in developed and developing countries. In doing so, the programme would seek to complement the ethnic profile of Southwark's residents and staff, the council's corporate objectives and the work of other UK local authorities and other agencies.

An increasingly positive funding environment for local government to engage in international partnerships currently prevails. However, the longer-term expansion and sustainability of this programme is clearly dependent on donor priorities, and these are vulnerable to change, especially in a political context. The programme will manage this risk by monitoring and reviewing its work carefully in order to inform existing (and potential) donors about the progress and impact of its work. Similarly, it will clearly and regularly demonstrate progress and impact to Southwark's residents and the council's executive and members. By doing this, the programme hopes to create an enabling environment for future increases of core funding of this programme by the council.

The programme is currently managed by one full-time staff member (International Partnerships Advisor), part of whose remit is to attempt to secure funding to recruit at least one additional full time member of staff in the future, and who also draws on the positive support of council colleagues in different departments to deliver the planned activities. Expanding and scaling up the programme before the current objectives have been fully met risks over-stretching the capacity

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR TAYO SITU

I would like to thank the executive member for his elaborate answer to my question. However I would like to know how much would be Southwark council's funding of this partnership.

RESPONSE

I would like to thank my colleague there for his question. I am a bit surprised that you came up with this question because I remember a couple of months ago you, myself and officers sat down and gave you a lengthy brief that covered everything including funding, how we intend to fund the whole process and we also briefed you about the

whole strategy structure. But coming to your question, which I see the answer on the paper here, I don't know if you have come across it how we intend to fund it, the answer is exactly here. If you want specific figures I cannot give that to you now because the process is we are looking for external funding, any amount we can get and if we get that we will let you know.

33. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CITIZENSHIP, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITIES FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

Will the executive member for citizenship, equalities and communities provide me with an update on future plans for the East Dulwich Community Centre (EDCC) on Darrell Road, in particular looking at:

1. the arrangements for the East Dulwich community centre to continue to occupy the whole site at Darrell Road for all of the indoor and outdoor activities (social, play, sporting etc.) that take place there;
2. continuing to allow the EDCC to use the site for Class D2 purposes; and,
3. how to develop and preserve this community centre to maximise the contribution it makes to the local community in East Dulwich?

RESPONSE

In accordance with policy agreed by executive the centre's occupation of the premises requires to be regularised by the completion of a formal lease.

Terms have therefore been quoted to the centre for a 10-year lease, enabling continued use of the premises, and their response is awaited.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

Thank you to the executive member for his clear answer and I would like to congratulate him on his present enlightened view of the role of East Dulwich community centre. My supplemental question arises out of his reference to the word 'terms' and the terms that have so far been quoted by the council and its arrangements with the centre. Terms which do not at present appear to reflect the time, the hard work, the skills and the commitment of all of the volunteers who will give that work to the community in East Dulwich. This has a monetary value. If these volunteers did not support the whole community in the way that they do the council would have to pay for it. I therefore want to put this question as a result of that to the executive member. Would the executive member agree that any finally agreed arrangement or settlement for the East Dulwich community centre must take account of a number of factors, namely the centre's long history over many years of improving and increasing the participation and involvement of residents in their local community, the close work and support that has been given to local groups, its partnership work with the council to develop and to deliver services that local people need and deserves, those same services that are contributing directly to all of the council's priorities and as it follows any terms for a lease must recognise this community centre's valuable contribution and for example reflected it in the terms of the final agreement that are reached.

RESPONSE

I would like to say that we are totally committed to seeing the continued use of the centre in Dulwich and I would like to say that we do recognise all the points you have raised. We do recognise the values that is why if you see here we are trying to get a

10-year lease with them and we will put all those factors into consideration and we have committed ourselves to supporting the centre.

34. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY

What is the executive member personally going to do to respond to the recent report identifying Southwark as having an increase in serious crime (almost 20,000 reported incidents in one year) and is he satisfied that the current 'Policing in Southwark Report 2006/2007' from the Safer Southwark Partnership is addressing this matter as a top priority?

RESPONSE

Tackling serious and violent crime is a priority for the council and the Safer Southwark Partnership. In 2005/06, the level of total recorded crime fell by 5% and means that the downward trend over the last four years continues, from 45,960 recorded offences in 2002/03 to 41,432 in 2005/06.

