

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY)
WEDNESDAY 4 JULY 2012
MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN MORRISSEY

Is he disappointed by Thames Water's decision to keep Chambers Wharf as its proposed drive-in site for the Thames Tunnel?

RESPONSE

I am not only deeply disappointed but staggered that Thames Water still plan to tunnel in Chambers Wharf. This is despite opposition from the thousands of local residents who signed petitions against the plan, from the adjacent primary school, the local council, local MP and serious misgivings from the Mayor of London.

The reasons that an all-party coalition of opposition has mobilised against the plan to tunnel in Chambers Wharf are well-rehearsed. It lies at the heart of a residential community and is adjacent to schools. The disruption of years of continuous drilling and earth-movement would be profound, and presents a glaringly obvious risk to the children who attend the schools, many of whom walk or cycle there.

As a council we will stand shoulder to shoulder with the local community against tunnelling on the site and will do everything within our power to prevent it, for the good of our residents and our school children.

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

Can the leader assure the people of Southwark that no one – especially vulnerable children and adults – are at risk as a result of the merger of the children's services and health & adult social care departments? What safeguards has the council put in place to ensure that Southwark's most vulnerable residents are not adversely affected?

RESPONSE

Councils across the country and of all parties have made the decision to move to having a single officer responsible for children's and adult social care. It is not a decision taken lightly and we would not proceed if there were not clear benefits or if we believed that doing so would place individuals at risk in any way. In order to be confident that this is the case, officers have conducted a test of assurance, which concluded that sufficient safeguards are in place in order that outcomes for children, young people and adults are not at risk of being weakened or diluted by the merger of statutory roles. The merger will naturally be kept under regular review to ensure there is appropriate capacity within the system and that the statutory functions of both roles are being discharged effectively.

As well as assessing to ensure that any risks could be mitigated against, the test of assurance concluded that combining departments offers additional benefits. These include opportunities for joint working and commissioning, common interest areas such as personalisation and the transition of young people to adult services, efficiencies of back office functions, streamlining of areas such as needs assessments, workforce planning, equalities and community engagement; and a single point of contact for health and other agencies.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS

Was he aware of a vote in parliament on 22 May 2012 that would have given the new Financial Conduct Authority the power to cap the charges made for credit and the cost of borrowing; thus curbing the excessive interest rates charged by many payday loan companies in Southwark?

RESPONSE

Yes I was. It was a fantastic opportunity to tackle the vile practice of charging the sorts of usurious interest rates that send some of our residents in the most financially precarious circumstances down an ever worsening spiral of debt.

I was disappointed to note that while two of Southwark's MPs backed the change, the other – Simon Hughes – failed to stand up for his constituents and instead chose to abstain. This follows on from his weak decision to abstain on the vote to triple tuition fees, directly plunging many of his constituents into greater levels of debt.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES

Would the leader confirm, as of the end of June 2012, how many learning disabilities clients in residential housing are in receipt of their personal budgets?

RESPONSE

There are 163 people with learning disabilities living in supported housing in Southwark, which I assume is what you mean by 'residential housing'.

Of these, 77 have personal budgets.

We aim to have offered all people with learning disabilities living in the community (i.e. excluding those living in care homes) a personal budget by the end of 2013.

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN HAYES

What role can Southwark's new shadow health and wellbeing board play in tackling longstanding issues like childhood obesity?

RESPONSE

The establishment of the shadow health and wellbeing board will provide focus for responding to key health and wellbeing challenges for local people. The planning group, which was set up to develop the shadow board, carried out robust work to identify the key health and wellbeing challenge areas for the borough and 'early

intervention and families' and 'healthy weight and exercise' were some of the priorities identified through that work.

The shadow health and well being board will provide an important opportunity to work with key experts in the NHS, the Children and Families Trust including schools, public health and social care to lead change across the system and make a difference for children and their families. The introduction of free healthy school meals at Southwark primary schools also supports the healthy weight agenda.

In formulating the joint health and wellbeing strategy we will also gain a more in-depth understanding of the needs of the local population and this should encourage more innovative means of tackling health and wellbeing issues such as childhood obesity.

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE BOWMAN

Will the leader agree to implement the cross-party recommendations from overview and scrutiny's recent investigation into the council's funding of tenant and resident associations?

RESPONSE

In line with the usual process, cabinet has received the report from overview and scrutiny and we are currently considering the recommendations. Cabinet will report back on which of the recommendations will be implemented in due course.

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS BROWN

Recent figures show the number of housing starts has fallen by 35% compared to the average achieved during Labour's 13 years in office. When the government has slashed the social housing budget by £4 billion, what can the council do to tackle the borough's critical housing shortage?

RESPONSE

I cannot understand how diverting funding away from building new homes makes any sense at a time when the country is suffering both a severe recession in the construction industry and a critical homes shortage. Whilst the government has announced on a couple of occasions its intention to finally backtrack and support the sector through loan guarantees, there remains a staggering absence of actual government action.

