

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL
COUNCIL ASSEMBLY 24 MARCH 2021

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. QUESTION FROM PENNY MORGAN TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND ROADS

I am 71 years old. I rely on my car/public transport to get to shops/doctors/hospitals/child care responsibilities. Southwark wants to reduce car journeys but how will they ensure there are well connected trains and bus services for myself and other senior citizens who simply cannot switch to bikes and find it difficult to walk far to maintain independence and support local shops?

RESPONSE

All bus services in Southwark are managed and controlled by TfL. The council is acutely aware of where local councillors, residents, tenants, key workers and other users have concerns around limited bus services.

The council are lobbying TfL regularly for enhanced and new bus services, particularly in those areas where the frequency of bus services has been identified as not meeting local needs. As a council, we work to make changes to our road network to support the flow of bus services. We have actively campaigned and made clear in consultations with TfL the necessity to improve and extend key routes in the immediate Dulwich area. These include routes such as the 37, 42, P4 and P13, extending the route of the 63 and restoring the number of buses on the 176 and 185 routes along Lordship Lane and the key interchanges with rail stations.

TfL are aware that there is often a lack of informed scheduling to co-ordinate bus services with train timetables. TfL are actively working to correct this in liaison with Network Rail and the train operating companies.

The council recognises the huge benefit to local people of a joined up train and bus service and will continue to lobby TfL for this initiative to be progressed as quickly as possible.

2. QUESTION FROM STEVEN HAMMERTON TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND ROADS

When the low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) were introduced, what consideration was given to hundreds of trades and others such as community nurses etc. who need cars and a functioning road network to do their jobs correctly and reach clients & patients? Shouldn't everyone have a reasonable expectation that our roads work sufficiently?

RESPONSE

Key aims of LTNs are to promote alternatives to the car such as public transport, walking and cycling. This is intended to be achieved by making the streets quieter, safer, and by reducing commuter through traffic. They have also been critical in our ability to support social distancing during the pandemic and allow residents and key workers to safely continue in their jobs, access services and essential shopping throughout.

All our LTNs have been installed as experimental measures and will be subject to a comprehensive review in the next few months to evaluate their success against the original objectives. As part of the review, all interested stakeholders will be consulted in May 2021 to offer their comments. The review will inform the recommendations as to whether the experiments should be made permanent, amended, or sections removed altogether.

3. QUESTION FROM BRIDGET FURST TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

My friend is sole carer for a partner too ill to even get to a blue badge assessment. How will Southwark ensure that those disabled and elderly, people on low incomes and in tech poverty will be included in decision-making, upcoming reviews and their voices, opinions and circumstances be reflected in your policies?

RESPONSE

It is absolutely crucial that views from within all our communities are gathered as part of our decision-making and consultations. The council keeps this under constant review as to how we can build on and improve accessibility and reach of decision-making processes.

Southwark's Borough Plan commits the organisation to supporting individuals in tech poverty and who feel disadvantaged by the digital divide. In 2020 we published the Digital Skills Action Plan, which, alongside the Digital Skills Group in the Council, will bring organisations together from across the borough to address these issues.

We are also building in the positions of all communities into our decision-making across the board. Our Annual Budget agreed in February this year, was the first to include a full Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) of all of our budget decisions. This means that we are centring people at the heart of our decisions, ensuring that the most disadvantaged are not disproportionately impacted by our spending plans.

As an administration, we aim to involve elderly people across our borough in decisions that matter to them. For example, our Cabinet

members and officers regularly engage Southwark Pensioners Centre (SPC) to understand key issues facing older people and make sure that we stay across their changing needs. SPC is just one of the partners we work closely with as part of the Consortium of Older People's Services in Southwark (COPSINS) who are our contracted partners for within the Older Persons' Hub, which delivers services on behalf of Southwark to older people.

However, we are also aware that we need to act now to support residents in making their voices heard today. Upcoming policy reviews, for example on traffic calming measures, will include posted newsletters, options for residents to respond with hard-copy forms and contact details for our consultations team who will be able to support residents who need help completing surveys.