

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY MEETING)
WEDNESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2012
MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

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

How many homes for social rent, as officially defined by government, will be included in phase one of the Heygate regeneration project? Following the report in Southwark News of 1 November in which the council stated its definition of social rented homes is based on "housing charity Shelter's guidelines", would the leader give a source for these guidelines? What communication has the council had with Shelter about these guidelines both prior to and after the article was published?

RESPONSE

We will secure at least 25% affordable homes on the first phase of the Heygate and at least that amount across the rest of the regeneration. This is solely because of the decision that we took in mid-2010 to have a minimum guarantee of affordable housing written into the contract with Lend Lease, a decision that the opposition criticised us for as 'selling residents down the river', because they were unhappy with potential lost income for the council. If we had followed their preferred course of action, leaving the level of affordable housing to the planning system, there would be less than 10% affordable housing on the Heygate. That is the difference between our approach and theirs.

On Shelter's 'What is Social Housing?' webpage, they set out the following criteria for social homes:

- Social housing provides affordable housing
- Social housing is allocated on the basis of need
- Social housing is owned and managed by social landlords
- Social housing is tightly regulated.

The 26 rented affordable homes in the first phase of the Heygate regeneration will all be in line with these criteria. The proposed number of homes and different rents is otherwise well-documented. All of them will be in line with Simon Hughes' feedback during the consultation phase that they should be below 66%-80% of market rents.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

Thank you Madam Mayor. So we could not get a straight answer on whether you used government money to help with nurseries. Let's try and get this issue which you have got yourself in complete knots with; talking about Shelter guidelines, when we rang Shelter they had no idea what you were talking about. The answer you have given goes to huge lengths to try and avoid actually answering part one

of the question which said, how many homes for social rent will be on phase one of the Heygate? Perhaps you could answer.

RESPONSE

Councillor Al-Samerai might not like it but the fact is, this Labour administration is delivering far more affordable housing, which includes homes for social rent, on the Heygate site than she ever would have done; because if heaven forbid the Liberal Democrats had won in May 2010, we would be asking questions of her or Councillor Stanton now as to why only 8 or 9% affordable housing is being delivered on the Heygate. That is a shame, a shameful position she would have put us in, and I am not going to go into what's this or what's that. We are delivering 25% affordable housing on the Heygate, half of which is for rent and half of which is for intermediate ownership, and yes, thanks to us and thanks to the work I have done, the one and two bed properties on the Heygate, all of them, including phase one, will be at 50% of market rent rate. That is a reduction that we have brought about through our negotiations, so I will take no lessons on social housing/affordable housing in this borough from Councillor Al-Samerai, shame on her.

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS

In the Southwark News on 1 November 2012 Simon Hughes finally admitted that the government has cut the subsidy it pays for new affordable housing from £120,000 to £20,000 per unit. He then claims that this has had no impact on the deal at the Heygate. Do you agree?

RESPONSE

No. It appears that those who are currently criticising the deal that we have managed to get with Lend Lease are hiding behind the complexity of the issue, so I will attempt to make my explanation of the impact that the government cut to the affordable housing subsidy has on the Heygate as simple as possible:

- Southwark has a planning target of 35% affordable homes on the Heygate site.
- But developers (including Lend Lease) are only obliged, by law, to meet that target to the extent that it is financially viable for them to do so, as determined by a series of standard tests.
- In other words, the law recognises that development will not happen if affordable homes targets are set so high that developers would not make any profit if they were obliged to meet them, so there is a safety measure to make sure development does not grind to a halt.
- If a developer is able to demonstrate that having 35% affordable homes on a site is not financially viable, therefore, because they are less profitable than private homes, they do not have to build 35%. They only have to build, by law, as many as are financially viable by the standard tests.
- At the same time, the government gives a subsidy for new affordable housing so that they are not so unprofitable.

- Under the last government this subsidy was £120,000 per unit. The coalition government has cut this to £20,000 per unit.
- This subsidy is factored into the standard tests for testing whether building a certain amount of affordable homes is financially viable.
- So the over 80% cut to the government subsidy for affordable homes makes each affordable home less profitable, which in turn reduces the amount of affordable homes that developers will be obliged to build in new developments, by law, as determined by the standard tests.
- In short, the cut has meant that on the Heygate site less than 10% affordable housing is viable, according to the standard tests, following the coalition's cut, whereas before the cut much more would have been viable according to the same tests.

It is for this reason that we stand by our decision to write a minimum guarantee of 25% affordable housing into the contract with Lend Lease. This guarantee is not affected by the same viability tests.

I do not underestimate Simon Hughes understanding of this issue and am therefore concerned by his stated belief that cutting off the subsidy has no impact. His government's decision to cut off the housing subsidy to the Heygate has exactly the same impact as cutting off a subsidy to a country bus service would; it makes it less affordable. I hope that he will clarify that he understands this.

On a final note, it is a shame that there was no separate vote on the decision to cut the subsidy. It would have been another opportunity for Mr Hughes to demonstrate his flexible principles by either voting with the government or not opposing their proposals, just as he did on tuition fees, the VAT hike, the housing benefit cap and police cuts.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS

Thank you Madam Mayor, and I thank the leader for his answer. Councillor John will be aware that there was recently a vote in parliament on whether or not to let developers wriggle out of providing any affordable housing by immediately appealing section 106 agreements. Could he tell me if Simon Hughes supported or opposed this ridiculous measure?

RESPONSE

Yes, it is absolutely shocking, given the hypocrisy of the position of Councillor Al-Samerai and her colleagues, that Simon Hughes supported that Bill; the Growth and Restructure Bill, supported it, which means that the developers can get away with delivering zero affordable housing. And do you know what? Councillor Al-Samerai has been shouting for an answer, I have never known her to let the facts get in the way of anything she puts out in any publication or any leaflets; so why does she want the facts anyway? She is just going to make it up and scare the people in Southwark in any event. So go and write your leaflets, Councillor Al-Samerai, don't worry about the facts. You never have before.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS

Can the leader explain why the Cathedrals ward councillors are not invited to attend the Blackfriars Road Landowners Forum meetings? These meetings include a range of stakeholders from a wide spectrum and are for the purpose of discussing multimillion pound developments. Does the leader not recognise the ward councillors as important stakeholders who can make a valuable contribution on behalf of their community?

RESPONSE

The Blackfriars Road Landowners Forum is a forum for landowners on Blackfriars Road. Cathedrals ward councillors are not invited in their capacity as ward councillors because they are not, in their capacity as ward councillors, landowners on Blackfriars Road. This is not to say that Cathedrals ward councillors are precluded from ever being landowners on Blackfriars Road, only that it would either require the election of a landowner on Blackfriars Road to that office or a Cathedrals ward councillor to purchase land on Blackfriars Road.

It is not true to say that a wide variety of stakeholders, other than landowners on Blackfriars Road, are invited to this meeting as a matter of course.

I am satisfied that having a dedicated forum for landowners provides a useful space for the council to engage with them directly as well as providing a platform for wider consultation, which I understand Cathedrals ward councillors have previously benefitted from.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS

Thank you Madam Mayor, and I thank the leader for his answer. Perhaps if the leader did allow the Cathedrals ward members to come to those meetings you could allay those fears that the community have that you are having negotiations and making secret deals; I wondered if you would reconsider whether or not perhaps that we can come to those meetings, if only to save your own name?

RESPONSE

Well, I have heard what Councillor Morris has to say, I don't think my name is very highly thought of in any event by the Liberal Democrat circles.

I mean Councillor Morris, the point is this – I mean these secret meetings that everybody knows about that are taking place, which, the purpose of which, let me just explain the purpose behind these meetings.

These are to try to bring developers and landowners in the Blackfriars Road area together to try and agree, so that we get some coordination of public realm; an agreed view on public realm, a shared vision for Blackfrairs Road, because we have got lots of people coming forward all at the same time at the moment with ideas of what they want to do in Blackfriars Road in terms of development. Trying to get one view is better than having 12 or 20 different views. I think there is a place for local ward councillors in that debate at a certain point. I don't think we have got to that point yet, but she is part of the neighbourhood planning forum which is doing work on exactly the same area, where her views are being heard and being taking into consideration, and it is to bring those two sets of views

together. There is no secrecy and negotiation and discussions which are going on. They are not negotiations, it is discussions; it is a bit of blue sky thinking about what we should do with Blackfriars Road. She is not being kept out of anything, and I will invite her and her colleagues along to a meeting in the very near future I have no doubt.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL SITU

Can the leader provide an update on the number of police lost from Southwark's streets since May 2010?

