



**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY MEETING)**

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Ordinary meeting of the Council Assembly held on Wednesday July 9 2008 at 7.00pm at the Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Eliza Mann

Councillor Anood Al-Sameraï	Councillor Kirsty McNeill
Councillor James Barber	Councillor Jonathan Mitchell
Councillor Paul Bates	Councillor Abdul Mohamed
Councillor Denise Capstick	Councillor Adele Morris
Councillor Fiona Colley	Councillor Gordon Nardell
Councillor Robin Crookshank Hilton	Councillor David Noakes
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle	Councillor Paul Noblet
Councillor Mary Foulkes	Councillor Ola Oyewunmi
Councillor John Friary	Councillor Chris Page
Councillor Mark Glover	Councillor Andrew Pakes
Councillor Aubyn Graham	Councillor Caroline Pidgeon
Councillor James Gurling	Councillor Lisa Rajan
Councillor Barrie Hargrove	Councillor Sandra Rhule
Councillor Jeff Hook	Councillor Lewis Robinson
Councillor Michelle Holford	Councillor Jane Salmon
Councillor David Hubber	Councillor Martin Seaton
Councillor Helen Jardine-Brown	Councillor Mackie Sheik
Councillor Peter John	Councillor Tayo Situ
Councillor Jenny Jones	Councillor Bob Skelly
Councillor Susan Elan Jones	Councillor Robert Smeath
Councillor Paul Kyriacou	Councillor Althea Smith
Councillor Jelil Ladipo	Councillor Nick Stanton
Councillor Adedokun Lasaki	Councillor Richard Thomas
Councillor Lorraine Lauder	Councillor Dominic Thorncroft
Councillor Richard Livingstone	Councillor Nick Vineall
Councillor Linda Manchester	Councillor Veronica Ward
Councillor Danny McCarthy	Councillor Ian Wingfield
Councillor Alison McGovern	Councillor Anne Yates
Councillor Tim McNally	Councillor Lorraine Zuleta

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1.1 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE OR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Mayor drew the meeting's attention to the list of people who live or work in Southwark who had received an honour in the Queen's Birthday List. The list was circulated at the meeting and is set out below:

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST JUNE 2008

Commanders of the Order of the British Empire

Charles Stuart Bell Chief Exec, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. For services to health care. (London, SE5)

Brian Edward Lately General Counsel, Office of Fair Trading. For public and voluntary service. (London, SE5)

Dames Commander of the Order of the British Empire

Mrs Donna Kinnair Director of Clinical Leadership, Southwark Primary Care Trust. For services to nursing in London (London, E5)

Members of the Order of the British Empire

Ms Yvonne Bobb Policy Analyst, Workforce Pay and Pensions Team, HM Treasury (London, SE26)

Dr Sarah Davidson For services to the British Red Cross Society (London, SE1)

Brian Dickens Director of Lambeth and Southwark Sport Action Zone. For services to community sport in London (London, SE1)

Ms Janette Hynes Founder and Director, Positive Mental Attitude Football League. For services to disability. (London, SE8)

Peter Thomas Outpatient Clerk, Barts and the London NHS Trust. For services to health care and to the community in East London. (London, SE22)

Matthew Thomas Grade C1, Ministry of Defence (London, SE16)

Uanu Seshmi Co-founder, From Boyhood to Manhood Foundation. For services to black and minority ethnic people. (London, SE15)

Ronald James Woollacott For services to the community in the London Borough of Southwark (London, SE15)

The executive members for children's services and education, Councillor Lisa Rajan offered her congratulations to Lorraine Walker and Bryan Edmands, two members of staff who had recently received a commendation from the police for their assistance in a recent police investigation. She also congratulated Mrs. Donna Kinnair, Director of Clinical Leadership at Southwark Primary Care Trust, who was recently made a Dame in the Queen's Birthday List.

The executive member for culture, leisure and sport, Councillor Lewis Robinson, offered his congratulations to the teams listed below on their recent successes at the London Youth Games. He stated that in conjunction with the Mayor he hoped to organise a reception at the Town Hall for competitors so that they could be congratulate on their achievements:

- Girls Hockey 1st place (retained cup from 2007)
- Girls Tag Rugby 2nd place
- Girls Artistic Gymnastics 3rd place
- Boys Floor & Vault Gymnastics 3rd place

Individual event medals (Gold/Silver/Bronze) were awarded to competitors in the following sports: Disability athletics, disability swimming, cycling, diving, gymnastics, weightlifting and sailing.

1.2 NOTIFICATION OF LATE ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Mayor agreed to accept the following items as late and urgent:

- Item 6.1 - Phase 1a Aylesbury Regeneration – Site Disposal (open and closed reports)
- Item 10 – Late Motion and Amendment: Cross River Tram.

At this juncture Councillor James Barber, seconded by Councillor Michelle Holford, moved that under council assembly procedure rule 1.11(m), the following rules be suspended in order that the late motion on the Cross River tram could be debated:

- Council assembly procedure rule 2.9(3) – Notice for motions to be delivered
- Council assembly procedure rule 2.9(7) – Notice of prioritisation and rotation by political groups of motions.

Following clarification from the clerk that the Labour group motion (item 9.1) would remain as the first motion to be considered, the procedural motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

1.3 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Members declared the following interests:

Item 6.1 Phase 1 Aylesbury Regeneration – Site disposal

As a council tenant on the Aylesbury estate Councillor Martin Seaton declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest.

Motion 9.2 – Disabled Freedom Pass Renewal

As Freedom Pass Holders the following declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest:

- Councillor Aubyn Graham
- Councillor Linda Manchester
- Councillor Ade Lasaki
- Councillor Veronica Ward
- Councillor Lorraine Zuleta
- Councillor Anne Yates
- Councillor Danny McCarthy
- Councillor Helen Jardine-Brown
- Councillor David Hubber

Item 9.2 – National Challenge for Schools

As school governors or members with children attending schools in Southwark, the following members declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest:

- Councillor Peter John
- Councillor Nick Vineall
- Councillor Bob Skelly
- Councillor Martin Seaton
- Councillor Althea Smith
- Councillor Columba Blango
- Councillor Sandra Rhule
- Councillor Mary Foulkes
- Councillor Jelil Ladipo
- Councillor Tayo Situ
- Councillor Toby Eckersley
- Councillor Nick Stanton
- Councillor Jonathan Mitchell
- Councillor Gordon Nardell
- Councillor Robert Smeath
- Councillor Ian Wingfield
- Councillor Veronica Ward
- Councillor Mary Foulkes
- Councillor Paul Noblet

Item 9.3 - Bus and Tram Discount Card

As the proposed cross river tram route may pass close to Councillor Jenny Jones home she declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in this item.

As a bus and tram discount card holder Councillor Ola Oyewunmi declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in this item.

1.4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Columba Blango, Toby Eckersley, Kim Humphreys and Evrim Laws.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the annual meeting of council assembly held on Wednesday May 21 2008 be agreed as a correct record, with the addition of the following note to item 6 on page 15:

“The nominations to the London Councils Grants Committee were agreed subject to clarification as to whether non-executive members could be appointed to this body.”

3. PETITIONS

The Mayor accepted the following petitions:

- Councillor Jonathan Mitchell spoke on the closure of East Dulwich Police Station.
- Councillor Lorraine Lauder spoke on improvements to East Street Market.
- Councillor Fiona Colley spoke on behalf of the Spike Surplus Scheme.

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.8, the Mayor referred the petitions to the relevant chief officer and executive member.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (see page 1 of the main agenda and pages 1-2 of the lilac paper circulated at the meeting)

Three members of the public submitted written questions the answers to which were circulated at the meeting. One supplemental question was asked of the executive member for resources. The questions and answers are attached as Appendix 1.

5. MEMBERS QUESTIONS (see pages 2-7 of the main agenda, and pages 1-25 of the papers circulated at the meeting)

There was one urgent question to the leader, the answer to which was circulated on blue paper at the meeting. The leader answered a supplemental question, the questions and answers are attached as Appendix 2.

Members submitted 46 questions. Members questions and written responses were circulated on yellow paper. There were 20 supplementary questions, the answers to all questions are attached as Appendix 3. The time for supplemental questions having expired the written responses to questions 33-46 were noted.

6. REPORT FOR DECISION FROM THE MAJOR PROJECTS BOARD

6.1 PHASE 1A AYLESBURY REGENERATION – SITE DISPOSAL (see supplemental agenda 1, pages 1-7)

The Mayor stated that on the advice of the strategic director of legal and democratic services and following consultation with the group whips, she intended to move that the press and public be excluded whilst the meeting discussed item 6.1 and the closed report on the same subject. The Mayor explained that the main issue for consideration was that the land value was detailed in the closed report and that discussing the open and closed report together would enable a full debate. Once the issue had been discussed the public would be recalled and the meeting would vote upon the matter.

Councillors Gordon Nardell, Chris Page, Jenny Jones and Danny McCarthy sought clarification from the strategic director of legal and democratic services on the following:

- why the value of public land could not be discussed in a public meeting
- if the discussion were held in open session what could be debated
- when the information contained within the closed report would become public
- information that the public could gain via a freedom of information inquiry (FOI).

The strategic director of legal and democratic services advised that any discussion of the value of the land in open session could prejudice future negotiations that the council may have in respect of the disposal of council owned land. She further stated that an FOI inquiry for information on this subject would be rejected as the information was confidential to the council and should not be in the public domain. However, she stated that the report could be discussed in open session if members did not disclose the financial information mentioned in the closed report.

The Mayor, seconded by Councillor James Barber, moved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting by virtue of category 3 of paragraph 10.4 of the access to information procedure rules of the Southwark constitution. The motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of paragraph 10.4 of the access to information procedure rules of the constitution.

The press and public were escorted from the public gallery. Thereafter, members considered the open and closed reports in closed session.

Following debate (Councillors James Noblet, Susan Elan Jones, James Barber, James Gurling, Nick Vineall and Peter John), Councillor Chris Page, seconded by Councillor Althea Smith, moved that the question be put. The procedural motion was put to the vote and declared to be lost.

Following the continued debate on the two reports (Councillors Nick Stanton and Richard Thomas), the strategic director of legal and democratic services stated that officers from the Aylesbury regeneration project were available to answer members questions. Councillor Jenny Jones asked a question on putting the confidential information in the public domain. The strategic director of legal and democratic services stated that the information was confidential to the council and should not be in the public domain. Thereafter, Councillor Nick Vineall asked a question regarding the training and employment aspect of the contract and an officer from the Aylesbury regeneration project explained that this was an added value aspect of the contract.

Following Councillor Paul Noblet's right of reply the meeting returned to open session.

After a short interlude, which allowed the press and public to return to the public gallery, the recommendations contained within the report were put to the vote and declared to be carried.

RESOLVED: That an application be made to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (CLG) for consent to dispose of the land shown edged on the plan appended to the report (the site known as Phase 1a Aylesbury Regeneration (Phase 1a)) to London & Quadrant Housing Group (L&Q) on the terms approved by the major projects board on June 19 2008.

7. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION FROM THE EXECUTIVE

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 1.15(2) the Mayor formally moved the recommendations contained in the report.

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared to be carried.

RESOLVED: That the content of the report be noted.

OTHER REPORTS

8.1 THE LICENSING ACT 2003 – CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL SATURATION POLICIES IN CAMBERWELL, PECKHAM AND SHAD THAMES (see pages 16-76 of the main agenda)

The Mayor advised that this report had been withdrawn.

