

# Council Assembly

Wednesday 8 July 2015  
7.00 pm  
Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

## TABLED ITEMS

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### Contact

Lesley John on 020 7525 7228 or 020 7525 7222 or email: [lesley.john@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.john@southwark.gov.uk);  
[andrew.weir@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.weir@southwark.gov.uk); [constitutional.team@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:constitutional.team@southwark.gov.uk)  
Webpage: <http://www.southwark.gov.uk>

Date: 8 July 2015

**QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS 2015****Knights Bachelor****Knighthoods**

The Right Honourable Simon Henry Ward **HUGHES** Lately Member of Parliament for Bermondsey and Old Southwark. For public and political service.

**Order of the British Empire****Commanders of the Order of the British Empire**

Chiwetel **EJIOFOR**, OBE Actor. For services to Drama.

**Order of the British Empire****Officers of the Order of the British Empire**

James Christopher **GURLING** Member, Executive Committee, Liberal Democrats. For political service.

**Order of the British Empire****Members of the Order of the British Empire**

Leslie Henry **ALDEN** For services to the community in Southwark, London.

Ms Jenny Ann **DEEKS** Director, Coin Street Family and Children's Centre, Lambeth and Southwark. For services to Children and Families.

Robert Michael **HADFIELD** Chair of Governors, Crampton Primary School, Walworth, London. For services to Education.

James **JUKES** Founder, UK Homes 4 Heroes. For services to the Homeless.

## SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

### COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

#### (ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 8 JULY 2015

### PROGRAMME MOTION

That the meeting be conducted as follows:

#### **PUBLIC QUESTION**

##### **Item 2.2 Public question time** (Up to 15 minutes)

- To receive a supplemental question from Mr Kelland - Councillor Fiona Colley to respond.
- To receive a supplemental question from Mr Scarlett – Councillor Darren Merrill to respond.
- To receive a supplemental question from Mr Blamey – Councillor Darren Merrill to respond.

#### **CEMETERY DEBATE**

##### **Item 2.1 Petition** (10 minutes)

- Spokesperson to present the petition on Save Southwark Woods. Five minutes.
- Questions from members. Five minutes

Petition time ended and meeting to agree to bring forward Deputation 4.1, Motion 5.2.1 and Amendment B on the same subject as the petition, as follows:

##### **Item 4 Deputation** (10 minutes)

- To receive a deputation on the council's future cemetery intentions, Five minutes.
- Questions from members. Five minutes.

##### **Item 5.2 Members' Motions** (30 minutes)

- Meeting to consider Motion 5.2.1 Save Southwark Woods and Amendment B – Single debate. Time limit 30 minutes:

(Motion and amendment to be moved and seconded followed by single debate. At the end of the debate the mover of the motion shall have a right of reply. Motion and amendment to be vote upon separately.)

#### **THEMED DEBATE**

##### **Item 3 - Themed debate** – (One hour)

1. Councillor Victoria Mills, cabinet member (7 minutes)
2. Councillor James Barber to speak and move amendment (5 minutes)
3. Theme open to debate by all other councillors (45 minutes)
4. Councillor Victoria Mills right of reply to the debate (3 minutes)

PTO

**OTHER AGENDA ITEMS****Item 4 – Other Deputations**

- Meeting to agree not to hear deputations from Southwark Defend Council Housing, Aylesbury Tenants and Leaseholders First and Camberwell Campus staff of Lewisham Southwark College

**Item 5.1 – Members Question Time**

- As set out on the agenda.

**Item 5.2 - General Motions**

- Remainder of general motions to be taken in order set out in agenda.

**Items 6 and 7 - Reports**

- Reports to be considered in the order set out in the agenda.

Note: Relevant procedure rules will be suspended.

- CAPR 1.6 Variation in order of business
- CAPR 1.14(4) Single debate
- CAPR 2.7 (2) Time limit of themed debate
- Conduct of business subject to the guillotine.

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY**  
**(ORDINARY)**  
**WEDNESDAY 8 JULY 2015**  
**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

**1. QUESTION FROM MR KELLAND TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, MODERNISATION AND PERFORMANCE**

How many cases are outstanding on refunding a deceased estate's claim for a refund of overpaid council tax?

**RESPONSE**

The council recognises the distress caused following the loss of a loved one and that having to make arrangements and notify a number of organisations can make it more difficult for people coping with bereavement. Therefore the council offers a bereavement support service for individuals registering the death of a Southwark resident, where the council can provide notification to a number of services within local and central government, as well as advice on counselling and accessing additional benefits, free of charge.

When the council is notified of the death of a resident from either the family or Southwark's Registrars department, the Council Tax team will immediately amend the account as appropriate and, if there is a refund due, a statement of the account will be sent to the executors of the family member at the last known address. The majority of council tax refund requests are processed and repaid within 10 working days.

Whilst every effort is made to refund the overpaid amounts in respect of deceased estates, in some cases the refund is never claimed following notification of the overpayment and in a number of cases it is not possible to obtain sufficient information to be able issue a refund. There are currently 204 overpaid council tax accounts for deceased estates, totalling £37,187.19.

**2. QUESTION FROM MR BLAMEY TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE PUBLIC REALM**

As the proposed £5.1 million to develop the cemeteries is effectively a subsidy from Southwark tax payers to a burial service which could be provided more cheaply to bereaved families and Southwark tax payers only a few miles away, does the councillor believe he has fulfilled Promise 1 "Value for Money" of "Fairer Future Promises"?

**RESPONSE**

The £5.1m referred to in the question is the total investment across all of the cemeteries over the next 10 years. This includes work to buildings and the replacement of cremators, as well as the proposed developments in Camberwell Old and New Cemeteries. The council believes it is important to provide a service for local residents that gives them the choice to be buried alongside their loved ones. Residents can choose to be buried outside the

borough should they wish, but forcing them to do so would push the cost onto the bereaved, as out of borough and private burials often cost more. It would also have a negative impact on those residents who for financial reasons would struggle to travel to visit a cemetery outside the borough.