In contrast, in Southwark we have committed to constructing 1,000 new council homes by 2020. This will be achieved through making the best possible use of our own assets, income and planning gain from new private developments. Clearly, at a time when our housing waiting list is over 20,000 households long and growing, 1,000 new homes is not going to solve the housing shortage on its own. I am content, however, that whilst at a national level housing investment policy adds up to little more than warm words, at least in Southwark we will be delivering new warm, dry and safe homes.

8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

What limits have Southwark placed on advertisers using sites owned or let by Southwark Council to support the fight against obesity?

RESPONSE

Our standard form of lease is explicit in that tenants must abide by the code of advertising and must not post any advertisement which is directly or indirectly of a political, racial or religious nature nor any advertisement to which the landlord may reasonably object.

It is legally very difficult to impose additional restrictions on advertisers. However, I have asked officers to look at the possibility of restricting advertising in this way.

9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PATRICK DIAMOND

What will be the impact of the government's welfare reforms and in particular its decision to pass on to local authorities a 10% cut in council tax benefit which supports Southwark's poorest residents?

RESPONSE

It is too early to say what the total impact of the government's welfare reforms will be; although – given the number and scope – it seems clear that the impact will be considerable. Given the protection to certain groups that the government has imposed, the actual impact on other groups is estimated at 15%. This will clearly create additional pressures for many vulnerable groups currently supported by council tax benefit.

As a council we are preparing to assist our residents who are impacted to manage their finances after the changes by offering any advice and support we can.

The 10% cut in budgets for council tax benefit is nothing more than a crude raid on the budget and expectation for councils to pick up the pieces. I am afraid that there is no way – given the savage cuts that the government continues to make to our budgets across the board – we can do anything but pass the cut onto those who currently receive council tax benefit and to attempt to spread this burden as fairly as possible. To do anything else would mean even deeper cuts to valued council services.

Cabinet will be agreeing a proposed scheme in July that will then be subject to full consultation with residents and stakeholder groups. All responses will be considered and the cabinet will then make a recommendation to council assembly later in the year.

10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS

Following the proposed transfer of its assets to Lewisham College, is the leader able to reassure us that the new facilities at Southwark College's Waterloo campus in The Cut – that were paid for by a sizeable S106 contribution from the Shard – will continue to be used as per the planning conditions to provide training opportunities for young people?

RESPONSE

Southwark and Lewisham Colleges have now agreed to merge. The council's role in the decision and discussions preceding it were necessarily limited to that of local stakeholder, as we had no power to either stop or approve the merger. Now that the decision to merge has been taken, the council will continue to use what influence it has over the newly merged college to secure the best possible provision for local learners. The merger between the two colleges will not undo any of the planning conditions for training opportunities entered into under The Shard S106 agreement.

11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET

Will the leader back a campaign by local residents to clean up the area outside Melville Court on Lower Road and consider a compulsory purchase order, as the council has done at St Olav's Square, to assist them in their efforts?

RESPONSE

We are currently considering what appropriate action the council can take to secure a long-term solution to the situation at Melville Court. Whilst the land is in private ownership, we very much understand the concerns of local residents in the area.

12. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

Would the leader outline the council's plans for the day centres in the borough which support people with mental health issues, physical and learning disabilities and dementia?

RESPONSE

In April 2011 we agreed the vision for adult social care in Southwark which was set out in the context of demographic challenges, reducing resources and the need to transform services in line with the personalisation agenda to ensure people have choice and control over how their support is organised.

Existing day centre provision across the different care groups needs to be reformed in order to be able to respond to the needs of vulnerable service users, respond to personalisation and to ensure that resources are used efficiently. We are therefore working with the national development team for inclusion – who are nationally recognised experts in this area – and seeking views of clients in a bid to re-shape day services in a way that (a) enables mentally and physically disabled people to access meaningful day activities, (including access to sports, leisure, learning and employment) and (b) provides good quality respite provision for carers.

The innovation fund grant available to day service providers over the last year (2011/12) has also contributed to the development of a new service model that supports transition.

Day centre provision is divided into three different types of support: support for people with mental health problems, with learning disabilities and older people. Each of the services is currently in a different state of change. We are working with

service users, South London and Maudsley NHS and providers to manage the transition from block funded arrangements to personal budgets in mental health services. At the end of this process clients will be able to choose the services they buy into with their personal budgets.

A consultation is also underway for people with learning disabilities to support the transition from block funded arrangements to personal budgets.

Services for older people, including those with dementia are provided at Southwark Park Road and Fred Francis centres. Clients can also use their personal budgets to fund one of our voluntary sector services. In July we will begin a consultation on the future vision for day services for older people with complex needs, including dementia. Our aim will be to develop excellent quality provision that can meet the needs of future generations of older people.

13. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBA BLANGO

What arrangements have been put in place for flexible working for staff based at 160 Tooley Street during the Olympics? What effect does he believe the virtual closure of London Bridge during that period will have on the functioning of the council?

