

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2024

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS WITH RESPONSES

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?

RESPONSE

The Council currently issues a summary breakdown of service charges alongside the service charge bill. A full breakdown of a property's service charge is available on request for any resident who wants one. To improve on this offer, we are currently looking at ways to develop easy online access to a leaseholder's account, including a breakdown of service charge bills for each homeowner. We are also exploring post-billing appointments for individual homeowners, where residents will be offered the chance to sit down with an officer to go through their service charge account, invoice and itemised breakdown of bills.

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?

RESPONSE

Labour's first budget in 14 years included a raft of new measures that are good news for Southwark residents. A £1,400 a year rise in the minimum wage will lift thousands of people out of poverty pay. The state pension going up by £470 this year will protect our older citizens. Support for our local small businesses and highstreets, much needed extra money for local public services, including the NHS, £1 billion of extra funding for children with special educational needs and disabilities, and funding boosts for schools, social care, breakfast clubs and to help fix local roads made this a welcome break from the austerity years.

I'm very glad to say there was also more money for council homes. Earlier this year Southwark Council set out our plan to secure the future of council housing, backed by over 100 councils. The Chancellor not only referenced our work in her speech, she delivered on some of our recommendations, including more funding and action to stop the loss of council homes through Right to Buy.

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?

RESPONSE

Southwark Council has led the way nationally on in-sourcing and remain committed to it. We have brought our high-needs hostels in house, our repairs service and all of our leisure centres too. With such significant growth in our directly employed workforce it is fantastic that we have a comprehensive training offer for new and current staff across the organisation.

In addition to this we create more apprenticeships than almost any other London borough and are on track to deliver our commitment to 2,000 more by 2026. In terms of the repairs service itself, it already includes 13 apprentices, who are studying to become qualified carpenters, electricians and plumbers. But we want to do even more – and so our repairs team will be developing a new workforce strategy, which will include greater use of apprenticeships as well as more opportunities for existing employees to develop their skills. The delivery of this strategy will be supported by our transformed HR service, which now includes a dedicated Apprenticeships and Early Careers team.

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?

RESPONSE

We fully support the new Labour government's ambition to build 1.5m homes and the Deputy Prime Minister's call for a council housing revolution as part of this critical work to tackle the housing crisis. We have brought together a cross-party coalition of 109 council landlords to set out the challenges we all face and the potential solutions to unlocking more and better council homes nationwide. Following the launch of our report 'Securing the Future of Council Housing', in September I have met with the Deputy Prime Minister and the

Minister for Housing to set out our case and we will continue to work with the government and our partners to deliver the homes our residents need.

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?

RESPONSE

Southwark welcomes the new Labour government's legislation that will protect renters from poor treatment and unfair eviction, and we will work hand-in-hand with the new government to ensure these new protections are enforced across our borough. We have been delivering training for our enforcement team to ensure they are updated on existing regulations and upcoming changes, and building partnerships with local stakeholders, including voluntary and community agencies, through our partners in Citizens Advice. This will build on the success of our private rented sector (PRS) team, fulfilling their existing responsibilities and who have led the way on enforcement nationally.

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?

RESPONSE

During the 16 days of action (25 November – 10 December 2024), the council is hosting a range of events to raise awareness about violence against women and girls (VAWG), challenge harmful attitudes including misogyny, and promote action.

These include:

- **Community Engagement:** Pop-up stalls in partnership with British Transport Police, the Metropolitan Police Service, and the Safer Business Network at key locations across Southwark. In collaboration with the Local Economy team, we will also participate in the Peckham Business Forum's community market event.
- **Student Outreach:** An awareness stall at London South Bank University will engage students on VAWG and women's safety issues.
- **Professional Training:** 'Lunch and Learn' sessions will cover topics such as online safety (The Cyber Helpline), bystander intervention (Suzy

Lamplugh Trust), consent and boundaries (Talk Consent), and Safe Havens (Safer Business Network). Refuge our commissioned domestic abuse service provider will be delivering half-day Domestic Violence Abuse (DVA) sessions.

- **Community and Faith Leaders Event:** This event on 4 December at Tooley Street (5pm-7:30pm) will highlight the role of community and faith leaders in addressing gender-based violence.
- **Partnership Initiatives:** We are collaborating with organisations like Millwall FC, which will support our 'Through Her Eyes' anti-misogyny campaign. The campaign film will also be shown at Peckham Plex throughout the period.
- **Awareness Stall on White Ribbon Day:** An information stall at Tooley Street for staff and visitors.
- A comprehensive **communications plan** has been developed for the 16 days which will drive a social media campaign with educational content, resources, and event promotions. This will include the promotion of our successful anti-misogyny video 'Through Her Eyes' which during last year's YouTube campaign saw 177,035 views.

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?