Our progress is monitored on a number of indicators including a basket of 10 crime types, including common assault, wounding and robbery of the person. The target for these is the Home Office PSA1, which is a 20% reduction of recorded crime from 2003/4 to 2007/8. We have made good progress on our overall PSA1 target, with total British Crime Survey comparator crime down -8% on 2004 - 05, which represents 2,047 fewer crimes than the previous year.

Serious crime remains a key priority to the police and Safer Southwark Partnership and is reflected in the Policing Plan for Southwark 2006-7 as well as the Safer Southwark Partnership strategy for 2005 - 8. The policing plan sets out in more detail the targets and priorities for Southwark police.

In the beginning of 2005-2006 Southwark experienced rises in violent crime and in particular serious violence such as actual bodily harm. Between 2004/5 and 2005/6 violent crime went up from 12,503 to 12,222 and increase of 281 recorded offences. This is an unacceptably high level and does not include un-reported crime. Within the global category of violent crime there are variations between different crime types. For example robbery has increased by 23% this represents an increase of 765 recorded crimes.

Over the summer the Safer Southwark Partnership responded by refocusing its resources and funding to address these increases. The strength of the partnership during this period was to respond rapidly and effectively, in a multi agency way that joined up the work of departments, agencies and the voluntary sector.

In October 2005/06 the outline programme to tackle violent crime was established and this has been developed further for the next two years within the neighbourhood renewal funding (NRF) funded violent crime programme. We have adopted a four-tier approach involving a range of agencies to tackling violent crime, which focuses on:

- early identification
- early intervention/prevention
- medium term intervention
- enforcement

The result has been a steady and sustained reduction of serious violent crime over the last part of 2005 - 2006. This reduction has continued into 2006 - 2007. The reduction (April 1 to June 11) for robbery is 20% compared to the same period last year and overall violent crime reduced by 13%. This performance is better than the metropolitan police service average.

This is good news and needs to be sustained.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY

Thank you Mr. Mayor. Can I thank the executive member for his detailed response and also to the response on the later questions, I find that as the Labour Group spokesperson most helpful. Not surprisingly I find that variance between the report that the London Right that I referred too that was in the press recently, which suggested that serious crime was up around 20,000 in Southwark and was going up. We see the Southwark response which is about 12,000 down, I am sure there may be some reporting variation in that but rather than getting to ask questions about the detailed numbers, I am just wondering if the executive member agreed with other parts of that London-wide report which suggested in terms of the more serious violent crime, knife attacks, guns incidents and sexual assaults - Southwark is in the top 3, and in fact overall was higher than Westminster in reporting serious crime and if he accepts that, does he think that his last line referring to this as being good news is not quite accurate in terms of the concerns, it doesn't quite reflect the concerns of the local residents.

RESPONSE

Thank you Mr. Mayor. I thank Councillor Friar for his supplemental question. We are working very closely with new Borough Commander and the safer neighbourhood teams to address all these issues but you will be aware that we currently do hold beacon status on how we are working with the safer neighbourhood teams within Southwark. In fact that the Home Office Select Committee is actually coming to visit us tomorrow to discuss how well we are doing. We are also working very closely with the Southwark police and community consultative group and I think we have got a lot more to do but we are working in that direction.

35. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON FYLE

Will the executive member now allow the details of anti-social behaviour orders, including names, to be made public where appropriate, given the new political make-up of the executive, and overwhelming public support for this policy?

RESPONSE

It is the duty of the council to work, through the Safer Southwark Partnership, to tackle anti social behaviour in the most effective way. Our approach is one that has been termed elsewhere "ASBO Plus" which means that we do not just slap an ASBO on someone and walk away until they come to the attention of the police or wardens again. Our anti-social behaviour team (SASBU) works with the youth offending teams and other services to tackle the root causes of the anti-social behaviour and address those issues head-on. Because of this approach we have an excellent success rate in terms of the percentage of ASBOs that are breached.

However, this approach relies on using ASBOs as a tool to prevent future bad behaviour and should not be used to criminalise people.

