

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY**  
**(ORDINARY)**  
**WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2013**  
**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

**1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY**

In the light of the recent report in "Southwark News" of the leader's views on pension fund investment, would the leader advise how many complaints have been received to date on the investment policy from our pension scheme members; and would he set out his view on whether the cost of any survey of scheme members should be met from the pension fund or from the general fund?

**RESPONSE**

The council, as the administering body for the pension fund, has a duty to ensure that pension fund is able to meet its commitment to those who have paid in through their working life. This has to be our primary objective as any shortfall would need to be met through the council's general fund which would impact on the services which the council provide and increase tax to the borough's residents.

Alongside this, the council also has a broader role and as part of this should consider how it acts ethically with the money it has. The challenge is how to effectively balance the two: get the rate of return required to pay the pensions, and ensure that money is being invested as ethically as possible. I welcome the cross party decision to consider this as part of the pensions advisory panel.

As I highlighted in my interview with Southwark News, there is a challenge to identify what we include under the heading "ethical investments". My interview was the start of this conversation but it is not as simple as picking off a couple of industries and banning investments in them. I believe it would be a mistake to rush something through without considering all the implications – that is why I propose a consultation as part of the work we are doing.

In response to your specific question: no complaints or enquiries from individual scheme members have been received by officers relating to the investments contained in the pension fund. Expenditure on fund matters would normally be charged to the fund unless it is deemed to relate more to service issues. Once the nature of any survey is established, we would look at how it should best be funded.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY**

Yes I do Mr Mayor, thank you very much. Thank you leader; would you disseminate more widely your wise words as reported in Southwark News about the ethical problem of undermining the organisations which supply our defence forces, as an illustration of the over-simplistic approach, which can sadly creep into this interesting debate?

## **RESPONSE**

I don't know what you are suggesting Councillor Eckersley; whether I should put my words on a website, or something, so that people can read and understand.

I think this – I thank you for your question and for your supplemental question. This is a really difficult issue, actually, once you start scratching the surface. You think you have identified a very clear investment that you would not want to pursue for ethical reasons but then you say, well if I am going to not invest in that one (and) I am not going to invest in the following and you can go down a very long list and find lots of things that you might not want to invest in.

So certainly I think it is not a simple nor an easy debate, or an easy one to resolve and that is why I have said that we need to have a wider consultation really and some thinking about how we take this forward. I think it also has to be seen in the context of the time when certainly London councils and local government are being placed under some pressure by central government to bring pension funds together. We have got 33 different pension funds currently operating in London and there is a very good argument that people can put forward as to why you don't want 33 but you want one or two covering all of London. There are ups and downs, pros and cons with that and I know you will be aware of those arguments but there is certainly a debate going on. Now, if Southwark adopted an ethical investment policy for our pension fund, I don't suppose for a minute we could very easily take it in to a combined pension fund and think that it would be adopted and accepted by all other 32 boroughs who would be part of that larger pension fund.

So there are difficulties which I can see coming over the horizon, even if we decided to adopt an ethical investment policy at a local level here in Southwark. It is a difficult debate and an interesting debate; one we should definitely have but there is no easy solution.

## **2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR NEIL COYLE**

What response has the leader of the council had from the House of Commons Standards Committee on his complaint against Simon Hughes for breaches of the Parliamentary Code of Conduct?

## **RESPONSE**

The Commissioner has reported on the complaint I made about the conduct of Right Honourable Simon Hughes MP and now Mr Hughes has been forced to apologise to the House of Commons for failing to declare over £30,000 in donations over a period of six years. The standards committee published a damning report highlighting that Mr Hughes accepted party donations from companies and then spoke about them in Parliament, while failing to declare the donations. The standards committee noted that while one breach on its own could have been easily dealt with, in Mr Hughes' case months of investigation were needed because of the number of breaches, the large value of the donations and allegations of paid advocacy.

The Liberal Democrat MP's conduct is not only embarrassing; it also falls well short of the standards people in Southwark would expect from their MP. I made this complaint to the Parliamentary Commissioner on Standards to shine a light on what the Liberal Democrat MP was doing and I welcome the decision that he breached the rules and had to apologise to the House of Commons.

I am disappointed that Liberal Democrat councillors have chosen to remain silent on this issue.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR NEIL COYLE**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I do have a supplementary question and would like to thank the leader for his response.

Does the leader share the concern of the House of Commons standards commissioner that a member of Mr Hughes' seniority and experience should have breached the parliamentary code over such a long period and does the leader agree that Southwark Liberal Democrats should consider returning the funding to avoid any suggestion of impropriety especially, especially – you laugh – but especially, given the number of people who are already approaching me for help, who can't get an appointment to see their current MP?

### **RESPONSE**

Well I want to thank Councillor Coyle for his supplemental question. I know that when he is MP for Bermondsey and Old Southwark, after May 2015, people will have no difficulty getting in touch with him and raising their concerns with him but this is a very serious issue. It is why I brought it to the attention of the parliamentary standards commissioner and why the parliamentary commissioner and the standards committee have made the findings which they have actually. And I think it bears reading, actually, the judgement which was handed down because whilst there might not have been some technical breaches of some particular rules, I think the committee found it extremely surprising that Simon Hughes had done what he had done in failing to make declarations, particularly before he spoke in committee in parliament.

So I don't think it represents the current MP for Bermondsey's finest hour at all and I do think the Liberal Democrats should consider what they do with the funding they have received but of course, as a party nationally, they have a record of taking funding from other sources and not paying (it) back even in the most dodgy circumstances. **I am careful, Councillor Bukola.**

### **3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE**

What steps are the council taking to regenerate and revitalise the Old Kent Road?

### **RESPONSE**

I want the Old Kent Road to be at the heart of the borough's plans and aspirations for the future. For too long, the Old Kent Road has missed out on the opportunities afforded to other parts of the borough. The previous administration ignored the needs of the Old Kent Road and I am determined that that will change.

The council is reviewing the Southwark Plan and core strategy to prepare a new Southwark Plan. This will set out a regeneration strategy for the next 15 years and ensure that Southwark is being developed positively to regenerate, enhance and protect where needed. I want Old Kent Road to be a major part of that.

This summer, the council organised a series of walkabouts involving local residents to hear about their views of the area. This will be followed up with a consultation event early in the new year which is part of the new Southwark Plan consultation, but with a specific focus on the Old Kent Road and issues associated with health of the high street. This is also an opportunity for more detailed feedback on business, transport, housing and other issues that will enable feedback on the most appropriate way forward. In conjunction with this, the council is also starting to gather evidence which will inform the new Southwark Plan and has commissioned a study of warehousing and industrial land across the borough. This study is ongoing and is aiming to find out more about the quality of industrial and warehousing premises, the businesses which are located in our preferred industrial locations, including the Old Kent Road, and the needs of those businesses. This study will be published in the new year and will feed into a wider review of employment land planning policies that will take place as part of preparing the new Southwark Plan.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE**

Thank you Mr Mayor and thank you for the response councillor. The council does not own a lot of land along the Old Kent Road but it does own the site at the junction of Rotherhithe New Road. There was a scheme to build the bail hostel there. You may remember a campaign (of which the local councillors were a part) instead to support the proposal which kick started a sustainable future for the Old Kent Road. Given the vision in your response to my question, does the council have any plans for this site on the Old Kent Road?

#### **RESPONSE**

Thank you very much Councillor Neale for your supplemental question. Yes it is – I think it is a site that was highlighted in the cabinet report where we considered phase two of direct delivery of new council homes. So it is a site which we believe is suitable for new council mixed housing in future. I think there is an issue; I will have to clarify it and I will come back to you on this because I think Transport for London are currently disputing ownership of some of that land in the way that they do – they like to assert ownership over bits of land – but certainly, I think it is in the direct delivery proposals for new homes so I hope that that is a use which residents of South Bermondsey will welcome in a way which clearly they had concerns about previous proposals.

#### **4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL SITU**

Can the leader of the council confirm the live date for the SELCHP energy waste facilitator and explain the benefits this project will have for residents in Southwark?

#### **RESPONSE**

South East London Combined Heat and Power (SELCHP) will see heating and hot water being provided to some of our housing estates without the need to burn fossil fuels for the first time. This scheme is the first of its kind in London and only the third in the country. It has generated regional, national and international interest, and visitors from as far afield as Japan have come to talk to us about this innovative project.

Hot water from SELCHP is scheduled to enter in to the heat network feeding around 2,600 properties in the New Place Estate (Four Squares), Keetons Estate, Rouel Road Estate, Slippers Place, Abbeyfield, Pedworth Estate, Silverlock Estate, Tissington, and Silwood Estate on 11 December 2013.

This project offers substantial benefits to residents on the estates involved compared to the current arrangements including increased resilience and lower energy bills. As well as helping people with their energy bills, there are huge environmental benefits. We expect to reduce emissions by 8,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year – the equivalent to taking around 2,700 cars off Southwark roads.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL SITU**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I thank the leader for his answer. My supplemental question is, given the coalition's dreadful record on the environment, does the leader think that there are some lessons for the coalition government to learn from the introduction of the SELCHP?

**RESPONSE**

I want to thank Councillor Situ for his supplemental question. I think what we are doing at SELCHP is truly revolutionary and it really is leading the way nationwide. I know Councillor Hargrove and other officers have been invited to speak at conferences around the country on this very, very exiting proposal; turning waste into power. It is actually being delivered under this administration to five estates in the north of the borough and we hope to see more delivered in due course.