RESPONSE

The total number of frontline police officers lost in Southwark since May 2010 is 128 with a further 69 police community safety officers cut.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL SITU

Thank you Madam Mayor, I thank the leader for his response. My supplementary question is in light of Simon Hughes' assertion that more police in Southwark does not actually mean less crime, what does the leader think has been the impact of officers' loss to date and does he believe that there will be further costs in the next few years?

RESPONSE

Well I am afraid, thank you very much Councillor Situ for your supplementary question, I am afraid that there may well be further police cuts in the future, and the trend that we have seen over the last two years is very worrying and we know that the police have to take 20% out of their budget, so the cuts we had already have come without those 20% cuts to the police budget. I think it is very wrong headed to say that more police on the streets doesn't equal less crime; I think the public are reassured by a very visible police presence on their streets, I think that's why the safer neighbourhood teams were so successful, delivered by the last government and the last Mayor of London and I think we all as councillors in Southwark should make the case for more police and more PCSOs on our streets in this borough rather than less.

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GEOFFREY THORNTON

Why has the council failed to meet the targeted increase for Bikeability level 1 cycle routes in 2011/12 (an increase of 2km)? Why is the target for 2012/13 only an additional increase of 1km? What is the targeted increase currently projected for 2013/14?

RESPONSE

We have not failed to meet the targeted increase. The current target is 'Increase the length of "bikeability level 1 cycle routes" in the borough by 10 per cent over the next five years'. This translates to delivering an additional 1km of bikeability level 1 roads and or paths per year. This increase is delivered through planned infrastructure improvements which are in the main delivered in the last quarter of the financial year, following this, an independent audit of the bikeability level is

undertaken meaning that the reporting of this target should be best considered on an annual basis.

Currently there are 57.345km of bikeability level 1 routes in the borough and the council is seeking to increase this to 58.5km by the end of 2012/13. The projected target for 2013/14 is 59.5km.

It is worth noting that the previous administration had eight years to undertake a bikeability audit but failed to do so; because of this administration's commitment to cycling we are one of only three London boroughs to undertake a bikeability audit in an effort to improve the cycling experience of our residents.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GEOFFREY THORNTON

I think I thank the leader for his answer, although he has not directly answered it. I would ask him to confirm that the council has indeed missed its interim target to increase the length of level one bikeability cycle routes, and in view of that, does he think the current target to cover just 80% of roads in the borough is sufficient for beginner cyclists to train in safe, largely traffic free, environments?

RESPONSE

Well we can to-and-fro on it; I can only repeat my answer in terms of what I put in writing, but I would say there is a commitment from this administration at this time to make Southwark the safest cycling borough in London by 2020, and part of that has to be with bikeability level one routes. We are absolutely committed to increasing those across the borough as soon as we can, of course bearing in mind that we have had a £90 million cut to our budget and economic times are very tough; so we are on target I do assure him, and do assure him of our continued commitment to making Southwark the safest cycling borough in London.

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL

When the heads of terms for the regeneration of the Heygate were approved by the previous Liberal Democrat administration, paragraph 57 of the report stated: "The level of affordable housing will be determined through the normal statutory planning processes in accordance with the emerging core strategy." Can the leader confirm how much affordable housing would have been delivered at the Heygate had this approach been followed?

RESPONSE

As I said in my response to question 2, the government cut to the affordable housing subsidy means that we anticipate less than 10% affordable housing would be delivered on Heygate if it was just left to the planning process. That would equal between 230 and 247 homes dependent upon the outcome of reserved matters applications as opposed to the at least 575-617 dependent upon the outcome of reserved matters applications that we will achieve as a result of our minimum guarantee.

Put starkly and simply: had the electoral result been different in May 2010, between 345-370 fewer affordable homes would be built on the Heygate site.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL

Thank you Madam Mayor and I thank the leader for his answer. With regards to the Heygate Estate regeneration, the Liberal Democrats are now claiming that they got 35% of affordable housing as an agreement within their planning documents. Is this correct?

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Councillor Merrill for his supplemental question. No, there was nothing secured by the Liberal Democrats to get 35% affordable housing on the Heygate site. It is very wrong headed and it is mistaken to say that. It is planning policy, that's right; it is planning policy, but we all know that planning policy is subject to the usual economic viability tests that developers have to go through, and we know from experience across London, from looking at major schemes of a similar order to the Heygate, that in the region of between 15 and 18 or even less percent affordable housing is being delivered, and we know that if the usual economic viability tests had been applied to the Heygate site, which is the approach which the Liberal Democrats were going to take, about 8 or 9% of affordable housing would have been delivered. That is why our minimum guarantee – and it is a minimum guarantee – of 25% affordable housing on the Heygate site is a good thing at this present time in this economic climate and I don't know why people cannot get that or understand it.

I think what the opposition has to show to us, Councillor Merrill, is how they would deliver 35%, because when I was being interviewed by the overview and scrutiny committee, there was no Liberal Democrat member who could explain how they get to 35%, other than by using the affordable housing fund to put more money in; which is of course something which they fundamentally disagreed with in the first place anyway, so you know they cannot get to this figure of 35%. It is a nonsense and they have to get real about what is going on across our borough, because they are just not being taken seriously at the moment.

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR NICK STANTON

Following the recent inclusion of the Sky Lounge in the 1 Blackfriars developments at a cost of £5.5 million, does the leader think that the construction of viewing lounges is an appropriate way for developers to provide public contributions? What plans does the council have to use the Sky Lounge for its own events and meetings? What steps will the leader take to ensure that the Sky Lounge will not be treated as a profit making exercise for its owners?

RESPONSE

The opposition have both recently stated that public access to a viewing gallery at 1 Blackfriars is a waste of public money and that the council should intervene, which would require spending public money, to get free public access to a viewing gallery in the Shard.

We are clear that providing some sort of public access to the borough's new tall buildings is a positive thing. It is the opposition that need to decide where they stand on the issue.

8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAN GARFIELD

While we all appreciate the rough and tumble of local politics, how important is it for politicians of all parties to adhere to a minimum standard of decency when engaging in political debate?

RESPONSE

It is vitally important. I believe that having a vibrant local democracy improves our decisions. Where decisions are subject to scrutiny, debate and competition, the end result will be better than where they are unscrutinised and unrivalled.

But that – what you might call the rough and tumble of local politics – must always remain subject to a level of decency; our residents expect it of us. Members will know that I have recently written to Simon Hughes MP about two matters: politicking at the time of Helen Morrissey’s funeral and behaviour around a public meeting, which I have been concerned have not met that level of decency. I know that many members share my concern.

I have further been concerned that Councillor Al-Samerai’s recent decision to criticise Councillor Colley for having a private life during her maternity leave represents a continuation of this sort of nasty and personal lack of decency. I hope that – having had time to reflect – she will apologise to Councillor Colley for her remarks.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAN GARFIELD

Thank you Madam Mayor, I thank the leader for his answer. Does he think it is the role of any public figure to dictate how mothers should be spending their maternity leave?

RESPONSE

No I don’t think it is, and I think it was regrettable that Councillor Al Samerai raised the issue of what Councillor Colley was doing during her maternity leave and in her private time and private life. I think it is a shame that she has not apologised but actually indulged into a Twitter row with Councillor Colley about what Councillor Colley should be doing. Councillor Colley is here this evening; as Councillor Colley would say, ‘Would Anood approve?’ She probably would approve of you being here this evening, but I hope you are not in East Walworth tomorrow, Fiona.

9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE BOWMAN

Please could the leader give an update on the number of new primary and secondary school places needed by 2015, broken down by ward?

RESPONSE

I am interested that the opposition has suddenly become interested in this subject. My colleagues Councillor Colley and the councillors for Peckham Rye lobbied hard in 2009/10 to get the then Liberal Democrat executive to take notice of the growing demand for school places in the borough, but their calls fell on deaf ears.

A telling example of the previous administration's complacency is evidenced in a discussion on primary places in the south of the borough before the elections in 2010. The then leader of the council appeared at a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee in 2010 and maintained the then executive line that demand for new primary school places in the south of the borough "peaks in 2015 before declining to about one form above the current capacity. This would suggest that additional places are required locally but mostly to accommodate a population bulge, with only a small permanent increase in numbers."

Our estimates indicate that Dulwich will in fact need between 2 and 2.5 additional forms of entry (FE) by September 2015 and this will increase to 2.5 to 3 FE in September 2016.

Our recent cabinet decision to commit real resources to a long-term solution to the growth in the need for school places shows that, contrary to the opposition's complacency, we are getting to grips with the problem.

It is not possible to break down the primary or secondary information by individual ward. The information on the number of new primary places required by 2015 was included in the report to cabinet.

