

<b>Item No.</b> 5.1	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 22 March 2023	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Council Assembly
<b>Report title:</b>		Members' Question Time	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Proper Constitutional Officer	

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Members' question time shall not exceed 30 minutes. During this time, members may not question any one cabinet member or committee chair for longer than fifteen minutes. Members are limited to one question at each meeting.

Questions to the leader will be taken first, followed by question from community council councillors followed by questions to other cabinet members. The order in which the different political groups ask questions of the leader will be rotated. Questions to cabinet members will also be rotated. The order of portfolios will be rotated at each meeting such that the cabinet member answering questions immediately after the leader will be the second to last cabinet member to answer any questions at the next meeting of council assembly. The rotation is in line with decisions of council assembly in July 2014 and rotations circulated by the proper constitutional officer.

Cabinet members and committee chairs have discretion to refer a question to another cabinet member.

Responses to members' questions will be circulated on the evening of the meeting.

The Mayor will ask the member asking the question if they wish to ask one supplemental question to the member to whom the question was asked. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. Therefore, supplemental questions to the leader or other cabinet members are not free ranging.

No question shall be asked on a matter concerning a planning or licensing application.

### Notes:

1. The procedures on members' questions are set out in council assembly procedure rule 2.9 in the Southwark Constitution.
2. In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.9 (12) & (13) (prioritisation and rotation by the political groups) the order in which questions to the leader appear in this report may not necessarily be the order in which they are considered at the meeting.

**1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR SABINA EMMANUEL**

Can the Leader of the Council please tell us more about the Southwark 2030 listening events that have been taking place since the start of the year?

**2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR EMILY TESTER**

Southwark Council has taken an unacceptable amount of time to make a decision on the future of Maydew House. It has been empty for over seven years, leaving the residents of Abbeyfield Estate living on a building site. The estate has become less safe and a far less pleasant place to live as a direct result of Southwark's failures. Can the council outline how it will ensure residents are never left waiting this long for a vital decision again? What lessons has the council learned from this failure?

**3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR KETZIA HARPER**

How will the Land Commission change the way we think how we use land for the benefit of local people?

**4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR IRINA VON WIESE**

Southwark's small local businesses suffer from the double whammy of lower demand due to the cost of living crisis and higher costs due to increased rents and higher utility bills. I therefore welcome the intention of the Council to 'nurture our home-grown businesses as much as possible, especially those headed up by people from underrepresented groups'. Can the leader of the council please explain, in this context, how it was possible that virtually all local providers of tennis coaching – all of them experienced, highly skilled and well loved by local communities for many years – have been excluded from a recent license renewal in favour of one large, corporate provider – the National Tennis Association, based in Norfolk – with no connection to Southwark?

**5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR JOSEPH VAMBE**

Can the leader of the council outline what Southwark Council will be doing to mark Hate Crime Awareness Week?

**6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ADAM HOOD**

Voter ID requirements brought in by the Elections Bill 2022 will act as a barrier to political participation for many, especially some of the most vulnerable groups. Will the council commit to the lobbying central government to scrap voter-ID requirements ahead of the next elections? Will the council then go further in

showing its commitment to democratic representation by lobbying for a proportionally representative voting system in UK general elections?

**7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS**

Would the Leader be able to give an update on the Dulwich Upper Wood retaining wall?

**8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MARIA LINFORTH-HALL**

Fly-tipping on our streets and estates has huge negative social, environmental and economic impacts on communities in Southwark. Councillors receive countless reports of illegal dumped waste every day from exasperated residents. Despite this, the amount of fines given for fly-tipping offenses has actually decreased since 2018. Does the council agree that it must increase enforcement of these fines in order to act as an effective deterrent to fly-tipping? How does the council plan to increase enforcement of fly-tipping offenses?

**9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR JON HARTLEY**

What were the key topics discussed at the recent Climate Conference?

**10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR RACHEL BENTLEY**

In July last year, Southwark voted to approve the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration and join other boroughs in standing up for responsible tax conduct. What tangible steps has the council made towards ensuring Southwark is a fair tax borough? What steps will the council be taking to ensure Southwark is a fair tax borough?

**11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ESME HICKS**

Can the Leader tell us about the cultural together fund, which was open for application in January and February this year, and how this grant will support Southwark's arts and culture organisation?

**12. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON**

Tenants and residents' associations throughout Southwark have raised serious concerns about anti-social behaviour and publicly criticised the response from the Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (SASBU). How is the council going to ensure that residents feel safe on our streets and our estates? Can the council provide an update on the recruitment of community wardens, including how many have been recruited so far and how many will be recruited by the end of this year?