8.2 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE – 2007-08 ANNUAL REPORT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR CAPITAL FINANCE AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT (see pages 77-85 of the main agenda)

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.10(2) the Mayor formally moved the recommendations contained in the report.

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared to be carried.

RESOLVED: That the 2007-08 outturn report on borrowing, investments, capital

finance and prudential indicators be noted.

8.3 ANNUAL REPORT FOR COUNCIL ASSEMBLY ON WORKS AND PERFORMANCE OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE IN 2007-08 (see pages 86-92 of the main agenda)

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.10(1), the chair of the audit and governance committee, Councillor Richard Livingstone, formally moved the recommendations contained in the report to council assembly.

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared to be carried.

RESOLVED: That the report from the audit committee on its work and performance since its establishment in March 2007 be noted.

9. MOTIONS

The clerk advised that following the procedure motion at the beginning of the meeting to accept the late motion on the Cross River Tram, motions would be considered in the following order: Motion 1, Late motion on the Cross River Tram, Motion 3, Motion 2, Motion 5 and Motion 4. In the minutes the motions are set out in the order listed on the main agenda.

9.1 MOTION 1 – DISABLED FREEDOM PASS RENEWAL (see pages 94-95 of the main agenda and supplemental paper circulated at the meeting)

Councillor Kirsty McNeill, seconded by Councillor Susan Elan Jones, moved the motion.

Councillor David Noakes, seconded by Councillor Tim McNally, moved Amendment A.

Following debate (Councillors Lorraine Lauder, Danny McCarthy and Anood Al-Samerai), Councillor James Barber, seconded by Councillor Richard Thomas, moved that the question be put. The procedure motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

Following Councillor Kirsty McNeill's right of reply, Amendment A was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 1.13(4) the following members requested that their vote against Amendment A be recorded in the minutes – Councillors Paul Bates, Fiona Colley, Dora Dixon-Fyle, Mary Foulkes, John Friary, Mark Glover, Aubyn Graham, Barrie Hargrove, Peter John, Susan Elan Jones, Lorraine Lauder, Richard Livingstone, Danny McCarthy, Alison McGovern, Kirsty McNeill, Abdul Mohamed, Gordon Nardell, Ola Oyewunmi, Chris Page, Andrew Pakes, Sandra Rhule, Martin Seaton, Tayo Situ, Robert Smeath, Althea Smith, Dominic Thorncroft, Veronica Ward and Ian Wingfield.

Following debate on the substantive motion (Councillors Veronica Ward, Nick Stanton, Fiona Colley and Alison McGovern), Councillor Nick Stanton made a point of personal explanation.

Following the continued debate on the substantive motion (Councillors Chris Page, Andrew Pakes, Aubyn Graham and James Barber), Councillor David Noakes exercised his right of reply. Thereafter, the substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That council assembly profoundly regrets the inconvenience and distress which was caused to some of the borough's most vulnerable people as a result of the council's failure to process all of the freedom pass applications in time.
 2. That council assembly notes and welcomes the apology issued by the chief executive on Tuesday June 3.
 3. That council assembly notes that the executive member for health and adult care had been receiving weekly progress reports and was informed on the Thursday before the deadline, that officers had exceeded the 6,000 figure, which was the total number that had always been quoted for renewals, and that they expected the same day service at the Walworth one stop shop to be used by only a small number of residents.
 4. That council assembly expresses its dismay that these predictions were inaccurate and the unacceptable consequences that this had on vulnerable and disabled residents, but notes the long hours and weekend work that officers had put in prior to the May 31 deadline to try and ensure as many passes as possible were issued.
 5. That council assembly also notes the management action taken immediately after officers became aware of the problems at the one stop shop, including the extra staff and resources put in place at the location to improve the process. Council assembly further notes that the executive commissioned an urgent briefing of the process to understand the situation in the week commencing June 2.
 6. That council assembly welcomes the decision of the overview and scrutiny committee to undertake a full review of the renewal process and notes the decision by the executive to fully support this review and subsequently put in place an action plan no later than June 2009 outlining the steps which will ensure that the 2010 renewal process is efficiently and appropriately managed.

At this point in the meeting, council assembly considered the late motion on the Cross River Tram (see pages 14-15 of these minutes)

9.2 MOTION 2 – NATIONAL CHALLENGE FOR SCHOOLS (see pages 94-95 of the main agenda and supplemental agenda 2, pages 12-13)

The guillotine having fallen, the motion was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Lisa Rajan and Michelle Holford respectively.

Amendment B was formally moved and seconded by seconded by Councillors Veronica Ward and Peter John respectively.

Amendment B was put to the vote and declared to be lost.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That council assembly notes the recent launch of the National Challenge for Schools, intended to reduce to zero the number of schools where fewer than 30% of pupils achieve grades A*-C at GCSE and welcomes the announcement of funding to assist schools to improve standards.
2. That council assembly notes with concern statements made at the launch by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families where he made reference to 638 'failing' schools.
3. That council assembly notes with concern that this approach takes no account whatever of either individual or local circumstances, value-added ratings for individual schools or improvements already underway.
4. That council assembly notes that in Southwark, three schools – the Academy at Peckham, Geoffrey Chaucer School and Kingsdale School – are on the list of 638 schools, but notes that:
 - a) The Academy at Peckham has been improving rapidly and is already part of the academy programme;
 - b) Geoffrey Chaucer School has shown rapid improvement since the council intervened, that the latest Ofsted inspection report noted that it “has improved significantly over the last two years and now provides a satisfactory education” and that it is set to become an academy later this year;
 - c) Kingsdale School is one of the fastest improving schools in the country and was recently recognised as such by Lord Adonis, the London Schools Minister as the most improved school in England.
5. That council assembly notes with concern the Secretary of State’s announcement that the government might intervene to either force these schools to convert into academies or even to close if certain requirements are not met.

6. That council assembly notes the hard work of students, teachers, heads and council staff to improve results at these three schools and notes with dismay the distress which this announcement has caused them.
7. That council assembly expresses its dismay at the lack of context behind the Secretary of State's statements and its opposition to direct government interference in these three schools.
8. That council assembly therefore calls on leaders of all political parties in Southwark to sign a letter expressing support for the students, staff and head teachers at the Academy at Peckham, Geoffrey Chaucer and Kingsdale Schools.

9.3 MOTION 3 – BUS AND TRAM DISCOUNT CARD (see pages 94-95 of the main agenda)

The guillotine having fallen, the motion was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Barrie Hargrove and Peter John respectively.

Amendment C was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Lewis Robinson and Michelle Holford respectively.

Amendment C was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That council assembly notes that the Mayor of London Boris Johnson announced over the late May bank holiday weekend that the bus and tram discount card would not be renewed from this August with the last cards becoming invalid in late February next year.
2. That council assembly notes that the bus and tram discount card was funded through an agreement between the Mayor, Transport for London and Venezuelan Oil Company Petroleos de Venezuela Europa, which provided a 20% reduction in the price of fuel for London's bus fleet, which was passed on by providing the discount card.
3. That council assembly notes that gross domestic product (GDP) per head in Venezuela is \$4810, less than one tenth that in the UK, where GDP per head is \$54,602. Council assembly believes that it is inconsistent, inappropriate and unfair to expect Venezuela's poor to subsidise transport discounts for London's poor.

4. That council assembly notes that as of November 2007, there were 17,320 Southwark residents receiving income support, making them eligible for the discount card, but that as of June 18 2008, less than 1 in 5 - 3178 residents - had taken up the discount card. Council assembly believes that this low take-up rate makes it appropriate to review the efficacy of the discount scheme.
5. That council assembly notes that in answer to a question from London Assembly Member Darren Johnson, the Mayor stated that he had asked Transport for London "to investigate more suitable forms of fares concession for low income Londoners for consideration at the next fares revision.
6. That council assembly also welcomes the Mayor's recent announcement to provide free travel in Greater London to all injured war veterans, war widowers and eligible dependents not eligible for freedom passes as of November 2 in recognition of their service to the country and hardships they have faced.
7. That council assembly calls on the executive to write to the Mayor of London expressing its concerns over the effect that the removal of the discount card will have on some of the most vulnerable families in Southwark but welcoming his decision not to force vulnerable families in Venezuela to subsidise their transport.
8. That council assembly further resolves to request that the executive should call on the Mayor to investigate more suitable forms of fares concession and for him to come forward with new proposals at the next fares revision, as he has already undertaken to do.

Note: This motion was referred as a recommendation to the executive for consideration.

9.4 MOTION 4 – CHILD POVERTY (see pages 94-95 of the main agenda and supplemental agenda 2, pages 13-15)

The Mayor advised that this motion had been withdrawn. As a result Amendment D fell.

9.5 MOTION 5 – EAST STREET MARKET (see pages 94–95 of the main agenda and supplemental agenda 1, pages 8-9)

The guillotine having fallen, the motion was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Lorraine Lauder and Abdul Mohamed respectively.

Amendment E was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Jeff Hook and Nick Stanton respectively.

Amendment E was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That council assembly notes the strong support for the petition on the repair of East Street Market.
 2. That council assembly notes that decisions on road resurfacing are based on a strict assessment of risks posed by the state of the road. Council assembly notes that this risk assessment is based on a scanner survey of all of the boroughs roads which gives a priority score for each road, together with other factors including usage, proximity to services and location.
 3. That council assembly notes that Southwark's road network consists of 349km of roads and that under the risk assessment criteria, East Street is not a priority for resurfacing, being 1783rd on the list of 2072 roads for resurfacing.
 4. That council assembly notes that under the last Labour administration, regular preventative maintenance of the borough's road network was not undertaken and that this has only been undertaken since 2005, when this administration created a £5 million fund for the maintenance of highways and lighting.
 5. That council assembly notes that on average, there are 210 pitches in use at East Street market today, compared to 240 ten years ago, a reduction of 12.5% and that this compares well with other London markets, where the reduction in usage is much greater, in some cases being as much as 42%. Council assembly believes that this proves the continuing appeal of the market and the success of the council's efforts to support it.
 6. That council assembly believes that the market is a genuine part of the Walworth area's heritage, that it has the potential to attract a significant number of people to the area and that a broader regeneration of the market is desirable.
 7. That council assembly notes however that under the London Local Authority Act 1990, any improvements to markets must be funded solely from receipts generated by the fees and charges paid by market traders.

8. That council assembly believes that to increase the charges payable by market traders in order to fund significant regeneration is unfair and untenable.
9. That council assembly calls on the executive to investigate the future of all of Southwark's markets, including the market at East Street, to investigate how they can be improved.

Note: This motion was referred as a recommendation to the executive for consideration.

10. LATE MOTION – CROSS RIVER TRAM (see supplemental 3, page 9)

This item was considered after motion 9.1 and prior to the guillotine having fallen. Councillor Paul Noblet, seconded by Councillor Caroline Pidgeon, moved the late motion.

Councillor Peter John, seconded by Councillor Chris Page, moved the late amendment.

Following debate (Councillors Barrie Hargrove, Alison McGovern, Jenny Jones, Mark Glover, Paul Bates and Richard Thomas), Councillor Paul Noblet exercised his right of reply.

The late amendment was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That council assembly notes that the Cross River Tram would meet the transport needs of thousands of south Londoners, would relieve pressure on the Northern Line and would begin to address the problems of one of the areas of London with the poorest transport provision.
 2. That council assembly further notes the vital strategic importance of the tram to Southwark, in particular to the regeneration projects at Elephant and Castle and the Aylesbury Estate and to the future of Peckham and Camberwell.
 3. That council assembly welcomes the fact that £24m funding for the environmental impact assessment, technical assessments and consultation work is already in place and that work is underway but notes with dismay that funding for the substantive works has never been agreed.