RESPONSE

The council offers comprehensive flexible working options to staff, subject to the needs of the service. Due to the anticipated impact of the Olympics and Paralympics, especially around travel, the flexible working options available to staff have been temporarily extended as follows:

- Flexibility around core time to enable staff to adjust start and finish times
- Extended opening hours for Tooley Street - 6:00 am - 9:00 pm (floors 1-5) and 6:00 am - 11:00 pm (ground floor flexible working area)
- The opportunity to work from home where feasible for the role and function
- Compressed hours by agreement where suitable
- The opportunity to use annual leave, flexi leave, unpaid leave, or make up the hours by agreement with their line manager.

The above options are subject to the needs of the council, are voluntary, and must be agreed with managers in accordance with the already existing procedures. In addition, staff may postpone non urgent meetings and or use of teleconferencing instead of face to face meetings, which can be done remotely.

We are working very closely with London Underground and Network Rail, to ensure that we have the most update information on the demands of London Bridge and other transport networks that affect Southwark staff. We are fully aware of the pressures at London Bridge. We have provided information advice and guidance to staff on how to plan their journeys to work during busy periods, to ensure that the council continues to provide its services throughout the Olympic period.

14. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PODDY CLARK

Would the leader confirm that the council will ensure that the site at 10 Spurgeon

Street and 58 Great Dover Street will not be used as a hotel unless or until planning permission has been granted?

RESPONSE

We have served a planning enforcement notice and stop notice against the change of use of the premises as a hotel. The enforcement notice has been appealed but the stop notice remains in force. We will continue to monitor the site and take further enforcement action as appropriate to ensure that the unauthorised use does not commence.

15. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

What representations has the leader made to police about safer neighbourhood teams being moved out of their wards to other duties in London, and what views have police officers expressed to the leader about this dangerous reduction in police numbers in our local neighbourhoods?

RESPONSE

We are very concerned about the general reduction of police numbers following budget cuts made by the government. Cuts Simon Hughes failed to vote against. The cabinet member for finance, resources and community safety has directly lobbied the Metropolitan Police and wrote to the Home Secretary calling to protect Southwark police numbers as one of his first acts in the post.

With regards to the specific question of moving police to "other duties in London", I assume the member is referring arrangements during the Olympics. Olympic shift patterns for all borough officers commenced on 11 June 2012. The Metropolitan Police Service has given a corporate undertaking, widely communicated to all our strategic and community partners to safer neighbourhood ward panel level that, barring emergency, a minimum of two thirds of safer neighbourhood team (SNT) resources will remain in situ throughout the period. This shift pattern ensures and extends daily availability of our SNTs from 7.00am to midnight on Friday and Saturday nights.

Safer neighbourhood team inspectors have the ability to use the resources available across ward boundaries in order that they can effectively response to short term peaks in crime or anti social behaviour. This however is a temporary solution and in response to immediate demands.

Whilst any reduction in police resources at a local level, even for a short period of time, is something we would under normal circumstances find difficult to support, I am sure that the member will agree that it is hugely important that the Olympics are properly policed for the good of all Londoners and visitors to our city during the games.

16. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GETTLESON

How many complaints have been received by the council as a result of the extortionate increase in the cost of garages for disabled residents? And does the leader believe that the reason why there is a discount for tenants and leaseholders (and not for those who are disabled) is because tenants and leaseholders were the only people consulted? Is that fair to every resident of this borough?

RESPONSE

The increase in garage rents was the correction of an error in the implementation of a cabinet decision. As it was a council error, it would have been unfair to attempt to correct it mid-year and as such we decided to remedy it at year-end, giving garage users a year of use at a very considerable discount.

A review of home ownership / corporate complaints registers has shown that two complaints have been received with regard to garage rents for the disabled.

Tenants and leaseholders have, since before and during the last Liberal Democrat administration, had priority access to garages that fall under the housing revenue account as a part of the relationship that the council has with them as their landlord or freeholder. However, the council is currently exploring opportunities for offering some garages to private occupiers.

17. **NOTE:** A question from a community council must have been previously considered and noted by the relevant community council (CAPR 2.9.2). In view of the timing of the constitutional change in May 2012 and the date of the subsequent community council, for this council assembly only it has not been possible for questions to be considered by some community councils prior to the deadline for submission of questions. A question was submitted on behalf of Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Community Council subject to the outcome of the community council. However following the deadline for questions, the date of the community council moved until after council assembly. The question therefore falls.
18. **QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ROBIN CROOKSHANK HILTON (DULWICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

Can the cabinet member for communities and economic development give an update on what steps have been taken to address the ongoing late-night economy problems in Herne Hill?

Note: A question from a community council must have been previously considered and noted by the relevant community council (CAPR 2.9.2). In view of the timing of the constitutional change in May 2012 and the date of the subsequent community council, for this council assembly only it has not been possible for this question to be considered by the community council prior to the deadline for submission of questions. Therefore this question was published subject to the outcome of the community council which subsequently considered the question at its meeting on 26 June 2012. In order to be considered by council assembly it will require a suspension of the relevant council assembly procedure rule.

RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

We continue to monitor crime trends across all areas of the borough. Our current analysis of crime associated with the night-time economy in Herne Hill does not currently suggest that there are significant levels of any crime type justifying targeted resource or action. Herne Hill in fact has only 17 recorded offences for the year between the hours of 18:00-06:00 with acquisitive crime rather than violent crime accounting for over half of these offences.

