

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY**

**(ORDINARY MEETING)**

**WEDNESDAY 10 JULY 2013**

**QUESTIONS ON REPORTS**

**ITEM 7.1: FAIRER FUTURE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2012/13**

**1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ROSIE SHIMELL**

The council has an objective to increase the percentage of children getting one of their preferences for a primary school. Why does the council not have a similar objective for secondary school children given that its performance in offering children their first preference is among the worst in the country?

**RESPONSE**

The highest ever number of Southwark secondary school pupils have received a place in one of their preferred choices for September 2013, with 93 per cent of pupils offered a place in one of their six preferred schools. Of these, 85 per cent received a place in one of their top three choices with 58.7 per cent getting their top choice.

Once again, all 2,500 pupils that applied have been allocated a school place.

Though primary preference is a priority in terms of children living less than two miles from their primary school, at secondary school age distance becomes a less critical issue for many families with older children who are better able to travel and cover longer journeys.

Even where a target is included within the council plan to increase the proportion of pupils obtaining their preference of secondary school, it would be extremely difficult to directly influence this measure in the short term. It is not possible for the council to expand oversubscribed secondary schools, as no secondary schools are controlled by the local authority. This would make the issue of target setting and performance management of the target a risk area.

It should also be noted in this context that many children's secondary choices are for out of borough schools, and, many out of borough children also apply for Southwark schools, further reducing local authority influence on this measure.

**2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE**

Can the Leader provide a breakdown of the assessment of public satisfaction with leisure centres by leisure centre and by satisfaction rating? How many users were surveyed at each of the leisure centres?

## RESPONSE

Public satisfaction with the borough's leisure centres is measured through the Council's reputation tracker survey by asking the people who were surveyed who said that they were users of our leisure centres.

The tracker survey does not ask for the specific facilities used, so there is no means of splitting results in this way

### 3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR PODDY CLARK

How many residents from each community council area were sent satisfaction surveys in 2012/13? What were the criteria for selecting the residents to be surveyed? What satisfaction results were recorded in each community council area?

## RESPONSE

The numbers sent questionnaires were as follows:

Bermondsey & Rotherhithe	550
Borough Bankside & Walworth	900
Peckham & Nunhead	550
Camberwell	236
Dulwich	470

Questionnaires were sent to all residents who had given council officers their contact details in each community council area and consented to us sending them further information about community councils. There was no selection applied to this; they all received a copy.

Community council	Number of responses
Camberwell	34
Borough, Bankside and Walworth	39
Dulwich	51
Peckham and Nunhead	24
Bermondsey and Rotherhithe	42

## Community council 2012-13 Survey Summary

<b>Q2. Please tell us how much you think the Community Councils are fulfilling the following roles:</b>	<b>Extent of agreement</b>	<b>C %</b>	<b>BBW %</b>	<b>D %</b>	<b>PN %</b>	<b>BR %</b>
To promote the involvement of local people in the democratic process and to bring decision making closer to local people	<b>Definitely</b>	44%	15%	41%	25%	57%
	<b>Mainly</b>	18%	44%	35%	54%	19%
	<b>A little</b>	15%	26%	22%	21%	14%
	<b>Not at all</b>	18%	5%	0%	0%	10%
	<b>No response</b>	6%	10%	2%	0%	0%
To take decisions about local matters e.g. the cleaner, greener, safer capital and revenue programmes, community council fund, traffic management and community project banks.	<b>Definitely</b>	32%	31%	41%	54%	55%
	<b>Mainly</b>	32%	31%	35%	42%	26%
	<b>A little</b>	21%	18%	16%	4%	14%
	<b>Not at all</b>	9%	5%	6%	0%	5%
	<b>No response</b>	6%	15%	2%	0%	0%
To act as a formal consultation mechanism on council wide policies and strategies.	<b>Definitely</b>	21%	28%	29%	33%	31%
	<b>Mainly</b>	35%	21%	47%	29%	36%
	<b>A little</b>	21%	28%	22%	33%	19%
	<b>Not at all</b>	15%	10%	2%	4%	14%
	<b>No response</b>	9%	13%	0%	0%	0%
To be a focal point for discussion and consultation on matters that affect the area.	<b>Definitely</b>	21%	26%	45%	42%	45%
	<b>Mainly</b>	35%	23%	39%	38%	29%
	<b>A little</b>	21%	31%	10%	17%	14%
	<b>Not at all</b>	15%	8%	4%	4%	12%
	<b>No response</b>	9%	13%	2%	0%	0%
<b>Q3. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:</b>	<b>Extent of agreement</b>	<b>C %</b>	<b>BBW %</b>	<b>D %</b>	<b>PN %</b>	<b>BR %</b>
I feel that, through the Community Council, I am able to influence decisions made about my area	<b>Definitely</b>	11.76%	10%	12%	8%	26%
	<b>Mainly</b>	8.82%	18%	16%	33%	21%
	<b>A little</b>	38.2%	36%	57%	38%	29%
	<b>Not at all</b>	32.35%	21%	14%	8%	14%
	<b>No response</b>	8.82%	15%	2%	13%	10%
The Community Council allows me to learn more about my area	<b>Definitely</b>	38.2%	31%	45%	42%	60%