**3. QUESTION FROM MR SCARLETT TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE PUBLIC REALM**

In regards to the development of the cemeteries in Southwark, why has the council not commissioned an i-tree survey or even a Capital Assets Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT) survey to ascertain project parameters?

**RESPONSE**

The council has commissioned all ecological surveys required for planning purposes: full habitat surveys at both sites, bat surveys at both sites, a reptile survey at Camberwell Old Cemetery and a tree survey at Camberwell Old Cemetery. The surveys carried out to date provide no ecological reason why the proposed works should not take place. The council continues to work closely with London Wildlife Trust, following its recommendations to ensure that our plans increase biodiversity in the cemeteries, provide a habitat for wildlife and a space for local people to enjoy.

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY**  
**(ORDINARY)**  
**WEDNESDAY 8 JULY 2015**  
**URGENT QUESTIONS**

**1. QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF PLANNING COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL MITCHELL**

What steps will the chair of planning now take to guarantee that the agreed council procedures for councillors to request a planning application is referred to the relevant planning committee are followed in the case of all applications?

**RESPONSE**

I will ask the chief executive to ensure that where councillors request that an application for planning permission is referred to a planning sub-committee, all appropriate steps are taken to ensure that this is carried out subject to the chair of planning's agreement. If members copy me into any requests that they make then I can ensure that these are appropriately followed up.

**2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI**

Now that the Elephant Park viability assessment has been released, can the leader tell us how much the council spent in total challenging the freedom of information request from a former Heygate Estate resident?

**RESPONSE**

The cost was £56,063.50 in legal fees which is fully reimbursable by Lend Lease.

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY**  
**(ORDINARY)**  
**WEDNESDAY 8 JULY 2015**  
**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

**1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR RADHA BURGESS**

What impact does the leader believe the recent decision by the government to slash £200 million of public health funding for local government will have in Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

It is very disappointing that at a time when the NHS is under increasing demand, the government has chosen to slash £200 million from local authority public health budgets, 95% of which is spent on preventative health services. In Southwark the estimated reduction in our public health budget is approximately £1.7 million, which will have a significant negative impact on the services we provide to our residents.

These short-sighted government cuts are completely counter-productive to the health of the population, as well as long-term efforts of local authorities to reduce cost pressures in the NHS. The likely impact of this cut will be reductions in funding to programmes which address priority areas such as sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV, which has a long-standing increasing trend. These are areas of major expenditure for Southwark, reflecting our provision of universal open access to service where there is high local need. In the context of major reductions in funding across the council's budget, making these particular savings will impact on our other commissioned services and limit the potential for investment in prevention and service development.

Preventative public health services are absolutely key to ensuring the NHS and social care is able to cope with the challenges of growing demand and limited resources. Local authorities are targeting some of the most significant public health challenges of our time, such as smoking, alcohol misuse and obesity, yet we are seeing more local resources being cut to fund national gaps. Instead of cutting funding the government should be enabling local authorities to fulfil their leadership role in public health, to protect and improve the lives of our residents, which is even more important in this current context of pressures on residents brought on by the government's austerity measures.

**2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES OKOSUN**

What progress has there been implementing the recommendations of the Childcare Commission so far?

**RESPONSE**

A report on progress will be received at the cabinet meeting on the 21 July.



### 3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR KIERON WILLIAMS

Can the leader give an update on the progress being made to deliver the administration's ambitious pledges set out in the council plan?

#### RESPONSE

Following the election in May last year, we put together an ambitious council plan setting out how we would continue to deliver a fairer future for all in Southwark over the next four years.

I am delighted that one year into our four year plan a significant amount of work has been undertaken and we have already delivered on a number of our pledges.

We have families getting ready to move into our first new council homes at Willow Walk and a further 193 new council homes currently under construction. The commitment to build 1,500 new council homes by 2018 is well underway and I'm proud that our new local lettings policy is now in place, meaning new homes will be offered to local people first.

The pilot for free swim and gym use is now underway, with all those aged 18 and under, or over 60, being offered free swim and gym use. Nearly 3,500 people have registered with the scheme so far.

Our Ethical Care Charter means that care workers in Southwark are no longer subject to zero hours contracts and we have ensured that they are paid for travel time, meaning they can spend more time with residents.

We guaranteed that every child would be offered a local primary school place and we have delivered on that as well as our pledge to help open a Credit Union account for every 11 year old, with accounts being opened with a £10 starting deposit.

We are also helping support more people to foster and adopt in Southwark by paying their council tax for them.

I should also mention the hugely successful launch of the Women's Safety Charter, where in excess of 40 venues across Southwark have signed up to the key principles of the charter, seeking to make Southwark the safest place for women in London.

A report outlining the council's progress against all the pledges set out in the council plan was presented to cabinet in June. The report can be found online at: <http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s54706/Report%20Fairer%20future%20annual%20performance%20report.pdf>

We will continue to update residents on the delivery of our pledges and our commitment to deliver a fairer future for all in Southwark.

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

Can the leader update councillors on what the council is doing to ensure co-ordinated action on education and training for jobs, and on proposals for the old Southwark College site on Drummond Road?

**RESPONSE**

The council remains committed to education, training and jobs in the borough.

The landscape that local authorities operate in and our priorities have changed in recent years – Southwark is a major player in creating the conditions to support economic growth and is involved heavily in partnerships with Job Centre Plus and getting our residents into employment. Local authorities have a major role in developing a new skills system in London, working alongside the Greater London Authority (GLA), the London Enterprise Panel (LEP) and London Councils, and we believe we can use our Community Budget partnership on work and skills across Southwark, Lambeth and Lewisham to best deliver the skills our residents and employers need to get into sustainable, long-term employment.

As part of the Community Budget initiative, I have agreed, with the Leaders of Lambeth and Lewisham, to put in place plans for the creation of a joint committee across the three boroughs. The joint committee will create a platform for the council to lobby and bid for further resources and responsibilities on employment and skills to be devolved to a more local level.

