

<b>Meeting Name:</b>	Council Assembly
<b>Date:</b>	20 November 2024
<b>Report title:</b>	Members' Question Time
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>	All
<b>Classification:</b>	Open
<b>Reason for lateness (if applicable):</b>	Not applicable
<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 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 by group.

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 (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 VICTOR CHAMBERLAIN**

The administration may be aware of a petition that has, at the time of submission of this question, gathered hundreds of signatures calling for leaseholder bills to be itemised by default. Will the Leader commit to improving communication with leaseholders by issuing fully itemised bills for leaseholders by default?

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

What are the most significant benefits of the new Labour government's first budget for Southwark?

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

The recent controversy surrounding the Council's repair works procurement raises questions about outsourcing more generally. The Trade Unions have raised significant concern about the Council's attitude towards its own workforce. Will the Leader commit to developing a workforce strategy, including apprenticeships, to grow a high skilled, directly employed workforce to give residents confidence in the housing and repairs service?

**4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MOHAMED DEEN**

What is the council doing to make the case for council homes as an essential part of the government's efforts to build 1.5m homes?

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

The Renters Reform Bill, when passed, will introduce significant additional duties for the council to take enforcement action and administer regulation that will come in. What work has taken place to date to prepare the council for these responsibilities, and can the Leader assure us that the council is already fulfilling all existing responsibilities?

**6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR KATH WHITTAM**

Next week is White Ribbon Day, which marks the start of the UN's 16 days of activism against Gender-Based Violence. Can the Leader tell us what activity is planned in Southwark?

**7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE**

The site of a former nursery has been empty in Tadworth House for many years, and residents are wondering when it can be put to productive use. Can the Leader confirm how long this site has been empty, and if there are any plans to use the site for either commercial or community purposes?

**8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR REGGIE POPOOLA**

Streets for People has been a cornerstone of the Labour administration. What are the sorts of benefits the scheme has delivered for residents across Southwark to date?

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

Last year we asked about how the tunnels under the railway running through Bermondsey could be improved from their current dingy state - and no clear improvement has happened since. Will the Leader consider convening a taskforce of the Archway Co, National Rail, TfL, ward councillors and council officers to consider how improvements like street lights, more regular cleaning schedules, and public art can make these spaces cleaner and more pleasant to walk through, especially at night?

**10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR SAM DALTON**

Could the Leader provide an update on the steps being taken to ensure council homes at Maltby Street and Fendall Street will be completed?

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

The situation in the Blackfriars Road area in relation to anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime is reaching crisis point. It's clear that the current systems and approach are failing, and residents feel abandoned by the authorities. Is the council aware of the scale of the issue here, and what steps is the council taking to ensure that a full, multi-agency approach can fully tackle the issues at hand, in both a reactive and preventative fashions?

**12. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR SUNIL CHOPRA**

This month we celebrated Living Wage Week. What has the council done to encourage more companies to become living wage employers?

**13. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL**

Can the Leader update me on what work has taken place to restore Walworth Town Hall following the devastating fire in 2013?

**14. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE**

What are the next steps for the implementation of the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan?

**15. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID WATSON**

District heating has become an increasingly fraught issue in Southwark, with leaseholders facing extortionate charges for systems that have been left to crumble. The council will be aware of new regulations for district heating systems coming down the track, which may add additional technical and financial complications to the issue. How does the council intend on meeting those challenges, and what preparations have been undertaken to that end?

**16. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLEAN AIR, STREETS AND WASTE FROM COUNCILLOR ADAM HOOD**

It's now been a year since we first raised the traffic issues around Lower Road. Can the Cabinet Member update us on progress made in resolving the issues, specifically around options such as parking and reversing the flow of Cope Street?

**17. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND REFUGEES FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES**

Southwark recently celebrated achieving Borough of Sanctuary status and became the first Library and Heritage service in London to be awarded Library of Sanctuary status. Can the Cabinet Member update us about the recent celebration event?

**18. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EQUALITIES, DEMOCRACY AND FINANCE FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS**

Can the Cabinet Member tell me what is being done this year to ensure older people on low incomes apply for pension credit and get the support they deserve?

**19. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLEAN AIR, STREETS AND WASTE FROM COUNCILLOR CHARLIE SMITH**

Can the Cabinet Member tell me what work is being done to enforce our No Idling policy, especially around schools and nurseries?

**20. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR RACHEL BENTLEY**

On council owned properties, scaffolding is often left up for long periods of time when no work appears to be taking place. This leaves residents feeling

unsafe due to the potential security risks these structures pose, as well as blocking natural light to windows. This can have a detrimental effect on wellbeing as well as force residents to turn on lights increasing their electricity bills.

Many residents also express concern about the charges levied by scaffolding companies and fear these are being passed onto leaseholders unfairly. How much did the council spend on scaffolding costs in the last year, and to what extent does the council scrutinise these costs to ensure that both the council and leaseholders are getting value for money?

**21. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLEAN AIR, STREETS AND WASTE FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON**

Surrey Docks farm is a vital community hub and resource, and one of very few urban farms in London. Like many community-oriented organisations, it is under significant strain financially. Whilst they accept that the new Car Parking Zone is there to stay, the cost of parking permits remains as a challenge for the ongoing viability of the farm. Will the council consider issuing free parking permits for workers and volunteers at the farm, especially at this time of financial pressure?

**22. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING FROM COUNCILLOR SABINA EMMANUEL**

Can the Cabinet Member update on the launch of the Southwark Maternity Commission's report in September 2024?

**23. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEW HOMES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR SANDRA RHULE**

How can interested parties contribute to new draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy?

**24. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND REFUGEES FROM COUNCILLOR LAURA JOHNSON**

The Council has committed to ensuring more children in care or care leavers live in or near to the borough. What work is the council doing to reduce the placement distance of children from the borough?

**25. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR NICK JOHNSON**

Can the Cabinet Member provide a breakdown of how many community wardens have been in place over the last 5 years, and outline plans for how this service will be either maintained or bolstered in coming years?

**26. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE EMERGENCY, JOBS AND BUSINESS FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID PARTON**

The news that a way forward has been found for the Peckham Levels complex is welcome. What work has been done by the Council and our partners to support businesses in the transition to new management?

**27. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR STREETS, CLEAN AIR AND WASTE FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD LEEMING**

What work is the council doing to reduce food waste and increase recycling?