	<b>Mainly</b>	23.5%	31%	29%	42%	17%
	<b>A little</b>	29.4%	26%	20%	4%	7%
	<b>Not at all</b>	2.94%	0%	2%	0%	7%
	<b>No response</b>	5.88%	13%	4%	13%	10%
The Community Council allows me to learn more about what the council is doing in my area	<b>Definitely</b>	29.4%	28%	41%	42%	50%
	<b>Mainly</b>	26.47%	44%	35%	38%	17%
	<b>A little</b>	29.4%	13%	18%	13%	19%
	<b>Not at all</b>	8.82%	0%	2%	0%	5%
The Community Council helps the local area to be a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	<b>No response</b>	5.88%	15%	4%	8%	10%
	<b>Definitely</b>	11.76%	18%	14%	21%	21%
	<b>Mainly</b>	29.4%	26%	25%	38%	29%
	<b>A little</b>	26.47%	33%	45%	29%	26%
	<b>Not at all</b>	23.5%	3%	10%	4%	12%
	<b>No response</b>	8.82	21%	6%	8%	12%
	<b>Q4. Please indicate what you most value about Community Councils by ticking below as appropriate:</b>	<b>C %</b>	<b>BBW %</b>	<b>D %</b>	<b>PN %</b>	<b>BR %</b>
	<b>Finding out what happens in my area</b>	65%	56%	73%	79%	74%
<b>Contact with councillors</b>	68%	44%	63%	54%	45%	
<b>Contact with officers</b>	38%	28%	35%	46%	26%	
<b>Contact with other residents</b>	47%	41%	24%	25%	40%	
<b>Influencing decisions</b>	24%	33%	39%	25%	24%	
<b>Consultations</b>	32%	36%	25%	29%	12%	

**4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL BUKOLA**

Why did the 2012/13 target for warm, dry and safe change from the £68m predicted in the council's annual performance report in 2011/12 to £61.8m in the latest council's annual performance report?

**RESPONSE**

The £68 million from the council plan annual performance report 2011/12 was a provisional target (provisional as 2011/12 spend was being finalised). The target was set at £63 million (£61.8 million excluding Leathermarket).

**5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR WILMA NELSON**

How many complaints have been received about leaseholder billing in 2012/13?

**RESPONSE**

It can be challenging to categorise complaints as leaseholders will often complain about several matters, which may be unrelated. However of the 195 complaints received by Specialist Housing Services, around 126 were about billing. The Revenue & Income and Service Charge Construction teams are responsible for major works and service charges and this is the main subject of the complaints they receive, often combined with service delivery issues.

<b>Specialist Housing Services</b>	<b>Apr '12</b>	<b>May '12</b>	<b>Jun '12</b>	<b>Jul '12</b>	<b>Aug '12</b>	<b>Sep '12</b>	<b>Oct '12</b>	<b>Nov '12</b>	<b>Dec '12</b>	<b>Jan '13</b>	<b>Feb '13</b>	<b>Mar '13</b>	<b>Total</b>
Home Ownership & TMI	1	1						1			1	3	7
Revenue & Income	13	11	2	5	8	2	23	14	12	19	7	9	125
Sales and Acquisitions			1	1	2		1					2	7
Service Charge Construction	5	3	4	5	3	3	6	6	3	4	2	4	48
Tenant Management Initiatives	1	2	1	1	1						1	1	8
	20	17	8	12	14	5	30	21	15	23	11	19	195

**6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR TIM MCNALLY**

Why has the council reduced the target for the number of empty private homes brought back into use from 135 in 2012/13 to 100 in 2013/14?