The council has announced plans to build a new construction skills centre based at the heart of our regeneration sites at the Elephant and Castle. This is about working at scale across Southwark, Lambeth and Lewisham, in partnership with the further education (FE) and training sector, to provide the right construction skills for our residents. The centre will complement those in Lambeth at Nine Elms and Lewisham at Deptford and mean together we will train hundreds of local people so they can take advantage of the development and construction related jobs in the borough.

Councillors will be aware that the former Southwark College as a wholly independent organisation sold the Drummond Road site some years ago and in doing so they deprived the borough of a key asset for education and training into employment. Any proposals for the site will be subject to planning process and we will work with partners to ensure the best outcome from the situation that the College created.

The cabinet member for children and schools and I are working with senior officers to secure the remaining FE assets in the borough (namely Waterloo and Camberwell) for the community. We have made clear our disappointment of Lewisham Southwark College for failing to deliver high quality education and training for our young people and adult learners. We are actively working with partners, the FE Commissioner and the Department for Education to address this directly and have put forward proposals which we believe would deliver excellent education and training from September 2016. We are meeting with the FE Commissioner later this month and can update councillors following that meeting.

**5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR EVELYN AKOTO**

Can the leader give an update on the council's free swim and gyms pilot for older and young people in Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

The Southwark Free Swim and Gym scheme opened to the public on Saturday 21 March 2015 with the commencement of the registration process, which allowed

Southwark residents whom were 18 and under or over 60 to sign up to the scheme ahead of its launch on Saturday 23 May 2015.

By 22 June 2015, 3,469 residents had completed the registration process, which equates to an average of nearly 37 registrations a day. In the most recent week alone the scheme has reached nearly 50 applications a day, and interest in the scheme has continued to increase significantly.

The breakdown for total number of registrations are:

- 18s and under = 2,587
- 60 and over = 882
- Total = 3,469

Registrations by black and minority ethnic (BME) communities has positively reflected the composition of the borough with over 36% in the 60+ age group (BME borough-wide composition in 60+ is 28%) and over 75% in the 18s and under age group (BME borough-wide composition in 18s and under is 64%).

The pilot scheme was launched on Saturday 23 May 2015 and is free for the following groups:

- 18s and under free swim – all day Friday; afternoons from 2pm until 6pm on Saturday and Sunday
- 16 to 18 years free gym – all day Friday; afternoons from 2pm until 6pm on Saturday and Sunday
- 14 to 16 years free youth gym sessions – at selected times on Friday evenings, Saturday and Sunday afternoons
- Free ‘Silver Sessions’ – access to the 60+ sessions all week.

Since the scheme commenced, 2,088 Southwark residents had benefitted by attending a Southwark leisure centre activity.

The attendances across our leisure centres are as follows under the scheme:

- Camberwell Leisure Centre = 387
- Dulwich Leisure Centre = 706
- Peckham Pulse = 396
- Seven Islands Leisure Centre = 535
- Surrey Docks Watersports Centre = 64
- TOTAL = 2,088

Average attendances per day are also increasing; at the start the scheme was averaging 48 per day and in the most recent week this has risen to 95 per day. Free swim and gyms will be extended to all residents by summer 2016

## **6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER**

Can the leader explain why the council’s new policy to prohibit and restrict payday lenders and pawnbrokers does not also prohibit and restrict fast food takeaways close to schools?

**RESPONSE**

We are in the process of adopting the New Southwark Plan and we will include restrictions on fast food takeaways near schools, as well as restrictions on 'clusters' of takeaway shops, so that these restrictions will be enforced on a borough-wide basis. We will consult on the preferred option of the New Southwark Plan in autumn this year.

The council already has in place restrictions on fast food takeaways through the Peckham and Nunhead Area Action Plan, which prevents hot food takeaways from opening within 400 metres of secondary schools. The number of fast food takeaways is also restricted within Peckham town centre, Nunhead local centre and the Walworth Road to prevent clustering of takeaways. New fast food takeaways will not be permitted where more than 5% of retail units in the area are already takeaways, or where there is an existing takeaway within 10 premises to either side.

**7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ELEANOR KERSLAKE**

Can the leader explain what the council is doing to ensure that Southwark residents are able to make the most of employment opportunities arising from regeneration and construction schemes in the borough?

**RESPONSE**

Southwark Council continues to pave the way to create a borough with builders ready to work on a range of construction sites. Southwark has teamed up with Lewisham and Lambeth councils to create an innovative new centre that will train hundreds of local people to take advantage of the jobs being created on their doorstep.

The £1 million Southwark construction skills centre will complement centres in Lewisham and Lambeth that will focus on related skills. Developers Lend Lease have also agreed to house the centre on site at Elephant Park, which means classrooms will be based at the heart of the borough on one of the country's largest regeneration sites at the Elephant and Castle (subject to planning permission). The centre will offer training to unemployed Southwark residents and a classroom space to promote construction careers to school students.

Other ways we support residents to access employment opportunities from regeneration and construction schemes is through ensuring developers appoint an onsite work place co-ordinator, who is responsible for identifying possible employment opportunities and assisting residents into the vacancies created.

We ensure that residents have access to the pre- and post-employment training that is relevant to the construction industry by placing obligations on developers working in the borough to deliver training through s.106 agreements. In 2014/15 alone, 324 unemployed Southwark residents were helped into jobs in construction.

We also offer employment support for targeted client groups through Southwark Works. This is a network of council commissioned employment support services. Southwark Works also offers a local recruitment service to employers moving into new commercial developments and engages with employers to meet their needs

through the recruitment of a local workforce. In 2014/15 Southwark Works supported 241 residents into employment.

**8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN**

What action is the council taking to reduce the number of empty homes in the borough following the motion agreed by council assembly in January?

**RESPONSE**

We are continuing to review the ways that the council's planning powers can be used to ensure future new homes in Southwark do not stay empty for more than three months.

We are seeking to increase the number of existing empty homes in the borough that are charged council tax by reviewing the current council tax exemptions on empty homes. We are also supporting calls for the qualifying period for charging the empty home premium to be reduced from two years to one and for the amount to be increased from 150% to 200% council tax.