RESPONSE

The council is considering options for use of the premises. While there are no immediate plans, if there is interest from a local group or business, a site visit can be facilitated. Options could include community or commercial operations that can and will provide benefit to the local community.

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?

RESPONSE

Southwark Council has worked with local communities to design safer, greener and healthier streets for walking and cycling. Significant work has already been undertaken to deliver the commitments set out in the Streets for People Strategy, including:

- 165 new pedestrian crossings installed over the last six years to improve safety

- 29 School Streets schemes are in place to improve air quality and safety for walking, cycling and scootering
- Over 10,000 adults and children have received free cycle training since 2023
- Over 760 cycle hangars installed with over 4,500 bike spaces
- 259 e-bike/e-scooter parking bays installed
- 1816 electric vehicle charge points delivered to help address vehicle pollution.

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?

RESPONSE

Thank you for raising this issue on behalf of the residents of Bermondsey and do please continue to raise issues of cleanliness and streetlighting with relevant cabinet members who will continue to work with the Arch Company, Network Rail and Team London Bridge to pursue improvements to the arches in our borough. There are further opportunities for ward councillors to contribute to specific projects such as the tunnels through the allocation of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy.

In addition, the Town Centre Action Plan for Bermondsey, will be considered by Cabinet in spring 2025. Each Town Centre Action Plan is informed by town centre walkabouts and business conversations that have taken place in response to the priorities of the community, and local ward councillors should take the opportunity to input into this work so that your priorities are reflected in our action plans.

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?

RESPONSE

We will be ensuring that the 40 council homes on this site are completed. This involves procuring a new main contractor to take over the construction on site following the previous contractor going into administration. We are aiming to make this appointment in the early part of 2025, with the main works scheduled to re-commence in spring 2025, then continuing for around six

months until the new homes are completed. In the interim there will be a number of smaller packages of work continuing on site, to help ensure that the new homes are completed at the earliest possible point.

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?

RESPONSE

Thank you for raising this issue on behalf of the residents of the Blackfriars Road area. The council works closely with the police to target crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots and we do this through multi-agency tasking and our weekly meetings to discuss this. We are aware of these residents' concerns, particularly around robbery and phone theft in the SE1 area. SE1, including Blackfriars Road, was discussed at the Local Partnership Tasking Group and the Better Bankside Warden team are currently supporting police with this crime type in the area as part of extended partnership working to prevent and address the issue of robbery.

If residents or ward councillors are aware of experiencing ASB or crime it is important that this is reported to either the council or police so the appropriate action can be taken. This is through, Southwark Anti Social Behaviour Unit by telephone 020 7525 5777 or via email sasbu@southwark.gov.uk. Call Southwark Police on 101 (24 hours), or alternatively you can report it online at <https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/asb/antisocial-behaviour/>

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?

RESPONSE

6,600 Southwark workers have now received a pay rise to the London Living Wage (LLW) because their employer has become LLW accredited, helping to ensure a fair wage for workers and contributing to the wider economic success of the borough.

The council is committed to paying the London Living Wage and to working with employers in the borough to encourage them to do so as well. Alongside our year-round work to promote the London Living Wage, we implemented a comprehensive communications campaign across all media channels to mark

Living Wage Week this month and help drive Living Wage Employer accreditations.

We currently have 392 accredited Living Wage Employers in Southwark, up from 307 in 2022. In October alone we saw 15 new accreditations from employers based in the borough. Our Southwark Living Wage grant scheme offers businesses support in becoming accredited and our Living Wage Unit offers detailed advice and support to businesses and their staff.

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?

RESPONSE

I am very pleased to report that the works to restore Walworth Town Hall are nearly complete. This £25m investment will provide 50,000 sq ft of space for small businesses, events and the local community in an exceptional development that respects the heritage of this historic, listed building. It is anticipated that the building works will be complete later this month.

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?

RESPONSE

The Old Kent Road Area Action Plan has already delivered significant changes for our residents, with over 3,300 homes either built, under construction, or about to start on site, of which 1,700 are affordable. We continue to engage with our residents on the next steps for the plan which, when complete, will see a total of 20,000 new homes and 10,000 new jobs created. While we are delivering much of this work at pace, the second phase, which includes 10,500 homes, still requires the delivery of the Bakerloo Line Extension (BLE). We are contributing 50% of our community infrastructure levy (CIL) funding towards the BLE and continue to actively Back the Bakerloo in collaboration with our partners in Lewisham, Transport for London, the GLA, and Central London Forward.

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?