In the case of young people and vulnerable adults particularly, naming and shaming can prove to be counter-productive. The head of youth crime for Nacro, the crime reduction charity, stated:

“ASBO ‘name and shame’ campaigns do nothing to tackle the serious issues underlying youth offending. In reality, they not only reinforce an unrealistic perception and fear of crime, but irresponsibly stigmatise children making it harder for them to eventually play a positive role in their communities.”

England’s Children’s Commissioner Professor Al Aynsley-Green has also challenged the government’s stance on naming and shaming and said: “I’m concerned about the naming and shaming of people. I think this is an abuse of their rights to privacy”.

Other evidence has revealed that ‘name and shame’ has become so-called ‘claim the fame’ with ASBO recipients treating their ASBO as a badge of honour, which is wholly unacceptable, or at the other end of the scale whereby naming and shaming breeds vigilantism (which in turn leads to more anti-social behaviour, or worse, criminal behaviour).

It has always been our policy that if there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that naming an ASBO recipient is essential then we will consider it. However, as yet this has not been the case and given that a large number of ASBOs in Southwark are handed to youths and vulnerable adults it is unlikely to be the case in the future.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE

Thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you to the executive member for his answer to my question. I am really delighted to learn about the work the council is doing through its safer Southwark partnership. I am delighted to learn about the ASBO Plus but my question really was trying to nudge you to sort to see whether the executive have any plans in view of the Tory/Lib Dem coalition – do they have any plans at all to actually review whether or not you will be in the future naming and shaming, where appropriate, those who breach ASBOs

RESPONSE

I thank Councillor Dixon-Fyle for her supplemental. She will know that ASBOs are awarded in court and should any over 18-year old be named their name is then available to the public if people ask for them. We are not definitely not in favour of introducing naming and shaming under 16s year olds, as there are lots of additional issues that would not be beneficial to that child.

36. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

How many community wardens are in post in each of the community council areas, and how many vacancies are there in each area?

RESPONSE

The current position of wardens in each of the schemes is as follows:-

- Walworth = 11 wardens
- Borough & Bankside = 11 wardens
- Bermondsey = 11 wardens
- Rotherhithe = 8 Wardens - 3 vacant posts
- Camberwell = 8 Wardens - 3 vacant posts
- Nunhead & Peckham Rye = 9 wardens - 2 vacant posts
- Dulwich = 10 wardens - 1 vacant posts –
- Peckham = 11 wardens -
- Parks = 16 wardens –

In addition each of the above schemes have 1 x manager and 2 x supervisors

Within this there is a small number of posts, which are filled by temporary agency staff. However we currently have 6 applicants suitable for appointment who are awaiting security clearance.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

I would like to thank the executive for his answer. However I have totalled this up for the wardens and there are 9 vacancies at the moment. My question is, however in the last paragraph he says there are 6 applicants suitable for appointment who are awaiting security clearance. How long will it be before the security clearance is clear and they will be working?

RESPONSE

I thank Councillor Lauder for her supplemental but that is completely outside our control. It is actually the police who supply back the information to us and until they are properly cleared we cannot employ them.

37. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCROFT

To ask the executive member if it is the council's intention to employ exactly the same number of wardens in the Nunhead and Peckham Rye community council area as for all other community council areas. If not, can he explain why? Can the executive member report back on progress in recruiting these wardens?

RESPONSE

It is our intention to employ exactly the same number of wardens in each of the area-based schemes across the council including Peckham and Nunhead and Peckham Rye both having exactly the same number of wardens.

The full complement for each scheme will be 11 wardens, 2 supervisors and one manager.

In terms of the recruitment, we currently have 6 applicants suitable for appointment who are awaiting security clearance. We have a further 80 persons who have expressed an interest and are waiting to be sent applications as part of the next recruitment stage. It is anticipated that the completion of the next recruitment round will bring the service to full compliment.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCROFT

Can I thank the executive member for his reply and can I ask him what plans he has to bring forward statistics which will allow all councillors and local residents to assess whether the community warden scheme is actually being effective and actually delivering some plausible results.

RESPONSE

Thank you Councillor Thorncroft for your supplemental. You will see from this question and the previous question the answers give indications that the community warden service is not fully up to complement yet and I think it would be premature to try and do a review of effect of the community warden service until they have the full complement and I suggest you wait until then.

38. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR MARY FOULKES

At the meeting held on March 20 where the chairman for Millwall FC, Peter de Savary gave a presentation on the potential regeneration plans in the South Bermondsey/Ilderton area the leader of the council identified improvements to South Bermondsey station as a key issue for Southwark. Can the executive confirm that all of the £270,000 given to Southwark council for the refurbishment and improved security at South Bermondsey station will be used for that purpose and will the executive also confirm when the works will start and exactly what the money will be spent on?

RESPONSE

The council has received a total of £270,000 from Transport for London to provide improvements to and around South Bermondsey station. Additional funding has also been secured by Rotherhithe community council through the cleaner greener safer programme and from the South Bermondsey Partnership to the order of £40,000 and £20,000 respectively. This funding has been provided solely for the station improvement project.

The council has also been able to secure commitment from the train operating company Southern railway for the provision of additional signage on Rotherhithe New Road. London Rail has also indicated that they would financially support the provision of improved and updated cycle parking facilities to replace the existing cycle parking. To complement this programme, the council has applied for additional funding from the Department for Transport through its Access for All programme for £50,000 towards improving the pedestrian environment to the western entrance to the station.

The improvements at the station are to be undertaken in stages, with the first stage including the installation of five CCTV cameras on both Ilderton Road and Rotherhithe New Road. The installation of these cameras was due to commence in early June however recent works in the area by Thames Water have delayed the commencement of this project. Installation of the CCTV cameras will take between two to three weeks from commencement to completion and is dependant upon the completion of Thames Water works.

Phase two of the improvements includes improving street lighting in front of the shops and surrounding the entrance/exits to the station. This phase also includes

environmental improvements to improve the street presence of the station, upgrade the existing fencing and paving and undertake measures to improve parking layout and turnaround to help prevent vehicular parking on pavement. Funding has been secured for this stage and initiation works have commenced. It is anticipated that local consultation for this phase will be undertaken following the school summer holidays with implementation in early 2007.

Due to the nature of the funding, the council can confirm that all funding gained for this project will be used for improving South Bermondsey station and its environs.

The above improvements will have an impact on public perception of the station and contribute to reduce fear of crime when using the station. Crime figures for the station show that 2004/5 there were 23 incidents reported which rose slightly in 2005/6 to 36 incidents. In undertaking the improvement work the council will have regard to the safer station requirements.

Unfortunately, crime at South London rail stations is increasing (latest figures show an 11% increase from 2002/03 to 2004/05). Our overall aim is to reverse this trend, particularly in Southwark stations, where almost all of the stations do not meet the criteria of the government's 'secure station' scheme. We will continue to lobby the government, the train operating companies, and TfL for safety improvements to all of our stations to ensure that passengers are not deterred from using public transport because of personal safety concerns.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MARY FOUKES

Thank you Mr. Mayor and thank you to the executive member for responding to my question. When I first started to read this I felt great, I thought this is brilliant, this is a good answer, bearing in mind the money was given to Southwark Council to refurbish South Bermondsey Station two years ago so when I read 5 CCTV to be installed and now I find that Thames Water are going to be blamed for the delay on the timetable. So first my question is, can I have a specific answer when we are going to start the first stage. The other query I have is about the rising crime, which seemed to have happened in the time that the money was given and there has been the delay. Now it says in the report that there were 23 incident reports, which rose slightly to 36 incidents, that is more than a 50% increase that's is not a slight increase so would the executive member also answer the question does he believe if he had use the money given to this council in 2004 in the time that crime would not have not arisen.

RESPONSE

I thank Councillor Foulkes for her supplemental question. Obviously if we could spend money faster than we are at the moment it would be welcomed but obviously any monies that we get given have to be planned and project managed. I would not jump into a project without full planning - the 18 months does seem a long time and if you like I will look into why it has taken so long and come back on that.

39. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN JARDINE-BROWN

Could the executive member for community safety outline which offences currently fall under anti-social behaviour order legislation?