The council will continue to build more homes of every type in Southwark, including council homes at council rents. These will be included within the policy and resources strategy for 2016/17 – 2018/19 that will be reported to council assembly as part of the budget setting process in February 2016.

**9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR KATH WHITTAM**

Southwark was recently officially recognised by the World Health Organisation as the only London community in its Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. What will this recognition mean for the council's Age Friendly work?

**RESPONSE**

I'm proud that Southwark has been officially recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as part of its Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. We want everyone to get the best out of Southwark, whatever their age, which is why we made a manifesto commitment last year to become an Age Friendly Borough. Our commitment to becoming age friendly is embedded in everything we do as a council; including transport, housing, culture, sport and social care.

Our successful application to join the network is an acknowledgement of the work we have done to maintain and improve the health of our older population and to work in partnership with older people to create physical and social environments that are accessible and inclusive for everyone. We have been implementing a number of policies and programmes over the last couple of years aimed at making the borough more age friendly, including:

- Bringing an end to 15 minute care visits through our Ethical Care Charter for home care contracts
- Becoming a Dementia Friendly Borough and forming the new Southwark Dementia Action Alliance
- Providing free 'Silver Surfer' IT sessions at our libraries and delivering a home library service to over 300 residents a month

- Providing free swimming and gym use to all residents over 60
- Providing free assistive technology to everyone over 85 and those residents diagnosed with dementia.

Being part of the Age-friendly Cities and Communities Network means that Southwark has joined a wide range of international communities to share information, experience and best practices, which we will use to build on our age friendly work. By being part of this global network we can gain inspiration from projects and ideas across the world to help us continue our age friendly work, as well as sharing our own experience, achievements and lessons learnt with others.

Over the summer we will be running a community conversation, steered by older people's organisations, about how we can build on the achievements so far in making Southwark an age friendly borough and positively celebrate ageing.

#### **10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAMIAN O'BRIEN**

What is the leader's response to the recent article in Southwark News by the local Greater London Authority member which stated that the Bakerloo Line extension should only have one branch?

#### **RESPONSE**

In the Southwark News article referred to the GLA member categorically did not state that the Bakerloo Line extension should only have one branch.

We have campaigned for the Bakerloo extension for several years and we've been working with the Mayor of London for the last two years to turn our aspiration into a reality. We are clear about the need for a two-branch route, to serve Camberwell and Peckham, and the Old Kent Road, both of which are currently under-served by public transport. Our position has been clear and consistent, and unlike the Liberal Democrats, we did not wait until the election to realise how important an issue this was for our borough.

The recent consultation on the Bakerloo line extension showed clearly that it is a key priority for our residents. The community have been fantastic in campaigning passionately for both routes and we will continue to push for a two-branch extension to serve existing residents, support new development and bring much-needed investment to both areas.

#### **11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR BILL WILLIAMS (BERMONDSEY AND ROTHERHITHE COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

Will the leader of the council explore the allocation of council staff parking permits across the borough and whether it is being abused?

#### **RESPONSE**

We are aware that this issue has been raised at Bermondsey and Rotherhithe community council. The only staff in receipt of parking permits are those who have satisfied the criteria as essential users and who use the permits in the proper performance of their duties. This includes social workers, surveyors, building control and emergency vehicles.

There are also liveried vehicles that get permits but these go with the car, not the member of staff. We have received complaints about the parking of liveried vehicles at Tooley Street on the nearby estates. There have been increased patrols in the area around Tooley Street by traffic wardens, but there has been very little evidence of inappropriate parking by staff except the pool cars. The parking situation was reviewed and measures put in place, including marking out designated spaces for the pool cars.

It has been our experience that there is inappropriate parking in specific areas, rather than a general problem with staff parking. Reviewing the problem, like at Tooley Street, has meant we have been able to put in place directed measures that have resolved specific problems. There is no evidence at present to suggest there is a wider problem with parking, but we welcome feedback from residents and members and will look into each situation individually.

**12. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR KIERON WILLIAMS (CAMBERWELL COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

Can the council advise as to progress on the extension of the Bakerloo Line to Camberwell?

**RESPONSE**

Transport for London (TfL) on behalf of the Mayor undertook a public consultation on extending the Bakerloo Line south towards New Cross, Lewisham, Bromley and Hayes in late 2014. Having received over 15,000 responses, they found over 95% of responses expressed support for the principle of extending the Bakerloo Line. The council supports both branches of the Bakerloo Line extension – one down the Old Kent Road and one through Camberwell and Peckham.

This consultation also found that 31% of respondents strongly supported and 18% supported option 1a; the preferred route between Elephant & Castle and New Cross Gate (along the Old Kent Road). 48% of respondents strongly supported and 16% supported option 1b (via Camberwell and Peckham Rye).

TfL are currently considering the key issues raised within the consultation, with an aim to publish this report later in 2015. At the time of writing, no decision has been made on preferred route alignment within Southwark, or on the extent of the route to the south. Current forecasts suggest that an alignment via the Old Kent Road would have the strongest business case, but an alignment via Camberwell also shows a very strong case, well in excess of TfL's required threshold for investment. The Old Kent Road option will have a major impact on enabling the delivery of new homes. The Camberwell and Peckham option builds on the regeneration of the two town centres already underway and provides a much needed public transport link for local residents.

Officers are continuing to input into the technical assessment and business case development for both branches of the Bakerloo Line extension. These discussions have focused on the routes to secure the large amount of funding needed to implement the scheme, including the extent to which it can be funded by associated development of new homes and commercial space. It is understood that the next stage is for TfL to present a business case to the Treasury by the end of July for the next Spending Review.

In addition, as part of a wider review of rail services in south London, officers are also reviewing the potential to reopen the national rail station at Camberwell in order to bring better connectivity to the area.