RESPONSE

We are aware of upcoming Heat Network Market Framework Regulations and are engaged in numerous industry network activities to ensure we are as well-briefed as we can be ahead of time, and also to help the new regulator (Ofgem) understand the Local Authority sector in regards to heat network operation. Although still in development, and pending further consultation, early indications are that further work will be needed to meet new regulations. However, we are not just waiting for regulation to come in. We are actively installing heat meters on a number of estates, have developed an in-house billing service, have undertaken numerous site-specific feasibility studies to identify where technical improvements can be made, and are actively delivering replacement and renewal projects on a number of estates, many of which are taking advantage of available grant funding.

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?

RESPONSE

Southwark Council is working with Transport for London (TfL) to reduce congestion on Lower Road and we are looking at options for the area as a whole. The Council has included the flow of Cope Street in the design scope for the Lower Road Gyratory Scheme, which aims to make bus journeys quicker and more reliable. In addition, the council is considering removing some parking to improve the traffic flow on Lower Road, especially opposite the Plough Way junction with Rotherhithe New Road. Consultation will take place with ward councillors, the public and local businesses prior to any decision around implementation.

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?

RESPONSE

On 10 October 2024, the council and its key partners from Southwark Refugees Communities Forum, Southwark Day Care Centre for Asylum

Seekers, Panjshir Aid, Community Southwark, United St Saviours and Southwark Law Centre celebrated the Borough of Sanctuary award with a special thank you event at Mountview Theatre Academy of Arts in Peckham. The event was an opportunity to celebrate achieving accreditation, including the council's Libraries and Heritage Service becoming the first in London to be granted the status of Libraries of Sanctuary.

The event included performances from a Palestinian Dabke group, a Nigerian poet, the Speakerbox chair and a Ukrainian Bandurist Opera singer. The event was compered by myself as the Lead Member, and we also heard inspiring speeches from a sanctuary seeker, our Madam Mayor, Miatta Fahnbulleh MP (Peckham), Councillor Portia Mwangangye, the Leader of the Council, and Southwark's trusted voluntary and community sector partners.

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?

RESPONSE

Southwark already has the biggest number of Pension Credit claimants of all the South London boroughs, both in absolute terms and relative to the size of our pension-age population. We know too though that Pension Credit is the most underclaimed of all benefits and we are keen to support residents to claim it where appropriate. This autumn and winter, we will renew and redouble our efforts to get more of our low-income pension-age residents onto Pension Credit. We will work closely with our voluntary, community and faith sectors and other partners including libraries and GP surgeries to support that ambition.

A new campaign is being launched this month with leaflets and posters, social media assets and other marketing set to appear more widely in the coming weeks. These will raise awareness of Pension Credit among older people and the families of older people. This month, about 800 pension-age households identified from Council data as likely to be entitled to Pension Credit will be sent letters urging them to claim and explaining how they can do so. The council has already successfully lobbied the Government for greater powers to make use of data and to obtain more Government data to support our Pension Credit take-up efforts. We will continue to seek further powers to use existing data and secure access to more data to help our older residents get all the help 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?

RESPONSE

We continue to monitor the enforcement of our 'No Idling' policy to ensure we reach the best possible impact in reducing pollution from idling, but we know there is more work to do to help residents understand why this is so important. Civil Enforcement Officers are deployed to approach vehicles with engines idling and ask drivers to move on if they are parking illegally or to switch off if they are parking legitimately. In addition, Southwark Council has doubled Civil Enforcement Officer resourcing from Monday to Friday, and these officers are deployed to our primary schools during drop off and pick up time. The council will continue to assess the effectiveness of this approach to ensure that the desired outcome of drivers moving on or turning their engines off.

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?

RESPONSE

Scaffolding can be raised for several reasons, including for a visual inspection of a building, not just for delivering building works. We do occasionally experience situations where scaffolding has been erected but delays have been incurred, for example when a leaseholder makes a representation regarding their contribution to the works under the terms of their lease. The scaffold requests are validated by a technical officer, including physical validation of scaffolding that is erected. Any discrepancies found result in a change in the cost charged to the council. In 2023/24 the council spent £3.45m on scaffolding.

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?

RESPONSE

The consultation for the Surrey Docks CPZ closed on 4 November 2024, and Southwark Council is considering all representations received. The council may propose installing some hourly free parking bays to assist customers of Surrey Docks farm, after hearing concerns from the business and residents about the impact of parking on the business. The outcome of the consultation report will be subject to statutory consultation and officers from Southwark Council will meet with the farm before any proposals are finalised.

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?

RESPONSE

The Southwark Maternity Commission launched its report on 30 September 2024, following a nine-month public engagement with over 750 people and organisations.

The launch was widely reported by national and local press including Sky News, the Mirror, BBC London TV News and My London.

As well as many organisations and residents, all key partners such as the council, NHS, mental health partners, the voluntary and community sector, and local MP Florence Eshalomi, attended the launch. They welcomed the report and made a commitment to working with local people and partners in health and care to ensure the best experience and outcomes.