However, reported incidents that do take place are notified to both relevant council and police services for appropriate action when they occur. Currently enforcement action is being taken to regularise the position of two local licensed premises known to be operating outside of their current planning consent.

Licensed premises operating in the area are also subject of occasional 'spot checks' by licensing and police officers and these are supplemented by occasional focused broader partnership operations around licensed premises and associated facilities.

If the member has any further concerns about the late-night economy in the Herne Hill area that she would like to raise then I am always happy to be contacted directly.

19. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ROSIE SHIMELL

Would the cabinet member explain how she thought healthy school meals were being provided when school hygiene inspections were not happening at the required minimum frequency? When will all schools be inspected by environmental health officers and what will be the average calendar days from the last inspection?

RESPONSE

On coming into office this administration realised that Southwark's school kitchens needed capital investment to ensure the healthiness of meals prepared there into the future. This investment was seen as a vital part of our pledge to introduce free, healthy school meals for all primary school children. We identified £500,000 of capital for this purpose. Unfortunately, as well as opposing revenue spending on free, healthy school meals the opposition even voted against the capital investment that is improving Southwark's school kitchens.

The frequency of inspections in Southwark is in line with Food Law Code of Practice based on a risk assessment. Where the risk is deemed to be high, hygiene inspectors will visit a premises every six months or more, where it is low they may not visit for a number of years unless a complaint is otherwise received.

88 school kitchens, 83% of our schools, have been inspected by food safety officers and have a hygiene rating of 4-5. In the small number of cases where the food safety team identify areas where a school can improve its hygiene rating, officers provide advice and guidance to the school and ongoing support and assistance, including revisiting. There was only one school with a hygiene rating of 1 based on the last programmed inspection. However all the improvements identified at this school have since been made and a recent re-inspection rated the school at 4.

However, all schools that require further inspections will be completed by 13 July 2012. We will continue to have close involvement with our schools and undertake inspection visits within the frequency determined by the risk rating score.

20. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL BUKOLA

Does the new cabinet member for children's services welcome the coalition government's measures offering free early years education to 2 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds, and will she endorse this provision which will benefit many families in Southwark and help close the gap between the most disadvantaged children and their peers?

RESPONSE

Southwark has been providing free places for vulnerable two year old children for three years. This started as a pilot scheme under the previous government. In 2011/12, 105 children benefited from this scheme.

I welcome the further extension of free places to more disadvantaged two year olds from September 2013 and look forward to receiving confirmation from the department for education of the level of funding available to support this initiative.

21. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ROBIN CROOKSHANK HILTON

How much will the council spend providing free lunches in schools in Village Ward to pupils who are not eligible under government regulations, and how much does the council expect to spend on each pupil in 2013 and 2014?

RESPONSE

There are two schools within the Village ward – Dulwich Hamlet Junior School with 360 pupils and Dulwich Village CE Infants School with 299 pupils.

The expected cost for a child who is not eligible under government regulations will be £1.90 per day for up to 190 days per year, this equates to a maximum of £361 in a full school year.

Based upon the current take up average across Southwark of 87% and discounting the pupils funded under government regulations, the anticipated total cost for these schools in this current financial year is £115,258.

We will continue spend up to a maximum of £361 per pupil during the financial year 2013/14.

22. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR WILMA NELSON

Would the cabinet member update members about the new secondary school for the north of the borough?

RESPONSE

Pupil place planning shows that new Year 7 places will be required borough wide from September 2016, with 5 FE (forms of entry) required by 2019/20 – 150 Year 7 places. It was and is considered by the council that these places should be provided in SE16 to respond to and support the ongoing regeneration in the area. This demand is accepted by department for education (DfE).

The DfE have advised of their provisional agreement to fund a new free school sponsored by the Compass School Trust which would offer 500 mixed secondary places and also of their support for a 700 place University Technical College (UTC) for 14-19 year olds based at Southwark College's Bermondsey site. They have also committed to funding a limited number of additional places in existing schools.

Compass School have yet to identify a site and this non-identification of a site, both permanent and temporary, is a significant risk to the school opening as proposed in September 2013. Following the merger of Southwark and Lewisham College the merged college needs to urgently confirm its commitment to enabling the new UTC on its Bermondsey site to enable the project to proceed.

Ongoing uncertainty due to site availability issues may result in both proposals not progressing. Consideration may need to be given as to whether the required additional places can be delivered within the existing estate.

23. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has estimated that 400,000 children will fall into relative poverty between 2010 and 2015. What role can free, healthy, school meals have in tackling child poverty here in Southwark?

RESPONSE

Rolling out the programme to all primary school aged children in Southwark schools by September 2013 will mean that children will be able to receive a healthy mid day meal.

It will also put up to £361 per child back into the family budget that can be used for the benefit of the children.

24. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL

Long-term youth unemployment in the north of the borough has risen by 89% in the last 12 months. Given the complacency of the government, what can the council do to address this worrying trend?