I think it is really interesting that it comes at a time when the Prime Minister was reported to have made very disparaging comments about the green agenda. The fact that the times are tough does not mean that we should forget our commitment and our duty to protect our planet going forward. So I think this is a really great piece of work and I would use this opportunity to commend everyone who has been involved in it. I know it goes back several years. Anyone who has had a part in delivering this deserves congratulations because it really is setting a national standard.

**5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI**

How much has the council so far spent on legal fees in the pursuit of its appeal against the Information Commissioner's Office ruling that it must publish viability information for the Heygate Estate redevelopment? How much has it budgeted for its total spend on legal fees associated with the appeal? What resources [financial, human or other] has the project developer contributed toward this legal challenge?

**RESPONSE**

The council is challenging the Information Commissioner's Office ruling because we believe that planning and regeneration processes would be prejudiced if this information had to be made public. Viability information is subjected to expert analysis and scrutiny by the district valuer on behalf of the council, which ensures that we have a good understanding of the real risks and potential profits associated with a given development. We therefore believe that the balance of the public interest lies in withholding the information. This is a view shared by the Mayor of

London, the Greater London Authority and the government's Department of Communities and Local Government.

The council has spent £8,650 on barristers' fees and a further £10,470 on internal legal fees in respect of the appeal to the Information Commissioner's ruling. Total spend to date is £19,120.

The further estimated costs associated with the appeal are £7,200 for internal legal fees and £31,600 barristers' fees for the five day court hearing. The total estimated cost for the appeal is £57,920 plus VAT, of which about £40,250 will be funded by Lend Lease.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you to the leader for his answer. As you probably know I am really troubled that any public money is spent appealing against the Information Commissioner's decision and I am particularly troubled by his sentence that there is public interest in withholding the information. Certainly I believe you should always be open and transparent with the public.

I am also very worried that this evening we have heard the Labour group be very pro supermarket and against the idea of taxing big supermarkets. We know that when they were in government they were very pro banks and against the idea of regulating them at all and we have seen in this council that they are very pro developers because they are scared the developers might walk away. I really don't think that is the case and I think it is possible to be tough but I certainly don't think you need to be helping the developers with their appeals and I noticed the answer to your question says that Lend Lease are contributing towards some of the costs of this appeal. Is that because Lend Lease is the one driving this appeal?

### **RESPONSE**

I want to thank Councillor Al-Samerai for her supplementary question. No, this is not an appeal which is being driven by Lend Lease in this case or any other developer. This is an important point of principle for all planning applications, not just in Southwark but across London and across the country and that is why we have the support of the Mayor of London. It is why we have the support of the Greater London Authority (GLA) and it is why we have the support of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) actually, in the position we are taking. This could jeopardise and undermine. You might be right, you know, it might not have the devastating impact in Southwark you know, but you think about other places elsewhere in the country where development is much more risky, where private developers are putting much more on the line and where they don't want to have to disclose their viability figures in the way in which is being invited. So this is important nationally.

We are taking this stance because it is important not just to us here in Southwark but I think it is important nationally, as I say, that is why I refer to the Mayor, the GLA and the DCLG and we will wait and see what the appeal brings in due course. If it is ordered that this has to be disclosed, ultimately then it will be disclosed. But I do fear for consequences that some developments going forward. We would not be raising this case, we would not be raising this point unless we had genuine concerns.

## **6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS**

Can the leader of the council confirm what action is being taken to reduce the number of payday lenders opening on our high streets?

### **RESPONSE**

I am very concerned by the growth of payday lenders, who particularly target people on low incomes and hit them with astronomical interest charges. At a time when everyone is feeling the pinch, I want to promote responsible lending such as through credit unions, rather than these legal loan sharks.

Planning laws often make it difficult for the council to stop a change in usage to a payday lender. However, local authorities can use an Article 4 Direction to help control certain uses, such as pay day loan businesses, by removing permitted development rights and requiring a planning application to be made. The proposal would then be determined in accordance with the local plan policies. It is advised that local authorities should only consider making Article 4 Directions in exceptional circumstances.

The council has taken action on this issue and planning committee approved the implementation of two Article 4 Directions with immediate effect in all of the borough's protected shopping frontages. These are the areas most affected by the clustering of betting shops, payday loan shops and pawnbrokers. These were implemented on 17 October 2013 and include withdrawing the permitted development rights for:

- Change of use from A5, A4 and A3 to A2 use
- Change of use from a range of town centres uses to A1, A2, A3 and B1 for a temporary period of two years.

The preparation of the new Southwark Plan will also provide an opportunity to explore a more "fine grained" approach to assessing the mix of uses in our town centres and protected shopping frontages. The first stage of preparation will be an 'issues' paper, which will be published later this year for consultation.

In addition to changes in planning we are also working hard to reduce the ability of payday lenders to promote their business in the borough. We have already secured agreement from two of the council's three advertisers that they will not take adverts from payday lenders in the borough and are urging the third to also stop.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN EDWARDS**

Thank you Mr Mayor and I thank the leader for his response. I obviously welcome the measures which we have heard about tonight about tackling payday lenders in the borough but does the leader agree that to a great extent the council and councils across the land's hands are tied when it comes to tackling payday lenders and that its a genuinely significant development that the leader of the Labour party is now committed to a future Labour government giving more powers to local government to tackle the spread of payday lenders?

### **RESPONSE**

I want to thank Councillor Edwards for his supplementary question. Yes, I think it is absolutely important. Somebody from the Conservative benches mentioned the government taking action on this. Well I think the government has come pretty late to this party on payday lenders and the pox I think that they are on our high streets and upon too many vulnerable people in our communities.

It is payday lenders, it is pawn shops, it is betting shops which really are the scourges of our high street and I think anything that we can do to deter them has to be good and it has to be through the planning process. I heard a terrifying example yesterday actually, from Hackney where a small business was, I think, seeking to renew its lease. It had been paying something like £25,000 a year and it was effectively gazumped by a Paddy Power that were willing to pay £100,000 a year for that same business tenancy, which just demonstrates, I think, the sort of money that the payday lenders, betting shops and pawn brokers are making at this time of economic difficulty.

So unless councils are fully equipped, we cannot do much by tinkering with the market I do not think actually. We have to have hard powers to say 'no, you are not welcome on our high street and you are not going to get permission to operate on our high street.'

**7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LISA RAJAN**

What are the council's long-term plans for South Dock Marina and the boatyard?

**RESPONSE**

The council has committed to improving service delivery and enhancing the overall value of the marina.

Recent developments include:

- Replacement all of the pontoon decks and utilities throughout the marina
- Replacing the floating shower block
- Installation of new laundry facilities
- New lifting equipment for the boat yard which has enabled operations to become more efficient and streamlined.

There has also been a significant improvement in the operational management at the marina which has led to sustainable improvements in relationships with berth holders and local residents.

**8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR REBECCA LURY**

Can the Leader of the Council assure me on the Council's performance on fly-tipping against claims by some opposition members that fly-tipping in Southwark has tripled?

**RESPONSE**

I am sorry to inform Councillor Lury that this is another case of the Liberal Democrats making things up to talk down the borough.

The number of fly tips reported by the public has in fact remained fairly stable. For example, during 2009/10 under the previous administration, an average of 325 fly-tips were reported monthly by residents and during 2012/13, this dropped to 293 per month.

However, for the same period the figures for fly-tips proactively cleared by our street cleaning service have increased considerably owing in part to more precise reporting of fly-tips found and partly due to a greater focus on known hot spots by the cleaning service rather than there being a greater volume of fly-tips present on our streets and estates.

This means that we are clearing fly-tipping before people even have a chance to report it and we are clearing more than almost any other borough in the country. This is a fantastic achievement and something which I and the council are proud of.

Unlike the previous administration who cut the number of fly-tipping lorries, we have kept the level the same with 20 vehicles used across the cleaning service to remove commercial waste, bags left out by street sweepers and fly-tips from streets and estates

The service continues to make great strides in keeping our streets clean of fly-tipped waste. The target is to clear 97.5% of all reported fly-tips within 24 hours – so far this year, 99% of all reported fly-tips have been collected within 24 hours.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR REBECCA LURY**

Thank you Mr Mayor and I would like to thank the leader for his response. Would the leader join me in congratulating the hardworking dedication of our fly-tipping service whose commitment to proactively clearing our streets has led to Southwark clearing more rubbish than almost any other borough in the country?

#### **RESPONSE**

Can I thank Councillor Lury for her supplemental question. This is a really interesting bit of weird news I thought, being played out by the Liberal Democrats who appear to be complaining that because Southwark council were collecting more fly-tipping than any other council – or second I think in the country – that that somehow was bad news. I think the fact – It says one of two things; it either says that people in Southwark fly-tip more which is not good but it suggests we are far more efficient and effective in collecting fly-tipping, which I think is something to be applauded. I do not see why that is somehow bad news. I think it underlines our commitment to keeping our streets clean.

I want to congratulate Councillor Hargrove and the team who work beneath him in keeping our streets clean and keeping the standard of our streets so high at a time when we are facing such hardship as a council, as a local authority, but I think this is a good news story. I think it is something to celebrate and I do not know why anyone would want to present it as bad news in some way. You're either criticising our staff or you're either criticising the residents of the borough. In either case it is not good news. I do not think you want to be pursuing – I think this is good news that our staff are doing hard work carrying on delivering excellent basic services at a time of hardship.