RESPONSE

An anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) can be granted if the court considers

- a) That the offender has acted in an anti social manner, that is to say a manner that caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself,
- b) That an order under this section is necessary to protect persons in any place in England and Wales from further anti social acts by him

(Source: Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

The Home Office has given examples of the types of behaviour, which they considered could be considered as anti social. These include:

- Harassment of residents or passers by
- Verbal abuse
- Criminal damage
- Vandalism
- Noise nuisance
- Graffiti
- Engaging in threatening behaviour in large groups
- Racial abuse
- Substance misuse
- Joy riding
- Begging
- Prostitution
- Kerb crawling
- Throwing missiles
- Assault
- Vehicle crime

Case law assists in defining the type of behaviour, which can justify the granting of an ASBO. Recent case law has emphasised the consideration of whether the granting of an order is necessary and also whether it is proportionate.

The courts have indicated that in considering whether legal action is necessary they will not impose an anti social behaviour order in cases where a successful criminal conviction could be obtained and an anti social behaviour order will not be granted. This will affect our ability to get ASBOs on conviction or on stand-alone applications where we rely on criminal acts to get an ASBO.

As such we have to look very carefully at the evidence of anti-social behaviour that we are presenting to the courts.

Finally, not all "offences" can be the subject of an ASBO even if they appear to fall under the home office definitions for example:

- The issue of begging - would require evidence of aggression to be considered as an element of anti social.
- Loitering - would need to be accompanied by other nuisance behaviour such as shouting, jeering, rowdiness.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN JARDINE-BROWN

First of all I would like to thank the executive member for community safety for his very comprehensive reply to my question. I would like to ask him if he will join with me in condemning the view of one of the members of the bench opposite as expressed in local papers recently who seemed to feel that ASBOs could be a suitable punishment for night crime.

RESPONSE

I thank Councillor Jardine-Brown for her supplemental. It is obvious that ASBOs are ASBOs and criminal offences are criminal offences and that knife crimes are definitely criminal offences.

40. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR ADE LASAKI

To ask the executive member for community safety what action is being taken by the council to tackle knife crime in the borough?

RESPONSE

A wide range of actions are being undertaken in Southwark to tackle knife related crime and challenge the acceptability of knife carrying by young people: These actions include

- A 12 week media knife campaign in conjunction with Southwark News and the Safer Southwark Partnership to tackle knife crime and get knives off the streets in the borough raising awareness and promoting projects and activities.
- Test purchasing of businesses throughout the borough specifically relating to knife sales During December 2005 - March 2006 14 attempted test purchases were carried out which resulted in 7 sales including one sale of an axe and a meat cleaver to a 14 year old girl. 6 received warnings while one has been reported for prosecution. (Environmental health and trading standards (EHTS) enforcement policy is to give a written warning on a first offence unless the particular circumstances of the offence give us no option but to prosecute. The premises given a warning are then targeted for a second sale).
- A second operation was carried out in May 2006 where 9 attempted test purchases resulted in only 2 sales.
- Voluntary traders' charter aimed at promoting responsible selling and reducing the sale of knives to young people by introducing tougher requirements regarding underage sales. By signing up to the charter retailers agree to a number of terms including increasing the age limit from 16 to 18. 25 business have already signed up to the charter.
- In May we launched the second year of the Get Scene, Get Heard competition giving young people the opportunity to make a short film or record a music track about peer pressure issues that young people face in Southwark. Young people are invited to submit their ideas about peer pressure issues in relation to a number of themes which including knives/weapons. The winning entrant will be shown at schools and venues across he borough and form part of our educational programme to address violence and knife related assaults.

- The Slash programme is delivered by Big Fish theatre company in schools throughout the borough to educate young people about gun and knife crime.
- Knife educational resource for young people on knife crime will be delivered by school beat officers in the 2006 academic year. This is a teaching programme developed locally.
- The WASTED programme run by the Youth Offending Team – a group work programme run in secondary schools targeted at potential offenders. In covering the implications about having a criminal record from carrying a weapon.
- There is a range of legislation relating to knives which is in place which restrict both the sale and carrying of knives. This is enforced by the Police, with the support of the Safer Southwark Partnership.
- Working in partnership with British Transport Police, we have carried out joint operations aimed at detecting the carrying of knives and other weapons using new technology and metal frame arches stationed around the entrance to transport links, resulting in 7 arrests 3 relating to the carrying of weapons.