4. That council assembly therefore welcomes last week's letter signed by the leaders of all Southwark's political groups calling for early implementation of the scheme and supports its call for the Mayor of London to make the tram a priority in his representations to the government for funding and hopes that this can be brought to a speedy and successful conclusion.
5. That council assembly notes that the London Assembly's Transport Committee is undertaking an investigation into the Tram proposals and that it is holding a seminar in September. Council assembly calls on each political group to send a senior member to attend the seminar to explain the benefits the proposals would bring to communities in Southwark and to demonstrate and show the support of council for the scheme.

The meeting closed at 10.10pm.

CHAIR:

DATED:

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY)
WEDNESDAY JULY 9 2008
PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM MR PATRICK YORKE

That the council calls on the post office authority to set the last collection period of mail at their Highshore Road Branch SE15 to read 7.00pm instead of 5.30pm as during the regeneration of Peckham the community lost some postal boxes and as such this influences the collection time.

RESPONSE

I would be happy to write on your behalf to the Post Office Limited and ask that they look into this situation.

2. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER OF RESOURCES FROM MR PAUL KELLY

Now that the council has gained awareness of the social/cultural/environmental benefits and the community-based support for the Spike Surplus Scheme (39B Consort Road), would they consider granting an extension of the current lease for two years to allow time for the trust to explore a broader scope of funding possibilities?

RESPONSE

At its meeting of the April 8 2008 the executive resolved to authorise the deputy chief executive to dispose of the council's interest in this and other named properties. Further that the tenants of 39b Consort Road be afforded a period of time to agree the terms of any sale with the council in advance of a sale to a third party.

Officers are currently implementing this decision. There is however outstanding litigation in relation to this matter and the council is advised not to comment further at this time.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM MR PAUL KELLY

I am highly disappointed that no response has been given to our question. We have only last week received the valuation of half a million pounds which is based on a light industrial use. We find that as a community not for profit voluntary organisation we find it very hard to move forward with this unresolved question and we ask the council to give us at least one year to gather the

finances possible and to delegate the proper legal planning use as D1 community facility – it is not a light industrial premises, it has been in the community for over a year. I would like you to reconsider your valuation basis.

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Paul for his supplementary, I should not comment further on this matter whilst this legal process is outstanding.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM MS SINDI TAAK

If an employee of Southwark Council makes a decision or takes action whilst carrying out their duties which is subsequently flawed does Southwark Council take responsibility and/or remedial action or is the individual concerned singularly responsible.

RESPONSE

Actions or decisions taken by individual staff properly in the course of their duties are the responsibility of Southwark Council. The only circumstances where staff would be individually culpable are where negligence or deliberate acts are involved. Clearly, internally the council would need to look into instances where staff have made mistakes and may need to put in place development or other interventions, so as to ensure there is no recurrence. Where the council is made aware of allegations of malpractice by its staff it has internal policies and procedures to ensure that these are properly investigated.

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY)

WEDNESDAY JULY 9 2008

URGENT QUESTION

1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN TO COUNCILLOR NICK STANTON, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

What assurances can the leader give that the practice of pretending to be a answering machine is not a widespread practice amongst call centre staff? Is he able to reassure members that this practice has never been given approval by any of the managing staff at the call centre? How many members of call centre staff does the leader estimate have carried out this practice?

RESPONSE

Of course staff in the customer services centre do not pretend to be answering machines. A recent story in a local newspaper suggesting that this had happened in one instance was investigated and found to be totally erroneous. I am afraid that you cannot believe everything that you read in the papers, although I hope that it is true Harriet Harman is planning a leadership coup.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

I have read the leader's response and ignore the stupid last part of his answer. His response was not the response that the council gave when this matter was reported in Southwark News on June 26, when some credence certainly was given to the story. He says an investigation has been carried out. Will he publish details of that investigation so that the residents of Southwark are not left with the impression that once again they are being ripped off by this increasing unsteady Liberal Democrat Tory administration

RESPONSE

I don't think I can give that undertaking tonight Madam Mayor because I understand that there are data protection considerations arising from calls that members of the public make to the call centre. Whether or not anything suitable or otherwise can be produced I don't know but I am assured that the calls have been recorded, they have been listened to and there is no suggestion that people were pretending to be answering machines.

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY)

WEDNESDAY JULY 9 2008

MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

What change has there been in the number of people receiving meals on wheels in the last month compared to the same period last year? What change has there been in the number of meals that the council has distributed through the scheme in the last month compared to the same period last year?

RESPONSE

The number of meals delivered in a 5 week period, which includes May and the first week of June, are as follows:

Meal	2007	2008	Change
Hot	1107	996	-111
Frozen	12387	11731	-656
Lunch Club & Day centre meals	4665	3872	-793

The number of service users on June 1 2007 was 733 and on June 1 2008 was 714. The number of service users who have declined the service as a result of increases in charging is 32. These service users have made alternative arrangements with friends and family. Over time there continues to be a gradual decline in the number of people using welfare catering services, with some peaks and troughs. Welfare catering is becoming a less popular service in terms of take up than previously. In addition, one day centre no longer uses the service as food is prepared on site.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

Thank you Madam Mayor and I am grateful to the leader for his answer. When the administration forced through their near 50% increase in meals on wheels in this year's budget we predicted that some of our older and most vulnerable residents in this borough would not be able to continue to afford to have meals on wheels. One person saying they could not afford it any longer would have been unacceptable, 32 residents saying they can no longer afford to have meals on wheels is unacceptable. In light of that would he reconsider his callous decision to increase meals on wheels by nearly 50%?

RESPONSE

Madam Mayor the reason that we had to increase meals on wheels this year, having frozen the charges for the last 3 years, was because as a result of the Labour government's settlement for this council. We had to find £35 million worth of cuts to take out of the budget. I would remind Councillor John that we raised meals on wheels to below the average charge in the rest of London. So these are charges that other pensioners in London on the same fixed state pension, which is still not linked to earnings, where pensioners had the 75 pence increase, where they are having to combat the effect of the Labour government doubling the tax rate on the lowest paid people in London, managed to pay meals on wheels charges higher than we charge in Southwark on the same fixed income.

QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES GURLING

Will the leader explain what action the council is taking to tackle benefit fraud?

RESPONSES

The council aims to create a balance between ensuring that those needing help paying their rent and council tax get that assistance promptly, and taking all reasonable steps to secure the system against fraud.

Southwark Council's benefit service continues to take steps to ensure that robust prevention and detection measures are firmly embedded, thereby striking the right balance; mitigating risk of fraud entering the system, detecting fraud where it does occur and seeking to punish those who are caught. The measures are:-

Prevention

- Unlike most local authorities, Southwark Council's benefit service thoroughly check the circumstances of all those seeking to enter the benefit system
- The council's benefit service raises awareness of benefit fraud amongst staff, stakeholders and the public through
 - Providing regular fraud awareness training to staff/stakeholders
 - Quarterly fraud and security newsletters circulated to benefit staff and stakeholders e.g. housing associations
 - Ongoing publicity on The Source (intranet) and Southwark Council's website
 - Promoting our benefit fraud hotline number and email address for the reporting of fraud
- In addition the council regularly places anti benefit fraud publicity across the borough in one stop shops, libraries and bus shelters. Benefit Cheats Have Their Hand In Your Pocket was the strap-line for one, recent, fraud publicity campaign in Southwark. In 2008-09 the council is running a joint anti-benefit fraud publicity campaign with the Department for Work & Pensions under the heading, 'Risking It All In Southwark'.

Detection

The council has in place a specialist team of accredited investigators who:

- investigate instances of suspected fraud
- Proactively target groups among whom the risk of fraud is judged to be greatest for example e.g. particularly high levels of benefit fraud are found among those working in certain industries or occupations
- Utilise the electronic methods offered by housing benefit matching service, national fraud initiative and other forms of cross-departmental data matching
- Participate in joint cross agency projects to tackle wider incidents of fraud
- Utilize powers granted by the Secretary of State to request information from employers, banks and other organisations
- Interview those suspected of fraud under caution using powers comparable to those of the police
- Refer cases for a lesser sanction or prosecution to the council's sanction panel.

Punishment

Those who have been caught defrauding the council are punished either by local authority sanctions or prosecution. Achievements in 2007-08 include:

- Over 600 people were investigated for benefit fraud
- A total of 171 were found to have actually committed fraud and received a sanction. Of these 74 were prosecuted in court (sanctions ranged from a caution in the less serious cases, to a prison sentence in the most serious cases)
- A recent benchmarking survey indicated that Southwark achieved the highest number of prosecutions for benefit fraud among London councils last year
- The amount of overpaid benefit due to fraud was £1m. To put that in context Southwark Council's total expenditure on housing benefit and council tax benefit in 2007-08 was £188m. Expenditure attributable to proven fraud was just over half of one percent of our total benefit spend – demonstrating that the majority of our benefit claimants are honest and simply claiming their rightful entitlement.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES GURLING

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you to the leader for his detailed answer, which will come as some reassurance to the hardworking and law abiding members in respect of all our constituents to know that the council is taking this action. Could he perhaps tell us therefore how many people who have been committed and found guilty of fraud have actually been evicted and if he cannot give us a number of the magnitude of that could he perhaps set out for us whether or not those people evicted are also classed as being voluntarily homeless for the purposes of rehousing in the future?

RESPONSE

I am afraid I cannot give the numbers tonight but I would be happy to circulate those. Yes I certainly believe that those people that we do evict for fraud are

declared to be voluntarily homeless and therefore are not eligible for rehousing by the council. I would also point out that I think council officers deserve a degree of congratulation from members for the fact that the Audit Commission in their recent work on the National Forward initiative singled out Southwark's for praise. I would say that I hope that we will be able to talk with the CPS and with the local police about increasing the number of prosecutions that we have particularly from people who have wrongfully gained secure tenancies from this council by lying about their circumstances. In some cases people who own properties elsewhere covering that up and getting council tenancies from a council which has over 11,000 people on its waiting list, where we have families in some very cramped and unsatisfactory temporary accommodation to be deprived of the council tenancies which they are entitled to because other people are swindling them out of it. I think is unacceptable and I think the prosecuting authorities need to raise their sights a bit.

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER

What representation has the leader of the council made to the new Mayor of London in support of the proposed Cross River Tram? Can he guarantee that all his executive colleagues remain committed to the scheme?

RESPONSE

Due to the central importance of the Cross River Tram to the council's regeneration of the Elephant and Castle and Aylesbury areas, I have asked the executive member for regeneration to take a lead on representations to the Mayor of London.

In addition I have invited the mayor's planning advisor, Sir Simon Milton to discuss how the Mayor's office can support and facilitate regeneration in Southwark and will naturally be lobbying for the Cross River Tram in that discussion.

The executive member currently holds the chair of the Cross River Partnership and last week, he wrote a letter, signed by myself, the deputy leader and the leader of the opposition. This letter urges the Mayor to "go ahead with this project and to secure the appropriate funding as a policy priority".

I can confirm that this administration and the entire executive are absolutely committed to the scheme.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER

I would like to thank the leader for his response. Given the importance of this issue and its regeneration impact on the community of Peckham could I ask that the leader agrees to share the response to the letter he has written to the Mayor with members of council when he receives it?