The information on the number of new secondary places is included in the "What's Happening" bulletin circulated to all head teachers. Secondary school place planning is carried out on a borough wide basis. We are anticipating there would be a secondary shortfall of 10 forms of entry by 2016 and if the Compass proposals to establish a 4 FE free school on the Bermondsey site of Southwark and Lewisham College proceeds then we would still anticipate a shortfall of 6 FE over the same period.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE BOWMAN

I would like to thank the leader for his response. I am disappointed that you have not been able to supply me with a ward by ward breakdown of the estimates of future need for school places because obviously that would be fairly helpful; and I wondered with that in mind, why didn't the Elephant and Castle supplementary planning document (SPD) make proper provision for increased school places? Clearly people are going to be coming to the Elephant and Castle as a result of the wider regeneration strategy, and there is already a shortage of primary school and secondary school places in parts of the borough; it would have made sense to have that included in that document.

RESPONSE

Well, the education requirements were undoubtedly considered as part of the Elephant and Castle SPD. What I would say to her is if you look at the cabinet report that we considered, it did break down on an area by area basis where the need for both primary and secondary school places would be across the borough. I think what is encouraging, and I said this at the last council assembly meeting, is that our officer team do have in place plans for how to deal with the growth in numbers over the next few years, and they have plans which I think are deliverable and achievable, provided we get financial support from the Department for Education which I believe should be forthcoming. So I think we can take some comfort from that, and I think that officers are looking ahead, they are planning on pupil places and pupil numbers and I think it is beholden on us as councillors,

particularly councillors who are school governors, to work with our schools to ensure that those schools do cooperate with the work that officers are doing to try and find permanent expansions to accommodate this growth in numbers.

10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED

What impact have the government's new planning framework, coupled with the slashing of the affordable housing grant, had on the viability of regeneration projects like the Heygate including on rent charges?

RESPONSE

The introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and reduction of social housing grant have had a significant impact on the viability of regeneration projects. In the current economic climate regeneration projects are a challenge. This is principally due to the substantial costs associated with delivery over and above those of a standard development. These costs include:

- creation of new high quality infrastructure associated with the development of a new neighbourhood including roads, public realm and utility capacity
- contributions to improvements to transport infrastructure
- community facilities, including parks and contributions to health and education capacity
- site preparation works including demolition and site decontamination
- cash flow and finance charges
- socio-economic programmes
- sustainability requirements.

In addition the development is required to meet the cost of providing affordable housing. Under the 2008-11 national affordable homes programme the average social housing grant for new homes in Southwark was £120,000 per unit for social rent and £36,000 per unit for intermediate housing. Under the 2011-15 affordable homes programme, the funding available nationally was substantially reduced and registered providers (RPs) in London were invited to seek funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) at a much reduced grant level. This has resulted in an average of £33,600 for affordable rent and £15,400 per unit for intermediate housing with grant generally limited to schemes delivering affordable rent properties.

More recently a government proposal that developers can immediately challenge section 106 affordable housing requirements has the potential to make the delivery of affordable housing on major regeneration projects even more difficult.

The financial impact on the regeneration of the Heygate Estate of the new social housing grant regime over the life of the project is a loss of grant in the order of £40 million, thus putting increasing pressure on the viability of the project. In normal circumstances this challenge is met by a financial assessment submitted to the planning authority which adjusts the level of affordable housing to a level which the scheme can afford. In the case of the Heygate such an assessment would result in the quantum of affordable housing being delivered on site at below 10%.

In order to address the reduction in the availability of social housing grant the government introduced the concept of affordable rent within the definition of affordable housing in the NPPF. This allowed for rents to be charged at up to 80%

of market rents on both new build and a proportion of re-let properties. The council's analysis has demonstrated that rents at 80% of market rent are unaffordable to Southwark's residents therefore this option is not deemed appropriate for Southwark and is therefore not available to meet the funding gap left by the reduction of social housing grant.

11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PODDY CLARK

How many reports of fly-tipping have been made in the last 12 months, broken down by ward? How many fines has the council issued in each of the last three years for a) fly-tipping, and b) littering?

RESPONSE

Reports of fly-tipping

Southwark cleaning services pro-actively deal with fly-tipping across the borough. In 2010/11 the cleansing service introduced a new system which meant that fly-tipping reports by staff was recorded more accurately, by the type of items and the locations. This has meant that there has been an increase in the numbers of fly-tips being recorded and better information on the extent of issues.

The number of reports of fly-tipping which are recorded on the council's confirm data base, broken down by ward, is as follows.

Fly-tipping statistics by Ward 1 November 2011 to 31 October 2012	
Ward	Totals
Brunswick	251
Camberwell	228
Cathedral	430
Chaucer	199
College	150
East Dulwich	254
East Walworth	314

Fly-tipping statistics by Ward 1 November 2011 to 31 October 2012	
Faraday	246
Grange	239
Livesey	262
Newington	315

Fly-tipping statistics by Ward 1 November 2011 to 31 October 2012	
Nunhead	291
Peckham	250
Peckham Rye	262
Riverside	89
Rotherhithe	141
South Bermondsey	163
South Camberwell	106
Surrey Docks	179
The Lane	444
Village	129
Total	4942

Fixed Penalty Notices for fly-tipping

All minor (for example bags only) fly-tips in public area are routinely dealt with by fixed penalty notices. These are all dealt with by means of a littering fixed penalty notice issued under Section 87/88 Environmental Protection Act 1990 which covers a range of waste types and volumes.

The number of fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping issued by the council's environmental enforcement team over the past two years is as follows:

2011/12	Fixed penalty notices issued	376
April – Oct 2012	Fixed penalty notices issued	375

The recorded figures for fixed penalty notices serviced by the combined noise and environmental enforcement in 2010/11 were 3,243. However these include fixed penalty notices for cigarette littering which formed part of a council-wide campaign to tackle this problem. The overall figures were significantly inflated due to this campaign.

Littering

The number of fixed penalty notices for littering issued by the wardens service over the past three years are as follows:

2010	Fixed penalty notices issued	710
2011	Fixed penalty notices issued	475
2012 (YTD)	Fixed penalty notices issued	474

12. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GETTLESON

How much has been spent on repairs and other works to the roof terrace in the Council's Tooley Street office in 2012/13 and in 2011/12?

RESPONSE

It is unfortunate that the Liberal Democrats are so keen to decry the costs of repairs and other works undertaken on the Southwark's Tooley Street office. It was, after all, their decision to move the council to the new headquarters and since then all costs for occupying and fitting out the building have been contained within the budget set by their administration.

Essential health and safety works were required to the roof terrace and were completed on 29 June 2012. These comprised structural strengthening of the balustrading upstands, perimeter decking and fixings and infill of open panels to meet building control and health and safety requirements. Expenditure to complete this essential work was as follows:

- Expenditure in 2011/12 - £9,625
- Expenditure in 2012/13 - £52,143.

A retention sum of £1,289 is due to be released in 2013/14 subject to a satisfactory completion of the contract defect period.

There are currently no further works planned for the roof terrace. The very low level of day to day maintenance and minor repair is contained within the existing Tooley Street facilities management budget.

13. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU

Will he give an update on the review of nurseries and children's centres launched in August and when the findings will be made public? Will he commit to keep all existing childcare services and nurseries in the borough open next year?

RESPONSE

The most recent update is available on the council's website here: <http://moderngov.southwarksites.com/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=3230>.

Whilst we have set a provisional budget for next year, we will not know how large the coalition government's cuts to Southwark are until after the Chancellor's 'Autumn Statement' (which will laughably be delivered at the start of the widely recognised autumnal month of December). No one can make any cast-iron commitments on council spending until we know quite how bad the settlement is going to be.

14. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON

Can he confirm how many schemes for new council homes were agreed between May 2002 and May 2010?

RESPONSE

No new build developments of council homes were agreed between May 2002 and May 2010.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON

Yes I have, madam Mayor and I want to thank the deputy leader for his response. Now the deputy leader would appreciate I am both astonished and each time I read his answer I am increasingly angry by the response. The deputy leader may be aware that the Liberal Democrats have recently distributed leaflets and annoyed my constituents on the doorsteps claiming that they care about council housing. Now, given that the Liberal Democrats have failed to agree any new council homes over the past eight years, how many will this administration build in the forthcoming eight years?

RESPONSE

Thank you Madam Mayor and I would like to thank Councillor Seaton for his supplementary question. In fact, it wasn't this government, it was the last Labour government, one of the last things the last Labour government did in office was to give the power back to local councils to build council homes, so let's get the facts right.