**13. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON (BOROUGH, BANKSIDE AND WALWORTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

What plans does the council have to improve planning, housing and regeneration policy to ensure easier access to information on progress, better access to opportunities for local people, and better standards by developers in employment?

**RESPONSE**

One of our fairer future promises is to revitalise our neighbourhoods to make them places in which we can all be proud to live and work. We are transforming the Elephant and Castle and the Aylesbury and starting regeneration of the Old Kent Road which will continue to pull the benefits of being in the centre of London southwards towards Elephant and Castle and beyond. This regeneration must work for local people and the benefits be felt right across the borough.

In support of these aims, we will open a Construction Skills Centre at the Elephant and Castle in early 2016 which will offer training to unemployed Southwark residents and a classroom space to promote construction careers to school students. The Skills Centre will respond to the growing need for construction workers and new trades, ensuring quality training that directly responds to employer needs in the sector.

Since 1 July 2013, 379 people have been employed on the Elephant Park site, 166 of whom were previously unemployed Southwark residents. Support for Elephant Park jobs comes through council commissioned employment support services such as Southwark Works as well as Lend Lease's own efforts to meet S106 obligations through its work place co-ordinator. Investment in the new Construction Skills Centre will make Elephant Park the focus for exciting new training opportunities that will help to boost and revive interest in the huge variety of jobs available in the construction sector.

During these periods of major change we encourage all of our partners to subscribe to the Considerate Constructor Scheme to protect the quality of life of residents.

**14. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR JOHNSON SITU (PECKHAM AND NUNHEAD COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

Can the cabinet member for regeneration give the Peckham and Nunhead community council an update on the current progress of the Peckham square co-design?

**RESPONSE**

The Peckham co-design process has been taking forward proposals for two squares – Station Square (in front of Peckham Rye Station) and Library Square.



On Station Square, a planning application is scheduled to be submitted in September 2015 to create the new square and refurbish a building on Blenheim Grove. Detailed negotiations are taking place with the property interests and local traders. Subject to planning and acquisition of property interests, it is anticipated that a start on site will be made in summer 2016.

On Library Square, the council has consulted on options for improving 91-93 Peckham High Street and the Square. The next co-design meeting on 23 July 2015 will update on this work and set out a programme for taking the proposals forward.

**15. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE PUBLIC REALM FROM COUNCILLOR JON HARTLEY (DULWICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

Could the cabinet member for environment and the public realm please provide an update on the consultation and implementation of the one hour free parking at shopping parades in the borough?

**RESPONSE**

A number of shopping parades in the borough have been identified for the introduction of one hour free parking and a formal decision to progress these sites for implementation will be taken later this month. The proposed sites will be subject to statutory consultation, which we expect to take place in September. If there are no objections to these proposed sites, one hour free parking will be implemented on the shopping parades in late autumn.

More details on the project are available online at:  
[www.southwark.gov.uk/onehourparking](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/onehourparking)

**16. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR BEN JOHNSON**

What discussions have there been between Notting Hill Housing Trust and the council about affordable housing levels in The Exchange development at Bermondsey Spa?

**RESPONSE**

Following concerns raised about the form of tenancy that the affordable homes were let at on The Exchange, a meeting has now taken place between Notting Hill Housing Trust and the director of planning. It is anticipated that a resolution will be agreed by the end of July.

**17. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER**

Given the increasing pressure to permit redevelopment in the borough by demolishing much-loved buildings, can the cabinet member confirm that it is still the council's intention to produce a schedule of locally-listed buildings where they are not listed nationally and, if so, when this will be adopted?

**RESPONSE**

The council values historic buildings and will be consulting on a Heritage supplementary planning document (SPD). The timescale for this will be linked to the New Southwark Plan scheduled for adoption in September 2017.

The consultation on the Heritage SPD will give local residents, community groups and businesses as well as building owners a chance to have their say on how we can protect our heritage buildings, whilst also building the new homes our communities desperately need.

**18. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR REBECCA LURY**

Can the cabinet member tell me what the council is doing to protect local historic pubs for community use?

**RESPONSE**

The council welcomes nominations from the local community for any land or buildings that in our view meet the requirement to be listed as assets of community value.

The Localism Act requires local authorities to maintain a list of assets of community value which have been nominated by the local community. When listed assets come up for sale or change of ownership, the Act then gives community groups the time to develop a bid and raise the money to bid to buy the asset when it comes on the open market. This is used by the council to help local communities keep much-loved sites in public use and part of local life.

Southwark was the first authority in the country to list an asset of community value. This was the Ivy House, a much valued local public house in Nunhead, since bought by a community group and continuing its life as a thriving community pub run by and for the local community. Having been the first to list one, the council understands the need and the desire of the local community to protect our local pubs while robustly and fairly operating the requirements of the legislation and accompanying guidance.

The list of assets of community value in Southwark now includes:

The Old School Keepers House	Alpha Street, Peckham,
The Grange Public House	Grange Road, London SE1
The Huntsman and Hounds Public House	Elsted Street, London, SE17
Peckham Liberal Club	Elm Grove, Peckham, SE15
Former Library and Baths	Wells Way, SE5
Dulwich Park	College Road, SE21
Thomas A Becket Public House	Old Kent Road, SE1
Elephant and Castle Public House	Unit 1, 119 Newington Causeway, SE1

Two historic pubs were recently listed as assets of community value – Elephant & Castle pub and the Thomas A Beckett on the Old Kent Road – after successful community campaigns led by the Walworth Society to nominate them. We are delighted to be able to respond to and work with local community groups like the

Walworth Society where in our view their nominations meet the requirement for inclusion on the list.

For pubs, in addition to the rights that this gives the community should a building come up for sale, the listing means it requires a planning application for a change of use rather than this being “permitted development”. This provides local people more opportunity to comment and enables the planning authority to take the listing into account as a material consideration when determining any planning application.