**13. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS**

On 14 July 2021, responding to a question at council assembly, Nunhead and Queen's Road Ward Councillors asked about a crossing at over Evelina Road (near Kimberley Avenue).

In the Cabinet Member's answer, we were informed 'Our top priority is to work swiftly in relation to improving safety at this junction and ensure there are safe crossing points along Evelina Road. As a result, our Highways team recently arranged for traffic, pedestrian and junction counts to be conducted at the junction of Kimberley Avenue and Evelina Road. The Highways team are in the process of producing a full technical note with recommendations to improve safety. This is likely to include a proposal for a pedestrian crossing near the new Co-op on Evelina Road, as well as additional traffic calming measures in response to complaints of speeding along this specific stretch of road.'

This crossing has yet to be implemented. This continues to be a place in desperate need of this crossing. Can we have a date for the implementation of this crossing?

**14. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR NICK JOHNSON**

The Thames Footpath by Odessa Wharf has been closed for many years. Cabinet had approved the budget to re-open the path but have since not commissioned any work on the site. Access to the Thames is a fundamental right of all citizens and its loss is sorely missed.

Can the Leader reaffirm the council's commitment to re-opening the Thames Footpath by Odessa Wharf in SE16 and commit to a timeframe for its re-opening?

**15. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR HAMISH MCCALLUM**

Free activities for babies, toddlers and children across Bermondsey and Rotherhithe have become massively over-subscribed, resulting in numerous parents being turned away every session. How does the council plan to increase capacity for these popular activities? Will the council establish a Family Hub in or around Southwark Park as called for by the local online community of parents 'Chatty Dads and Chatty Mums'? Will the council expand Rotherhithe Children's Centre to provide additional activities sessions?

**16. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, EQUALITIES AND FINANCE FROM COUNCILLOR SAM FOSTER**

How much support has been issued to residents via the community referral service?

**17. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, EQUALITIES AND FINANCE FROM COUNCILLOR ELLIE CUMBO**

What support is the council giving to residents given the expected rise in the energy price cap?

**18. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, EQUALITIES AND FINANCE FROM COUNCILLOR NAIMA ALI**

Can the cabinet member outline what preparation we are making for the new Voter ID requirements?

**19. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, EQUALITIES AND FINANCE FROM COUNCILLOR VICTOR CHAMBERLAIN**

Every year, LGBTQ+ charity Stonewall publishes a list of the [top 100 employers for LGBTQ+ inclusivity in the workplace](#). Last month, the 2023 top 100 was published and Southwark Council, despite representing the fourth largest LGBTQ+ population in the UK, was not on it. Southwark Liberal Democrats have asked numerous times for Southwark to aim to be on this list and been given assurances by cabinet members that this was a shared aim. Why, despite these assurances, has Southwark failed to be included in the top 100 employers for LGBTQ+ inclusivity? How is Southwark going improve sufficiently to ensure that it is included in the top 100 for 2024?

**20. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, EQUALITIES AND FINANCE FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE**

Southwark produces a large volume of written materials for internal and external communications. Much of this material does not meet the standards set by the [dyslexia friendly style guide](#) produced by the Dyslexia Society and, therefore, potentially excludes people with dyslexia. Does the council agree that Southwark must endeavour to be inclusive to all groups, including those with dyslexia? Will the council commit to producing a house-style that conforms to the dyslexia friendly style guide from the dyslexia society?

**21. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, EQUALITIES AND FINANCE FROM COUNCILLOR SAM DALTON**

What is the council doing to promote digital inclusion in the borough, including to improve digital infrastructure, and what is it doing to ensure that residents can fully access opportunities and services provided by the council if they are not online?

**22. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, EQUALITIES AND FINANCE FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID WATSON**

How much has Southwark council spent on 'Southwark 2030' so far? Specifically, how much has been spent on consultancy staff and communications (including graphic design and branding) in relation to 'Southwark 2030' and how much is projected to be spent over the course of the consultation?

**23. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING FROM COUNCILLOR LAURA JOHNSON**

Can the cabinet member let us know how many residents used the warm hubs and what lessons were learned from the delivery of this service?

**24. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE**

Food insecurity is shamefully an ever increasing problem in Tory Britain. What work has been done with the voluntary sector to tackle food insecurity in Southwark?

**25. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING FROM COUNCILLOR ESME DOBSON**

The council has recently implemented the residential care charter; can you update us on how many residential homes have signed up?