RESPONSE

Yes Madam Mayor I will be delighted to do that.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

Could the leader explain what impact increased wholesale gas prices is likely to have on those Southwark council tenants whose estates are heated through district heating?

RESPONSE

In the current year we have already agreed wholesale gas prices with contractors. We believe that these prices are competitive as we negotiated at a time when wholesale prices were falling. These contracts are due to be renegotiated during 2008 and we would expect the increase in wholesale to be reflected in new contract rates. However, we intend to use our position as a major user to negotiate favourable rates.

The cost of gas supplied to the council's district heating schemes are settled through three contracts (arranged according to level of consumption). Prices on each of these contracts were fixed for two years and were agreed when gas prices were low. The smallest value contract is due for renewal in October 2008, whereas the other two contracts have prices fixed in place until February and July 2009. The council will be moving to different energy procurement approach this year where we will be able to minimise the risk of exposure to the highly volatile gas market.

It should be highlighted that those with individual gas heating systems will be exposed to the predicted rise in gas prices and will have limited options to mitigate this. While domestic customers may switch suppliers companies operating in this market typically change prices at times close to each other (they are all affected by the same volatility in the underlying wholesale market for gas).

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

Thank you. I would like to thank the leader for his answer. Can the leader tell me if Southwark Council have tried working with other local authorities to pull purchasing powers to get better deals in the future?

RESPONSE

Madam Mayor that is an excellent suggestion, I think that London does lag behind other places in the country in seeking joint procurement or joint shared services between authorities and I certainly encourage officers to look at that suggestion.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

Will the leader explain what level of community engagement there has been in the area surrounding Potters Field since the appointment of Squire and Partners as the architects?

RESPONSE

I am pleased to report the excellent engagement that is taking place in the community which is being led by the architects, Squire and Partners. Squire and Partners were appointed in May by Berkeley Homes and their senior partner, Michael Squire, places great emphasis on community engagement, putting it at the heart of the development of their plans for the site. Berkeley Homes and the council have agreed the consultation process and events will be taking place over the coming months to engage with the community on the development of the designs.

There has already been consultation with key council officers, ward councillors and the local member of parliament at a presentation on the June 9. On June 23, the architects met with the Shad Thames Residents Association and the feedback from this meeting was powerful and strongly supportive. Future events that are planned include meetings with other local groups such as the Fair Street TMO; Tooley Street T&RA and the Riverside Parents and Carers group which are scheduled throughout July. Additionally, key local stakeholders and business groups such as the Potters Fields Park Management Trust, London Bridge BID, Southbank and Bankside Cultural Quarter Group and Southbank Employers Group are being invited to an additional event in July. Following this first round of meetings, local residents and businesses will be kept informed of progress. There will then be an additional round of events to gain further input for the designs as they progress. There will also be an exhibition for all councillors.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

Thank you Madam Mayor and I thank the leader for his response. I would like to ask if he agrees with me that Squire and Partners and their inclusive approach has so far represented a really good step forward for Potters Field and that it gives us a really genuine chance to realise the best value for the council but also to have a great building on the South Bank?

RESPONSE

I am greatly encouraged by the approach that Michael Squire and Partners takes toward community consultation. I think they are genuinely interested in eliciting ideas and responses from the local community. I think they are going to tap into a good deal of good will from residents and from local businesses who want to see the site developed, who want it to become a landmark area in London, who want to see it bookending the cultural offer on the Southbank and who want a design that is appropriate to the grandeur of the location.

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD THOMAS

How much money was spent in the last financial year on advertising, providing a breakdown of different types, in a) Southwark News and b) South London Press. What proposals will he bring forward to reduce this total?

RESPONSE

In 2007-08 the council spent the following amount on advertising relating to recruitment and planning.

In 2007-08, Southwark Council spent £57,000 on recruitment advertising in local papers, of which £36,000 was with the South London Press and £21,000 with Southwark News. The council have now stopped using the South London Press (no recruitment adverts since January) and curtailed Southwark News use to just periodic coupon adverts.

Last year development control spent £15,952 on the weekly planning press notice in Southwark News. This is on the basis of a special rate which has not increased in the last three years. The council does not use the South London Press for planning notices, apart from one press notice costing £392 related to an increase of fees in the building control service.

The recent review and resulting reorganisation of the communications function for the council is already saving £1.5million for local taxpayers in the current financial year. We are determined to continue making efficiency savings wherever we can in order to protect front line services during the worst financial settlement for councils in a decade.

We will work closely with our local newspapers to get the best deal we can regarding advertising in these publications and explore how we can maximise advertising in our own publications.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD THOMAS

I thank the leader for his answer. My constituent in Upland Road were this year and last year quoted a fee of £350 for advertising the traffic closure notes that are necessary to have their annual street party. Will he undertake to look at whether such adverts could be published in council publications or will he seeks to negotiate a community rate with the South London Press and other local newspapers for such community events?

RESPONSE

Madam Mayor. Yes we have instituted a thorough review about advertising, about making better sense of the council's bulk purchasing power and advertisements,. on making sure that we only advertise where it is appropriate to do so and on opening up the council's Southwark Life Magazine to external adverts and I am happy to take on board those suggestions.

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

What was the result of the district auditor's investigation into the formal complaint made about the information distributed with Southwark's council tax bills earlier this year?

RESPONSE

The District Auditor was requested to investigate a potential misuse of public money in respect of council expenditure on a graph printed on the envelope containing council tax bills for 2008-09. After consideration of the issues, the District Auditor has concluded that that there is no action required of her.

7. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE

Could the executive member for health and adult care confirm that Southwark Carers are facing a shortfall in funding of £25,000 from Southwark Council for this current financial year and is he aware that one of the implications of this cut is that Carers in Southwark on the "Fix Yourself a Break" Scheme will now get a maximum of £250 whereas before they received a maximum of £300?

RESPONSE

Southwark received its worst financial settlement from the government in a decade and is being forced to make changes and further efficiencies to services, including social care services, in order to bridge a £35 million funding shortfall.

In February 2008, the executive, having considered a range of options, agreed that a cut of £200,000 should be made from services funded by the carers grant. The £200,000 has been invested in mainstream respite services for service users and their carers.

Senior managers, commissioners and the Carers Strategy Forum worked together to find a method of achieving this cut whilst minimising the effect on carers services. This was done by decommissioning some services and implementing an across the board reduction of 5.3% to funding. This reduced the monies available to the 'Fix Yourself a Break' scheme by £5,628 to £101,577. The 5.3% reduction reduced the funding available to services run by Southwark carers by £25,000.

Southwark Carers Board considered how to handle this reduction and decided to reduce the level of spend on each break for carers from £300 to £250. This covered both the saving, but also allowed more carers to receive a service.

The department is currently reviewing the efficacy of all carers services, and is producing a new carers strategy in the light of the new national strategy released recently by the government. These two work streams will inform the future investment into carers services in Southwark.

Southwark carers core funding has remained the same this year compared to last, and the reduction in funding the organisation faced is due to specific services that are commissioned outside of the core contract.

8. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR SANDRA RHULE

How many Freedom passes were issued at Southwark's one stop shops in the first two week in June 2008? How many passes were issued at the one stop shops to individuals had been refused a pass earlier in the renewal process? What is the total number of Southwark residents previously holding Freedom passes who have been refused renewal in 2008?

RESPONSE

In the first two weeks of June 2008, approximately 450 Freedom Passes were issued. None of these passes should have been issued to applicants who had previously been refused.

The total number of applicants who were unsuccessful in renewing their Freedom Pass was 738. The unsuccessful applications were as a result of clients not meeting the medical criteria set out in the Transport Act 2000.

9. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS PAGE

To which other councils was the executive member referring to when he informed the public that ten other London councils had missed the May 31 deadline for disabled Freedom pass renewals? Does the executive member agree that by informing a member or members of the public he was putting this information into the public domain? Does he regret his decision to do so given that London Councils are of the opinion that only two other councils were in this position?

RESPONSE

I do not agree that by having a private conversation with a constituent, I was seeking to put information into the public domain.

My statements in that conversation were based on anecdotal evidence concerning the situation in other boroughs. In my private conversation, I made it clear that the source of the information was not fully verified.

I welcome the full review to be undertaken by the overview and scrutiny committee, who are free to examine any information available from other councils and the role of London Councils should they feel that this is appropriate.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS PAGE

Thank you Madam Mayor. I would like to thank the executive member for his answer. I am rather puzzled by it. He says that he did not make it public - he spoke to a member of the public and that's not making this public? I disagree with him and I am just wondering because he does not make clear his answer whether he in fact regret misleading that particular member of the public and whether he regrets the fact he was just found out for doing so.

RESPONSE

Can I thank Councillor Page for his supplementary. I can only reiterate again that the comments that were made were made in a private conversation where very general information was given out. It was made quite clear when those remarks were being made that the information was not verified. At no time has this council sought to put the performance of other councils into the public domain, into the domain of the local press or anything like that. I actually dispute his assertion that it is in the public domain because he would be able to quote any particular relevant information relating to other councils. So yes I regret that the information was passed to one or two other individuals because it was not intended to be passed – it was not my intention for that information to get to the public domain and therefore I regret that it was.

10. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR ANDREW PAKES

How many entitled Southwark residents had not received their renewed disabled Freedom pass when the deadline passed on May 31? On what date was the executive member first made aware that council officers expected to miss the deadline? How many applications for compensation had the council received as of July 1?

RESPONSE

On the May 29 2008, I was informed by officers that there were 200-250 applications which still needed to be completed, and officers were working on these over the weekend. This was still the case on the May 31. It was not until the June 2 that it became apparent that this was not representative of the true situation.

From February-March 2008, it was clear that there would be problems in meeting the original deadline and from this point I requested weekly reports to ensure that I was kept up to speed on the issues.

11. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON

How many Southwark residents were issued with disabled Freedom passes which could only be used in the greater London area? Will all of these have been changed for nationwide passes by July 9? When did the last applicant for a disabled Freedom pass renewal receive their full, nationwide pass?

RESPONSE

We have requested information about the number of London only and national Freedom Passes issued from the Carefirst database, which officers are in the process of collating data.

In some cases the applicant will only be entitled to a London only Freedom Pass and will not need their pass to be upgraded to a nationwide pass. However, it is

important to ensure people entitled to nationwide passes have received them, and we are currently still working on these cases.

We are continuing to receive general practitioner reports in support of applications, however response times vary. We will be able to provide a figure at the end of this exercise.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON

Thank you Madam Mayor. I want to thank the executive member for his response and of course also to note that he has not responded to my question at this point in time. I also note Madam Mayor, also members of the public and other members here would have remembered the long queues outside the Walworth Blue Badge shop and the embarrassment it caused both to council members and indeed to Southwark in general. What I want Madam Mayor is for the executive member to give a clear assurance that by the time of our next full council meeting we will have these figures and that we are clear as to the number of persons who have actually received these passes and to ensure that the executive member has thought about what has happened so far and indeed have learnt the lesson of the past?

RESPONSE

Can I thank Councillor Seaton for his supplementary question. As we pointed out at the moment we are unable to give exact numbers. I do not want to give incorrect numbers in this chamber but I would expect certainly by the next full council, which I believe to be sometime in October, that we would be able to provide fairly accurate figures on how many people were issued with London passes and how many people were issued with National passes. At the moment obviously we are continuing to prioritise anyone who is without a Freedom Pass and that I believe is the right prioritisation at this stage. Of course we want to learn the lessons of this whole event and I believe we will learn the lessons and we are absolutely committed to learning those lessons on this side so I think I can also satisfy him on that point as well.

12. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH

How many social workers in Southwark have taken stress related leave or sickness in the last year? What proportion of the total number of social workers in the borough does that represent? How many social workers were on long-term stress related leave or sickness as of July 1?

RESPONSE

Sickness absence for 'stress' are not recorded separately from other 'neuro psychological' conditions and therefore include illness such as anxiety, depression and bereavement.

During the period April 1 2007 to March 31 2008, 34 social workers were recorded as being absent for neuro psychological reasons. This equates to 46 days (8.6%) out of the total of 535 days lost to illness by social workers. The

number of social workers on long term illness for 'neuro psychological' reasons on July 1 is zero.

13. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR ADE LASAKI

Could the executive member outline what action he took on learning of the problems with the distribution of Freedom passes on June 2 onwards?

RESPONSE

On learning about the situation on Monday June 2, I brought this to the attention of chief officers to ensure that additional support and resources were put in place to avoid a repetition of circumstances that had developed at the Walworth Road one stop shop.

I worked with the chief executive to agree that a public apology would be issued the following day on behalf of the council.

I have received continued updates about the status of the applications and asked that a briefing be provided for the executive on Thursday, June 5.

I am working closely with Councillor Tim McNally to ensure that the council continues to address any ongoing issues.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ADEDOKUN LASAKI

I would like to thank the executive member for his reply. I know that he telephoned people affected by the delay and that he visited the One Stop Shop more than once. I was there as chair of health and adult care scrutiny committee myself once. Can he confirm that he personally apologised to the people he spoke with?

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Councillor Lasaki for his supplementary. I can confirm that I did indeed, following the events on Monday 2 June, visit the One Stop Shop and I visited the One Stop Shop again later that week. In relation to the situation about individual cases, in fact in excess of 50 cases were brought to my attention, in those circumstances I personally kept in contact with those constituents and rang them back and followed up their cases with officers until they were resolved. No one in this chamber knows more about the distress and upset that was caused by the failure of Southwark to issue a 100% of those Freedom Pass applications. It was our intention that I should see them myself and I believe it was the right thing to do. I think it showed political ownership of the issue to personally get involved with those cases. A number of Labour councillors pass their cases to my attention and I hope they would be able to verify that I remained actively involved in those cases until they were resolved.

14. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

What are the plans for the consultation around changes to social care eligibility arising from the budget agreed in February?

RESPONSE

Southwark is one of only eight London Boroughs that provide adult social care services for people assessed as having moderate needs according to the government's eligibility criteria.

As a result of a poor local government financial settlement, the council must find £2-3 million of savings from the adult social care budget for the next three years. One way of achieving this is through providing services to those whose needs and risks to independence are assessed as substantial or critical.

A wide and detailed consultation on all issues will be taking place from June 30 to September 26 2008.

The consultation process will involve:

- All older people, adults with physical or learning disabilities, adults with mental health needs, health and social care partnership boards, representative organisations for elderly and disabled users and carers who receive these services will be sent the consultation document.
- A free reply paid envelope has been included in the consultation pack and feedback can also be given online at www.southwark.gov.uk/eligibilityconsult. There is also a telephone hotline so people can express their views and to answer any queries.
- Social care and health organisations in Southwark will also be encouraged to provide feedback.
- There will be face to face presentation for groups.

The feedback received through the consultation will be reported to Southwark Council's executive on October 21 2008. No changes will happen unless and until a final decision is made in October 2008. All councillors have received the consultation pack.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

I would like to thank the executive member for his answer but could you tell us what reaction has he had to the council's decision to consult on this change when the voluntary organisations and other bodies representing Southwark care users.

RESPONSE

I thank Councillor Manchester for her supplementary. Obviously the formal consultation only started a few days ago but I have been to a number of events and organisation. I was invited to Southwark Pensioners Forum as a pre-

consultation to talk about the eligibility criteria and the decision that we made to consult on that. I have also attended a SPAG event which Councillor Peter John has also attended and was attended by Alan Johnson from Southwark's Carers. I have also been to a pensioners' event in Portculas House to celebrate a 100 years of state pension. At all those meetings I talked about the eligibility criteria and the position that we find ourselves in Southwark and the situation that we felt we had to consult on the possibility of raising eligibility criteria.

I think it would be fair to say that of course the organisations are fearful of that. I think individuals are fearful of the consequence of that but I think I would also be fair in saying there is an acceptance that the situation in relation to social care funding is not a Southwark only issue, it is a national issue, and I think that has been demonstrated right from the top by the Prime Minister in his decision to have a debate about the future of social care.

Southwark unfortunately is just following a long line of councils in having to look at raising their eligibility criteria. Already we know that over 75% of councils in England and Wales have raised their criteria to 'substantial' or 'critical' including all our neighbours, Lewisham Wandsworth and Lambeth - they are already on 'substantial'. I think there is a realisation by people in this borough that the situation that Southwark finds itself in is not one of Southwark's making it is in response unfortunately to the very poor 3 year settlement that we got and the fact that we have to make significant savings for the next 3 years as we have 3 below inflation increases of 2% this year, 1.75% the year after and 1.5% the following year and even on the lower level of inflation that is considerably lower than what is required. So I think there is some understanding and I think and I hope that many of these organisations will join us in our campaign with the government to make sure that we make our case so that they relook again at the social funding levels in this borough and give us the money that we properly deserve.

15. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN JARDINE-BROWN

Could he provide an update on the consultation around the merger of two day care centres announced in the budget?

RESPONSE

The proposal is to merge the two older people's day centres in the north of the borough. We intend to cease to provide services from the Evelyn Cole site and transfer services to a merged centre at the Southwark Park site without any loss of service for users who currently attend either centre. The proposal came about because there was unused capacity in both centres and the need to make savings as a result of the Council's poor financial settlement. In addition, there was the added challenge of the impending regeneration of the Bermondsey Spa area which meant the Evelyn Cole day centre would have been demolished.

Adult Social Care has consulted widely on this proposal:

- Staff, users and carers were written to on February 11 2008.

- Service users, staff, carers, health organisations and other stakeholders were formally consulted between April and June. The consultation was conducted through face to face meetings, letters and a consultation document was sent to all those potentially affected by the change.
- It is important to note that during the consultation not one objection was received. However, there were a range of suggestions and anxieties expressed that have informed the implementation plan.

As a result of the consultation the following actions are taking place:

- Services at Southwark Park have been temporarily relocated to the Blue Square Tenants Association Hall, 5 minutes from the centre. This is to allow maintenance and minor building works to be completed. There will be minimal disruption to services for users.
- The works to Southwark Park day centre includes a new rehabilitation kitchen which will add a new dimension to services in the area of activities for daily living (ADL). This will help build confidence for users discharged from hospital so they are more able remain in their own home. It will allow different types of activity addressing different needs to take place at the same time.
- There will now be a 7 day service in the north of the borough as there is in the south. This has been accepted warmly and builds our capacity to support more high needs users and their carers in the community.

The new service is due to commence on August 4 2008.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN JARDINE-BROWN

Thank you. I would like to thank the executive member for his very detailed answer and ask if he can give us an assurance that all care will be taken to ensure that disruption is minimised for clients using the day centres

RESPONSE

Can I thank Councillor Helen Jardine-Brown for her supplementary. The decision to consult on a merger of the two day centres - Evelyn Cole Day Centre and the Mental Health Day Centre and Southwark Park Road, would be another consequence of the budget settlement. The situation is that both the day centres in the north have vacancies in them and Evelyn Cole of course was due to be demolished as part of the Spa regeneration. We have carried out consultation with the users of both Southwark Park Day Centre and Evelyn Coyle Day Centre and their friends and families and also with the staff and I believe that we have reassured them as much as we are able to about the move if that decision takes place.

We have also picked up a number of issues that they expressed about for example at Evelyn Coyle - there is a secure garden area and if it were to move to Southwark Park Day Centre we would want to reprovide a secure garden area for those elderly patients who have mental health issues.

There are also issues around possible concerns in dividing the two client groups because Southwark Park runs one for older people who do not have mental health issues and the ones at Evelyn Cole do. Again I think that any decision to move to Southwark Park and to merge will actually reflect those concerns and we will be able to provide a degree of separate services at the same site.

I believe to date we have consulted correctly, I think we have taken on board those concerns that have been raised and should this decision go ahead I believe that will be reflected in the service that the people will receive.

16. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBA BLANGO

Could the executive member give us an update on the selection of a host to support the new LINKs?

RESPONSE

The selection process for the host organisation to support Southwark's new Local Involvement Networks (LINK) is currently in its final stages. The LINK is an independent network of local people and organisations with an interest in local health and care services.

The LINK will improve the health and social care services through a strengthened system of user involvement and the promotion of public accountability in health and social care.

The tender evaluation panel for the host organisation comprises both officers and, importantly, community representatives. It is due to make its recommendation to the deputy chief executive this week in order for the host organisation to commence in August. Therefore, I am unable to announce the successful host at this stage.

17. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR MACKIE SHEIK

Could the executive member provide an update on the outcome of the social care funding summit?

RESPONSE

Southwark Council alongside other boroughs and London Councils has raised concerns that the relative needs formula is flawed and should not be used in its current form to determine need and therefore funding for social care services in areas like Southwark.

Expenditure and activity on the ground in Southwark shows strongly that the younger adults' and children's social care formulae significantly understates real need in the borough and similar kinds of authority.

There are some clear and obvious flaws in both the younger adults' and children's social care formulae. We do not believe that these were fully explored when the department of health introduced the formulae 3 years ago.

Criticisms and contradictory evidence was not taken into account by officials at the time. The formula was devised using information from a very small sample size of councils across the country and uses the disability living allowance as the main driver of need which does not reflect the true level of care needed in Southwark. We want the formulae back on the table so that these issues can be fully explored.

The continued use of the formula means the council will not be funded for the level of care it needs to provide for residents in the future. We estimate we would have to make savings in future years in the amount of money we spend on services of:

- Between £4.9m and £8.8m in physical disabilities
- Between £3.9m and £7.7m in learning disabilities
- Between £4.2m and £4.9m in mental health
- Between £0.8m and £0.9m in other social services

We held a summit on May 13 2008 to examine the issue and publish our evidence. We have written to John Healey, Minister for Local Government, to request a meeting to discuss this and the flawed population estimates for Southwark. We are meeting national bodies such as MENCAP, Local Government Association, London Councils and the Learning Disabilities Coalition to brief them of the issues around the relative needs formula for Southwark. Some local organisations have also requested more information on the issue and we will be contacting them to offer briefings as well.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MACKIE SHEIK

I would like to thank the executive member for his detailed response but may I ask, can he confirm that he will continue to lead efforts to raise awareness of the flow funding formula and the effect of the insufficient grant that Southwark receives?

RESPONSE

Can I thank Councillor Sheik for his supplementary. Yes, I think this is at the heart for us and at heart for me for my priorities. I think we made a very responsible and appropriate decision to hold a London-wide summit on the issue of social care funding. We had quite an unprecedented reasonable attendance, I think over 90 people who attended that conference. We had some excellent speakers and we also commission some work by Local Government Futures about the social care formula for children and adults and on the basis of that piece of work I think we have a strong argument on top of the issue around the government failing to recognise the proper population number in this borough I think we have a very good case to put to the government which we will do.