## **9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS**

What is the leader's view on investing in residential property via the council's pension fund, with the returns from rent or sales being put back into the pension pot? Will he ask the council to look into such a policy?

### **RESPONSE**

The council holds the pension fund in trust for the staff of the council, past and present, who have paid into the fund. If there is shortfall in fund performance, then the council has to make up this difference out of their budget.

The council will be considering investment in residential property as well as many other opportunities as part of the investment strategy review. This is currently being carried out by officers working with the fund's investment advisers AON Hewitt; the pensions advisory panel will agree the strategy and will make recommendations to the strategic director of finance and corporate services.

However, the 'trustees' of the pension fund have a legal responsibility to the fund and to fund members to get the best rate of return on any investment that is made. This would mean that under Liberal Democrat proposals, the recipients of the funds investment would most likely have to charge market rent on any properties they build and let, to ensure the best rate of return for the fund. The consequence of this Liberal Democrat policy may not be to build affordable or social housing but instead to build houses for market rent. I strongly oppose this and instead believe that this administration's plan to build 11,000 council homes is a better way to tackle the borough's housing shortage and would urge all councillors to support this rather than Liberal Democrat plans for more market rent housing. In completing this programme, this administration will pursue the most economic and effective sources of financing. All options will be considered but not to the detriment of achieving truly affordable rents.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I am not quite sure whether or not there has been a cut and paste job here because in the second paragraph it says 'the council will be considering investment in residential property as well as many other opportunities' and then in the last paragraph you suddenly start talking about affordable housing and how terrible it would be for us to have market rent and what a shocking Liberal Democrat idea that is to be having investments in something that is for market rent.

This is not about the affordable housing and actually the Liberal Democrats have welcomed council housing being built. The question was really about whether or not you would follow the lead of a lot of European cities and indeed Labour councils in Manchester and Islington, in taking advantage of the fantastic development opportunities that we have in Southwark – I walked past near Bankside the other day where their starting prices are £1 million - for the council itself to make some of that money to invest in its own pension funds to get a good return for the staff. I do not understand why the leader is against that. Could he explain why?

### **RESPONSE**

I thank Councillor Morris for her supplemental question. I think the issue here is if one comes in with a political priority of wanting to do something, i.e. enter the private rented sector market and you use your pension fund to deliver that political priority, I think that is where the lines between prudent investment of the pension fund and politics become really blurred and it is really difficult.

I think there are other ways in which we can use the pension fund, potentially, provided it is the best sensible investment in terms of some infrastructure investments and we are looking nationally; Local Government Association is pioneering a municipal bond agency. I think on a London wide basis, if there is a unified pension fund I think you could see the potential that Southwark ends up investing in this sort of thing but not necessarily in Southwark and not necessarily a result of a direct political decision that we are taking.

I think it is really important that we do not muddle up the pension fund and our duty to protect and preserve that and grow it for the benefit for those who are paying in and current pensioners and political priorities. And so I think what we are doing as an administration building council housing, using prudential borrowing, using additional housing revenue account monies that we have to deliver those 11,000 new council homes for people most in need in our borough. That is where the priority should lie and continue to lie and not in putting our fingers in pies who are very well served by other people actually.

#### **10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MARK WILLIAMS**

How is Southwark Council promoting equality and opportunity within its housing service?

#### **RESPONSE**

Southwark Council is committed to promoting equality and opportunity within our housing service. I am pleased that these efforts have been recognised in 2013 with several awards, for example, in homelessness services: Chartered Institute of Housing - Charter for Equality and Diversity; and Albert Kennedy Trust (accreditation for equality and diversity – tackling community and staff attitudes towards homophobia). I am proud that Southwark is leading the way in many aspects of equality in our housing services.

In October 2013 Southwark Council became the first local authority in London to be accredited by the Housing Diversity Network for its work to promote equality and opportunity within its housing service.

The accreditation encompasses the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Guidance and also considers the opportunity to address new inequalities, new vulnerable groups and more holistic thinking to complement community needs and business strategies and policies.

The council has improved the way we work. We are training staff in aspects of safeguarding and are identifying issues through our tenancy checks. We have improved joint working between housing and adult services, particularly in relation to the provision of support and services to older people who are just below the threshold of safeguarding but who could, without intervention, very easily end up meeting the threshold at a later stage.

Through tenancy visits, officers are able to clean up equalities profiles of tenants, where they express a preference to share this personal sensitive data with us, to complete personal information about faith, sexual orientation, and ethnicity as well as age. Officers are also working to develop a range of options for closer working between housing and children's services.

#### **11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF HOOK**

Please give an update on the trial scheme to prevent rat running through residential streets to the north of Jamaica Road? What are the Leader's views on implementing a further series of one way systems in the area around Cathay Street to reduce rat running in residential areas?

#### **RESPONSE**

The Riverside traffic management scheme was implemented in June 2013 and included measures to prevent 'rat running' from west to east through the area in response to concerns raised by local residents. To deter through traffic, Pottery Street and Wilson Grove were converted to one-way working. Other options such as physical closures were considered, but not taken forward due to concerns raised at the consultation stage. Residents were concerned that implementing such closures would restrict their own access to the area.

The measures implemented are on a trial basis and will be monitored for a period of 12 months after which time a further consultation will be carried out before a decision is made as to whether to make them permanent. Following reports of vehicles disobeying the new restrictions these have been enforced using CCTV and a number of penalty charge notices have been issued.

It is likely that a physical closure of these streets will be required in order to deter 'rat running' completely. However, based on previous consultation responses, this is unlikely to be supported unless alternative access to the area from Jamaica Road can be provided. Officers are currently working with Transport for London (TfL) on plans for cycle superhighway 4 which will run along Jamaica Road by 2015. This presents an opportunity to review access to the Riverside area from Jamaica Road and the concerns raised will be relayed to TfL accordingly.

#### **12. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR CLAIRE HICKSON**

Can the leader of the council update me on the likely budget settlement from government and what impact this is likely to have on services in Southwark?

#### **RESPONSE**

The government's autumn statement is planned for 5 December 2013, and we anticipate receiving details of Southwark's settlement around 19 December. Yet again we are extremely concerned that the Liberal Democrat/Tory government will slash the funding to Southwark and do so at a higher rate than the national average. We obviously hope that this will not be the case and that government will recognise the damage that is being caused by their cumulative cuts over the last three years.

In July 2013 the government issued a consultation on the 2014/15 and 2015/16 local government finance settlement. Indicative figures for Southwark show government funding for 2014/15 of £226.5 million, £26.9 million (10.6%) less than

the £253.4 million 2013/14 settlement. This is again a greater cut by the government to Southwark than the national average.

Indicative figures have also been given for 2015/16, these show a further reduction of £32.2 million (14.2%), these can be compared with the national reduction of 12.4%. Again the Liberal Democrat/Tory government are slashing funding to Southwark at a rate higher than the national average.

I am disappointed that Liberal Democrats locally are burying their heads in the sand on this. While Liberal Democrats elsewhere in the country are beginning to speak out at the impact their government's policies are having, here in Southwark they remain quiet, afraid to say anything against their political masters in the Conservative Party. Their MP voted for savage cuts to Southwark, while this Labour council has stretched every penny of value out of every pound to protect residents from the failed economic policies of Nick Clegg and George Osborne.

**13. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ELIZA MANN**

What percentage of invoices to the council were paid within the best practice target of 10 days in 2012/13? What is the average number of days the council takes to pay an invoice in 2012/13? Will the leader commit to pay invoices within 10 days in order to support businesses?

**RESPONSE**

In 2012/13, the council paid 84.77% within 10 working days.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 to Date
<b>Percentage paid within 10 working Days</b>	<b>69.40%</b>	<b>73.20%</b>	<b>79.44%</b>	<b>84.77%</b>	<b>88.85%</b>
<b>Percentage paid within 30 days</b>	91.12%	92.34%	94.15%	95.04%	96.05%
<b>Average days per invoice overall</b>	14.57	13.72	11.71	9.72	8.63

The council has standard terms and conditions embedded in contracts to pay within 28 days of the invoice date. Where appropriate every effort is made to make a payment sooner and I continue to support this policy. As the table shows, this is having an impact and since this administration took over in 2010 we are paying invoices quicker and businesses are on average getting payment six days sooner than under the previous administration.

**14. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH, ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND EQUALITIES FROM COUNCILLOR FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON (BOROUGH, BANKSIDE AND WALWORTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

Why is there no dedicated telephone line which handles calls from older people to the council's adult social care department?

**RESPONSE**

There is, in fact, a single dedicated phone line for social care information and advice in place, which is 020 7525 3324. It was brought in last year to replace

28 separate lines, which people told us they had found confusing. The new "one number" launch was promoted in Southwark Life, GP practices, hospitals and day centres. It is staffed by experts in social care, all of whom are experts in social care for older people. The phone line has taken over 20,000 calls so far, helping residents and carers to remain living as independently as possible within their communities.

We also fund specialist advice and community support services, including Riverside, who provide advice for everyone with support needs, not just those eligible for social care. Comprehensive information on service options is also available on the council's "My Support Choices" website.