In our consultation on the New Southwark Plan, we recognise that for many people pubs are important places for social contact and enjoyment, and we have sought residents’ views on more protection for pubs. Some pubs also have special architectural features and have a strong local heritage value. They can also provide local employment. Over recent years many pubs have closed, been demolished or changed use to other commercial uses or to provide new homes. We want to protect pubs by allowing a change of use or demolition only where there is evidence provided which meets certain criteria. Policy DM27 of the New Southwark Plan Options Paper sets out the proposed criteria which must be met in order to consider the loss of a pub.

#### 19. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS

Can the cabinet member give an update on the progress of the council’s plans to build 1,500 new council homes by 2018?

#### RESPONSE

I welcome the opportunity to update council on progress of our ambitious programme to build 11,000 council houses, 1,500 of these by 2018.

#### Willow Walk

I am pleased to confirm that Willow Walk is due to be handed over this month. This is an important development for the council and will offer 75 new council homes, 21 for social rent (No 1, 1-21 O’Reilly Road) and 54 for temporary accommodation (Ross Stark House).

We have been working hard with the contractor to get the required quality of construction and the contractors are currently carrying out the final finishes to enable handover to housing management for letting. Residents have already carried out viewings to allow for occupation upon handover.

The following is the summary of the total programme. There are 47 homes that have been completed by the current administration.

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	SCHEME NAME	RESIDENTIAL UNIT NUMBERS						Other units / description
		Soc rent	Temp Acc	Int sale	Sale	Count to 1500	TOT	
Delivered	14a-18 Firbank Rd	3				3	3	
	b. 125 Peckham Park Road	16				16	16	

	Hidden Homes Delivered	28				28	28	
		47	0	0	0	47	47	

All of Phase 1 except Sumner Road of the Direct Delivery Programme are on site meaning that there are 225 council homes on site.

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	SCHEME NAME	RESIDENTIAL UNIT NUMBERS						Other units / description
		Soc rent	Temp Acc	Int sale	Sale	Count to 1500	TOT	
On site	Willow Walk (GN) (No 1- 1-21 O'Reilly Road, SE1)	21				21	21	
	Willow Walk (SSA) (Ross Stark house)		54			54	54	
	Gatebeck House (1-9 Gatebeck House, Pytchley Road, SE22)	9				9	9	
	Southdown House (SO) (1-18 Southdown House, Pytchley Road, SE22)			8		0	8	
	Southdown House (GN) (1-18 Southdown House, Pytchley Road, SE22)	10				10	10	
	Clifton Estate Garages (1-8 Parish Apartments, 7 Clayton Road, London SE15)	8				8	8	
	Cator Street Extra Care (Prop - 1-42 Tayo Situ Hse, 73 Commercial Way, SE15)	42				42	42	
	Masterman House Garages (Rent) (Flats 1-25 Piper Court, 8 Lomond Grove, London SE5)	15				15	15	
	Masterman House Garages (Private) (Flats 1-25 Piper Court, 8 Lomond Grove, London SE5)	0			10	0	10	
	169 Long Lane (Flats 1-19 Villiers Court, 167 Long Lane, SE1. 165 Long Lane, SE1 (wc unit long lane), 115 Weston St, SE1 (wc	21				21	21	Commercial unit

165 Long Lane, SE1 (wc unit long lane), 115 Weston St, SE1 (wc

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	SCHEME NAME	RESIDENTIAL UNIT NUMBERS						
		Soc rent	Temp Acc	Int sale	Sale	Count to 1500	TOT	Other units / description
	<i>unit Weston St block) 169 Long Lane, SE1 (Commercial Unit))</i>							
	Nunhead Site B (Prop - 8-13 Candle Grove & 56 & 58 Nunhead Lane, SE15)	8				8	8	
	Good Neighbours House		37			37	37	
		<b>134</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>243</b>	

The following council homes have planning approved.

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	SCHEME NAME	RESIDENTIAL UNIT NUMBERS						
		Soc rent	Temp Acc	Int sale	Sale	Count to 1500	TOT	Other units / description
<b>Planning Approved</b>	Sumner Road (Rent)	50		20	42	50	112	
	Sumner Road (Community)					0	0	Community Centre
	Hidden Homes Planning approved	5				5	5	
	<b>TOT</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>117</b>	

Phase 2 is at the preplanning stage. 237 homes are at the pre-planning stage having been to the Delivery Programme Board.

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	SCHEME NAME	RESIDENTIAL UNIT NUMBERS						
		Soc rent	Temp Acc	Int sale	Sale	Count to 1500	TOT	Other units / description
<b>Pre Planning</b>	Daniels Road Car Park	14		0	0	14	14	
	Lugard Road Garages	2		0	0	2	2	
	Fenham Road Garages	5		0	0	5	5	
	Haddonfield garages	24				24	24	
	Commercial Way	56		20	40	56	116	
	Pelier Street	17		0	0	17	17	
	Welsford Street Garages	12		0	0	12	12	
	Meeting House Lane	19		0	13	19	32	
	Goschen Estate ex T&RA Hall	16		14	14	16	44	
	Canada Estate	35		0	21	35	56	
	Tenda Road Car park	11		0	0	11	11	
	35-41 Nunhead	10		0	0	10	10	

	Lane							
	Kinglake Street Garages	16		0	0	16	16	
	<b>TOT</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>359</b>	

Phase 3 is due to go to cabinet in September and currently consists of 13 sites plus various potential sites in the Faraday Ward. This is currently estimated to deliver in excess of 200 homes in total. Resident consultation in partnership with the community engagement team has begun on these sites in line with the Charter of Principles agreed by cabinet.

Council homes are also being delivered as part of works on the Abbeyfield Estate (Maydew) and Sceaux Gardens (Lakanal House). The hidden homes programme continues to build new homes, with recently completed homes alongside Warm Dry Safe works on the Dickens Estate.

### **The delivery of other council homes**

As well as further direct delivery sites being identified the council is in negotiation with a number of developers to purchase council homes developed through s106 requirements.

Council homes are also being delivered as part of wider regeneration projects. A report on the council's Southwark Regeneration in Partnership Programme is expected to be submitted to cabinet in September 2015 and will have the potential to deliver more than 500 new council homes. A number of sites are progressing through the development and appraisal stage. Ward members are being briefed and consultation meetings are being arranged for July and September 2015.