We are also in the process of writing to the three local MPs to highlight those findings and to obviously urge their support in the process. I have also had

conversation with a number of my opposite numbers across London and think it is a concern that is shared across London councils and wider. So, yes, this is absolutely a priority and we will continue to lobby the government to make sure that Southwark receives an appropriate level of funding. Interestingly I was at a South Bank Partnership meeting not very long ago which the Labour leader of Lambeth, Councillor Steve Reid, was present and he announced that it was his intention with the Mayor of London, until unfortunately he was despatched, to organise a social care summit that Lambeth were going to organise and to lead the way on this but I had to point out to him that obviously we had already got there before him but obviously we would welcome his support in that campaign.

18. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR ANNE YATES

Could the executive member inform full council about the newly trained lay inspectors for care homes in Southwark?

RESPONSE

The lay inspector scheme was originally initiated by a user representative of the older persons partnership board (OPPB) to improve the monitoring of quality in care homes in Southwark by providing a voice to residents that use the service.

Lay inspectors are volunteers who live and/or work in Southwark and who accompany council officers when they visit homes to carry out monitoring visits. They engage with residents to discuss and discover their experience in the home. All volunteers have undergone a training plan including safeguarding and understanding dementia. Lay inspectors create their own reports on their visits to accompany council officers reports.

The project will be reviewed after 6 months and a report will go to OPPB for them to consider outcomes and determine whether to make the scheme a permanent one.

19. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR SUSAN ELAN JONES

Will the executive member for health and adult care provide details of the outcome of the council's consultations on increasing the calculation basis for client contribution levels for social care to 80% of surplus income by 2010-11? Can he provide details of the estimated increase in the average weekly client contributions between 2007-08 and 2010-11? Can he provide the council's estimate of how many individuals are expected to be affected by the removal of the £200 ceiling for weekly contribution levels?

RESPONSE

The council received a low level of response to the consultation from individuals and no responses from client representative groups.

The estimated increase in the average weekly client contributions between 2007-08 and 2010-11 are as follows:

2007-08 - £14.70 per week
2008-09 - £18.69 per week
2009-10 - £20.02 per week
2010-11 - £21.35 per week

In 2007-08 the London average charge per week was £18.67. Southwark was in the third quartile. Assuming that other authorities are not making substantial changes the increase in 2008-09 brings Southwark up to the London average.

There are currently 6 clients out of 813 people who make contributions, who would be affected by removing the £200 ceiling.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR SUSAN ELAN JONES

I would like to thank the executive member for his response but also to ask him whether he is aware that in the London Borough of Hackney, which is a borough that is fairly demographically similar to our own, that client contribution levels for the period stated will stay at 50% of surplus income and that in Hackney also the ceiling is £150 for weekly contribution levels

RESPONSE

Can I thank Councillor Jones for her supplementary. I can't say I particularly know about Hackney's situation but what I do know is that when we were again making this decision we certainly did do some research to see what the situation was in other London Boroughs and actually even by raising the contribution the people make up to 80% over 3 years that will actually be equivalent to the London average once again. In Southwark we have been very proud to be able to keep our charges down. We have been very keen to provide a good service. I believe we have done that. I think that is reflected in our 3* status. It is also true to say that times have change and we have a 3-year settlement and it would be irresponsible for us to ignore that 3-year settlement as it currently stands and therefore I think that in making this decision we have made it based on a policy decision to try and set our charges around the London average. I think that is a reasonable aspiration and I think an appropriate aspiration and I believe that it is a decision, as much as we regret having to raise charges, that we can defend.

20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED

Does the executive member intend to make a compulsory purchase order (CPO) on the Elephant and Castle shopping centre site from St Modwen? If so, when? When does he anticipate work on the demolition of the centre will begin?

RESPONSE

On July 30 2007 the council's major projects board resolved to exercise compulsory purchase powers to acquire land buildings and other interests necessary to deliver the Elephant and Castle regeneration which includes the shopping centre currently owned by St Modwen plc. However, this process cannot start until the council has completed the regeneration agreement with

Lend Lease Europe, and they have submitted an outline planning application. The current development timetable anticipates that the agreement will be completed by December 2008. However both parties ability to reach final agreed terms depends on discussions with Transport for London and London Underground on the levels of funding required for highways and public transport interchange improvements at the Elephant and Castle.

The timetable to resolve these matters means that the shopping centre is unlikely to be demolished before December 2012 and the council informed traders of this at a recent meeting at the shopping centre on June 25.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED

Thank you Mayor. Thanks to the executive member for their response. My supplementary is about St Modwen. Does any agreement with the developers include provision for the tenants of St Modwen PLC and is this being worked with the tenants of St Modwen?

RESPONSE

Thanks to Councillor Mohamed for his supplementary question. The straight forward answer is that the relationship is often misunderstood between tenants, St Modwen and the council.

St Mowden are the tenants landlord and they happen to be in Southwark. We are not their landlord but we do a number of things including business support with the two officers we now have there on a Wednesday and Thursday to try and give them support.

I hope that the announcement that the leader and I made when we went around the shopping centre a fortnight ago, to the traders who came, to the shopping centre would not now be demolished until 2012. We will give some clarity on that. Certainly St Modwen said that clarity that they had now been given about the time frame would now enable them to invest some money in the centre, which is I think a big step forward and something that members on all side of the chamber have been pressing St Modwen to do to carry out their duties as the traders landlord. I think that is a positive step.

I was a little disappointed that a note was sent round, I understand from some of the traders, calling for a boycott of that meeting. I found that somewhat disappointing given that often we are asked, and certainly in my 2 years on regeneration scrutiny committee, we are often asked when is this meeting going to happen between council officers, members of the executive and St Modwen. For the traders to then boycott a meeting when we have set that up does seem – perhaps its not to everybody's benefit that they did not attend. I am sure that the message would have got through and hopefully we will now see that investments from St Modwen.

21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR MARY FOULKES

Please detail the dates and agendas of every meeting that a) the executive member for regeneration and b) strategic director of major projects had with traders at the Elephant and Castle since January 1 2008? Please include information on meetings with traders operating inside the shopping centre and those who operate immediately outside.

RESPONSE

Since January 1 2008 the council have held two public meetings (February 13 and June 25) to which all traders (including market stall holders) were invited. On both occasions the purpose of these meetings were to provide traders with an update on the Elephant and Castle regeneration and the anticipated development timetable including the demolition of the shopping centre. On both occasions the leader of the council attended the meetings as did the Elephant and Castle project director. I attended the second meeting in March following my election to the post of executive member for regeneration. The strategic director of major projects has not been directly involved in these meetings as the lead officer is the Elephant and Castle project director.

In addition, the council has appointed two business support officers to improve communication with traders. Both of these officers are based within the shopping centre for two days a week and are in regular contact with traders.

22. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON

Could the executive member update us on any plans he is aware of for the use of the remaining New Deal for Communities (NDC) funding held by the Creation Trust?

RESPONSE

The funding referred to is held by the Aylesbury NDC and amounts to £13.7 million allocated for 2008-09 and £14.8 million for 2009-10.

This funding is committed to a number of items over the next two financial years:

- Amersham development - £14.5m
- Social and economic projects - £7m
- Management/administration - £0.8m
- Michael Faraday community learning centre - £1.6m
- Walworth School - £400,000
- Burgess Park - £400,000
- William IV youth training centre - £1.3m
- Southwark Council delivery support - £2.4m.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON

Thank you Madam Mayor. I would like to thank the executive member for his response and asks does he believe that a good chunk of this money would be best put to use by investing in Burgess Park to the benefit of the residents and number of wards including my own constituents in East Walworth?

RESPONSE

I would like to thank my colleague Councillor Salmon for that supplemental question. Yes I very firmly do. I think it is a huge opportunity to have this money. Certainly my predecessor, Councillor Thomas, and I think predecessors in environment portfolios have always argued this would be an excellent use of NDC money.

Certainly I am grateful for the backing of Councillor Bates and colleagues in Faraday Ward and others to try and put pressure on the NDC to get some of the money out for this purpose because as I say, it is a huge opportunity for residents in a number of wards, including East Walworth, Brunswick Park and Faraday - indeed for many others including Camberwell Green - that does highlight how much essential part this is to the life of the borough. I think if we can't give that money out I think it would be a huge missed opportunity and a bad misjudgment I think from the people who hold the purse strings.

23. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR BOB SKELLY

Could the executive member give an update on progress at the Bermondsey Spa development?

RESPONSE

There have already been significant improvements to the public realm within Bermondsey Spa including the completion of the refurbishment of Bermondsey Spa Gardens. The redevelopment of a number of key sites is also progressing well.

The new developments will provide over 1000 new homes by 2011. The Artesian Building and Site T are now completed providing a total of 123 new homes and Sites J and E-H both adjoining St James Church will complete within the next few months providing a further 200 new homes. The redevelopment of the Old Chocolate Factory (Site D) is also proceeding with completion due summer 2009.

24. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PIDGEON

Can he provide an update on the latest meeting of the Cross River Partnership?

RESPONSE

The last Cross River Partnership on June 11 constructively discussed a range of issues including a review of current partners and partner boroughs and featured a presentation from Southwark Council officers about the retail investment programme. Following the meeting the Cross River Tram Board met with each of the partners and partner boroughs reaffirming their commitment to the CRT project and to lobbying the new Mayor of London for its early implementation.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PIDGEON

I would like to thank the executive member for his answer. I am really pleased to read that the Cross River Partnership reaffirmed its commitment to the Cross River Tram. As you are currently the chair of the Cross River Partnership will you guarantee to work with members of the London Assembly and other key partners as we develop our urgent case for the future of the Tram both for government and for the Mayor of London?

RESPONSE

I thank my colleague Councillor Pidgeon for that supplemental question. I think that the very short answer is yes. We have found ourselves in a very fortunate position on the rotation Southwark currently holds a share of the partnership and some members opposite would be aware I have already been in touch with the Director of the Cross River Partnership and the former leader of the council Jeremy Fraser in his new role to see if we can work with the GLA and other organisations to put some pressure on anybody we can, be it the government, be it the Mayor, to get secure funding and make sure that a review does not turn into a sort of deletion of the whole project which is a very great fear I think.

25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR JELIL LADIPO

Can he give a progress report on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project?

RESPONSE

The council continues to make considerable progress towards the implementation of the Elephant and Castle regeneration. In May 2008 the St. Mary's churchyard was successfully reopened following its £1.3m refurbishment. Work has recently commenced to redevelop the former Printworks site on Amelia Street in the form of a mixed tenure building including 67 affordable units and 15,000sq ft of employment space. Work is expected to start on the redevelopment of the former London Park Hotel site towards the end of 2008. The building, designed by Richard Rogers, includes over 400 new units (40% of which are affordable), a new home for Southwark Playhouse and the refurbishment of Churchyard row. The redevelopment of Castle House is continuing and the core of the 43 storey tower is increasingly visible. All this activity demonstrates the council's successful delivery of its vision for a mixed tenure mixed use town centre at the Elephant and Castle and the continued market confidence in its plan for the area.

Lend Lease have reconfirmed their commitment to the Elephant and Castle project and have board approval to proceed with the master planning and legal work necessary to complete the regeneration agreement with the council, which we anticipate will be by December.

26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY

Is the executive member aware of any moves made by Lend Lease to subcontract the development of any of the Elephant and Castle regeneration project? How would the executive member characterise Lend Lease's current relationship with the council? Does he think that it would be fair to say they are growing 'impatient' with the council?

