

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 4 JULY 2012

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

1. QUESTION FROM JANE LOVEL TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING

The Dulwich Estate's Scheme of Management recently brought out revised policy guidelines for solar energy panels. Are you planning to submit comments and can they include views of many residents who have found the current guidelines to be a barrier to investing in renewable energy, lacking in transparency or scrutiny?

RESPONSE

We understand that the Dulwich Estate is preparing new guidelines on solar panels. They have not consulted the council on these yet but expect to do so in the coming weeks. We will await their consultation but we hope that the estate would adopt a position that is not unduly restrictive, and are of course happy for residents to send any comments that they believe should inform any response we make.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM JANE LOVEL TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING

Madam Mayor, councillors, ladies and gentlemen, I urge Councillor Hargrove to proactively engage with the scheme of management at Dulwich Estate, as to my knowledge they have not published the revised guidelines on solar energy panels on their web site or circulated them to any other interested local groups such as Dulwich Going Greener, of which I am a member. I believe this process needs to be more transparent and the Dulwich Estate need to be more accountable to residents like me who pay for their services and I want to contribute to this process to improve Dulwich.

My repeated request to meet the Dulwich Society representatives on their planning committee has been denied despite me being a member. Since 2010 energy prices have increased by nearly 40% and many residents want to reduce their energy bills and contribute to reducing their dependence on fossil fuels, which cause climate change, and not leave this to our children or their children. Dulwich Society is not representative of all Dulwich residents.

My question is what steps would you take to contact the Dulwich Estate and gain some concrete assurances that residents' comments will be considered into their revised guidelines for solar energy panels? I ask you to write to the Dulwich Estate and their trustees asking them to re-establish their planning committee that contains at least two other Dulwich groups such as Dulwich Going Greener.

Since the Dulwich Village Preservation Society and the Dulwich Leaseholders' Society were closed many years ago they were not replaced. If the Dulwich Society will not engage with their residents nor the Dulwich Estate, we need to have a mechanism to make our voices heard as we live in a democracy today.

RESPONSE

I want to thank Miss Lovel for coming here tonight and bringing this important issue to our attention. We have already had some contact, preliminary contact, I should say about this with the Dulwich Estates and they are planning to consult us on the changes to their guidelines.

I apologise if the written answer was perhaps written in a bit too bureaucratic language – what we want to say is that Dulwich Estates should be showing a greater commitment to the enabling of renewables and to that end we will be writing to them saying this is what we want. We want them to take a greater account of what residents want to be able to do with their homes and we will formally request what you have asked about the changes to their planning committee and anything else that residents wish to submit to us in terms of our response we will certainly take them on board and welcome them.