### **Identification of sites for the delivery of new homes**

Work on the identification of potential sites and the realisation of those sites into the pipeline as potential new council homes continues.

The council is continuing to investigate potential sites identified and welcomes any feedback on potential sites. Further information on how people can help can be found on the council's website which includes our interactive map of the borough (<https://southwark.communitymaps.org.uk/#/welcome>). Using the map it is possible to mark where you think we should build new homes. You can also see suggestions made by other residents.

[http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200538/new\\_homes\\_delivery](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200538/new_homes_delivery)

## **20. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR SARAH KING**

Can the cabinet member give an update on the council's campaign for the Bakerloo line extension?

### **RESPONSE**

See question 12.

**21. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS**

How much does the council currently have in pooled affordable housing contributions and how much does it expect to receive in the next five years from developments with planning consent?

**RESPONSE**

In the last 3 years the council has been able to support the building of 3,808 net new homes including 1,488 affordable homes of which 998 are for social rent.

In the few instances in recent years where affordable housing has not been achievable on site we have been able to collect £55.7m in payments in lieu of affordable housing provision and this fund is supporting the council's programme of building 11,000 council homes with 1,500 delivered by 2018.

If all developments with planning permission come forward for construction in the next 5 years, there could be at least £130m for the affordable housing fund. In addition for those which are phased developments with review mechanisms, this figure could be revised upwards.

We cannot predict contributions from future applications as for each of these we will need to undertake the sequential test and we cannot pre-determine the outcome of this process.

**22. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN**

What is the latest spend on the security fence and security staffing/policing for the Aylesbury estate regeneration scheme?

**RESPONSE**

At the request of the remaining residents on the first development site on the Aylesbury Estate, the council erected a security fence at a cost of £140,000. Following damage during the occupation of the site before Easter, an additional £10,000 was spent repairing the fence. This expenditure was necessary to address community safety concerns as the blocks are largely empty.

At the request of the remaining residents on the first development site the council increased the level of security patrols. During the occupation of these blocks before Easter the council needed to increase this security presence. The cost of this security to the end of May 2015 is £465,000. This expenditure was necessary due to the nature and extent of occupation as well as the scale of securing this large site.

**23. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR MAISIE ANDERSON**

Can the cabinet member confirm how the council is supporting local people into employment through the Elephant Park regeneration?

## RESPONSE

Since 1 July 2013, 379 people have been employed on the Elephant Park site, 166 of whom were previously unemployed Southwark residents. To date, 71 out of those 166 have stayed in their jobs for at least 6 months.

Support for Elephant Park jobs comes through council commissioned employment support services such as Southwark Works as well as Lend Lease's own efforts to meet S106 obligations through its work place co-ordinator.

Investment on the new Construction Skills Centre will make Elephant Park the focus for exciting new training opportunities that will help to boost and revive interest in the huge variety of jobs available in the construction sector.

The map below shows the location of people employed on the site by ward:





**24. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND NEW HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR NICK DOLEZAL**

Can the cabinet member give an update on the council's online planning portal and whether it is improving public access to the planning process?

**RESPONSE**

The Planning Division launched a new planning register, IDOX Public Access, on 11 February 2015. This launch was promoted and publicised widely to residents. Residents can search for a specific application by case number, or for sets of applications by week received, ward, development type, decided date etc. Residents can then submit comments directly from the application web page using an on-line form. The system also allows residents to save searches, and track specific applications. The system sends email alerts to residents when there are status changes on applications they are tracking. The key benefits for the planning division are:

- When comments are submitted they are transferred directly to the Acolaid system. This simplifies the handling of the received comments because they can be allocated directly to the corresponding planning applications without the need for manual searching and data redaction thereby improving on transparency and accountability;
- The system uses 'back-office' data directly, so updates to application data or documents are available on line as soon as they occur. By contrast, the previous system provided a snapshot view of data and documents which was updated every 24 hours.

Analytics to date shows that (i) IDOX PA has resulted in an increased number of visitors/traffic to the planning register and a higher number of searches on the register. A total of 2458 comments were received on planning application over the period 11 February 2015 to 29 June 2015. Of these responses, 1487 or 61% were received via the new system. The rates for May and June are now around 85%, demonstrating increased usage of the new system. There are plans to integrate the Public Access database with the over 100,000 service users registered on MySouthwark. Officers continue to provide support to service users to register onto Public Access to receive planning information.

**25. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS, EMPLOYMENT AND CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON**

Can the cabinet member give an update on the progress of the Southwark Business Forum?

**RESPONSE**

The first meeting of the Southwark Business Forum took place in June 2015. The forum brings together Southwark's major business partners to promote stronger and more coordinated relationships between key businesses in Southwark and the council, educational institutions and community organisations. It will particularly focus on corporate sustainability and social responsibility activities – helping businesses to channel their energies and resources into initiatives that will benefit Southwark's residents and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Key strategic businesses from across Southwark took part including British Land, Ernst & Young, News UK, Norton Rose Fulbright, Notting Hill Housing Trust and others. The forum is 'business-led' and the first meeting was chaired by a representative from PwC.

The forum agreed key strategic priorities and common areas of interests to be discussed at future meetings, to include but not be exclusive to: employment, skills, schools engagement, business support and employee wellbeing. The forum will be held 6 times a year with a rotating venue and chair.

**26. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS, EMPLOYMENT AND CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR JASMINE ALI**

Can the cabinet member give an update on the work of the Southwark Employment Enterprise Development Scheme in supporting business growth and reducing youth unemployment in Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

There has been a significant level of interest from Southwark businesses in engaging with the Southwark Employment & Enterprise Development Scheme (SEEDS) to provide employment opportunities paying the London Living Wage for young people from Southwark who are finding it hardest to find good quality employment.

To date, SEEDS has supported 12 young people into employment (including 3 apprenticeships) and 20 employers have signed up to the initiative. A further 21 jobs are currently in the pipeline.