RESPONSE

The council's relationship with Lend Lease is extremely strong. There are very regular meetings between officers and their development team and members of the executive. There is no indication that Lend Lease is growing impatient with the council. Indeed both parties are working towards the completion of the regeneration agreement by December 2008. Lend Lease Europe and Southwark have recently completed an exclusivity agreement which requires both parties to "negotiate in good faith and use all reasonable endeavours" to achieve this objective.

The council selected Lend Lease Europe as its preferred master development partner in July 2007. In this capacity Lend Lease will be responsible for the preparation of a major planning application, supporting a compulsory purchase order, and the acquisition of land needed to implement a consented scheme. Lend Lease will also have a major development role particularly in regard to the commercial and retail aspects of the development, however they may contract with other parties, such as First Base, to develop the residential element of the scheme. This is entirely consistent with their bid submitted to the council.

27. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE ZULETA

Could the executive member set out the planning department performance in each of the following the categories: major developments; minor developments; and all other developments for the financial year closing March 31 2008?

RESPONSE

During the year ended March 31 2008, 64% of major applications decided were decided within the 13 week target. The national target is 60%. 69% of minor applications were decided within the 8 week target. The national target is 65% and the council's own local target is 69%. 81% of other applications were decided within the 8 week target. The national target is 80%. This was the first time that all three national targets have been met.

These results represent a massive increase in performance overall, and I would like to thank officers in development control for their hard work in achieving this.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE ZULETA

Disruption on tape whilst question being asked.

RESPONSE

Thank you Councillor Zuleta for that supplemental question. Certainly I would just like to start off actually by paying tribute to my predecessor, Councillor Richard Thomas, because I think he really set in train the turnaround - we have a new head of development control, and I pay tribute too this evening, who has I think helped turn around the department which for too long was not meeting those targets and was not meeting the targets we should set ourselves in Southwark.

I am told over the last few days that it is looking like the first quarter of this municipal year is actually exceeding the targets outlined in the original answer. So things are continuing to move in the right direction. In terms of active things we are doing I am sure colleagues on all sides will welcome the fact that we are increasingly appointing permanent staff now and reducing the number of agency staff, because I know that is a common theme of many questions. Additionally we are working to strengthen links with London South Bank University because there are many planners there, many who grew up in the borough or in South London who wants to come and put those skills to good effect and we are slowly but sure strengthening those ties and hopefully in a few years' time we will have lots of local planners who not only want to work for the borough but have a personal and historical stake in the borough too.

28. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD

Will the executive member give her assurances that Phase 2 of the children centre capital programme will go ahead as agreed at the executive meeting on May 15 2007?

RESPONSE

In May 2007, the executive agreed a programme to achieve the Southwark target of having 21 children's centres designated by the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF then DfES) by March 2008. This target has been achieved, with the DCSF agreeing to designate new centres on the basis of there being plans in place to deliver the required range of services for children under five and their families across Southwark. The aim of the capital programme is to enhance this provision by improving facilities in children's centres, most of which are based on primary schools in this phase of the programme.

Progress with capital projects in Phase 2 is as follows:

- Rye Oak Primary School - currently on site and nearing completion. (Phase 1 & 2)
- Crawford Primary School - scheme in contract and on target

- Victory Primary School - contract let and work commencing on July 14 2008
- Ivydale Primary School - contract let and work commencing on July 14 2008
- Pilgrim's Way Primary School - contract let and work commencing on July 21 2008
- Gumboots Community Nursery - final issues to be resolved around possible need for temporary relocation. Due to start on site in December 2008
- Redriff Primary School - final contract approvals being sought. Due to start on site in September 2008
- Heber Primary School (alternative site to Dulwich Village CE Infants School) - final plans being agreed with new head teacher to ensure on-going suitability. Due to start on site in December 2008
- Rotherhithe Primary School (alternative site to Riverside Primary School) - no capital works needed to function as a children's centre
- Bessemer Grange Primary School - project is proceeding. Awaiting final approval from Department for Children Schools and Families for aspects of the scheme which require secretary of state approval. Start date is dependent on the final approvals being granted.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD

Thank you very much for the answer from the executive member for children and education. Have any of these projects been reduced in scale of provision since the original decision made last year?

RESPONSE

Since the original decision last year there have been some changes. I think Councillor Ward is probably aware if she has been through these executive report there were some changes to the locations of the children's centre and I think where that's happen there may be a change in scale, particularly on Heber Primary School being an alternative site to Dulwich Village and Rotherhithe Primary an alternative site to Riverside. I am quite happy to find out from her the exact answer to her question because I think you are asking for a bit more detail than I have given in the original but I am quite happy to supply that to you after this meeting.

29. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR DANNY MCCARTHY

Recent news stories have highlighted the concerns about children missing from school whose current whereabouts are not accounted for. How serious is this issue in Southwark ? What procedures and policies are now in place to ensure that the situation of children missing from school without a known reason is monitored. Do all schools presently have a child protection coordinator?

RESPONSE

Southwark has a robust process for tracking children reported out of school (children missing education - CME), including a centrally employed team of three

staff. Clear procedures and policies have been agreed with the schools to ensure consistent information sharing about children who go missing. In addition a mid-year fair access protocol for admissions outside of the normal transition arrangements has been implemented and has had a major impact on the numbers of children without a school place. In 2005 there were 300 children missing from education. In April 2008 this had been reduced to 9. Where there are discrepancies between school audit returns and the education management system (EMS) data base the CME team track children in cooperation with other council departments - in particular housing. Most children are located at another school or there is evidence that they have left the country.

Schools are required to have named child protection officers, ('designated persons'), typically senior staff, with several actually creating small teams to support this area. Good links also exist with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies. This network, supported by centrally employed staff, has traditionally proven highly effective in locating children.

The council has a legal obligation to ensure that governing bodies are complying with Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) expectations pertaining to safeguarding and this is monitored through a regular audit visit by the schools safeguarding coordinator and support for self-evaluation. A parallel audit is applied to supplementary schools and education other than at school (EOTAS) providers that are supported or commissioned by the council and this is also offered to non-maintained schools within the borough, on a voluntary basis, on behalf of the Southwark safeguarding children board. We also have a clear and widely disseminated policy on CME.

30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

Could the executive member explain the likely impact on schools in Southwark of the announcement made by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about school performance?

RESPONSE

Much hard work has been undertaken by Southwark schools to address issues of achievement in the last few years, not just those highlighted in the announcement. This has resulted in a number of our schools being identified by the Department of Children, Families and Schools as some of the most improved in the country. The timing of the policy change is unhelpful as resources in schools have to be diverted to respond to it. The three schools identified in this announcement have shown good improvement over the past three years across a wide range of indicators, including achievement. We share the belief with the head teachers of those schools that there is more to do however; and we are not complacent.

Our local response is made more complicated as we understand that the programme will not actually include Geoffrey Chaucer as announced, as the school closes this summer to be reopened as the Globe Academy, nor the Academy @ Peckham, which Ministers believe to be making good progress. The

Minister's letter to Kingsdale, which identified it as a rapidly improving school, adds further to the confusion around this announcement.

Nonetheless, any additional resources that are brought to bear by central government to some of the most deprived communities and hardest working schools in the country must be welcomed.

31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

Could the executive member provide a progress report on plans for the new Harris Academy in East Dulwich?

RESPONSE

I am delighted to announce that Harris's planning application for the new academy in East Dulwich was approved by the planning committee on July 2 2008. I am very pleased that this new school, which will accommodate 950 boys including a sixth form federated with Harris Girls Academy East Dulwich, is a huge step closer to becoming a reality. I sat on the scrutiny committee of five years ago, when parents and residents started the EDEN campaign, and brought their case for the provision of a new boys' school for this area so that their sons could be educated locally. This planning decision means that we can now move forward in accommodating this need and delivering high-quality education to the many families who want a place at a boys-only school for their sons. There is still a lot of work to be done to get the school ready to open on a temporary site in September 2009 and I look forward to continuing to work closely with the Harris Federation and the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF). The Harris Federation has proved itself a good partner to the borough and I am confident the new boys' school in East Dulwich will continue Harris' strong track record of delivering excellent quality schools in Southwark.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

I would like to thank the executive member for her answer and of course on the gratitude of the people of Dulwich for the wonderful and welcome news about the school. Can I though ask on their behalf what is the next step?

RESPONSE

Thank you very much Councillor Mitchell for your question. Yes I am very pleased that the project is going ahead. The next stage is to secure the funding agreement between Harris Federation and the Secretary of State and also to begin the demolition of the old school in time for construction to start at the beginning of 2009. That is due to be completed in June 2010 in preparation for the opening on this site in September 2010.

32. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH

How many cars have been removed or clamped by the council parking enforcement contractors this year? When vehicles have been removed or

clamped what was the average length of time that elapsed between issuing a parking ticket and removing the vehicle? What is the council's policy on the minimum period that should elapse?

RESPONSE

The council scrapped the policy of vehicle clamping on the public highway at the end of last year (March 31 2008) and clamps are now only used on the Southwark housing estates.

Vehicle removals totalled 705 from April 1 2008 until June 22 2008. It is not possible to give an average time lapse overall because there are 18 different offence codes where vehicles are removed after a given period.

The removal of the actual vehicles will depend on the availability of resources at the time. The policy which is used in Southwark is a combination of the Traffic Management Act and the London Councils code of practice.

33. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES

How many unannounced tenancy and resident checks were carried out in the year 2007, by housing area?

RESPONSE

Prior to the transfer of this function to housing management 991 proactive visits were made to tenants by the housing investigation team. 253 tenancies were fully verified.

The new area management service formally took on this service in December 2007, a major tenet of the new structure being to increase the level of contact between housing officers and tenants. So far, housing officers have visited more than 80% of residents unannounced and made direct contact with 37% of tenants as a result, or just under 15 000 households. We are aiming to complete 100% of unannounced visits by September 2008. Formal tenancy checks will start in August 2008 with a view to achieving 50% per annum on a rolling programme. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to highlight the significant improvement in performance due to the new structure.

34. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR KIRSTY MCNEILL

Can the executive member for housing update council assembly on the progress of the Heygate new-build housing sites? Which sites have been identified and how far has development progressed on each individually?

RESPONSE

There are two packages of Elephant and Castle housing sites which are identified below. Package A is being delivered by Urban Choice, comprising of Affinity

Sutton & Family Mosaic, and Package B is delivered by Wandle, Guinness & L&Q.

In the case of Package A, architects have been appointed to design each scheme, pre-planning application meetings are in the process of being held with planning officers and applications are expected to be submitted in autumn (subject to scheme viability) following further pre-planning consultation with local residents who live in the vicinity of the sites.

In the case of Package B, one application for the site at Bolton Crescent / Camberwell New Road has been submitted. The remaining schemes are likely to be submitted in September subject to scheme viability. Pre-planning consultation has been carried out for all sites however further events are planned for Leroy Street and the Stead Street sites (including Crown Terrace).

Package A:

- Manna Ash House, Pocock Street (Site 8P)
- LBS Social Services, Harper Rd (Site 10P)
- 153 – 163 Harper Road (42P)
- Welsford Street garages (54P)
- Royal Road (55P)

Package B

- Library Street (9P)
- Prospect House (38P)
- Albert Barnes House, New Kent Road (40P)
- Comus Place, Townsend Street (43P)
- Leroy Street (44P)
- Brandon Street (50P)
- Stead Street Car Park (51P, 52P & 53P)
- Bolton Crescent / Camberwell New Road (58P)

35. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR OLAJUMOKE OYEWUNMI

What was the total number of stage 2 and stage 3 complaints on housing matters (including repairs delays, customer service complaints etc.) made in the municipal year 2007-08 (May 2007 - May 2008)? What was the number for the preceding year (May 2006 - May 2007)?

