

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 10 JULY 2013

QUESTIONS ON REPORTS

ITEM 8.3: CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW 2013/14

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

Will the Leader guarantee that members' arrangements to visit front-line services will not be obstructed by chief officers?

RESPONSE

There are no plans to prevent members visiting front line services. The rules around these are clearly set out in the member and officer protocol.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

Thank you Mr Mayor, yes I do and thank you to the leader for his answer.

I would like to ask the leader of the council why on earth this change is being made then?

RESPONSE

I want to thank Councillor Al-Samerai for the supplemental question.

I think it is important, particularly at the time when we have reducing staff dealing with increasing work loads because of government cuts, that councillors – well it is the truth of the matter, you might not like it and I think it is a funny matter and absolute hysterics that we have had to find £28.3 million this year, the fact that we are going to have to find over £20 million in the next year; the fact that we have had to find savings of £80 to £90 million over the last four years is not a laughing matter on this side of the chamber and it is not a laughing matter for the residents of our borough.

So I don't know why Councillor Al-Samerai finds this hysterical that I should raise this as an issue. I will answer the question Councillor Bukola in good time, and if it takes more than fifteen minutes you can wait and listen to it.

But I am going to give you an answer, and the answer, Councillor Bukola and Councillor Al-Samerai, is that the time of increasing work loads for front line staff it is important that councillors do not just simply turn up without chief officers knowing, because it can be disruptive to the work that is going on, on the front line and I am delighted that councillors do want to visit the front line. I think it is important that people should do. But I don't think it is an unnecessary burden that

we should ask that chief officers should be advised when a councillor is visiting, I do not think that it is an unreasonable request at this time at all and I think it is really for her to justify why she thinks that it is an unreasonable request this time.