Having a single number for all adult care clients, the majority of whom are older people, is considered preferable to having a separate number just for older people, ensuring an efficient and fair approach to the provision of advice, information and support across all age groups.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH, ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND EQUALITIES FROM COUNCILLOR FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON (BOROUGH, BANKSIDE AND WALWORTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

Thank you Mr Mayor, and I want to thank the cabinet member for what is a very comprehensive answer to our question. Maybe a follow up question on the response would be this: does this line also include a matter to do with housing and financial advice, for example, for older people?

**RESPONSE**

Thanks very much for your supplementary question. The advice line is staffed, which is one advice line for social care which we brought in a few months ago to replace countless – well, not countless, 28, 29 advice lines. It's staffed by social care experts who are experts in social care across all the areas we deliver social care in, particularly for example social care for older people because that makes up the largest group of people receiving social care. Those experts are social care experts, but they are experts also in signposting to other advice, so the – almost everybody who has rung, almost 20,000 people have rung so far, almost everybody gets the answer to the advice that they've asked for on the same day.

**15. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE (BERMONDSEY AND ROTHERHITHE COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

Under the provisions of the Localism Act an application was submitted, on 7 July 2013, to the council to establish a neighbourhood forum in the Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks neighbourhood area. The regulations require the council to carry out a public consultation on the application. As all the requirements of the legislation have been met, why has this not been done?

**RESPONSE**

The Localism Act 2011 introduces a completely new process by which 'neighbourhood areas' are designated by the local authority and 'neighbourhood forums' are recognised as the body that will prepare a neighbourhood plan for that area.

Southwark's experience as a 'front runner' authority has shown us that this process can be helped if there is discussion between the groups seeking recognition as a neighbourhood forum and the council to set the process off in the right direction at an early stage and try to resolve issues that are likely to be contentious. To this end, officers met the prospective forum in June and July and have been giving advice about meeting the requirements of the Act. I then met the prospective forum on 30 October 2013.

We are close to concluding these discussions and expect to start consultation on the neighbourhood area next month.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE (BERMONDSEY AND ROTHERHITHE COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

Thank you Mr Mayor, and thank you for the answer. July, August, September, October, November, December; six months. Was the delay administrative or wilful? Thank you.

**RESPONSE**

Thanks you Councillor Neale. Neither of those things, actually. The reality that we found in our experiences to date with neighbourhood planning is that it takes a lot longer and is a lot more complicated than you think – and I can see Councillor Morris agreeing with me on that point, and I'm sure that councillors in Grange ward will similarly agree with me on that point. The thing that we have learnt is that it's much better to take a bit more time at the beginning to get things straight, to work out what are likely to be contentious issues, before you go out to consultation, so you can try and avoid the experiences we have had to date in some other areas. We have gone out to consultation and then find things come up and we have to go out to consultation again and again and again; and we don't get to a decision at the end. So a bit less haste, more speed in actually getting to a decision, and that's where we are. I've met with this group since the community council meeting. They know where we are, and I am anticipating that we'll be able to go out to consultation and I'm hoping we'll have a much smoother process than we've experienced with some of the first ones that we had to do.

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

Further to the answer given at October's council assembly on take up of free early education provision, how many free early learning outreach officers (FTE) will be employed by the council? What tasks will they undertake in order to assist parents to take up their free entitlements? When will those officers be in place?

**RESPONSE**

The council is recruiting four free early learning outreach officers to promote take up of places by two, three and four year old children. They will:

- Identify children potentially eligible for a free place
- Support parents in completing application forms, where this support is

required

- Check parents' eligibility
- Support parents to secure an appropriate place for their child
- Provide practical support to identified priority families to enable their children to sustain their attendance at settings.

Following interviews, four candidates have been offered posts. Subject to checks and references, it is expected that officers will be in place in December 2013.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ROSIE SHIMELL**

I'd like to thank the cabinet member for her answer. I've recently spoken with a lot of parents who are really concerned about the issue of child care and child care costs; and many have expressed concerns particularly about the lack of available information on the options and entitlements that are available to them. In particular, information on the council website, it has come to my attention, is not always easy to access or necessarily completely up to date. Will the cabinet member commit to reviewing information about child care on the council's website to make sure it is up to date and looking at the way that it is presented?

#### **RESPONSE**

Thank you for your question. I am really surprised to hear you say that, especially on this particular issue, we have really gone the extra mile to make sure information is easily available. We had a big advertising campaign, we have gone to all the children's centres and nurseries and talked about it, raised awareness through that way and obviously on the web as well. But I hear what you're saying; I talked to parents too. I go to all the nurseries and children's centres etc, and I meet parents. I've not come across that argument before, but having said that though, I take your point. I will promise to go back and look at that and try and make it easier, and also perhaps hear from you, particularly where these information is coming from and try and tackle it head on, if that would be helpful.

#### **17. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES**

Of the total number of troubled families, how many has Southwark identified to date? How many have been turned around, broken down by each of the outcomes specified by government? How much funding has the council received from the government for troubled families?

#### **RESPONSE**

As of October 2013, the year 2, quarter 2 submissions in Southwark have identified 480 families eligible for the programme and we are working with all of these families. This is 44% of the total number of families identified for Southwark (1,085).

Southwark have reported turning around 105 families by July 2013. The following provides a breakdown of which national criteria the turned around families have met:

- Education and crime/anti-social behaviour: 104
- Continuous employment: 1 (note: to achieve the continuous employment criteria, a minimum of six months employment is required therefore most families were unable to achieve this in the July 2013 reporting).

The 2013/14 spending profile identifies a total income of £1,934,795; this includes the attachment fee for the target number of families, money received for turned around families (104) and management and coordinator costs.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES**

Thank you. Can I thank the cabinet member for her response, but can I ask her why Southwark has the lowest number of families identified out of the top ten London councils with the most troubled families, that's 44%, compared to the average of the other nine, of 75%, and also the second lowest number of families worked with; only 44%. Was the cabinet member aware of Southwark's poor progress 18 months into this programme, and what is she doing to ensure some of our most troubled families get the help and support they need?

**RESPONSE**

Thank you for the question. I am very touched by your concern. No, but can I just say to you that before the government came onto this idea (and we call it family focus, not troubled families, but anyway) we were already working in this area. And if you remember when the government first brought out this programme we had local papers, egged on by certain individuals, I don't know who, to come and say to us "Why have you got such a high number of families who are needing such help?" And we took them to a workshop which was being run by our family focus team, and they were actually able to meet some of these families, who had got, you know, complex and chaotic lifestyles. And we were actually working with them already.

So we are already ahead of the game, Councillor Noakes, so – and also this is, issues the figures, they are quite recent as well, so the work, the numbers of families who have actually been in continuous employment, were not – we couldn't have a six month figure, because this is quite a new scheme in our borough from the government's point of view. We've been running the family focus teams in Southwark for many years so that is already up and running. So I don't understand why you are saying we have got the lowest number. But that's the government's accounting figures, we have already got a family focus team already running. We have been tackling some of this already. A different approach.

**18. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER**

What is the average cost of school uniforms in Southwark? What is the range of cost? What does the council do to monitor the cost?

**RESPONSE**

We do not monitor the cost of uniforms. Any calculations as to the cost of a school uniform cannot be entirely accurate; however, considering six randomly selected local secondary school websites shows a range of prices between £125 and £200.

Of the six secondary schools viewed, the average cost is approximately £150. This includes the costs of a blazer, tie, two pairs of shorts, jumper and trousers or skirt. It also includes sportswear. It does not include shoes or socks.

Primary schools also have uniforms, and the costs vary, but the average is £65 for trousers, skirt, shirt and sweater.

The governing body, with its parent community is responsible for establishing the uniform. Governors are committed to ensuring that the uniform is affordable. All schools have a uniform shop, where second hand uniforms can also be purchased. For families in need, the school can also assist in covering the cost of the uniform.

The school admissions code used to prohibit schools from charging excessive sums for school uniforms. Section 1.8 of the code now states "Admission authorities must ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational needs, and that other policies around school uniform or school trips do not discourage parents from applying for a place for their child".

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I thank the cabinet member for her answer to my question. In September, the Liberal Democrat education minister David Laws revamped government guidelines on school uniforms, including making – limiting the use of a single uniform supplier, which of course leads to a monopoly, in order to keep the costs down. Does the cabinet member support the call for schools to use – not to use a single uniform supplier, and will she give some indication of the situation in Southwark, and how we can make sure that we are doing all we can to help school uniform price be kept as low as possible?

#### **RESPONSE**

Thank you for the question. As we said in the answer, it's not a council responsibility per se. However, in my visits to the many schools I see, I know that certain schools are actually helping families, particularly those families who are entitled to free school meals, so that, the poorer families, and are actually helping them. For example they are actually making available free school uniforms, the trousers, the basic part of the uniform that's available. So schools are actually tackling that already.

#### **19. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU**

How many staff are employed in the council's family information service? What targets exist to monitor success rates in getting parents to take up the government's free early education offer?

#### **RESPONSE**

It is not possible to quantify the number of staff employed solely in the family information service as delivery of the family information service is shared between the call centre, data improvement team and early help service.

The Department for Education publishes annual tables for the take up of free early learning by three and four year olds by local authority areas. From 2014 this will be extended to include two year old children.