I am also proud to be part of an administration that the leader has given a firm commitment to, that is going to build 1,000 new council homes by 2020. We have already taken a report to the cabinet which has identified nearly 300 units in different sites across the borough where we can start to build those 1,000 homes. This is a clear sea-change from the previous administration, as my previous answer says, where nothing was built. So we have started off where the Liberals finished; with a complete empty basket of building new homes. And it is not the only thing they left us with; they left us with a £0.5 billion gap in our housing investment programme and we have had to bridge that gap, we bridged that gap with our warm, dry, safe programme, which is as you know is at least £326 million and we are hoping over the coming years to put more money in that, because if we had continued with the Liberal Democrat programme we would have had over 22,000 homes that would have been non-decent under that programme if we would have continued it. So I am very proud to be part of this administration that has taken housing to the heart of our programme during a period when this government is attacking public housing, is attacking the welfare that supports people in benefits within those houses particularly here in Southwark. So, in a period where the Liberal Democrats didn't build anything in their eight years in office but instead sold over 9,000 council properties, then we do not need to take any lectures from the opposition over there.

15. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR NICK DOLEZAL

In 2009 the Audit Commission found that: "In 2008/09, [the council] invested £73 million in works to achieve decent homes whereas double this figure was required to meet their targets. They aim to increase investment further by better contracting arrangements and the sale of buildings."

The report also acknowledged that “not enough has been done so far. There remains a significant funding gap to bridge, and over 18,000 homes are still likely to be non-decent in 2013. This is partly because Southwark has decided, in line with the wishes of residents, to improve homes to a higher standard. This will give more tenants new kitchens and bathrooms. However, it also means that more tenants will continue to live in poor-quality housing for longer. The lack of an up-to-date picture of the condition of council housing means that it is uncertain how much more investment may be needed and therefore how soon the improvements can be made.”

Is this incontrovertible evidence not only that the previous administration planned to sell council homes to fund decent homes work, but also that their decent homes programme was nothing but an abject failure?

RESPONSE

Absolutely. The only thing more depressing than the previous administration’s total failure of a housing investment programme is their utter hypocrisy over void disposals.

In March 2009 the executive affirmed its intention to fund its housing investment programme through, amongst other things, the disposal of void properties.

The executive, as it was then, also agreed ‘that 100% of the receipts generated from the additional disposal of voids and land proposed by this report are used to fund the housing investment programme to deliver Southwark’s decent homes standard’.

However a report to the cabinet in December 2010 identified not only a shortfall of up to £314 million in delivery of the Southwark standard but that by 2015/16 a total of 22,463 properties would actually be non-decent.

So not only was their housing investment programme underfunded, it would have had the perverse effect of leaving less homes decent than when the programme began.

That is why in May 2011 this administration implemented a new fully-funded and timetabled housing investment programme that will make every council homes in Southwark warm, dry and safe by 2016.

This Labour administration is delivering where the Liberal Democrats failed.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR NICK DOLEZAL

Thank you very much , Madam Mayor. Could you please detail how the current programme is progressing as a scheme for all and not just the few that they choose?

RESPONSE

I thank Councillor Dolezal for his supplementary question; I am tempted to refer him to my previous answer, but can I say that one of the key things that marks out the difference between this administration and the previous administration with the

warm, dry, safe programme, is that we responded to what the residents wanted in terms of a housing investment programme. They wanted transparency; that was non-existent before, they wanted certainty; that was non-existent before, and they wanted a clear timetable, and that was non-existent before. So we have listened to our residents, we have not acted in a dictatorial manner, we have introduced a programme that they wanted all that time through that eight years when the Liberal Democrats were in power. So we have instituted our warm, dry, safe programme.

It is proving so successful in terms of the works that are on the way that now we are bringing forward those elements that were programmed for the later years. So that means we have not only kept to our programme, we are ahead of our programme; and if that isn't success, I don't know what is.

16. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

Can he provide a breakdown of which estates are due to benefit from improved CCTV coverage thanks to the council's £1.4 million capital investment?

RESPONSE

The programme of investment into the borough's estates CCTV network plays an important role in raising public confidence in the safety of their surroundings. It is also an important resource that aids crime prevention and detection.

In September this year, the cabinet agreed the investment into the upgrade and refurbishment of essential CCTV for the benefit of the following estates:

- Four Squares Estate
- Aylesbury Estate
- Gloucester Grove Estate
- Castlemead Estate
- Wyndham & Comber Estate
- Brandon 1 Estate
- Elmington Estate
- Draper Estate
- Perronet Estate
- Newington Estate
- Abbeyfield Estate
- Hawkstone Estate
- Osprey Estate
- Silverlock Estate
- Bramcote Estate
- Bonamy Estate
- Kingswood Estate
- Tabard Estate
- Kipling Estate
- Tustin Estate.

The programme will also include investment in 30 redeployable cameras, which can be moved across the borough to respond to emerging crime and anti social behaviour issues. The cabinet member for finance, resources and community safety has asked officers to develop a business case considering the deployment of some of these cameras on the Manor Estate.

In addition to the specific estates listed, we will be embarking on an ambitious programme of work that upgrades and installs new transmission equipment that will enable the council to place any of the new redeployable cameras on other estates in Southwark where it is most needed.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER

I would like to thank the deputy leader for his answer. My supplementary is, what impact does he believe this investment in CCTV will have on crime and anti-social behaviour on our estates?

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Councillor Lauder for her supplementary question. I believe this will have a significant impact on anti-social behaviour on our estates. Every single councillor in this room gets regular complaints about anti-social behaviour, and may I say that some councillors, and I am looking at my colleague there in the Village ward, are the subject of anti-social behaviour because of where they live. So it affects all of us in this borough as residents in an entirety so it is important we get this CCTV up and running and also I think it runs parallel with the other work that we are doing, and my colleague Councillor Livingstone is at the forefront of this, and again the cabinet paper the other day which is outlining our violent crime strategy.

This is another sea-change from the previous administration. We've lobbied for years over those eight years for this council to adopt the violent crime strategy to deal with gangs and the problems that people were facing on our estates. Did they listen to us? No. They voted it down each time we brought a motion to this assembly, so again we have listen to what the residents have wanted and we have delivered what the residents want through our crime strategy whether it is a violent crime strategy or whether it is through putting CCTV on our estates. Our borough will be a lot safer by the time Labour stands for re-election in 2014 and that's why we will be elected with an increased majority.

17. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET

What definition does the council use to define the various tenures of affordable housing (social rented, affordable and intermediate)? Does the council accept the official government definition outlined in Planning Policy Statement 3?

RESPONSE

I would like to answer the second question first. Unlike Simon Hughes, who has taken contrary positions at a local and a national level, we have been consistent in our opposition to the coalition government's definition of "affordable rent" as anything up to 80% of market rent.

Whilst the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes a third type of affordable housing ("affordable rent") it does not explicitly require boroughs to include affordable rent within its planning policies. However, the London Plan is currently being amended to require boroughs to include affordable rent as part of

its policies. The council have objected to this and council representatives are attending the London Plan examination in public on 22 November 2012 to put forward our concerns and request that boroughs should be given the flexibility to deliver affordable housing that meets its housing need.

The council's adopted definitions of affordable housing are set out in the core strategy (2011) and the draft affordable housing supplementary planning document (June 2011). This includes a definition of affordable housing, social rented housing and intermediate housing. However, due to the adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012, the council now use the definitions in the NPPF, bearing in mind the following caveats in relation to affordable rent. We are updating our planning documents with these new definitions (so far we have the new definitions within fact boxes in the adopted Canada Water area action plan, the adopted Elephant and Castle supplementary planning document and the draft Peckham and Nunhead area action plan), and will review this as part of our local plan preparation in 2013.

National government amended the definition of affordable housing through Planning Policy Statement 3 (adopted June 2011). Planning Policy Statement 3 has since been superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was adopted in March 2012. The NPPF defines three types of affordable housing in its glossary as follows:

"Affordable housing: Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the affordable housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as "low cost market" housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes."

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET

I have Madam Mayor; thank you, and I thank the cabinet member for his initial answer.

I suspect we are always going to disagree on housing in this borough sadly, but there we go. So I wanted to try and ask a question following on from the leader's appearance at overview and scrutiny committee which obviously you won't know, so I will explain very briefly, where we got into a discussion about trying to find some practical ways forward in terms of borrowing against the housing revenue account to try and plug gaps left by the reduction in social housing grants, which, yes, does exist. And it is really to ask the cabinet member if I may, Madam Mayor, apologies for the long introduction, which is to say is actually increasing the way we borrow, maybe taking a few more risks, and increasing that gearing, is something which off the back of housing commission you might consider doing? And it is entirely meant in the spirit of being helpful.