**41. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY
FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER**

How many cases of fraudulent use of Blue Badges have there been over the last five years and what is the average fine imposed?

RESPONSE

Unfortunately there are no figures available in relation to blue badge fraud offences for the last five years. Data is available for the last six months. The council has focused on the issue of theft of blue badges and by the introduction of an additional permit reduced such thefts by 82%.

The parking services is now focusing on the fraudulent use of blue badges and in the last six months has dealt with ten vehicles where the blue badge had been reported as being lost or stolen. The vehicles concerned were removed to the car pound and the blue badge seized when the driver collected the vehicle. Five of the ten cases were referred to the police and these cases are currently being considered for prosecution.

Additionally the parking service has now put in place robust information sharing systems with the health and social care department, the police and other local authorities. This information is passed to the council's parking attendants and where fraudulent use is suspected, the vehicle is removed. It is anticipated that many more incidents of blue badge fraud will be identified now the new systems are in place and the service is in the process of recruiting a dedicated fraud officer to take forward this initiatives.

**42. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY
FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS**

There is a big problem in my ward – Cathedrals – with street drinkers, particularly in Mint Street Park. Please could you provide me with an update on the plans for a designated public places order and how you expect this to address these issues in the Mint Street area?

RESPONSE

The consultation on the proposal for a borough wide alcohol control area closed on May 12 2006. A full report of the results of the consultation was considered by the executive on June 26. The executive recommended that a Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) be adopted in a number of wards in the borough, including Cathedrals. This recommendation is due to be considered by council assembly later this evening (see item 6.2).

We received 22 written submissions and a further 490 questionnaires which established the key concerns and issues around alcohol related disorder across the borough. The public perception survey shows that the community is intolerant of alcohol related nuisance and disorder, particularly that associated with street drinking.

The introduction of an alcohol control area should reduce the incidence of street drinking by giving the police the ability to require a person not to drink in that place and or to surrender alcohol if the officer reasonably believes that the person, is has been, or intends to consume alcohol in that place.

The Borough and Bankside Together Action Zone has identified Mint Street Park and the associated anti social behaviour as a priority for Borough and Bankside. A multi agency partnership operational group has been set up to tackle this issue and an action plan has been developed. The actions include CCTV in the park, designing out crime, wardens' patrols as well as increasing reporting and identifying perpetrators and reassurance to the community.

43. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES

Could the executive member for community safety provide me with the figures for street crime and knife-related crime in Southwark over the last 8 years?

RESPONSE

Overall crime rates in Southwark have shown an encouraging downward trend in recent years, with the total level of recorded crimes falling from 45,960 in 2003/04 to 41,432 in 2005/06.

The street crime trend over the last eight years, shows an increase from 1,676 offences in 1998/99 to 4,004 in 2001/02. Following the police street crime initiative, we saw a significant decrease in 2002/03 to 2,961 offences, with levels staying around the 3,000 level for 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05. In 2005/06 the figures rise to 3,730, the rises experienced in Southwark is reflected in other areas of London.

Gun and knife crime has reduced since 2001; by about 10% in both cases. (Knife crime has only been counted corporately by the metropolitan police service (MPS) since 2003). A more recent look at offences, shows that knife crime has started to climb. However it still remains approximately 7% lower than the 2003-4 figures.

Violent crime, including robbery has been a key priority for the council and in the summer of 2005, we developed a violent crime action plan. The result has been a reduction in knife crime towards the end of 2005, followed by reductions in robbery from the early part of 2006 and which have continued into this financial year (2006/2007).

For this financial year to date, until the end of May, robbery is down 24%, wounding is down 28% and total violent crime is down 16% compared to the same period in 2005/6.

Currently a twelve week campaign is running with Southwark News. The campaign is profiling the work being undertaken in Southwark to tackle and prevent knife crime. News stories have profiled:

- Trading Standards work to establish good trader schemes and local shops have signed up to ask for proof of age to reduce underage sales and raise the age of sales to eighteen years.
- Profiling the education work being undertaken by the police, youth offending team and theatre in education.
- Work with British Transport Police, on joint operations aimed at detecting the carrying of knives and other weapons using new technology and metal frame arches stationed around the entrance to transport links.
- A knife amnesty is currently running and knives can be handed in at police stations for safe disposal.