RESPONSE

The primary responsibility for supporting people of working age into employment, including younger people, rests with the national government agency Job Centre Plus (JCP) and the department for work and pensions (DWP) work programme. The council works with JCP, DWP work programme contractors, business representatives, education and learning providers and other partners to facilitate pathways into work for young people and commissions a range of provision to help young people with specific needs or barriers to employment into work. Provision includes the Southwark Employment Training Scheme, one element of the youth fund, which provides young people aged over 16 with relevant work experience, part-time employment, internships and vocational training. The council also commissions programmes of intensive training and employment support for young people leaving council care and for people of all ages who need extra support to become "job ready" e.g. people with learning disabilities.

25. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ROWENNA DAVIS

Can she provide an update on the youth aspect of the council's £1 million community restoration fund?

RESPONSE

I have taken the decision on recommendations for funding for the supporting young people element of the community restoration fund. Funding totalling £497,200 will be allocated to five distinct projects in areas most affected by the riots, including:

- £100,000 for community-led grants. This element is open to applications from community and voluntary organisations and will be distributed equally across each ward. Youth council members and the community councils will form panels to make recommendations to me for a decision on awards in their local areas.
- Start up funding of £85,000 will be allocated to establish an 'App centre' which will support our entrepreneurial young people to develop smart phone applications. This project will help young people to develop their employability and personal skills, supported by staff that can provide advice in conjunction with the IT support already on offer through the city learning centre. This is a great opportunity for young people to gain exposure to the creative industry and their applications will be made available at the iTunes store enabling them to receive commission based on a percentage of the applications' income.
- £70,000 has been granted to London Youth Support Trust to fund bursaries of up to £5,000 to support business start ups; this project will be modelled on a 'Dragon's Den' style approach involving 50 local business mentors.
- £62,200 will be used to support pop up youth projects in three locations which will run for about six weeks each in areas most affected by last summer's riots.
- £180,000 will be used to purchase three youth buses and a specialist mobile recording studio which will provide a broad range of youth work in areas that currently have limited provision.

The community restoration fund will help to deliver positive activities in the community and encourage young people to make positive life choices. We have worked hard to look at a legacy from this funding. This is built in with the purchase of the youth buses, but we are also hoping the business start ups and app centre will provide a young people's business legacy; new projects will be initiated through the community-led funding stream, and if the pop up youth projects are effective we will look at replicating these projects in the future. We have also tried to be innovative and ground breaking by trying new ideas, taking risks, and looking at projects that will not only involve young people but will also excite them.

26. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN

Which primary schools are expanding intake in September 2012 and September 2013? Please give figures detailing their current intake and increased intake.

RESPONSE

Temporary expansion classes of 30 pupils in 2012 have been made available at Albion, Bellenden, Bessemer Grange, Ivydale, John Donne, Langbourne, Crawford and Rye Oak.

Temporary expansions of 15 pupils have been made available at Charles Dickens, Grange and Robert Browning.

School	Normal Intake	Intake in Sept 2012
Albion	30	60
Bellenden	30	60
Bessemer Grange	60	90
Ivydale	60	90
John Donne	60	90
Langbourne	30	60
Crawford	60	90
Rye Oak *	60	90
Charles Dickens	45	60
Grange	45	60
Robert Browning	45	60

*Please note that these schools have a designated ASD base. Places at the base are reserved for children with autism who have a statement of special educational needs, but who may benefit from inclusion in a mainstream school.

On the basis of the current projections, which provide a range of possible forecasts, it may be necessary to provide between 5 and 12 additional forms of entry in September 2013.

Children's services have commissioned surveys of the entire primary estate to assess existing and possible capacity for expansion. This work is due to be completed by summer 2012 and will form the basis of a report to cabinet in the Autumn to determine the primary places strategy and to agree recommendations for both temporary and permanent expansion of primary schools to meet the forecast need.

27. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR NICK DOLEZAL

What measures has the council taken to ensure Southwark's school kitchens are up to an acceptable level of hygiene?

RESPONSE

Please see the response to question 19.

28. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE

What has been the total amount of the street cleaning budget spent on the removal of chewing gum in each of the years 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12?

RESPONSE

Southwark Cleaning, our in-house cleaning service, has never set aside a specific sum of money for the removal of chewing gum since it was formed under the previous administration in 2003.

Newly dropped gum is cleared routinely by our street cleaners as part of their normal duties. Once gum is trodden into the pavement, it becomes incredibly difficult to remove. High pressure steam cleaning or manual scraping are the only effective means of removal. Both systems are labour-intensive and extremely costly. Results are also less than perfect as once the gum has been removed from a stretch of paving, the area is left speckled with lighter spots as a result of the deep-cleaning action.

Despite having to reduce the street cleaning budget last year, cleanliness in our borough is still extremely good with only 6.5% of our streets found to have unacceptable levels of litter by assessors last year.

Resident satisfaction with the cleanliness of the borough's streets is also high and currently stands at 92%, our best ever result.

I believe that the above information clearly demonstrates that we are using our money wisely.

29. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR GEOFFREY THORNTON

How many temporary green spaces have been created on vacant land since May 2010?