We continue to ensure that information about early education entitlement is available through the council's website, the call centre and a dedicated free phone number, to encourage a greater take up.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL KYRIACOU**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I'd like to thank the cabinet member for her response. As my colleague mentioned a few minutes ago, information for parents remains a challenge. The council's website is at best confusing, at worst incomplete and out of date. Can the cabinet member confirm if there are any plans to improve access to information for parents, in order to comply with its statutory duty to inform?

**RESPONSE**

Well I was just going to say actually, thank you for your question, but earlier this evening we heard the leader of the opposition criticising the fact that we've actually updated the website, so you can't have it both ways, but I will look at that, thank you.

**20. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE BOWMAN**

How many Southwark looked after children are placed with foster parents outside the borough? Of those outside the borough, how many are placed further than 35 miles away from central London?

**RESPONSE**

There were 426 children looked after as at 31 March 2013 in foster carer placements. This was 75% of all children looked after (the remaining 25% includes those in residential care) as at 31 March 2013.

Of these children looked after placed in foster carer placements 67% were placed out of borough and of these 18% were placed over 35 miles from their home.

There are a variety of reasons why children could be fostered away from the borough – usually it is because some have very complex needs which require specialist placements which are not available nearby, while others are moved for their own personal safety. We are however aiming to recruit more foster carers in Southwark so that fewer children need to be placed outside the borough.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE BOWMAN**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I'd like to thank Councillor Dixon-Fyle for her answer. I'm concerned though, and I imagine you are too; because we have hundreds of children in foster care, and a very significant number of them, which is confirmed in this answer, are placed more than 35 miles away from their families. Will she agree with me that that's regrettable, and causes potentially an awful lot of problems when it comes to maintaining family links, which are incredibly important,

particularly when foster placements are not always long-term, and would she instruct officers to look at the excellent work that the Quorum Foundation do? They provide foster care services for a number of boroughs now, and they have a principle that they don't place children more than 35 miles away from their home and their loved ones.

**RESPONSE**

Thank you for that question. As Councillor Bowman will know, we have debated this issue time after time again at corporate parenting committee, and I keep repeating myself; I keep saying to Councillor Bowman that we look at each case on an individual basis, so for some children, they have to be far away to get away from gangs or whatever the issue was here in Southwark, for their safety, so I'm not going to give a blanket 'yes' to that question. We will look at each case individually and we will do the best that we can for that child.

**21. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET**

How many parents have applied for a statement of special educational needs for their children in each of the last three years? Of these applicants, how many children have been refused a statement in each year? How many parents have had a statement changed in each year?

**RESPONSE**

We have only been keeping this data since April 2011.

Data for parental requests for statutory assessments is as follows:

	<b>Request from parents</b>	<b>Request from schools / health authority</b>	<b>Parents' request not agreed</b>	<b>Not agreed to assess in total</b>
April 2010 to March 2011	102	172	data not held	84
April 2011 to March 2012	91	173	51	96
April 2012 to March 2013	115	212	68	168
April 2013 to date	130	155	73	136

We do not hold any data on amendments to statements. However, information from annual reviews shows that around 50% of families ask for amendments to the statement and around 70% of these requests from families are agreed. We have

just over 1500 statements so on this basis the team are amending around 500 statements per year.

Cases that might be refused are those where a child is functioning above thresholds, or where there is insufficient information and more is needed to fully get a picture of the needs, provision and progress a child is making or where insufficient time has been allowed for the advice and strategies recommended by a professional to be put in place. All cases are given thorough and full consideration.

2.8% of the 0-19 population in Southwark are subject to a statement of special educational needs. This is in line with the London average and slightly higher than the average for England.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Can I thank the cabinet member for the very fulsome answer; I am very pleased to read that officers are giving such detailed consideration to each case. Could I just follow up by asking – she will be aware of the passage of the Children and Families Bill through the House of Lords, I think it's in now. I wonder if she could outline briefly, or perhaps in more detail at a later date, how the council is getting ready for many of the planned changes in that Bill, particularly around the statementing process?

#### **RESPONSE**

Thank you for that question, Councillor Noblet. You are absolutely right, this is going through parliament at the moment. We already have a working party led by our director of education, and on that working party there are professionals from across the field, and we hope that by January there will be actually a draft of how we are going to address some of the points there, particularly about personalisation for example. As you know, Councillor Noblet, we will no longer be having statements. Come next year, we will be having education, health and something else statements as a way of assessing our children with disabilities. So in January we are going to publish the draft and then we can share that with you if you so wish. But we are again already ahead of the game.

#### **22. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES**

What success has the 'Find 40 Families' scheme had in the borough?

#### **RESPONSE**

The Find 40 Families scheme was the headline for our innovative new approach to finding suitable adopters for Southwark children in need of permanent loving families and it has been very successful.

Last year we recruited 19 adopters and this year we have 38 potential adopters being assessed. We are particularly pleased that nearly half of these potential adopters are black and minority ethnic. Last year we adopted 20 children. In the first half of this year 15 children were adopted and we are on track to have between 30 and 35 children adopted.

Southwark's success in this area has been picked up by the specialist press and it has been put forward for a Local Government Association award.

**SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES**

Thank you Mr Mayor. I'd like to thank the cabinet member for her comprehensive response. I do have a supplementary which I'd like to ask. I'd like to ask what proportion of adopters being assessed by the council are from the BME groups, and why is this important, does she think?

**RESPONSE**

Thank you Councillor Soanes. Well, I am pleased to say that indicatively, our figures are showing that the numbers of adopters are actually reflecting our population, our diverse population. And it is really important because many of our young children waiting for adoptive parents do come from a diverse background, so that is really important that we can try and match the young children up. But also I think it is important because we really need to show that in Southwark, we can recruit and keep adopters from all types of population, all different communities. Southwark is one of the most diverse boroughs, as you know, so it is important that we actually reflect that. I was at a drop-in for the doctors a couple of weeks ago at Peckham Library, and looking at the prospective adopters in that room, I counted about 26, and they were a range, from a range of background, which I am very very proud about.

**23. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL**

What steps is the council taking to enhance and better recognise the role of school governors in the borough?

**RESPONSE**

The council held a very successful celebration evening on Thursday 14 November to honour and recognise the contribution of school governors who have served for ten years or longer and to present them with an award. This was very much appreciated by all those who attended this event and it is planned to organise further events for governors in future years.

Unlike some other councils, Southwark has retained its professional governor support service providing a clerking service, a comprehensive and core governor training service and advice and support for governors. These services are highly valued as evidenced by the positive evaluations received and by the high level of buy back by schools.

Mentoring support is provided for new chairs of governors where required and steps are taken to strengthen governing bodies when this is deemed necessary. Governors are also provided with a termly bulletin which provides information on the latest legislation and developments in governance and articles written by a range of specialists from children's services. In addition the governor development team provides support for the independent Southwark Governors Association which is a forum for governors to receive information and put forward their views.

**24. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN SEATON**

Can the cabinet member confirm what proportion of young people in Southwark are staying on in education or training post 16 years old and how this compares to the London and national average?

**RESPONSE**

**Participation of 16-17 year olds recorded in education and training, June 2013.**

The Department for Education recently published participation data for all of the local authorities in England. The figures show that Southwark has performed excellently in comparison to both London and England. This is in terms of both increasing participation and reducing the number of “not knowns”.

<b>Participation of 16-17 year olds recorded in education and training</b>	
National	88.4%
London	91.3%
Southwark	93.9%

This is an improvement of 5.2% for Southwark as opposed to a national improvement of only 1.1%.

Southwark has the lowest number of 16-17 year olds that are not in education, employment or training in London.

<b>Current activity not known to the local authority</b>	
National	4.0%
London	4.6%
Southwark	3.2%

This represents a drop of 4% for Southwark (last year 7.2%) as opposed to a drop of only 0.9% nationally.

**25. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR ROWENNA DAVIS**

Can the cabinet member reassure me that this administration will not follow the lead of the Liberal Democrats and restrict free school meals to the youngest children?

**RESPONSE**

This administration has committed to provide free, healthy school meals to all primary school children in the borough and we have delivered on this promise, with over 21,000 primary school pupils in Southwark now being offered a daily free school dinner. Providing free school meals for all increases educational attainment, improves children’s diets and makes a massive financial difference to families who are currently facing the biggest cost of living crisis in a generation.

While I am pleased that the Liberal Democrats nationally have followed Southwark Labour's lead by introducing free school meals to the youngest children, their proposal would mean that in Southwark 11,694 children in years three to six will lose out on a free meal unless the council continues to fund them. We are committed to continue this funding, but despite the Liberal Democrats' embarrassing U-turn on this issue, over the past few years they have consistently made new spending commitments which rely on savings from scrapping free healthy school meals. This leaves a huge credibility gap in the Liberal Democrats' plans, leading people to question whether they can really be trusted to protect this essential service.

**26. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR SUNIL CHOPRA**

Can the cabinet member update me on the work the council has done to clear up after the recent storm?

**RESPONSE**

The parks, wardens and sustainable services teams led local efforts to respond to the high winds that affected London between 27 and 28 October this year. Thankfully, the impact of the storm on Southwark was manageable with most service areas including our refuse, recycling and cleaning departments able to run as normal.

After the storm some emergency work was immediately required, and with the passing of the storm our focus has been on dealing with the most dangerous trees, including those causing an obstruction, and keeping roads clear of stray branches, leaves and debris caused by the strong winds. At the end of the clear up, we reported 171 fallen trees, 73 fallen branches and 312 incidents including leanings or dangerous trees.