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Councillor Noblet for his supplementary question and as always, he is always helpful. Can I say, yes, that was a very sensible question and I will give a sensible response. You're quite right – for a change. You are quite right to raise this issue and I wasn't at the overview and scrutiny committee as you say, but that issue was raised as part of the housing commission report. It is quite clearly detailed in there in terms of the investment options for the future, and we are very keen to spark a debate the length and breadth of the borough on those particular investment options.

There are different schools of opinion on this, as you can well imagine, and before we jump the gun on this and make any policy announcement it is important that we get the feedback from our residents in terms of the housing commission report and also that we deliberate with our own officers in relation to the financial repercussions. But I hope you will make a contribution to that debate as a group and as individual councillors as well, because the more ideas we get on this and the more ideas particularly in terms of how we can mitigate any negative effects on this would be very welcome.

18. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR TIM McNALLY

Would the cabinet member list the developments where the council has accepted in-lieu payments instead of affordable housing since May 2010, and the value of each of the payments accepted? What proportion of these in-lieu payments has been spent on affordable housing?

RESPONSE

The developments where the council has awarded planning permission and accepted in-lieu payments for affordable housing element of the scheme, since May 2010 is listed below.

Site	Value of in-lieu payment (£)
Bankside Industrial Estate 118-122	9,000,000
Blackfriars Road 231-241	556,000
Kings Reach Tower, Stamford Street	22,435,000
New Kent Road 157-159	15,000
Land at Ewer Street	30,500
Wedge House, 32-40 Blackfriars Road	100,000
1 Tower Bridge Road, Land adjacent to Lambeth College	10,510,000
Spa Road 19	2,100,000
St. Giles Hospital, St Giles Road	100,000
Grove Vale 18-22	711,000
Total	45,557,500

The receipt of payments in each case will be based on milestones in the legal agreements triggered by stages reached in the development process. A number of these developments have yet to commence.

The funds generated as a result of these in-lieu payments are pooled into the affordable housing fund (AHF) and are ring fenced to the delivery of new affordable housing.

Approval for the use of in lieu payments is reserved to planning committee. To date, of the schemes listed above, planning committee has approved the allocation of funds from land at Ewer Street to support the provision of affordable housing on Stead Street car park site.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR TIM McNALLY

Thank you, Madam Mayor, yes. Thank you for your answer; given that this government has now allowed councils to build council housing and has allowed them to keep the receipts from right to buy, and given that the home ownership unit over the next eight years is forecasting 800 homes will be sold under right to buy and they will be forced to replace them one for one, and given the figure he quotes here in response to question 18 which represents about 250 homes adding up together to over 1050. Are the 1000 new council homes that he is committing to buy in addition to this 1050, or is he just talking about doing what he would have to have done anyway?

RESPONSE

Obviously it is not my particular brief as such, but thank you for your supplementary question. I have just confirmed with my colleague the leader that these are in addition, but I must pick you up on two things. Firstly to correct you again, it wasn't your government, it was the previous Labour government that introduced the policy for councils to build their own homes again; and secondly this fetish with right to buy that somehow this is the panacea to all housing ills across the length and breadth of the land. I mean, it's completely misguided. You do not look at the practical effects that it is going to have on residents in this borough. Yes, people see the advertisements and they think 'oh we'll get the discount on our homes' and they rush out to apply, what they don't think is the longer term financial commitments in buying their properties, whether that is through a

mortgage or whether that is through the service charges that they will receive from time to time.

To say that through the right to buy we are going to have X amount of right to buy sales and the money from that we can then invest in building these new council homes; yes that is one, but only, I think, a very small source of money. I don't think a lot of that will be realised. These are estimates at the end of the day and I think a lot of people who do apply for right to buy will find that they haven't got the financial wherewithal to follow through on those major financial commitments. And I think as a council we have not only a financial but a moral responsibility to point out to our residents the huge financial commitments that they are getting themselves into under right to buy. Because again, I think every ward councillor must have leaseholders coming to them talking about the difficulties they have in meeting their service charges, whether it is on major works or other commitments and so therefore it is important that we act responsibly when people comes to us requesting the right to buy. And I think we should leave the ideology out of it and just look at the practicalities.

19. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL BUKOLA

How many leaseholders were under or overcharged on their service charge account in 2011/12? What is the average time taken by the council to correct these errors? What action has been taken to improve leaseholder charging in 2012/13?

RESPONSE

Leaseholders' service charges by their very nature are variable charges. As such, and in line with the terms of the lease, we invoice the annual service charges on an estimated basis prior to the commencement of the financial year. Only after the end of the financial year (March), can we begin to collate and calculate the actual charges. Most modern service charges are variable, therefore they rise or fall each year in line with expenditure. The process involves gathering information from various service providers and calculating the cost of what we actually spent on providing the services to the blocks and estates. The process takes approximately six months and therefore we aim to provide the credit note or additional invoice in October following the end of the financial year.

Therefore the estimated service charge is not over or undercharged. It is an estimated charge which is based on the actual service charges for the past three years. A combination of known factors (planned preventative maintenance costs, insurance premiums) and unknown factors (gas/fuel prices, responsive repairs) all contribute to the estimated charge.

Below you will find a table which outlines that there were 3,377 leaseholders who received a credit in respect of their 2011/12 actual service charge and 8,627 leaseholders received a debit and a further invoice for their 2011/12 actual service charge. 67 leaseholders received no adjustment.

Credits and debits (excluding tenant management organisations)		
	Leaseholders	Value of credit/debits
Number of leaseholders who will be getting a credit	3,377	-495,538.38

Credits and debits (excluding tenant management organisations)		
	Leaseholders	Value of credit/debits
Number of leaseholders who will be getting debit	8,627.	2,427,055.25
No adjustment	67	0.00
Total	12,071	1,931,516.87

With respect to how many leaseholders were under or overcharged for their service charge account in 2011/12, the answer is 220. These were all leaseholders of houses who were charged an insurance premium (leases of houses require the leaseholder to insure the house). Apology letters have been issued and the service charge accounts credited, this has taken four weeks. The error, caused by leaseholders of houses not being differentiated from leaseholders of flats, has been corrected by the creation of a separate process for constructing service charges for freeholders and leaseholders of flats.

A number of initiatives have been put in place in recent years to ensure the accuracy of the annual service charges. They include a full electricity survey, working closely with the repairs section to ensure data quality monitoring, an audit of pre and post inspections, accuracy of cost recording within the housing revenue account and the implementation of the new billing and accounts receivable (BAR) system.

20. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

How can the registered nurse in the housing department effectively complete a medical and self care assessment of an individual's needs without visiting them and observing their ability to self care and the effect a medical condition has on their quality of life?

RESPONSE

The medical assessment service (MAS) conducts assessments not on health treatment and support needs alone, but considers the impact of a person's current accommodation on these needs. The applicant completes a self-assessment to explain the impact and can submit documents from health care professionals to support this.

The MAS does not assess an applicant's ability to self-care as this function is the responsibility of occupational therapy and/or social services, who carry out home visits, and MAS does liaise with these other departments as required. Assessments carried out by occupational therapists and social workers are shared with MAS if relevant. The expectation is that most clients assessed by MAS are able to live independently and the nursing officer grades the difficulty they experience in their current home according to the information provided by the client and their healthcare professional and in line with the banding in the council's lettings policy.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

Thank you madam Mayor, I would like to thank the deputy leader for his answer and I am pleased to see that he thinks that the impact of a person's current accommodation on their needs should be considered as I have actually seen very little evidence to that recently.

What I would like to ask you is would you agree with me that as many vulnerable residents live with carers who enable them to remain in the community, these carers should be considered as essential to individuals' housing needs; and would you agree that those individuals who have very limited mobility and are therefore living in accommodation that basically make them prisoners in their own home be given an above average banding, and be considered higher priority for ground floor and stairless accommodation?

RESPONSE

Thank you Councillor Capstick for that supplementary question, again, another sensible question and I hopefully give another sensible answer.

I am very pleased with what you said because as you know we have had a cross party working party with residents on our lettings review working party. You have had two representatives there at different times, and we have talked about prioritising carers within our lettings policy. The whole of that report is going to go out to consultation across the borough in the near future, and certainly my personal position is that I would like to see the role of carers recognised more formally within our housing allocation process because they are an essential need for the elderly, for the infirm, the vulnerable etc, etc. So I think we are all singing from the same hymn sheet on that; and again when that is out to consultation in the near future I hope that you and other members of your group collectively will respond to that in a positive way to ensure that it is recognised in our lettings policy.

21. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE

How many incorrect rent statements have been sent out to tenants in the last year? What is the cabinet member doing to ensure that this problem is resolved?