RESPONSE

The major regeneration schemes being planned for the Elephant and Castle and the Aylesbury Estate will be phased over a period of up to 15 years and will provide opportunities for temporary green spaces to be laid out where demolition and clearing of sites precedes development by a sufficient period. The first such site to be made available in this way is the former site of Pritchard House which has been made available for temporary gardening space on a 5 year lease in advance of it being incorporated into the Lend Lease master plan at a later date. The mobile gardeners' group took up occupation of the 0.11 hectare (0.28 acre) site on 16 May and have since commenced storing equipment on site and have applied for planning permission for the temporary use. The group have successfully applied for cleaner greener safer (CGS) funding (£4,000).

30. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK

Would the cabinet member tell me how many trees have been felled in Southwark every year for each of the last five years? How many more are due to be felled in the next two years? What consultation is taking place with residents about each one which is felled?

RESPONSE

The following provides a breakdown of the number of trees felled by the council together with the number of trees which fell on their own accord as a result of being dead/dangerous for the previous 5 years; the total tree stock is in excess of 90,000 trees.

	Felled	Fallen Trees
2007/2008 -	621	56
2008/2009 -	604	55
2009/2010 -	293	105
2010/2011 -	526	44
2011/2012 -	663	42

At this stage we are not able to determine how many trees will be felled in the next two years. In line with the current tree management strategy the tree team are undertaking routine inspections of trees and will identify dead, dying and dangerous trees. For the year 2012-13, 199 trees will have been felled by the end of July which are considered dead, dying or dangerous. Southwark has an ageing population of trees and it is unfortunately inevitable that trees will continue to be felled. Where felling is justified replacement trees will be planted where appropriate to maintain the council's tree stock.

If 5 or more trees are being felled in a particular street, park or estate, residents are informed of the intention to fell. For all trees that are to be felled, a 5 day felling notice is applied to the tree with the tree sections contact details on the notice. Residents regularly contact the tree section during this 5 day period as a result of the felling notice being applied. The council have a duty of care to ensure we manage our tree stock to ensure the health and safety of the public, so any decision to fell is a process of informing rather than consultation. The tree team will however consult with residents, tenants and residents associations and friends groups for all replacement or new tree planting in terms of location and species.

31. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU

Would the cabinet member for transport, environment and recycling get me a definitive answer as to when the farmers market will come to the Blue and how it would work?

RESPONSE

Two operators that currently run a farmer's market in the borough have been approached to determine whether they would be interested in operating at the Blue. Unfortunately both operators declined as they did not have the capacity to operate from another site. Officers are in the process of seeking interests from other operators. Consultation has taken place with the market traders and they would prefer the farmer's market to take place on a Saturday.

32. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR DAN GARFIELD

What does he believe will be the benefit to Southwark residents of the transformation of Burgess Park?

RESPONSE

Southwark residents are already benefiting from the transformation of the park. The café has been relocated from inside Chumleigh Gardens to just outside where parents can sit and watch their children play in the new under-fives playground. Also in view from the café is the over-fives playground which opened in March 2012 with a six metre high climbing frame, donut swing and zip wire, all presented on a colourful rubberised safety floor. These facilities have already proved very popular.

On Saturday 21 July we will reveal our stunning new and expanded lake with two 30ft high water fountains and a 90 metre wooden bridge designed to connect residents on and near Albany Road to other parts of the park.

The lake is filled with a variety of fish of all sizes to give keen anglers the opportunity of passing on their fishing skills to a new generation. Residents will need to buy a fishing permit for the day or become a member of the anglers club to join in.

If you have passed by the park recently then you will have seen the new hills from the perimeter. We have redesigned the park with five hills with panoramic views of the park. From one hill you can see the London Eye, Canary Wharf, the BT Tower and Palace of Westminster. The new landscaping means that the park is now more open with clear sight lines both in the interests of safety for park users and to improve the general environment.

For the first time we now have a designated section within the park, near to the lake, for barbecues. There will be a seated area along with space for cooking. Should the area prove popular we have two more locations to add during the summer.

The park also provides a haven for wildlife and includes space of horticultural value. A total of 331 trees and 92,000 plants have been planted, as well as two new 'rain gardens' that cleverly capture surface water at the park's entrances.

For those who are more active there are opportunities to sign up to a number of fitness activities including Park Run, cycle rides, training at the outdoor gym, army boot camp training and Zumba dance. Young people can take part in the sports challenge which includes 'have a go sessions' of rugby, cricket, football, boxing and American football or can sign up to the Burgess Sports Camp with a whole range of sports on offer throughout August. Details will be available soon so look out for the poster in the sports centre.

This is the first of many phases of delivering the overall vision of this exciting transformation of the park and there has already been funding and associated planning permission granted to deliver a national standard BMX track in the park.

33. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR RENATA HAMVAS

Can he provide the latest information on the borough's recycling rates compared to a) when the previous administration left office and b) the average for London boroughs?

RESPONSE

Southwark's final recycling rate for 2009/10 was just over 22%, almost 10% below the London average. By 2011/12, we had improved performance considerably and recycled almost 28% of our waste, closing the gap between us and the London average to just over 6%.

