

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2010

URGENT QUESTION

1. URGENT QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

Given that officers have removed all financial references from the Liberal Democrat motion preventing full debate at tonight assembly meeting, failed to table a question from an opposition councillor for an unspecified yet confidential reason and issued advice threatening councillors with standards boards investigation if they speak out, what does this say about his commitment to running an administration with 'empathy, openness and trust' and would it be fair to conclude that officers are running the council, not politicians?

RESPONSE

The rules relating to confidential information are there for good reasons. When companies enter into agreements with the council they need to be confident that the council will take commercial confidentiality seriously. Failure to follow those rules jeopardises our reputation as a council to do business with. All councillors therefore have obligations under the code of conduct to maintain that confidentiality. Similarly officers are under an obligation to follow processes designed to protect confidential information. This relates both to questions and to motions.