RESPONSE

The statistics below show an encouraging reduction in both stage 2 and stage 3 complaints in the past two years, reflecting greater confidence in managing complaints at stage 1 of the process.

Complaints	Stage 2	Stage 3
May 1 2006 – April 30 2007	479	154

May 1 2007 – April 30 2008	366	92
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There has been a 23% reduction in stage 2 complaints and a 40% reduction in stage 3 complaints when comparing 2007-08 figures with the previous year.

The housing services complaints comprise of housing management, community housing, leasehold management unit and repairs. In 2007-08, 40% of the complaints at stage 2 were related to repairs and 37% were related to other housing management services. The same year, 47% of stage 3 complaints were related to housing management services of which 32% were repairs related. Housing complaints also include those relating to leasehold issues and community housing.

I would like to thank you for allowing me to share these impressive reductions with members.

36. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

Where do the lift contractors source their 'spare parts' from when residential lifts break down? How much would it cost to hold a 'spare part' for every part of the residential lifts? What's the average amount of time it takes to fix a lift that requires 'spare parts' to be sourced externally?

RESPONSE

The lift contractors have an impressive stock of spare parts which they are able carry with them to carry out day to day lift repairs and which will cover most standard problems they encounter. Both lift contractors also have the ability to source parts from the original manufacturer or an approved supplier. In the case of Apex Lifts Ltd, they have the ability to manufacture spare parts in their own factory.

However due to the vast and varying lift equipment in the borough (there are well over 10,000 different parts that would be required), and the age and obsolescence of lift equipment, some parts need to be sourced externally. On average these parts would take between two and three days to be fitted. In some exceptional circumstances, due to the scale or complexity of the equipment that needs to be replaced, this period may be longer.

It would be extremely expensive to hold spare parts for all our lift equipment due to the extent of the spare parts that would be required for contractors to hold. It is not the industry standard for managing a lift service, and is unlikely to see any service improvements upon the present arrangements. Performance figures for the end of June indicated 97% of lifts in use and working.

37. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY

How many council houses were empty in Southwark as of July 1 2008? How many have been empty for longer than six months? What has been the average turnaround time for council housing voids to be brought back into use in each year since 2001-02? Please itemise by year.

RESPONSE

The number of empty council houses at June 29 2008 is 671. Of these properties, 209 will be brought back into the lettings pool within the month, another 180 require major works but will be returned to use within a maximum of three months.

278 properties have been empty for more than six months. Most of these properties, some 200 are voids arising in regeneration estates such as the Heygate. Whilst some will be returned to use as temporary accommodation pending the completion of the regeneration programmes some, such as those on the Heygate, will never be let. Of the remaining 78 longer term voids, 35 are in the major works contract being brought up to the decent homes standard, and the rest are pending investment decisions.

Comparing void turnaround year on year is difficult due to various changes in the definition and its application since 2001-02. Void turnaround time per annum is as follows:

2001-02	39 days (minor voids only)
2002-03	Performance not measured – due to change in national target regime.
2003-04	Performance not measured – due to change in national target regime.
2004-05	63 days (minor voids only)
2005-06	41 days (new definition partially applied e.g to minor voids)
2006-07	111 days (definition clarified by Audit Commission to include major voids)
2007-08	85 days including major voids.

Performance on turnaround is improving steadily, but has been affected by the number of longer term void properties now being brought back into use.

38. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR GORDON NARDELL

How many recorded missed repairs appointments have there been in the last 12 months? How many individual compensation payments were awarded for missed appointments in the same period? Please itemise each figure by month. How confident is the executive member that the recorded number of missed appointments reflects the actual number of missed appointments?

RESPONSE

There were 749 missed appointments identified and awarded compensation during the last financial year and we are confident that all missed appointment claims that have been verified, were paid.

We are unable to identify the number of missed appointments by month for the whole of the last financial year but have now altered our reporting methods and are able to show monthly data since April 2008. We previously relied upon the customer to contact the council to report such instances but no longer do this. This means that residents will receive compensation payments when appointments are missed when they have not necessarily complained or requested payment.

The monthly figures for missed appointments are April - 404, May - 94 and June - 38. The missed appointment level this financial year is running at 2.55% of all repairs appointments (this includes appointments not kept as result of the emergency planning and disaster recovery from the Tooley Street incident).

During the 2007-08 financial year 225,700 works orders to individual dwellings were raised across all housing repair contracts (repair & maintenance, heating, emergencies, door entry, asbestos, lifts, TV Aerials, pest control etc).

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

How much has been paid as compensation or out of court settlement by the council to members of staff past or present in the last 24 months, not including redundancy packages? Please itemise by loose category of what the payment was for (e.g. accidents or injuries, sexual harassment, racial discrimination)

RESPONSE

In the financial year to March 31 2007, 25 payments were made totalling £229,334. In the financial year to March 31 2008, 6 payments were made totalling £119, 464, representing a reduction of 76% in the number of payments made and a reduction of 48% in the amount paid compared to the previous year.

In 2006-07, there were two awards against the council at the Employment Tribunal, for breach of contract. In both cases the breach of contract related to the non payment of notice pay to which, in the view of the Tribunal, the claimants were entitled. There were no awards against the council at County Court.

In 2007-08, there were no awards against the council at the Employment Tribunal. There was one award against the council at County Court, for breach of contract, in respect of pay to which, in the view of the court, the claimant was entitled.

Each of the other 23 payments in 2006-07 and 5 payments in 2007-08 were made by the council as part of a settlement agreement, such as a compromise or conciliated agreement. It is not possible to categorise what these payments were

for, as each agreement responds to a variety of allegations that are not discretely isolated at the point of settlement, and there is no admission of any fault or liability on behalf of the council.

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

Why does the council's tourism website www.visitsouthwark.com contain separate sections for the comparatively small areas of Bankside, London Bridge, Bermondsey, Rotherhithe and Dulwich, yet place the majority of the borough in terms of population into a single catch-all section entitled 'Peckham and Elephant & Castle'? Is this a further example of the couldn't-care-less attitude that the Liberal Democrat/Conservative coalition has so frequently shown towards the central areas of the borough?

RESPONSE

The website www.visitsouthwark.com was set up in partnership with Better Bankside and London Bridge Bid, and some of the content reflects their involvement in the project. The site is designed for use by those who might visit the borough, and headings have been used that are more easily recognised by a tourist than electoral ward boundaries.

As part of the reorganisation of communications, it is intended to develop a marketing campaign to promote the whole of the borough as a tourist destination. In light of this I have expressed the view that in consultation with partners, the effectiveness of this site in achieving that aim should be reviewed.

41. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE

How many incorrect council tax bills have been sent out in the last year? Is this an improvement on the previous year? How many times in the last year has the council or its contractors sent bailiffs to collect council tax arrears which were not actually owed?

RESPONSE

This information is not currently captured within the revenues and benefits system. Any incidents relating to incorrect billing whether customer or council error, are responded to on a case by case basis. Overall revenue and benefits complaints at stage 1 have reduced by 51% in the period 2006-07 to 2007-08.

Any bills sent in error are included within the number of revised bills that are sent during the financial year as a result in changes of circumstances.

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

We received the keys to the new Tooley Street building on 11 June. I understand that the original landlord, UBS, has now passed on ownership. Who is the new

landlord? What assurances can the executive member give that the council's new landlord meets the ethical standards that Southwark residents might expect?

RESPONSE

The council's landlord for 160 Tooley Street is UBS Global Asset Management (UK) Ltd, however it is understood that the freehold interest in the property is under offer to Tooley Street Investments. The ownership of the building has no impact on the occupation of the building by the council

43. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCROFT

How many instances of double charging of council tax, where a council tax payer pays for a single instalment of the tax more than once, have there been in the last 24 months? How many of those instances have been refunded? What checks does the council have in place to make sure that where double charging occurs it is refunded?

RESPONSE

Direct debit is the only form of payment where the council has direct control over the frequency of payments taken from residents' bank. 49% of residents who are liable for council tax choose to use this method.

The council does not record the number of double charging incidents because instalment plans are set up automatically by the council tax system at the beginning of each financial year or at the time a new account is created. 10 instalments are set up to take payments on the 1st of the month, therefore double charging cannot occur.

Therefore, for an instalment to be paid twice, the payment must have been made by the customer. In these circumstances the council would not necessarily know that customer has paid an instalment twice.

There is one instance where a customer may possibly be requested to make a duplicated payment. This can occur as a consequence of a customer moving address within the borough. In these circumstances a new bill and a new instalment plan is created.

It is normal practice in these scenarios for any credit existing on the "old" account to be transferred to the new account. The service provider runs regular reports to identify accounts in credit particularly to try and identify any which need to be transferred to new accounts. Whilst these do occur from time to time they are rare and data is not held on the number of such cases.

44. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR NICK VINEALL

Would the executive for resources please outline his position on the:

- (a) Desirability and

(b) Feasibility

of providing voluntary bodies in receipt of grant funding from the council with 3 year settlements and, if he agrees that to do would be desirable, would he please say what steps he has taken or proposes to take to introduce either indicative or binding 3 year funding of voluntary bodies.

RESPONSE

The provision of longer term funding arrangements whether through grant aid or contract are both desirable and feasible and enable voluntary sector organisations to plan and deliver services more effectively. Since 1991 the council funding has included 3 year service agreements and contracts or varying terms including 3 years.

In 2007 following completion of a strategic review of its relationship with the voluntary and community sector, the council adopted the voluntary sector framework, which sets out the policy and principles governing the council's arrangements for partnership with, support to and resourcing of Southwark's voluntary and community sector (VCS).

In relation to commissioning and funding the VCS, the framework sets out that the council will operate a mixed economy of grant aid and contracts and will normally operate on a three-year cycle. Service agreements are to be phased out and the new borough council for voluntary sector, Community Action Southwark is now in a 3 year contract (2008-11) subject to review after one year, given that it is a new organisation. This is jointly managed by health and social care, children's services and community support. There will be further moves to 3 year commissioning across all council departments from 2009-10 onwards.

There will be circumstances where it may not be feasible or appropriate to provide terms of 3 year funding and where such terms are offered, whether in contract or grant aid, continuation of funding year on year will depend on a number of factors. These include the performance of the organisation, evidence of value for money, the funding stream which supports particular types of service delivery and the council's overall budgetary position and review processes.

45. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR EVRIM LAWS

How much has the publicity (including advertisements in the press) for the 'No More Reminders' campaign cost since it began? How much have council tax collection rates increased over that period? How much extra revenue does that increase in collection rate represent in monetary terms?

RESPONSE

The No More Reminders campaign cost £105,000, which was met by the council's service provider, Liberata. This is a sign of their continued commitment and investment into the contract and of their commitment to improving council tax collection performance.

The campaign has contributed to the following results:

- In 2006-07 council tax in year performance was 92.3%. Cash collection amounted to £75.4m
- In 2007-08 council tax in year performance was 92.5%. Cash collection amounted to £80.6m, an increase in £5.2m compared to 2006/7.
- In 2006-07 council tax arrears collection amounted to £2.6m
- In 2007-08 council tax arrears collection amounted to £3.8m, a 33% increase in arrears from the previous financial year.

The campaign has therefore contributed to an addition £6.4m in council tax revenue.