

Item No. 5.	Classification: Open	Date: July 8 2009	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Members' Question Time	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.8 member's question time shall not exceed 30 minutes. During this time, members may not question any one executive member or committee chair for longer than fifteen minutes.

Members are limited to one question at each meeting.

Questions to the leader will be taken first, followed by questions to other executive members and on the portfolio for education and school attainment. The order in which the different political groups ask questions of the leader will be rotated. Questions to executive members will be taken in the order of receipt and portfolio. The order of portfolios will be rotated at each meeting such that the executive member answering questions immediately after the leader will be the last executive member to answer any questions at the next meeting of council assembly.

Executive members and committee chairs have discretion to refer a question to another executive member if this is appropriate.

Responses to member's questions will be circulated on yellow paper around the council chamber on the evening of the meeting.

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

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

Note: In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.8 (12) & (13) (prioritisation and rotation by the political groups) the order in which questions to the leader appear in this report may not necessarily be the order in which they are considered at the meeting.

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

What guarantees has the leader sought from the preferred bidder regarding its ability to complete the Elephant & Castle scheme in the current economic climate?

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JENNY JONES

On Wednesday November 5 2008, council agreed to support the London living wage by paying all staff, including staff employed by contractors providing a service on behalf of council, the London living wage. Council further agreed to promote the living wage more widely across the borough, including to the private sector. What steps has the council taken since that date to implement these commitments?

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PIDGEON

Would the leader of the council tell us what discussions he has had with the Mayor of London about securing funding for the cross river tram?

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE

Can the leader provide the date by which he expects the agreement with the preferred bidder for the Elephant & Castle regeneration will be signed?

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

Would the leader of the council care to reflect on the likely impact on the lives of people living in Southwark of the Labour government's mishandling of the economy, in particular the need for a £100 billion banking bail-out. In the light of this can he remind members of the steps that the council is taking to ensure that local businesses continue to thrive and bring new jobs and opportunities to our area?

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MCGOVERN

What alternative development proposals is the leader considering to improve the Elephant & Castle area, in case the current proposals cannot be progressed?

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

What are the treasury's published projections about public spending and what are the implications for Southwark council's finances and services in the future?

8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

In the light of several unfair and undemocratic decisions taken by the tenants council, or the tenant fund management committee acting on the tenants council's behalf, will the leader of the council now take immediate steps to remedy the unintended consequences flowing from these decisions, to ensure that organisations like the Barry Road residents association who represent Southwark Council tenants and leaseholders including those in "street properties" [as distinct from those on estates] are able to:

- (i) obtain for their tenant members the share of the tenant fund (into which they have an obligation to pay) to which they are entitled and which they have a legitimate expectation of receiving, but of which at present they are being unreasonably deprived;

- (ii) fairly challenge the arbitrary and self-interested decisions taken at present by the tenants council, which are taken in the interests of a part only and not the whole population of tenants in Southwark;
- (iii) freely “operate under the terms of the constitution” which was given to them by Southwark Council, and not under the dictation of a tenants council whose aims and objectives are in conflict with that constitution.

9. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS PAGE

Does the executive member believe that any deal reached with Lend Lease for the Elephant & Castle regeneration will be as satisfactory for Southwark and Southwark residents as it would have been had it been concluded within the original timetable?

10. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD

Does the executive member believe that the final agreement with the preferred bidder for the Elephant & Castle regeneration will meet the council’s aspirations for the number of socially affordable homes in the scheme?

11. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR KIRSTY MCNEILL

Is the executive member for housing able to re-iterate assurances that all residents required to move as a result of the Elephant & Castle regeneration schemes will be able to return to the area following the completion of the scheme?

12. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY

Despite his various assurances to tenants that he wouldn’t scrap the tenant’s arbitration process since he’s been responsible for housing, can the executive member now confirm that he intends to scrap it?

13. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY

Does the executive member consider it feasible to structure major works contracts for low rise housing estates with a substantial number of leaseholders/freeholders so as to provide those owners with the opportunity, at their expense, to opt in to the contract, with the advantage that economies of scale and less disruption might be achieved in the interests of all concerned?

14. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBA BLANGO

Would the executive member for housing tell us what steps he has taken to ensure that new social housing is being developed in Southwark?

15. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

What progress is being made with demolition of Giles, Carton and Darnay House?

16. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

What is the schedule for Southwark's acquired street properties to be brought up to Southwark decent homes standards?

17. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR MACKIE SHEIK

Would the executive member for housing tell us what steps he has taken to update and improve the council's tenancy agreement?

18. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON

Would the executive member for housing update us on the progress towards the digital switchover for tenants using communal antennae on council blocks?

19. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CITIZENSHIP, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITIES FROM COUNCILLOR MARY FOULKES

What is the demographic profile of the staff who have left Southwark council from January 2008 to June 2009? Can these figures be broken down by age, gender, ethnicity and reason for leaving?