RESPONSE

The problem with the rent statements was caused by a software error, which resulted in a failure in the process to accurately generate the documents. At no time was the underlying data compromised, or in error. There were approximately 7,000 rent statements affected in the first run in May 2012, and 300 in June 2012 run. There have been no other errors with the statements in the last twelve months.

450,000 statements are generated each year and this failure therefore represents a 1.5% error rate. It is however, recognised that any level of error is unacceptable in view of the potential distress to tenants, and the problem was therefore escalated immediately to the director level with the software supplier.

The software problem has now been rectified and correct statements subsequently issued. In addition, the supplier has since provided to the council verification software which checks the output before despatch. Together with more robust

sign off procedures, and a review of internal verification processes, we are comfortable that errors of this nature will not occur in the future.

22. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN

How many care leavers have been evicted within three years of signing up to new tenancies in the last 12 months? What is the council doing to ensure care leavers are supported to find suitable housing?

RESPONSE

Care leavers are referred to the housing options services by children's services under our joint protocol and are granted band 2 on the housing list, which offers sufficient priority for them to make a successful bid for a home within a reasonable period.

A total of four care leavers have been evicted within three years of signing up new tenancies in the last 12 months. A further care leaver was evicted who was a licensee.

Of these, three were referred to the sustain team prior to the eviction and two of these received very intensive support and the sustain team were able to help them sustain their tenancy at the time. Sustain are keen to work with housing management to ensure that referrals are made to their team at the point of a young care leaver signing up for a property, rather than at the point of them being at risk, to improve outcomes for young people.

Any person evicted in Southwark is able to approach housing options services for advice, and in some cases we will try to assist with access to a private sector home.

23. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES

How many council homes have been a) sold, b) demolished and c) built since May 2010, broken down by ward?

RESPONSE

The figures below are for the period April 2010 to the most recent data available.

a) **Disposals**

The information for disposals is broken into two categories, right to buy disposals, and disposals of other void properties.

Right to buy	
Brunswick Park	5
Camberwell Green	1
Cathedrals	3
East Dulwich	1

Right to buy	
East Walworth	1
Faraday	2
Grange	3
Livesey	11
Newington	10
Nunhead	4
Peckham	9
Peckham Rye	1
South Camberwell	6
South Bermondsey	6
The Lane	6
Village	1
Riverside	9
Surrey Docks	2
Rotherhithe	4
Chaucer	4
College	1
Total	90

Non right to buy	
Brunswick Park	11
Camberwell Green	8
Cathedrals	2
East Dulwich	12
East Walworth	7
Faraday	4
Grange	1
Livesey	4
Newington	4
Nunhead	13
Peckham	11
Peckham Rye	9
South Camberwell	20
South Bermondsey	8
The Lane	7
Village	6

Non right to buy	
Riverside	1
Total	128

b) **Demolition**

These are the numbers of units removed from the stock for the purposes of demolition from April 2010 to date; not all the units have yet been physically demolished. All of the properties are being demolished as part of the regeneration schemes at Aylesbury Estate, Heygate Estate and Bermondsey Spa.

Faraday	111
East Walworth	43
Grange	30
Total	184

c) **New build**

These are the number of units completed to date. They do not include the properties under construction at Lindley Estate, SE15 or any of those in phase 1 of the direct delivery programme approved by cabinet on 23 October 2012.

Peckham	2
Chaucer	1
College	4
South Camberwell	3
Nunhead	3
Total	13

24. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PATRICK DIAMOND

Can he provide a breakdown by a) postcode and b) age of under-occupying social housing tenants that will have their housing benefit cut by the government from next April?

RESPONSE

The data currently available and presented within the attached spreadsheet represents the most up to date projection of the numbers of council tenants affected by the social sector size criteria from April 2013.

(Note: The housing department are continuing to re-evaluate their property sizing information and data and therefore the information presented may be subject to review).

This identifies that currently there are 3,463 council tenants who will be impacted by the size criteria changes from April 2013. Of this number the greatest impact will be seen in the 45-54 age group and the post code with the greatest number of affected claimants is SE15.

The table provides both the post code and age analysis requested.

No of unoccupied bedrooms	No of claimants
Under occupying by 1 bedroom	2,482
Under occupying by 2 bedrooms or more	981
Total	3,463

Post code analysis	
No of unoccupied bedrooms	No of claimants
SE1 ***	567
SE11 ***	38
SE14 ***	12
SE15 ***	858
SE16 ***	508
SE17 ***	606
SE19 ***	8
SE21 ***	76
SE22 ***	169
SE23 ***	19
SE24 ***	35
SE26 ***	1
SE5 ***	553
SE8 ***	12
DA14 ***	1
Total	3,463

Age analysis	
No of unoccupied bedrooms	No of claimants
18-24	53
25-34	235
35-44	583
45-54	1,586
55-61	1,006
Total	3,463

25. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES

Can she provide the latest information on the number of long-term young unemployed people in Southwark and what, if any, impact the government's work programme is having on long-term young unemployed in Southwark?

RESPONSE

The 18-24 jobseekers allowance claimant count has shown a steady decrease over the past 12 months from 2750 to 2132 in September 2012.

Longer term youth unemployment (over one year of claiming) in Southwark is a concern, having risen from 180 to 400 over the same 12 month period.

This experience of the labour market when young can also have a long-term impact on future earnings and employment.

Although the government's work programme went live in 2011, it is impossible to state with any certainty the impact it is having on long-term young unemployed in Southwark as no borough-level performance data has been published. This data is held by the Department of Work and Pensions.

On 20 November 2012 the cabinet agreed a new economic wellbeing strategy. One of the priorities in this strategy is closing the gap between Southwark's employment rate and the London average. To do this, we will need to focus on youth unemployment and in particular the needs of those who have been or are at risk of being unemployed for long periods of time. We will work with public, private and voluntary partners, including developers, to find and support people into work.

26. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ROWENNA DAVIS

How many apprentices has the council taken on this year and how many of last year's cohort have gone on to find long-term employment?

RESPONSE

This year the council has recruited directly and provided support to the "major works" contractors to employ apprentices, in line with the council's scheme. The total number of appointments and apprenticeships on programme at present is 46 comprising:

- 24 new apprenticeship appointments to the council
- three existing council apprentices progressed to a higher level apprenticeship framework within the council
- six apprentices are continuing on their learning programme (craft and technical posts, which have a longer apprenticeship learning period)
- 13 new apprenticeship appointments with "major works" contractors.

In 2011, 16 apprentices were appointed with a learning programme of 12 months duration, with the following outcomes:

- 12 people successfully completed their frameworks. Nine people secured employment with the council; two people secured employment with Serco; one person is working in a voluntary organisation in Southwark
- Three people successfully completed their apprenticeship framework and have progressed to a higher level apprenticeship
- One individual did not complete their learning framework.

27. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR WILMA NELSON

Please give the ethnic breakdown of a) people on the council housing waiting list, b) school exclusions, and c) registered business owners in the borough.

RESPONSE

The council does not ask business rate payers what their ethnicity is and as such we do not hold this information.

The council does not ask people on the housing waiting list what ethnicity they are and as such we do not hold this information.

The ethnic breakdown for school exclusions is shown in the table below and is for 2010/11.

Note: # = Figures of 10 or below are suppressed for confidentiality reasons.

Note: * = Local authority except pupil referral units and nurseries.

Ethnicity	Number of children*	% of total school population	Fixed Term exclusions	% of school population	Permanent exclusions instances	% of school population
Bangladeshi	977	2.7%	#	#	#	#
Indian	270	0.7%	#	#	0	0.00%
Pakistani	190	0.5%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Any Other Asian	582	1.6%	#	#	0	0.00%
Black Caribbean	3872	10.6%	185	4.78%	13	0.34%
Black African	10587	29.1%	244	2.30%	11	0.10%
Any Other Black	2137	5.9%	53	2.48%	#	#
Chinese	427	1.2%	#	#	0	0.00%
White & Black Caribbean	1263	3.5%	32	2.53%	#	#
White & Black African	522	1.4%	#	#	0	0.00%

Ethnicity	Number of children*	% of total school population	Fixed Term exclusions	% of school population	Permanent exclusions instances	% of school population
White & Asian	247	0.7%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Any Other Mixed	1280	3.5%	30	2.34%	0	0.00%
White British	8119	22.3%	134	1.65%	17	0.21%
White Irish	247	0.7%	#	#	0	0.00%
Gypsy / Roma	16	0.0%	#	#	0	0.00%
Traveller of Irish heritage	44	0.1%	#	#	0	0.00%
Any Other White	2575	7.1%	17	0.66%	#	#
Any Other Ethnic	2155	5.9%	14	0.65%	#	#
Unknown	929	2.5%	28	3.01%	#	#
All	36439	100.0%	763	2.09%	57	0.16%

Sources: Capita One, local authority central database, School Census January 2011

28. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR RENATA HAMVAS

A campaign by residents in my ward has succeeded in getting the much loved Ivy House pub placed on the community asset register. Given that Southwark is the first council in the country to have something placed on its community asset register, will she join me in congratulating the campaigners?