The exact figures are:

- 2009/10 recycling rate in Southwark was 22.13%. The London average for the same period was 32.05%, 9.92% below the average.
- 2011/12 recycling rate in Southwark was 27.76%. The London average for the same period was 34.22%, 6.46% below the average.

The figures clearly show that we have closed the gap since taking office in 2010 and with the opening of our new waste facility along with the introduction of food waste recycling across the borough, we are confident that we will be above the London average by the end of this administration.

34. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED

What impact can Trixie mirrors have in improving cyclists' safety in Southwark?

RESPONSE

The objective of installing trixi mirrors is to improve the visibility at junctions for drivers of large vehicles; thus improving road safety for cyclists and pedestrians and in turn contributing to a reduction in the number of cyclists being killed or injured. Drivers of large vehicles are often unable to see cyclists that ride down their nearside in their blind spot which can compromise a cyclist's safety particularly when the vehicle is turning left.

Following the move of the Department for Transport allowing highway authorities to install trixi mirrors at traffic control signalled junctions, we have acted quickly to progress advancing this cyclist safety measure. I have utilised £50,000 from the discretionary element of the Local Implementation Plan funding and this investment will contribute towards making us one of the first London boroughs to install the mirrors.

Initial research from Switzerland and Germany indicates that trixi mirrors can improve the safety of cyclists and pedestrians at junctions and that the mirrors have been well received by drivers, riders and police alike.

Working closely with Southwark Cyclists, we have identified 12 sites for implementation of trixi mirrors but are not yet in a position to state how many mirrors each site will require.

Following implementation at the 12 sites we will monitor and evaluate the scheme and continue to work with Transport for London and Southwark Cyclists on improving safety for all cyclists and pedestrians.

35. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL MITCHELL

Could the cabinet member for transport, environment and recycling state why, despite diligent enquiries by officers in response to resident and councillor enquiries, no explanation is yet forthcoming as to why traffic counters appeared across borough roads in numerous locations in Village ward in March and April 2012, and would he set out the circumstances, if any, in which it would be lawful for third parties to place such things across a road without informing the relevant highway authority?

RESPONSE

Third parties are not authorised to install traffic counters on borough roads without our permission although the Department for Transport and Transport for London (TfL) are allowed to do so with prior notification. Whenever officers are notified of unauthorised traffic counters being installed they are investigated and appropriate action taken to regularise the situation either by their removal or, in exceptional circumstances, by their authorisation if strict conditions can be met. In a recent case of unauthorised traffic counters being reported by Dulwich members, officers made an inspection only to find that the counters had already been removed so it was not possible to establish at that time who had installed them. Subsequent investigations have found that a unit within Transport for London may have been responsible for installing counters on various roads around London without following the correct notification processes. If this proves to be the case, we will take this up with TfL and seek their assurances that correct notification processes are always followed in future

36. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR NICK STANTON

What steps has the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management taken to put pressure on the Corporation of London Authority to fix broken entry phones on the Avondale Estate?

RESPONSE

This estate is run and owned by the Corporation of London. We have been in touch with the corporation to progress this issue on behalf of Avondale residents. They are aware of the faults across a number of systems on the estate but we understand the systems are beyond repair and require full renewal. The Corporation of London are in the process of tendering this work but they cannot provide a definitive date for resolution. Unfortunately, the council have no further contractual route to accelerate these works on behalf of the residents of the Avondale Estate.

37. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

Would the cabinet member provide statistics for the number of privately owned

vacant properties and homes in Southwark, and can he outline his proposals for bringing those properties back into use, in an effort to tackle the housing shortage in Southwark?

RESPONSE

As at April 2011, it was estimated that there were approximately 2,462 empty homes within the private sector.

As with most parts of the country the main obstacle to bringing these properties back into use is the inertia of some owners, and the complexity of the issues causing the property to be empty. Coupled with this Southwark also has a unique set of local circumstances. We have some of the oldest private sector housing stock in London much of which predates the 1900s, and one of the largest number of heritage buildings, as well as high numbers of residents financially unable to maintain their property or to become homeowners within the borough.

There are a wide range of options available to help owners, ranging from providing some financial assistance through limited loans and grants, working in partnership with housing associations and developers to offering good quality impartial advice to encourage an owner to kick start the process and to offer support to them to see it through. However, housing associations and developers have been hit hard and are not always able to offer the solutions of the past to bring homes into use. To fill the gap we have more recently worked with smaller social enterprises, housing charities and voluntary community organisations who can offer empty homes owners similar options such as popular works and lease packages, to enable empty properties to be brought back into use as affordable short term housing wherever possible.

We have secured a capital funding budget to continue to offer a small range of recyclable loan products and incentive grants to help empty homes owners bring properties back into use as affordable housing in a market where private rental incomes are very attractive. To further support this the team bid for and secured £195,000 capital funding from the homes and community agency's (HCA) to help bring 15 long term empty properties back into use as affordable short term housing, helping to reduce the call on corporate resources for bed and breakfast.

Enforcement powers are used as a very last resort to deal with owners who after being given every opportunity to return their property to use voluntarily do not do so, and where it is in the best interest of the public.

38. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

What are the council doing to help tenants get up to date meter readings, especially for those with meters in locked cupboards?

RESPONSE

We are aware of this issue and have been working closely with the supply authorities for some time to resolve it. The meters themselves are not owned or maintained by the council and are the property of the supplier. We have provided electrical suppliers with master keys, which provides access to all our intakes and there is a process in place if access is needed urgently. Unfortunately, we are unable to issue keys to our tenants as electrical intakes contain inherent dangers

to an untrained person. We have approached the suppliers to move meters into residents' homes but have been quoted up to £6,000 per meter move.

In conjunction with the issuing of master keys, we are currently training area housing staff to safely enter intake cupboards so that they can provide a meter reading facility to any resident who needs it. We expect this to be rolled out to all areas during this summer.

39. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON

With reference to the undertaking by the strategic director of housing services in her e-mail of 18 June 2012 to all councillors about the Wates Major Works Contract, that all relevant residents will be consulted, would the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing management please confirm that the consultation will extend to non-resident leaseholders? If not, could reasons be given, please?

RESPONSE

We can confirm that consultation regarding the Wates settlement agreement will extend to non-resident leaseholders.

40. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER

How many applications were there for the business element of the community restoration fund and when will applicants be told of the outcome of their application?

RESPONSE

17 applications were received at the 11 May deadline. The final decision will be made on successful applications and the applicants informed in early July.

41. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

How big is the current Bermondsey One Stop Shop and how big is the new space in the Blue? Is the cabinet member sure that all the services currently provided at the One Stop Shop will have enough space in the new planned premises?

RESPONSE

The current Bermondsey One Stop Shop (BOSS) at Spa Road is approximately 730 sq metres.

The size of the ground floor of 11 Market Place is approximately 82.5 sq metres for public reception services. Approximately half of the floor space at BOSS in Spa Road is given over to the delivery of customer services, whereas the whole of the ground floor at 11 Market Place will be dedicated to meeting customer needs.

The footfall at the existing BOSS has fallen over the last year as customers choose to access services in other ways, but there will still be 6 customer service booths at the new space in Market Place. It is anticipated that the services provided at Market Place will be the same as those provided at BOSS. These are:

- Revenues
- Benefits
- One Touch
- Housing
- Payments
- Blue Badges
- Electoral Services
- School Admissions

The new service at 11 Market Place ensures that provision of face-to-face services is maintained for residents in the Bermondsey area. The focus will be on assisting customers to self-serve through the council's website and telephone services. Customers with lengthy enquires will also be offered an appointment at their convenience.

42. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR TIM McNALLY

Could the cabinet member please give a list of all sites owned by the council or other public sector bodies in Southwark, their current uses, and which ones have potential for development?

RESPONSE

The council holds all its records in electronic form and there is no one list of all sites owned by the council. The council's GIS records all land ownership within the borough under the land title search and all land owned by the council is coloured yellow. This is accessible through the council's intranet system but not on the council web site as it is commercially sensitive and for security purposes to help prevent squatting.

Information on how the member can access this information will be sent separately.

We do not hold comprehensive records of other public sector owned properties but can contact them requesting such information: e.g. fire service, police and National Health Service (NHS). This information would not be available by the time of the council assembly.

The council does not hold a list of disposable sites as these are determined on a case by case basis subject to being declared surplus to requirement. The council has internal strategies to review development opportunities e.g. Heygate estate and other programmes such as schools for the future, which may provide additional development opportunities. These are reviewed within a five year plan linked to the capital programme.

43. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, SPORT, THE OLYMPICS AND REGENERATION (SOUTH) FROM COUNCILLOR NORMA GIBBES

This is the last council assembly before the Olympic Games. Is Southwark ready for this once in a lifetime event?

RESPONSE

Yes, I believe we are. Members will recall the extensive and exhaustive number of projects that the council – led by the Olympics Delivery Board – has completed in preparation for the games. To fully detail all those events and the preparation for the Olympics and Paralympics would require as much paper as for the assembly papers already distributed. My thanks go out to all who worked on the five workstreams that have put us in such a good position. For further information go to the Southwark 2012 website http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200164/london_2012 where you can find listings of summer events and sports.

Members will also recall the 10 projects which were successful in bidding for some of the £2 million capital legacy funding, ensuring that there is a genuine Olympic legacy on the ground in our borough.

Preparing for the once in a lifetime opportunity that the Olympics present has been a top priority of this administration. As such, I am fully satisfied that we are in an excellent position to take full advantage of the games. Again, I would like to thank all involved for their hard work and dedication.

44. QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY

In the light of the new regime for determination of planning applications would the chair of planning committee confirm that generally he will ensure that requests by any two councillors for determination at member level will be acceded to, and, if he is minded not to do so in some circumstances, would he please outline such circumstances?

RESPONSE

Generally, yes. However, it is conceivable that circumstances may arise when it is not in the council's interests to follow this course of action in the future. Clear reasons for that decision will be given at the time.

It is difficult to predict the future and the precise nature of the circumstances that may arise.