The ten recommendations to tackle inequalities in Southwark residents' care and experience of maternity care were brought together by the council with contributions from Guy's and St Thomas', King's College and South London and Maudsley Hospitals, voluntary groups and maternity health advocates. The recommendations are aimed at both national government and local systems; they range from addressing racism and improving workforce conditions, to preparation and support before pregnancy. Key concerns raised also included the quality of care, cultural sensitivity, communication, and a lack of support for fathers.

The report also highlighted the need to address wider issues like housing, financial stability, employment, and mental healthcare, which play a critical role in the overall well-being of mothers and families.

The recommendations acknowledge that the challenges explored in the report are not unique to Southwark. Change is needed from all partners across the government, the NHS, mental health services, and the voluntary sector.

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?

RESPONSE

Our new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy has seen extensive engagement with staff, residents and over 30 partners from the statutory and voluntary sector over the last year. The new strategy will bring greater focus on how we can tackle drivers of housing insecurity and improves access to services. The current formal consultation period ends on 8 December 2024, and we encourage everyone who hasn't yet had their say to feed into this process. They can do so by searching for 'homelessness consultation' on our website.

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?

RESPONSE

The council is committed to doing all it can to support the children and young people in our care to live in or close to the borough. Over the last five years, the council has reduced the average placement distance of children from the borough every year through a refreshed recruitment drive for local foster carers. Southwark Council's Access to Resources Team (ART) works to find homes for children matched to their needs in or near to the borough. In some cases, a small number of children with complex needs and high risk need to be placed at a distance from the borough.

The council are opening a children's home in borough taking children from March 2025. Work has started on a second home in Southwark which we plan to open by the end of 2025. We would expect this to show impact by the end of 2025 with more children in care living in Southwark. The council has joined with other London boroughs to commission a secure children's home to be located in Waltham Forrest. This will ensure some children with the highest of needs that require deprivation of their liberty are able to have their needs met closer to the borough. Currently there is no such provision in London and the south east region.

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?

RESPONSE

Up until 2022 there were 25 Community Wardens and 4 Warden Team Leaders. In April 2022 the council invested £2 million in an anti-social behaviour (ASB) Taskforce to bolster front-line service provision through a further seven posts and two CCTV operatives to monitor ASB in the key hotspots. Our intention is to maintain the service and we have made improvements to how they work, with further developments to come to ensure they are more effective, driven by data, evidence and resident feedback in areas and communities where it is most needed.

Improvements include:

- Body worn cameras have been issued to all Community Wardens
- Aligned the working shift pattern of the Community Wardens to the peak times that crime and ASB is reported to be happening.
- Building a new data platform for the Community Wardens service – handheld devices will form part of the new system, so the Community Wardens are able to capture their patrols in real time.
- Increased communication to residents on the engagement work focusing on ASB and crime prevention, including resident newsletters promoting crime-prevention advice, targeting messaging in hotspot crime areas, and encouraging the reporting of crime through Crimestoppers.

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?

RESPONSE

In response to Peckham Levels Limited going into business administration, the council worked to ensure a quick process to recover control of the building and install The Trampery to manage the workspace on the council's behalf. This work resulted in limiting the closure of the building to a single day whilst the legal court processes were concluded with minimal disruption to businesses in the building. Had the council not taken these steps, the building would have been closed for a number of weeks, directly impacting over 100 businesses and around 200 jobs based in the building, causing the redundancy of 15 directly employed site staff and removal of fixtures and fittings by the administrator.

Since The Trampery have taken over management of the building, the council has worked with them and the businesses to address any issues. These have centred on the tenancy relationships and concerns about the future and investment in the building. The Trampery have now got all businesses on a new property footing, enabling previous occupiers that wished to continue operating in the building to do so. They have also established regular communication with the businesses through newsletters and meetings and engaged with the Peckham Levels Steering Group to ensure the project continues to deliver benefits for the local community.

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?

RESPONSE

Southwark Council is reducing waste and increasing recycling to ensure our borough has one of the highest recycling rates in inner London. In Southwark, 36% of collected household waste is recycled or composted – the highest figure in central London. In October 2024, Southwark Council began the roll-out of food waste collections to all households in the borough, and this will extend the opportunity to recycle food waste to housing estates and an additional 90,000 properties in blocks of flats and flats above shops.

The council is undertaking further work to increase the level of participation in recycling collections, such as providing advice and information to residents through communications campaigns like the London-wide 'Eat like a Londoner' campaign and the 'One Bag A Week' campaign in Southwark. By 2030, we will be successful if we have increased the proportion of waste being recycled in the borough, but overall household waste tonnage in Southwark is already falling. Over the last 15 years, the tonnage of household waste has fallen by 5%, despite an increase of 20% in the number of households.