Initially our efforts were focused on identifying the trees that represented the highest safety risk such as blocked roads and footpaths and trees on property (cars and houses). All such trees were initially made safe and then removed as resources allowed.

Only one major open space had to be closed: Nunhead Cemetery (which is now open again) and all other parks remained open.

We are still receiving a few reports of trees falling that are related to the storm where the wind has weakened them. These are being dealt with through our normal emergency call out service.

Once more, I am filled with great pride to be able to report back to council assembly on the dedication and effectiveness that our staff have yet again shown in responding to an emergency.

**27. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN HAYES**

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the cycling to school partnership in Dulwich and Herne Hill?

## **RESPONSE**

I am delighted that we have been successful in our application for £285,000 of funding from Transport for London (TfL) to deliver the Cycling to School Partnership in 2013/14 in Dulwich and Herne Hill. We now have the investment we need to strengthen our grass roots cycling outreach at our local schools.

With the extension of the 20mph speed limit into East Dulwich Grove and Lordship Lane as well as across the borough, we are continuing with our commitment to improve road safety for all road users. The grant will help to improve the otherwise potentially dangerous junction at East Dulwich Grove and Townley Road. We will be engaging with 11 local schools to promote and encourage more cycling, through the recruitment of a Bike It Plus officer, who will work with schools to increase the levels of walking, scooting and cycling proficiency, which should in turn reduce congestion in the area and at the schools' gates and provide other health and environmental benefits.

Work at the junction will start in the summer of 2014, during the school holidays, and will include an extension of the footway, removal of the staggered crossing and the installation of trixi mirrors which help to improve the visibility of cyclists for larger vehicles turning left.

We also have some funding to work with the schools partnership to identify other key interventions which will support cycling.

Throughout this process we will continue to work closely with the Dulwich Young Cyclists organisation to help them fulfill their ambition to make Dulwich an exemplar area for cycling to school.

### **28. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR NORMA GIBBES**

Can the cabinet member confirm what actions have been taken by the council to ensure the borough is prepared for any poor weather conditions, including snow, this winter?

## **RESPONSE**

Following a review of the last winter season the winter service plan (published on our website), our winter plan, has been updated to reflect our planned response to winter weather conditions. As well as a reaction to snow we have detailed plans for precautionary treatments to roads susceptible to ice and frosty conditions, transport hubs, hospitals and health centres, emergency service locations, areas of high footfall, school access roads and critical areas of housing estates.

This year we have three new gritters available on standby, all of which are fitted with the latest in GPS, salt distribution and measurement technology. We have, through using some additional depot space, been able to purchase more salt than ever before and have over 1,200 tonnes in stock available for immediate use. All of the borough's 185 salt bins, the position of which are mapped on our website, have been cleaned and refilled. There are also bagged stocks of salt stored on housing estates across the borough. Southwark cleaning services are fully prepared with salt and hand gritters to salt and clear footpaths and housing estates as and when required.

Coordination and planning meetings between officers in emergency planning, parks, funeral services, South Dock Marina and housing have taken place with roles and responsibilities allocated. A coordination meeting has also taken place between the winter service officers of Southwark, Transport for London and our neighbouring boroughs.

As in previous years we again have access to a forecasting service which provides twice daily updates reflecting road and air temperatures and weather conditions specifically for the north, central and south of the borough.

As part of the council's approach to enable residents to help themselves, officers will be distributing free 5kg bags of salt to members of the public at shopping areas across the borough, on 30 November and 7 December. As part of this self help effort, guidance and frequently asked questions will also be provided.

**29. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR DAN GARFIELD**

How far have plans progressed to secure heritage lottery funding for Burgess Park?

**RESPONSE**

An application will be submitted for a 'Heritage Grant' of £2 million to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) by 2 December to deliver the 'Bridge to the Future' project which will be assessed by the HLF London committee with a view to making a decision in March 2014.

The main aims of the project are to:

1. Restore the "Bridge to Nowhere", giving it context within the history of the area
2. Highlight key historical features such as the walls and bridges in Surrey Canal and Glengall Basin
3. Revamp Chumleigh Gardens buildings and accommodate a park heritage/archive centre and facilities for horticultural and conservation training
4. Implement new biodiverse heritage planting
5. Install historical markers across the park revealing the layers of history
6. Deliver live theatre and spoken word performances, concerts, workshops, and creative activities
7. Create volunteer opportunities.

The bid has been informed by the adopted long term vision for the park and also has significant community support including from the Friends of Burgess Park, Walworth Society, 1<sup>st</sup> Place and users of the park.

The overall project value is £2.7 million, £2 million will come from the HLF and the remainder will be match funding. This will consist of section 106 funding and a

small amount of 'in kind' funding (which is non cash match funding) which will come from staff and volunteer time to deliver the project.

We hope that the bid will be successful; further to a decision on the outcome of our application, detailed design work will be carried out next year and subject to further HLF approvals works will commence in 2015.

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

Considering the 2008 Transport Research Laboratories research "The effectiveness of speed indicator devices on reducing speeds in London" found that speed indication devices on average reduce traffic speeds by 1.4mph and their 2000 report "the effects of drivers' speed on the frequency of road accidents" concluded that 1mph reduction in average speed reduced crashes by 5.6%, why have officers banned speed indication devices, blocking their deployment?

**RESPONSE**

Historically Southwark have implemented speed indication devices (SIDs) at fixed sites with limited speed reduction results and had notable maintenance issues.

The 2008 Transport Research Laboratory – 'The effectiveness of speed indication devices on reducing vehicle speeds in London' did find that SIDs on average reduce speeds by 1.4 miles per hour, however, the report also highlighted:

- The SID was most effective in the first week with significant reduction in effectiveness during week two
- SIDs should remain at each site for at least two weeks but no longer than three weeks
- Once the SID is removed there is little or no residual effect on vehicles speeds
- They should be moved regularly with a reasonable gap before returning in order that drivers forget about the previous installation.

Given that for SIDs to be effective they are required to be re-sited every 2 to 3 weeks, require electrical connections and often have to be erected on their own pole due to their size, this appears to create significant street clutter and there is a significant administrative burden and revenue cost in arranging the regular moving and reinstallation. Officers are therefore unconvinced that fixed SIDs are a cost effective speed reduction tool, unless regularly moved. There is also significant revenue cost associated with their installation and monitoring; costs which would also need to be covered by any bid made towards their use.

**31. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR GEOFFREY THORNTON**

Please provide a detailed breakdown of the council's capital and revenue spending on cycling in each of the last three financial years (2011/12; 2012/13 and 2013/14 to date)?

## RESPONSE

We have considered funding spent on cycling from the following sources; Transport for London, council and section 106 for both environment and planning and broken that down by revenue and capital as requested.

We cannot guarantee that this is the full extent of funding spent on cycling as other departments may have spent funding on cycling schemes. It is also very difficult to assess the exact amount spent on cycling, especially as some cycling elements are delivered as part of wider projects.

Transport Planning	Financial Year		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 to date
Revenue	£201,367	£174,265	£199,191
Capital	£358,006	£989,513	£19,989
Total	£559,373	£1,163,778	£219,180

Environment	Financial Year		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 to date
Revenue	£0	£0	£0
Capital	£11,855	£207,889	£34,100
Total	£11,855	£207,889	£34,100

Combined	Financial Year		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 to date
Revenue	£201,367	£174,265	£199,191
Capital	£369,861	£1,197,402	£54,089
Total	£571,228	£1,371,667	£253,280

Combined and rounded	Financial Year		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 to date
Revenue	£201,000	£174,000	£199,000
Capital	£370,000	£1,197,000	£54,000
Total	£570,000	£1,372,000	£253,000

### 32. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR NICK STANTON

How many streetlights are currently broken in Southwark? How many of these have been broken for more than 3 months? What is the average time to fix a broken street light?

## RESPONSE

At the time of writing, 149 (0.87%) of the borough's 17,052 street lights are out of lighting. Of the 149 which are out of lighting 12 (0.07%) have been broken for more than three months, five of which require a repair by UK Power Networks and seven require delivery of a component.

The average time to fix a broken street light as at the end of October is 4.08 days.

It should however be noted that breakdowns fluctuate throughout the year, e.g. the figure for June was 2.82 days, whereas the figure for July was 5.04 days.

The trend in the variance in percentage of lights working is 0.03% across three full financial years and likely to improve very slightly this year.

	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
<b>Average percentage of street lights working as planned</b>	99.61 %	99.59 %	99.58 %
<b>Average number of days taken to repair street lighting faults</b>	2.94 days	3.67 days	3.26 days

**33. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR ROBIN CROOKSHANK-HILTON**

Now that the Barbara Hepworth replacement sculpture has been awarded for Dulwich Park, please provide a price comparison of all four artworks shortlisted for the project. How much insurance money remains left over from the previous statue, and what will this money be used for?

**RESPONSE**

The Hepworth insurance money was ring-fenced for the new Dulwich art commission. All four shortlisted artists were given the same budget to work within, as is best practice for public art competitions. The artworks would need to be deliverable within the budget and this was made clear throughout, both to the public and to the artists. It is commercially sensitive to provide any further breakdown in detail regarding how the artists were to utilise that budget and particularly now that a final commission has been chosen.