Officers have secured external funding to increase the SEEDS programme from the Greater London Authority and Department for Work and Pensions to increase the number of job opportunities available for young Southwark residents.

**27. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS, EMPLOYMENT AND CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR CHARLIE SMITH**

What has the public reaction been to the new sculpture in Dulwich Park?

**RESPONSE**

The public response to the Conrad Shawcross sculpture "Three Perpetual Chords" in Dulwich Park has been very positive. The launch event on 18 April was attended by approximately 300 people, and received good press coverage from Time Out and Channel Four News.

The sculpture is very tactile, playful and interactive and has drawn a lot of attention, particularly from local families with children of all ages. Positive comments have been received by the parks team and on the local social media site 'netmums' from local residents.

**28. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, MODERNISATION AND PERFORMANCE FROM COUNCILLOR ROSIE SHIMELL**

How many times has the council failed to provide an answer to freedom of information requests within the legal timeframe in each year since May 2010?

**RESPONSE**

The table below shows the number of freedom of information requests responded to within 20 working days since 1 April 2011. Information relating to years prior to this date has been deleted in line with the council's retention policy.

Financial Year	Completed	Completed in 20 working days	Not completed in 20 working days	% completed in 20 working days	% not completed in 20 working days
2011-12	1374	936	438	68%	32%
2012-13	1556	1071	485	69%	31%
2013-14	1772	1181	591	67%	33%
2014-15	1772	1255	517	71%	29%
2015-16 YTD	274	213	61	78%	22%

It should be noted that where agreement is reached with a requester to extend the response timescales – for instance as a result of difficulties in accessing information – such cases are still included in the 'Not completed in 20 working days' column.

It can be seen that although the completion rate has not changed significantly, the number of requests completed over the four year period from 2011/12 to 2014/15 has increased by 28%. Notwithstanding the upward trend in volume of requests received and the continuing budgetary pressures, work continues to try and improve the response rate.

**29. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC REALM FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES**

Can the cabinet member tell us about progress on improving the pedestrian crossings along Borough High Street at the junctions with St. Thomas Street/ Newcomen Street/Marshalsea Road/Great Suffolk Street?

**RESPONSE**

Last year the council backed the community campaign for new pedestrian crossings on Borough High Street, in response to concerns over safety in the area. We have been pressing Transport for London (TfL) to deliver their scheme for improving pedestrian safety at the junctions of St Thomas Street and Borough High Street and these proposals are now in hand. TfL plans to start works to upgrade the junction in November/December 2015, with the majority of the works being carried out from January to April 2016. After significant lobbying from my predecessor to TfL, the Marshalsea Road junction is now on TfL's Regional Improvements Programme to start feasibility design this financial year.

The junction at Newcomen Street already has a pedestrian crossing. This junction will be remodelled as part of the proposed cycling Quietway works in mid to late 2016 and any implementation will retain the pedestrian crossing at this junction.

The junction with Great Suffolk Street will be upgraded as part of the council's cycle quietway works and is due for implementation in autumn 2015. This upgrade will introduce a pedestrian crossing.

**30. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC REALM FROM COUNCILLOR HAMISH McCALLUM**

Can the cabinet member update us on discussions with Transport for London on expanding the London Cycle Hire Scheme further into Southwark?

**RESPONSE**

The council has long supported an extension of the cycle hire scheme to Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, Camberwell and Peckham. The original footprint of the scheme has been extended significantly to east, west and south west London. This leaves a clear gap in coverage – south east London, specifically Southwark.

The council wrote to the Mayor of London in March 2015 reiterating the council's ambition and recognising the work undertaken to date to pursue an extension including:

- Identified locations for an extended network of docking stations
- Identified the capital costs involved
- Secured contributions from developers for docking stations
- Pledged council funds towards the capital cost of the expansion
- Undertaken research to demonstrate how the scheme can appeal to a wider user group.

In the response received on 21 May 2015, the Mayor supported in principle an expansion to bring the benefits of cycle hire to as many people as possible. Over the coming months, Southwark and TfL officers will be working to try and assemble a suitable funding proposal for consideration by the council and the Mayor of London.

**31. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR MARIA LINFORTH-HALL**

What steps is the council taking to reduce the record number of Southwark homeless applicants being placed outside London?

**RESPONSE**

This question is factually incorrect – no Southwark homeless applicants have been placed outside London and indeed our policies currently ensure that all applicants where we have a duty are housed within the capital.

There are 289 applicants that are currently housed outside of Southwark, overwhelmingly in neighbouring boroughs. These are intended to be short term placements in nightly paid accommodation and the household will be brought back within the borough as soon as a suitable in-borough vacancy is available.

This is because Southwark currently has a record number of homeless people to whom we either have a duty or for whom we are assessing that duty, and a shortage of available housing for them within our borough. The council has seen an increase of 91% in homeless decisions in the last 12 months. The coalition government's welfare reforms and housing policies drove up homelessness, with young people and families hit the hardest. Sadly, the number of homeless applications is likely to only increase further if the government pushes through its proposals for a further £12 billion cuts to welfare and reductions in the levels of affordable housing by forcing councils to sell much-needed council homes.

The council is taking a number of steps to address the shortfall in available homes for homeless applicants:

- All homeless decisions are made within the statutory timescales and we have reduced the average time it takes for a homeless claim to 35 calendar days – the best performance on record.
- We are now using homes on Wendover on the Aylesbury Estate as temporary housing as tenants move out in preparation for future phases of the regeneration taking place there.
- 54 new temporary accommodation units are due to be opened at Willow Walk on 13 July.
- 37 new units are being opened at Good Neighbours House on the D'Eynsford Estate on 24 July.
- We also anticipate that the provision of specialist housing at Northcott House in Cathedrals ward will help provide capacity, with 46 places.
- In the medium term, we are considering the potential to use modular housing solutions to provide more capacity within the borough.
- Longer term, the construction of 11,000 new council homes, together with other forms of affordable housing in the borough, will also assist in providing the homes needed.