RESPONSE

Yes. The whole point of the asset register is that it is led by the community and the campaigners have done an excellent job in gathering the required signatures. The fact that we are the first council to register a community asset demonstrates our genuine commitment to localism and supporting our communities.

29. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

How much has the council spent on plastic cups in each of the last three years? How many plastic cups were bought in each of the last three years? How much has the council spent on sugar and milk sachets in each of the last three years?

RESPONSE

The quantities and costs set out below are for the vended hot drinks service provided and the provision of plastic cups for drinking water in Tooley Street.

	Number of cups (,000s)	Cost of cups (£)	Cost of sugar sachets (£)	Cost of milk sachets (£)
2009/10	124	2,232	2,507	7,337
2010/11	311	5,598	2,982	7,915
2011/12	326	5,868	4,300	12,109

The phased occupation of Tooley Street took place in 2009/10 with full occupancy achieved in the latter part of the year. The vending machines were phased in over the course of the occupation programme with the related consumption of consumables as reflected in the 2009/10 costs in the table above.

The cost of milk in 2009/10 was significantly high in relation to the lower staff numbers due to the initial use of milk sticks which had a high unit cost. The change to milk pots brought a significant saving which is reflected in the 2010/11 and 2011/12 figures.

There was a similar cost issue with sugar in 2009/10. This related to a 20% increase in sugar prices and a lack of staff awareness that sugar could be delivered directly through the vending machines. Through raising staff awareness and having no further major sugar price increases to date the costs have come into line in the subsequent years.

The cost of sugar/milk increased in 2010/11 due to the move to fair trade products in line with the council's adoption of 'Fair Trade' status.

The higher sugar/milk costs in 2011/12 are largely attributable to the significant increase in the density of occupation within the building and the growing use of the building over extended opening hours for civic and other council related functions. Additionally the number of visitors to the building on a daily basis has increased and will continue to increase as the council maximises its use of Tooley Street.

The 2012/13 figures as monitored are anticipated to be in line with 2011/12 for plastic cups, sugar and milk.

Quantities and costs prior to 2009/10 are unknown as the services were managed departmentally across multiple sites through a variety of individual contract and service arrangements. The current costs are likely to be no higher than the overall pre 2009/10 costs.

The new Tooley Street facilities management contract will deliver savings over our current costs for the overall vending services provided in Tooley Street.

The cups provided are fully recyclable and are sustainably sound. I have been advised that the costs of the cups are less than the energy and associated costs required to wash in excess of 1,000 china cups on a daily basis.

Staff may of course use their own cups and drinking water bottles and are encouraged to use only one plastic cup each working day. This rate of usage is supported by the 2011/12 data which show that 191 cups were used by each member of staff based on daily attendance per annum.

The provision of milk and sugar in sachet form is a key element of the pest control regime in Tooley Street and avoids over 2,000 staff keeping individual supplies of milk and sugar in both the kitchen areas and lockers.

30. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

How much has been spent in each of the last three years on office chairs and desks? How many desks are available at Tooley Street and what is the current rate of usage?

RESPONSE

Office chairs and desks

The expenditure on office chairs and desks over the last three years is set out in the table below:

	Tooley Street £ revenue	Operational Estate £ revenue	Queens Road 1 £ capital	Talfourd Place £ capital	Curlew House £ capital
2010/11	0	13,183	0	0	0
2011/12	0	3,061	0	10,296	50,133
2012/13	2,850	6,003	183,604	0	0

The main fit out of Tooley Street was completed in 2009/10. The expenditure for Tooley Street in 2012/13 was for additional desking to facilitate the drive to maximise the utilisation of the building supporting the overall disposal programme and associated savings.

The operational estate expenditure has been departmentally driven to accommodate operational service changes around the centrally driven accommodation programme and reflects the resultant churn and rationalisation of accommodation following the decant of staff to Tooley Street and building decommissioning. The higher cost in 2010/11 is attributable to the level of these activities in that year. These costs also include individual business unit expenditure on specialist chairs resulting from display screen equipment and Disability Discrimination Act assessment recommendations for individual members of staff. The first port of call for office furniture requirements continues to be the managed stock of equipment from the decommissioning programme.

The residual stocks of office furniture resulting from the decommissioning programme have been effectively managed with reusable and compliant items being fed back into the estate with any surplus offered and distributed to the voluntary sector, schools and community groups. Unusable and non compliant equipment has been disposed of through a responsible, sustainable process.

The fit out capital expenditure for 2011/12 was primarily for Talfourd Place and Curlew Street and the 2012/13 capital expenditure is for Queens Road 1. The furniture requirements for East Dulwich Road and Sandgate Street were met from our managed stocks of reusable equipment at no cost.

Available desks and usage at Tooley Street

Excluding offices, the members' area and the cabinet suite there are currently 1,812 desks available in Tooley Street.

NHS Southwark has a licence to occupy 158 of these workstations leaving 1,654 for council use.

The current average desk to staff ratio in the building is 8:10 (10 staff utilising eight desks). Prior to the move to Tooley Street the ratio was in excess of 10:10, i.e. there were more desks than numbers of staff in many of our office buildings.

Utilisation rates in Tooley Street vary according to the time of year (e.g. school holiday periods usually lead to lower levels of desk use and a Friday is generally quieter than other weekdays).

During a typical weekday, desk use rates are in the region of 90% to 93%. This compares very favourably to the average desk utilisation of 42% before the move to Tooley Street.

31. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR ROBIN CROOKSHANK HILTON

Further to the ongoing discussions surrounding the East Dulwich police station closure and the upcoming Dulwich supplementary planning document, can the cabinet member for finance, resources and community safety supply us with a list of all council owned, non-residential properties in East Dulwich, Village, College and Peckham Rye wards?

RESPONSE

A spreadsheet listing all council owned, non-residential properties in East Dulwich, Village, College and Peckham Rye wards has been supplied to you. I am happy to circulate this to other members on request.

32. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL MITCHELL

One year on from the closure of the Holmhurst Day Centre in Burbage Road, the part previously occupied by the council appears to stand empty. Is the apparent continued occupation of the rest of the building by the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust making things difficult for the council? What plans does the council have for this underused resource?

RESPONSE

Holmhurst is still partially occupied by South London and Maudsley NHS Trust (SLaM) under formal lease arrangements. Officers have tried for some time to engage with SLaM to establish their future plans but these remain uncertain. SLaM's leases come to an end next year but they would have rights to renew.

The council would ideally like to see this property returned to residential use with some appropriate development to the rear on the site of the extension. This would be subject to planning consent, taking account of the local conservation area and the Dulwich Estate scheme of management although the council owns the freehold of the site. Conversion is obviously not possible while the upper floors remain leased to SLaM.

If it continues to be impossible to negotiate SLaM's exit, the council will seek interim uses of the former day centre area. Ongoing service reviews are considering whether the property could be retained and used for delivery of other functions.

33. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR NEIL COYLE

Southwark Primary Care Trust held section 106 funding for the provision of health services surrounding new developments. Can the cabinet member explain who now holds that funding and how the resource can be accessed to ensure local health needs are met?

RESPONSE

Southwark Council secures section 106 contributions from many major planning applications by developers, towards extra primary health care provision.

The contributions are paid to and held by Southwark, for expenditure on primary health care in conjunction with the providers of that service, the primary care trust/ GP/commissioning groups.

The contributions legally can only go towards provision that the residents of the development can access and only for primary health care.

Ideas for what to spend the money on can come directly from the providers, NHS South East London, Southwark Council or even through the project bank.

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

What is the number of care leavers aged 18-21 for which the council is a corporate parent? What specific steps does the council take to fulfil its corporate parenting role for these care leavers? What percentage of these care leavers is the council in contact with on a regular basis?

RESPONSE

The number of care leavers aged 18-21 for which the council is a corporate parent is 351. From our records we estimate that we are in regular contact with at least 80% of these young people.

Our responsibility towards these young people is to support their journey through early adulthood. This is particularly in relation to finding and sustaining suitable accommodation as well as help to secure education and training opportunities. This support includes practical, emotional and financial assistance.