Now that we have reached the final stage of the project there are other associated costs to the sculpture being commissioned such as a public engagement programme, launch and communications all of these had funding allocated to them at the outset of the project as agreed by the steering group. In addition to this there are some responses that we are awaiting that will impact on the use of certain areas of the budget which were forecast, for example we are awaiting a response from our insurers. Therefore we cannot yet comment upon whether or not there will be any budget remaining at this stage

**34. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GETTLESON**

When will the signage be amended on Kipling Street? Will the cabinet member consider not issuing any more fines until the signage has been amended and will he consider annulling the fines already issued?

**RESPONSE**

The signs at Kipling Street were changed from no motor vehicle access signs to no entry except pedal cyclists signs on 30 October 2013. Enforcement has restarted as of 17 November 2013, with warning notices being issued to vehicles driving in contravention.

**35. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS**

Can the cabinet member give an update on the progress of the new annual tenancy checks?

**RESPONSE**

The housing operations team has been set a challenging performance target to visit 100% of our tenants this year.

Performance in 2013/14 has been encouraging so far. At the end of October 2013, 56% of our tenancy visits had been carried out. Officers are achieving this level of success working with colleagues across the council to maximise opportunities for joint visits, such as with our gas contractors.

If officers suspect illegal occupation they take swift action. To September 2013, 69 properties have been recovered thanks to intelligence referred to the special investigation team from resident officers and 55 properties have been recovered by the actions of resident officers alone. In addition prevention measures have stopped illegal/fraudulent activity in 30 cases so far this year.

So far in 2013/14 we estimate at least an increase of 300 referrals to colleagues in maintenance and compliance as a direct result of tenancy visits, including six referrals to our disrepair team.

134 hoarding cases have also been identified. Once he or she is located, officers of the social care and environmental health departments work in unison to clear the property as quickly as possible. We work with the tenant to ensure a long term positive outcome.

156 flags relating to vulnerability of the tenant have been added to our systems, ensuring we know and take into account the needs of our tenants.

Before the welfare reform changes became live earlier this year 3,300 tenancy visits were prioritised for those who were going to be affected by the size criteria. 300 tenancy visits were prioritised for those affected by the benefit cap. Officers continue to work with colleagues in housing options to provide support to those affected by welfare reform.

**36. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR RENATA HAMVAS**

Can the cabinet member outline the detail of the new lettings policy?

**RESPONSE**

Our new lettings policy has been drafted following extensive consultation with local stakeholders including residents groups, housing associations, the Citizens Advice Bureau and other voluntary sector groups.

It aims to be clear and easy to understand and incorporates best practice from other local authority schemes nationally and deals with some anomalies in the existing scheme.

The principles of the proposed housing allocations scheme are as follows:

- A five year local residency qualification before a customer can join the housing register.
- Housing priority for applicants leaving the armed forces.
- Applicants may not be allowed to join the housing register if they have behaved poorly e.g. have rent arrears, a history of nuisance and annoyance or other anti-social behaviour.
- Applicants will not be allowed to join the housing register if they have deliberately worsened their own housing circumstances.
- Housing applications will be made by customers on-line, with or without assistance from officers.
- Anti-fraud checks will be carried out on all new applications and all offers for alternative accommodation.
- If an applicant fails to bid for alternative accommodation in a 12 month rolling programme they will be removed from the housing register.
- If a customer refuses three reasonable offers of alternative accommodation, they will be demoted to band 4 for their housing priority.
- Additional priority will be given to working households.
- Additional priority will be given to applicants that make a voluntary community contribution in Southwark.
- Under-occupiers affected by the spare room subsidy will be awarded the highest priority on the housing register.
- Tenants who have not complied with the terms of their tenancy agreement will be placed into band 4.
- Tenants who fail the pre-tenancy transfer inspection and where the property does not meet the lettable standard will not be placed onto the housing register.
- Southwark Council tenants who have a clear rent account, have not caused anti-social behaviour or nuisance and annoyance will be placed into band 2.
- Customers discharged from hospital will be placed into band 1, if the applicant's home no longer meets their housing needs.
- Applicants who undertake fostering and adoption will be placed into band 2.
- Homeless families will be placed into band 3.
- Homeless families re-housed into the private rented sector will also be placed into band 3.

- The four priority needs bands remain.

**37. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS BROWN**

Can the cabinet member list the new measures introduced to assist leaseholders?

**RESPONSE**

The homeowner improvement plan consists of a variety of measures which are aimed at the homeowners of former right to buy properties, and which will either directly improve the service they receive from the council or address other issues related to home ownership. Some of the measures have already been introduced and others are in preparation.

1. The introduction of technical officers for communal repairs. These repairs are a major source of concern for leaseholders. By taking sole responsibility for delivering communal repairs the new team can ensure that a better communal repairs service is provided aimed at delivering homeowners' priorities such as: pre and post inspection; coding of expenditure; identification of insurable perils; clear specifications and consultation.
2. The continuing development of a facility for viewing service charge invoices, statements and breakdowns online. The ability to view 'real time' repairs information will particularly assist homeowners in conjunction with the technical officer posts noted above.
3. An increase of funding to enable an expansion of the existing Citizens Advice Bureau-run advice service for homeowners across the borough, increasing homeowners' opportunities to obtain independent advice.
4. The funding of an independently run resource and information centre for homeowners, backed by the Homeowners' Council and Leaseholder Association of Southwark 2000, and is again in line with the council's policy of enabling homeowner access to independent advice.
5. A review of the current arrears and collections process to ensure that the council's communications are 'customer focused'. This has already been largely completed, with input from elected members, council officers and homeowner representatives, and a report is due to be issued shortly.
6. A re-write and update of the homeowners' guide, a document provided to all homeowners to advise them of their rights and responsibilities, to take account of recent legislative and administrative changes.

The improvement plan also features three key policy items:

- a) The first is a commitment to investigate and develop a one-time offer to homeowners of a lease on fixed service charge terms, giving both homeowners and the council a degree of financial certainty in the future.
- b) The second is a refresh of the buy back policy, providing funds to purchase back properties from homeowners who are no longer able to afford owner occupation.

- c) The last is a policy of offering leaseholders in certain blocks where all flats have been sold the opportunity to purchase the freehold at a discount.

Taken together these measures should address a number of long standing issues raised by homeowners and will result in substantially improved services to them.

**38. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR KEVIN AHERN**

Can the cabinet member inform the assembly of how many illegal sub-lets have been identified and recovered?

**RESPONSE**

To demonstrate how serious we regard the issue of illegal sub-lets an ambitious target of recovering 500 properties has been set for 2013-14. This is as a result of the success of 2012-13 where 322 properties were recovered.

By the end of October 2013, the department has recovered 210 properties. The specialist team dealing with tenancy fraud received over 700 allegations of subletting since April 2013. Resident services officers reported in October 2013 162 known cases of unauthorised occupancy.

The special investigations team has seen a marked increase in the number of referrals and good leads received in the last six months due to:

- Increased promotion of the central team's hotline and inbox by presentations to area forums, tenant management organisations and the customer contact centre.
- Right to buy: there are in excess of 1,000 right to buy applications currently being processed due to the increase in discount available which is now £100,000. The special investigations team is reviewing all applications awaiting completion to ensure that they are genuine and as a result three properties have been recovered and eight fraudulent right to buy applications have been stopped.
- Increase in resident services officers identifying suspected non-occupation and illegal occupation through planned tenancy check visits and estate blitzes out of hours.

The table below shows the trend of recovery since 2009/10:

	<b>Number of properties recovered</b>
2013-2014	210*
2012-2013	322
2011-2012	200
2010-2011	199
2009-2010	98

\* To October 2013.

**39. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR PODDY CLARK**

What is the council's policy on repairs to council homes affected by leaks from neighbouring leasehold properties? As the landlord, what specific steps does the council take to hold the leaseholder responsible for damages to its properties? Will the cabinet member commit to repair all ceilings damaged by leaks from neighbouring leasehold properties?

**RESPONSE**

There is not one uniform process or procedure as each case needs to be managed on an individual basis and no procedure can cover every eventuality. Equally a set procedure would remove any element of discretion.

Primarily, the lease is the fundamental tool for enforcement and control of leaks being caused within a leasehold property.

In regards to repairing all damage caused to council homes by leaks from neighbouring leasehold properties, we will take the relevant action for each case, following the appropriate procedures outlined above, which may include enforcement action.

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

How many applications have been made for arbitration in each of the last three years (2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14)? Of those cases heard by arbitration, what number of cases failed to receive a written judgement within 30 days of the hearing? What is the longest length of time a case has remained open before arbitration in each of the last three years?

**RESPONSE**

	<b>Applications received</b>
2010-2011	167
2011-2012	115
2012-2013	108
2013-2014	58 (to date)

The number of cases which failed to receive a written judgment with 30 days of the hearing is not currently being recorded. The service will begin recording the time it takes to issue a written judgement following a tribunal hearing from this month. However written judgments rarely take longer than 30 days to be issued and if they do, all parties to the hearing will be kept informed of the likelihood of delay and be provided with an explanation.

What is the longest length of time a case has remained open before arbitration in each of the last three years?

The service began measuring time taken for arbitration from April this year. There is a target to schedule the first hearing within 30 working days of receipt in 90% of all new cases. The half yearly figures to October show that 100% of new cases met this target.