**RESPONSE**

The cost of doing extensive improvements to private empty homes is becoming too expensive for independent freeholders to do.

Whilst the council provides grants, there is a ceiling on the maximum amount that an owner can apply for, and with the rises in building materials and associated charges outstripping the grants available.

As a result it is proving much harder to bring empty homes back into serviceable use. As a result the target was reduced to a more realistic level to reflect these pressures

**7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI**

Please provide a full breakdown of results from the council's reputation tracker on satisfaction among residents regarding ability to influence decisions affecting their local area.

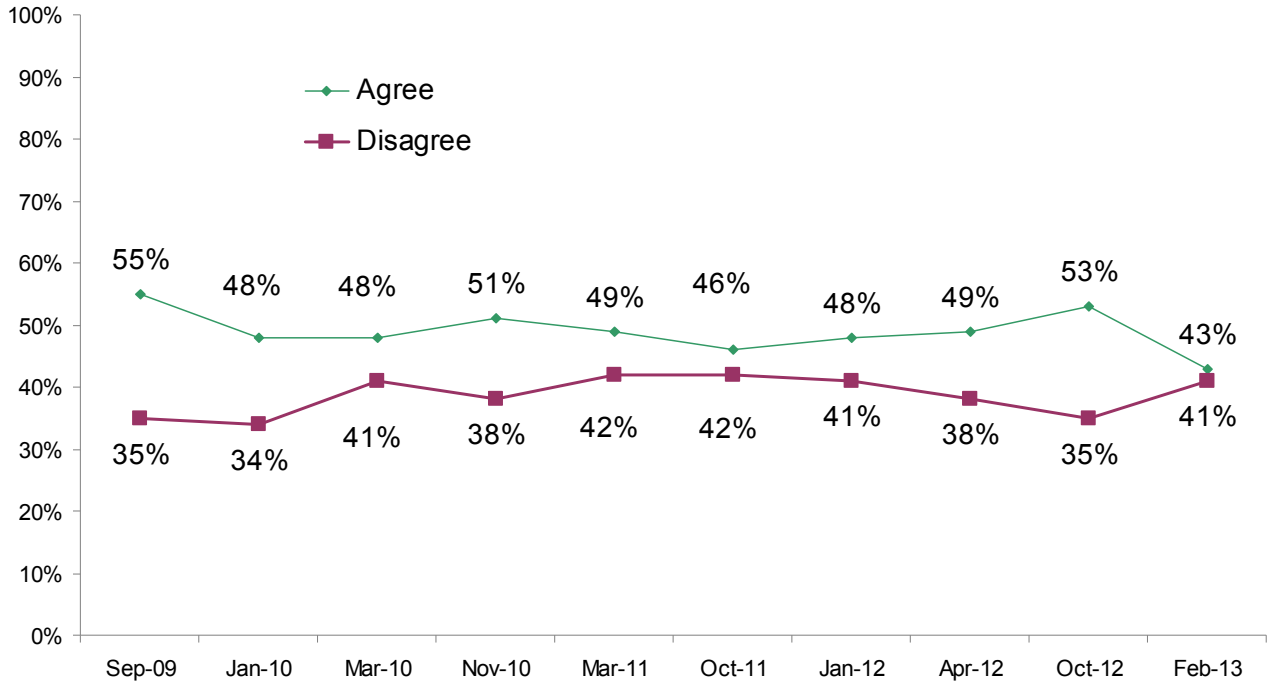
**RESPONSE**

The graph below shows those who agree or disagree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area.

As the graph shows, the proportion of residents agreeing that they can influence decisions has been broadly consistent over time at around the 50% mark. The most recent result in February 2013 saw a lower proportion of residents agreeing and so we are awaiting the next tracker result to see if this is part of a new pattern or a one off set against the overall trend.

It is possible that residents' views may have been influenced by the headline changes to welfare that were prevalent in the media at the time of the survey – namely those about or affecting: bedroom tax, council tax benefit passing to local control, the scrapping of Disability Living Allowance and the welfare benefit cap

# Agreement that can influence decisions affecting local area



**Question:** Q4. Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?

**Source:** c.400 Southwark residents, aged 16 +, interviewed face to face, between September 2009 – February 2013