Some young people stay in their foster placements beyond 18 to complete courses or due to their vulnerability.

Care leavers with disabilities receive a continuing service from our transitions team around their physical and health needs.

The adolescent and after care service offer group work sessions on issues such as budgeting, practical living skills, sexual health and dealing with violent and difficult situations. They also offer a drop in for any care leavers who wish to call in. Each care leaver has a personal advisor who is a key point of contact between the young person and the authority and through them much of the above support is organised and delivered.

35. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN

How many enforcement notices and/or penalty charge notices (PCNs) have been issued to residents and businesses for contaminating recycling or incorrectly recycling since June 2010?

RESPONSE

PCNs are issued in relation to parking matters. We assume Councillor Rajan is referring to Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) which are issued for enforcement issues other than parking.

Since 2010 no FPNs have been issued by the council for recycling offences. We have only ever issued one FPN to a resident as a result of a failure to recycle (in 2007) and have never sought to use enforcement powers to tackle problems with contamination in recycling.

The focus of our work with residents on recycling is positive; emphasising how easy it is to recycle in Southwark and why it is so good for the environment and the borough. Successful enforcement action is very resource-intensive because of the level of evidence gathering required for successful prosecution. Instead of using our resources in this way, and because of the importance of collecting non-contaminated recycling materials, we have run a campaign this year focussing on contamination, with the crews reporting problems and recycling support officers visiting places where issues are found. Problems are solved by working with residents and making sure everyone has the information and configuration of bins that they need. It is also worth noting that the council's powers in relation to household waste enforcement are changing, with the value of the associated fines being reduced for example, so it is even more important that we focus on making the service easy to use and on engaging with residents.

Due to a decision taken in 2008 by the then executive member for environment, the trade waste service was sold off to a private company. Southwark Council retains enforcement powers with regards to waste collection from businesses. This includes the private sector that supplies a collection service in Southwark. The council's environmental enforcement team carry out checks on trade waste licenses to ensure business are compliant with the legislation.

36. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

How many potholes have been reported in each of the last three financial years, broken down by ward? What were the average time and the longest time to repair potholes in each of those years?

RESPONSE

Potholes are reported from a range of sources including members of the public, councillors, emergency services, and utility contractors/developers undertaking highway works. In every case, the location is inspected and repair works programmed if the dimensions of the identified pothole exceed set borough criteria. If the dimensions do not exceed the criteria, then no further action is taken other than to inform the party that made the report.

The vast majority of potholes are identified as a result of the regular regime of highway inspections where roads are checked on a one, three or six month frequency dependent on classification. Again, potholes are only identified and repair works undertaken if the dimensions exceed the set criteria. All other non actionable potholes are not recorded by the highway inspectors.

The following table identifies the number of works orders issued for road repairs for the past three years in each ward:

WARD	2010-11			2011-12			2012-13		
	1 hr	24 hr	Total	1 hr	24 hr	Total	1 hr	24 hr	Total
Brunswick Park	1	155	156	8	97	105	3	62	65
Camberwell Green	8	190	198	20	167	187	11	97	108
Cathedral	12	77	89	6	121	127	19	92	111
Chaucer	10	23	33	4	33	37	4	25	29
College	15	142	157	3	132	135	18	64	82
East Dulwich	13	172	185	16	171	187	16	66	82
East Walworth	8	46	54	7	43	50	0	30	30
Faraday	13	59	72	12	79	91	9	69	78
Grange	5	149	154	8	132	140	7	93	100
Livesey	11	169	180	12	178	190	12	90	102
Newington	22	128	150	22	158	180	11	67	78
Nunhead	12	93	105	9	106	115	4	58	62
Peckham	2	130	132	5	120	125	4	36	40
Peckham Rye	8	142	150	4	117	121	8	61	69
Riverside	6	142	148	4	86	90	3	54	57
Rotherhithe	8	122	130	6	134	140	6	87	93
South Bermondsey	17	103	120	16	125	141	7	93	100
South Camberwell	8	129	137	12	105	117	5	40	45
Surrey Docks	8	53	61	6	105	111	1	62	63

WARD	2010-11			2011-12			2012-13		
	1 hr	24 hr	Total	1 hr	24 hr	Total	1 hr	24 hr	Total
The Lane	20	214	234	15	168	183	10	84	94
Village	9	154	163	7	118	125	5	55	60
TOTAL			2808			2697			1548

The works orders include for all actionable road defects but are predominantly associated with potholes.

With respect to the query on pothole repair response times, there are KPI's for both one hour and 24 hour works orders. For April to September 2012, our contractor completed 99.75% of all works orders within the required limits.

The job types are broken down into the component parts of the repair work according to the type of repair. However to determine if a job is related to a pothole repair would require a check of each individual works order.

A check of the confirm inquiry system determined the following number of customer reports of carriageway potholes (as opposed to any other road or pavement defect):

2010-2011	730
2011-2012	384
2012-current	250

The reports of potholes ranged from minor depressions to carriageway collapses.

Every one of the above would have been checked to determine if the identified pothole required remedial work.

37. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBA BLANGO

Why is the target increase in the number of adults receiving cycle training in 2012/13 lower than the target increase for 2011/12? How many adults have been provided with cycle training this year to date and what is the cost to the council per person trained?

RESPONSE

As the overall budget funded by Transport for London has been reduced from £163,000 to £156,000, the target number of adults receiving cycling training has had to be reduced.

The council continues to offer free cyclist training to anyone that lives, works or is educated in the borough with around 900 children and 600 adults receiving training each year. Up to the end of September this year 542 adults have received cyclist training, with a cost of £48 or £96 per person depending on whether they required one or two training sessions to reach the required Bikeability standard.

38. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

What practical steps have been taken to promote the Bakerloo line being extended to Camberwell and beyond? The cabinet member recently talked publicly about the Cross River Tram (which was never placed in Ken Livingstone's funded projects and was canned by Boris Johnson when originally elected over four years ago). Where does he imagine the £1.5 billion required to fund this project would come from?

RESPONSE

The leader of the council and Mayor of Lewisham have continued to lobby the Mayor of London to bring the benefits of the Bakerloo line to the south of the borough, including recently writing to the Mayor of London to seek his support for further preparatory work on the proposed extension of the Bakerloo line south through Southwark and Lewisham.

We hope that the Mayor of London will recognise the range of benefits an extension to the Bakerloo line would deliver in the south of the borough: supporting regeneration in a borough which is projected to see high levels of growth over the next 18 years; improving capacity along parallel corridors such as the Jubilee line in to London Bridge station; reducing journey times to central London for those living in the south east; improving transport choices for those currently living with poor public transport accessibility; and, enhancing opportunities for those living in areas of high deprivation.

Southwark and Lewisham officers have been working with Transport for London to identify key constraints and/or opportunities for a Bakerloo line extension and are also continuing to work on identifying viable plans in light of current resistance by Bromley Council to Hayes being included in the extension.

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

How many ash trees are there in public spaces in the borough? What is the council doing to assess the prevalence of the deadly fungus Chalara fraxinea (ash dieback) which has recently infected ash trees throughout Europe? How many infected trees has the council already identified?

RESPONSE

In Southwark there are approximately 7,000 ash trees with different species and cultivars located across highways, housing and parks. However half of these are thought to be of a species that has not been identified as a problem.

As of 20 November there has been no verified infection of Chalara in greater London or Southwark. Nevertheless, we are taking this threat very seriously and are about to commence a survey of all the ash tree across the borough, starting with surveying in detail all newly planted ash trees to identify any symptoms of ash die back. We are adhering to the guidelines set out by the Forestry Commission and the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs and also posting advice for the general public on the council website.

40. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY

Will the cabinet member confirm that an application has been made to the Department for Transport for a "STOP" sign to be placed in Gallery Road near the junction with the Dulwich Village roundabout, and whether he has an indication of the timetable for the likely response?

RESPONSE

An authorisation request was submitted to the Department for Transport in the week ending 16 November 2012. We anticipate a response by 14 December 2012.

41. QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF PLANNING COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON

Following an investigation into a serious failure in procedure in recording requests for planning enforcement by residents in relation to breaches of planning conditions in my ward, it has come to light that there are no details of enforcement investigations on the council website and the only way to establish whether an investigation is taking place is to view the register at the Walworth One Stop Shop. Neither have the reporting arrangements for enforcement and planning applications and appeals to community councils yet been agreed.

Given that a number of local authorities already have information on "live" enforcement investigations available on their websites, and if the chair is not aware of these shortcomings, can he undertake to ensuring arrangements for establishing an online register, reporting back and further improving transparency are put in place in the next six months at the latest?

RESPONSE

Yes.