The WASTED project is delivered by the youth offending team (YOT) and in secondary schools and informs young people of the serious consequences of knife carrying: the police will arrest you; the maximum prison sentence is four years; you will get a criminal record and this can affect the rest of your life for example prevent you getting jobs and travelling abroad.

High-risk offenders are referred to the multi-agency risk management panel, managed by the YOT which oversees the intervention plan aimed at managing and reducing levels of risk. Additional neighbourhood renewal fund (NRF) resources have been obtained to support a premium service for this population.

The YOT Youth Justice Plan 2006/07 notes that the gravity factors for youth offences in Southwark is the second highest in London. Southwark also has high rates of custodial sentences made by magistrates reflecting the gravity of violent crime offences.

44. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MCGOVERN

Can the executive member for leisure give a timetable for repairs to Camberwell leisure centre and a date by which Fusion and the council will announce long-term development plans?

RESPONSE

A programme of minor repairs and improvements will be taking place over the next three months at Camberwell leisure Centre. This will include general internal redecoration, replacement of broken floor tiles in the male and female changing rooms, and replacement and/or repair of broken lockers. This work has been prioritised as a result of feedback from users and for reasons of health and safety. It is recognised that much more needs to be done as the centre is old and in need of major improvements.

In terms of the programme of major improvements for all the leisure centres, it is not possible at this time to give a precise timetable for the complete refurbishment of Camberwell Leisure Centre. Officers and Fusion are working on details of their investment proposal for all leisure centres, including Camberwell. The total level of proposed investment is in the region of £21 million (of which Camberwell needs in the region of £5 – 6 million). The aim is to have an agreement in principle to proceed by autumn. The executive will then be presented with this proposal alongside a range of other options with which to achieve the necessary investment. A programme of work will follow after this decision.

45. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

To the executive member for culture, leisure and sports - Dulwich pool has had minimal maintenance, let alone investment, for over forty years. Its current sad condition means many people are not willing to use it. How and when will it be brought up to a decent standard?

RESPONSE

Similarly to the Camberwell Leisure Centre addressed in Question 44, a programme of minor repairs and refurbishment will be taking place in the coming weeks including work to the front of the building and internal areas. This follows on from the recent refurbishment (in March) of the male and female changing areas.

The major investment programme is part of the same deal with Fusion (or other options) which will be the subject of an executive decision in the autumn. The level of investment required at Dulwich is also broadly in the same region as that required at Camberwell.

46. QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON

Would the chair of overview and scrutiny outline her priorities for the scrutiny function for the forthcoming municipal year?

RESPONSE

The work plans for 2006-07 have not as yet been agreed by sub-committees and there will be an overview and scrutiny committee (OSC) away-day before recess so it would be wrong for me to dictate now what any particular topics for scrutiny will be - however I would anticipate that major strategic projects for the council such as the customer service centre (CSC) will continue to be subject to scrutiny.

As public services are increasingly delivered by partnerships, I also anticipate that we will be undertaking some scrutiny of the work of major partnerships and outside bodies. However this must not and will not be to the exclusion of scrutinising council services or mean that we neglect our key role of providing 'critical friend' challenge to the executive and chief officers - the residents who elected us would expect nothing less.

We are starting from a strong base compared to scrutiny in many authorities, and I look forward to further developing Southwark's scrutiny work.

Some obvious areas for focus are:

- Undertaking fewer reviews so committees can look in more depth at selected topics and have a bigger impact
- Being more proactive about selecting topics where scrutiny can add value
- Better community engagement – making our work more accessible through the web site, building links with community councils, inviting evidence from a wider range of service users
- Getting out of the town hall to see things for ourselves

There is clearly also the issue of improving follow through on completed scrutiny reports to the executive. We are keen to hear back from executive members and chief officers as to the implementation of agreed scrutiny reviews. I look forward to working with the deputy leader on that matter.

One area of strength for scrutiny in the last council was that it was (usually) consensual. I am very keen to continue that since scrutiny is most powerful in its critical friend role when there is unanimity on reports and recommendations. The political situation has changed but that should not stop us going forward - all members regardless of their political affiliation must strike a reasonable balance between being a critic and being a friend.