20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CITIZENSHIP, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITIES FROM COUNCILLOR TAYO SITU

At the last council assembly when we had the opportunity to ask questions, the executive member said that the council's policy is that frontline staff and managerial staff, approximately 3,000 members of staff, complete equalities and diversity training, but did not say how many of those members of staff have actually completed the training. How many members of staff have completed equalities and diversity training?

21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CITIZENSHIP, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITIES FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES GURLING

Following the resignation of Hazel Blears, the secretary of state for communities, and the shelving of the government's community empowerment bill, what affect will this have on our efforts to strengthen community empowerment in Southwark?

22. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CITIZENSHIP, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITIES FROM COUNCILLOR ADE LASAKI

Can the executive member for citizenship, equalities and communities tell us what progress is being made in strengthening the powers of community councils?

23. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR SUSAN ELAN JONES

In the light of the astonishing fiasco of 'talking' CCTV which was installed, never worked, and is now going to be ripped out again, all at a cost of £85,000, what measures is the executive member putting in place to ensure that the council properly considers the viability and value of similar initiatives before significant amounts of resources are expended upon them?

24. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE ZULETA

Will the executive member for community safety tell us what steps are being taken to reduce the threat from aggressive and dangerous dogs in the borough?

25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ROBIN CROOKSHANK HILTON

Given the success of the recent Lost Southwark exhibition at the Cuming Museum, does the executive member have any further plans to exhibit the council's art collection?

26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR JELIL LADIPO

Can the executive member please tell me how Southwark will help celebrate the 175th anniversary of Surrey Gardens?

27. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY

Will Nunhead and Peckham Rye residents be consulted on options for the future use of the Nunhead Green Early Years Centre site before the council decides whether or not to dispose of it?

28. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM

Does the executive member for health and adult care agree with me that day centres for older people in Southwark provide vital services and activities for the most vulnerable residents, including the BME communities, and that the present working partnership service level agreements between the voluntary sector and the council has proven to be an effective way of maintaining such services in Southwark?

29. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES

Can the executive member please give me a comprehensive update on the discussions between the council and the primary care trust with regard to the Aylesbury health centre? When will services begin to run from the centre again?

30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR NICK VINEALL

Having regard to the core strategy draft preferred options paper dated April 2009 which at page 14 states that "We will support development of the railway arches [in Herne Hill] into niche businesses or other activities that provide vibrancy to the town centre", what steps does he anticipate being taken in the next 6 months in order to achieve this expressed aim?

31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR WILMA NELSON

Is the executive member for regeneration planning to attend the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition this year which runs until the August 16 and is he aware of any interesting regeneration projects that are being highlighted there?

32. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN JARDINE-BROWN

Will the executive member update members on progress in developing the strategy to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies in Southwark and let us know what actions are being prioritised?

33. QUESTION ON EDUCATION AND SCHOOL ATTAINMENT TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD

What steps are being taken to ensure that parents in East Dulwich who have so far not been offered a primary school place for September within a reasonably accessible distance from their homes will be found places in East Dulwich primary schools so that they do not have to take complex journeys, often with smaller children in tow? Given the baby boom in East Dulwich what plans are in place to ensure that there are sufficient primary and nursery places in East Dulwich in future years to meet the needs of these families?

34. QUESTION ON EDUCATION AND SCHOOL ATTAINMENT TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH

Please detail the percentage of new applicants for primary school places that did not receive a) their first choice of school b) any of their top five choices of school, in the borough by ward.

35. QUESTION ON EDUCATION AND SCHOOL ATTAINMENT TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR BOB SKELLY

Would the leader of the council like to join me in congratulating Councillor Lisa Rajan and her team for the successful conclusion of the negotiations of Southwark's £200 million local education partnership agreement and can he give us an update as to when work will be starting to deliver the improvements to the borough's schools?

36. QUESTION ON EDUCATION AND SCHOOL ATTAINMENT TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

Would the leader of the council please update members on the re-location of Southwark Park Road special school?

37. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE

Could the executive member for environment provide a status update on cleaner, greener, safer projects broken down by community council area showing year by year from 2004-2009: total number of projects; total projects uncompleted; under-spend?

38. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR GORDON NARDELL

Is the executive member aware of any instances where the council's waste and recycling contractor, Veolia, has taken waste collected in Southwark as household recycling to landfill or for incineration instead of recycling it? How many tonnes of waste that residents had left for collection as recycling have been sent to landfill or for incineration in the last year?

39. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED

Can the executive member tell us why nearly all public toilets have been shut in Southwark? Does the member agree that this can be a severe inconvenience for residents (particularly the vulnerable)?

40. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

Can the executive member please provide an update on any plans to make long overdue improvements to East Street market, or to the road surface on East Street?

41. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD THOMAS

Can the executive member for environment confirm that Southwark will stick to the UK's national cycling infrastructure guidelines and not implement Boris's recent whizzy idea of blue cycle lanes?