**41. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR WILMA NELSON**

Of the 7,330 leaseholders who were asked to pay additional service charges in the latest rebalancing, what was the largest amount invoiced? Of the 4,815 leaseholders who received a credit note, what was the largest amount refunded? What was the largest difference between the estimated service charge and final service charge?

**RESPONSE**

The largest amount invoiced is £4,381.00, the largest amount refunded was £1,083.17 and the largest difference between the estimated service charge and final service charge is £4,381.00.

**42. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL BUKOLA**

What incidents of data loss or other data breaches has the council reported to the Information Commissioner's Office in the past two years? For each case, please give a description of the data affected including how many records were affected.

**RESPONSE**

In the past two years one data breach was reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The breach reported involved the loss of a bag containing a data listing which included a list of 982 Southwark clients. Southwark self reported to the ICO, fully investigated the breach and reported the outcome of our internal investigation to the ICO who chose to take no further action.

**43. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR TIM MCNALLY**

How many a) formal disciplinary notices and b) dismissals have been issued to council staff in the past 12 months for misuse of social media and internet and for what reason in each case?

**RESPONSE**

- a) None.
- b) None.

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

How much has the council spent on bailiffs in each of the last three financial years (2011/12; 2012/13 and 2013/14 to date)? How many times have bailiffs been used in each of these years (broken down by reason for intervention)?

**RESPONSE**

The council has a framework contract for bailiff services with four providers. The framework relates to services provided for parking, council tax and business rates

debts. Fees in relation to collection for the outstanding amounts are payable by the debtors and there is no handling/contract fee payable by the council.

**Council tax**

	<b>Instructed (value)</b>	<b>Liability orders</b>
2013/14	£8,921,319.69	11,304
2012/13	£10,497,571.81	14,301
2011/12	£23,461,346.06	32,880

**Business rates**

	<b>Instructed (value)</b>	<b>Liability orders</b>
2013/14	£4,197,615.11	865
2012/13	£10,391,163.61	2,203
2011/12	£9,637,172.14	1,753

**Parking (penalty charge notices)**

	<b>Penalty charge notices</b>
2013/14	5,766
2012/13	14,727
2011/12	14,080

**45. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER**

Of the total, what number of freedom of information (FOI) requests does the council issue a final response to within the statutory time limit of 20 working days? For what percentage of responses was an extension period requested? How many complaints has the council received about its handling of FOI requests in each of the last three years?

**RESPONSE**

**Of the total, what number of freedom of information (FOI) requests does the council issue a final response to within the statutory time limit of 20 working days?**

2011/12 – 961 out of 1,656  
 2012/13 – 1,071 out of 1,556.

These figures represent the cases where a final response was issued within 20 working days of receipt of the request, but do not take account of any cases where the clock was stopped (for example, where clarification of the request is sought). Including those cases where the clock was stopped but where the final response was still issued within 20 working days overall brings the totals to 991 and 1,091 for 2011/12 and 2012/13 respectively.

**For what percentage of responses was an extension period requested?**

2011/12 – 1.8%

2012/13 – 2.5%.

**How many complaints has the council received about its handling of FOI requests in each of the last three years?** (N.B. answer provided for previous two years as per ‘notes’ above)

Taking both requests for an internal review of an FOI response and stage 1 complaints:

	<b>Internal review request</b>	<b>Stage 1 complaint</b>
2011/12	52	6
2012/13	50	4

All responses are subject to resources being available and other priorities being dealt with by service managers required to complete or coordinate any response.

FOI requests come from many different sources ranging from interested residents and local businesses to commercial enterprises seeking commercial information. The council is required to respond to all FOI requests on the same basis.

**46. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT AND VOLUNTEERING FROM COUNCILLOR NICK DOLEZAL**

Following the success of the recent awards presentation at Canada Water library for the Olympic programmes, what are the council’s plans for 2014 to ensure we sustain our Olympic legacy?

**RESPONSE**

The young people’s celebration event was a wonderful celebration, with the presence of a representative from the Brazilian Embassy in attendance. We exchanged flags and gave our best wishes to Brazil, host country of the Olympics in 2017.

The council’s plan for 2014 started in 2011. We have invested £2 million in Olympic legacy projects which will benefit local people and contribute to improved health and well being in the borough. Most of these are now completed and in use. Completed projects include:

- Camberwell Leisure Centre Jubilee Hall
- Herne Hill velodrome
- Burgess Park BMX track
- Homestall Road grass pitches
- Trinity games area in Camberwell
- The Bethwin playground.

The Peckham Rye project is in phase two of completion and will include the re-provision of changing rooms is part of a wider programme of improvements to the park which will be delivered over the next year.

Work on Southwark Park athletics track has commenced and a bid to the capital programme for funding to upgrade and bring the pavilion back into use is being submitted as part of the capital refresh report in January. This will ensure our legacy will go on way beyond 2014 and continue the work of the Olympic Legacy

Board to coordinate the council's work supporting volunteers working with the sport development team and ongoing work with young people.

The sport and physical activity strategy sets out an action plan to tackle inactivity and focus work with women, girls and people with disabilities and work to ensure as wide an access as possible through sport activity available in Southwark through the 'Get Active' website.

**47. QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF PLANNING COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBO BLANGO**

How many planning applications have been a) approved and b) refused by the council's three planning committees since 1 January 2012, broken down by ward and type of application?

**RESPONSE**

The three committees which are referred to in the question were set up in May 2012, so I am providing details from this date.

A summary of the information is provided below:

\* Note the following abbreviations: CAC- conservation area consent, REG3- council's own application, FUL- full planning application and LBC- listed building consent.

<b>Decision Issued Date</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Committee Name</b>	<b>Ward</b>
07/06/2012	Granted	REG3*	Planning committee	Peckham Rye
16/07/2012	Granted	FUL*	Planning sub-committee B	Village
16/07/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Village
23/07/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Camberwell
23/07/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Cathedrals
23/07/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Peckham Rye
23/07/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Dulwich
23/07/2012	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Grange
01/08/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Peckham
14/08/2012	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Chaucer
14/09/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Riverside
14/09/2012	Granted	REG3	Planning sub-committee B	Peckham Rye
14/09/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Village
14/09/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-	Village

<b>Decision Issued Date</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Committee Name</b>	<b>Ward</b>
			committee B	
14/09/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Village
26/10/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
26/10/2012	Granted	REG3	Planning sub-committee B	Peckham Rye
07/11/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	Cathedrals
18/12/2012	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
17/01/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Cathedrals
23/01/2013	Granted	CAC*	Planning sub-committee A	Riverside
23/01/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	College
31/01/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	Village
31/01/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	Village
05/02/2013	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Rotherhithe
13/02/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	East Dulwich
13/02/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Peckham Rye
13/02/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
13/02/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning sub-committee B	College
13/02/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning sub-committee B	The Lane
04/03/2013	Granted	LBC*	Planning committee	Riverside
27/03/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	E. Walworth
28/03/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning committee	S. Camberwell
05/04/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning committee	Grange
15/04/2013	Granted	LBC	Planning committee	Village
15/04/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning committee	Village
29/04/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Village
29/04/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Brunswick Park
29/04/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning sub-	Brunswick Park

<b>Decision Issued Date</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Committee Name</b>	<b>Ward</b>
			committee A	
17/05/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
21/05/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Grange
24/05/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Cathedrals
13/06/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	The Lane
13/06/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	College
13/06/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Village
14/06/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning sub-committee A	Village
25/06/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	S. Camberwell
28/06/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	Camberwell G
09/07/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning committee	Brunswick Park
09/07/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning committee	Brunswick Park
11/07/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Cathedrals
11/07/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Cathedrals
11/07/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Cathedrals
12/07/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
12/07/2013	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Grange
12/07/2013	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Rotherhithe
29/07/2013	Refused	FUL	Planning sub-committee	Peckham Rye
07/08/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning sub-committee A	Faraday
08/08/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Cathedrals
08/08/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Cathedrals
19/09/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning committee	Nunhead
19/09/2013	Granted	CAC	Planning committee	Nunhead
02/10/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Village
02/10/2013	Granted	LBC	Planning sub-committee A	Village

<b>Decision Issued Date</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Committee Name</b>	<b>Ward</b>
14/10/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	E. Walworth
14/10/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee A	Brunswick Park
25/10/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	College
25/10/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	S. Camberwell
15/11/2013	Granted	REG3	Planning sub-committee A	Peckham Rye
20/11/2013	Granted	FUL	Planning sub-committee B	Cathedrals

Southwark has among the highest number of planning applications for local authorities in England and one of the highest proportions of major applications. We maintain delivery of an efficient system with 75% of applications being dealt with within target times including 75% of major applications being dealt with on target time. This is particularly important with changes that allow for applicants to be refunded their application fees for delayed decisions and sanctions that take the planning function away from the local authority and give decision making power to the planning inspectorate if performance on planning decisions for major applications falls below a certain level.

Since the inception of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 there have been eight refusals issued by members which have been appealed. Of the five refusals appealed from the community councils, four were allowed and only one dismissed; and of the three refusals appealed from the planning sub-committees, two were allowed and one dismissed. Whilst these samples are small and therefore it is difficult to discern clear trends, the figures do show that inspectors have allowed more appeals than they have refused arising from member decisions since the inception of the NPPF, which may reflect the emphasis in the NPPF on a presumption in favour of sustainable development.