



**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY MEETING)**

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Ordinary meeting of the Council Assembly held on Wednesday November 5 2008 at 7.00pm at the Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Eliza Mann

Councillor Anood Al-Samerai	Councillor Danny McCarthy
Councillor James Barber	Councillor Alison McGovern
Councillor Paul Bates	Councillor Tim McNally
Councillor Columba Blango	Councillor Kirsty McNeill
Councillor Denise Capstick	Councillor Jonathan Mitchell
Councillor Fiona Colley	Councillor Adele Morris
Councillor Robin Crookshank Hilton	Councillor Gordon Nardell
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle	Councillor Wilma Nelson
Councillor Toby Eckersley	Councillor David Noakes
Councillor Mary Foulkes	Councillor Paul Noblet
Councillor John Friary	Councillor Chris Page
Councillor Mark Glover	Councillor Andrew Pakes
Councillor Aubyn Graham	Councillor Caroline Pidgeon
Councillor James Gurling	Councillor Lisa Rajan
Councillor Barrie Hargrove	Councillor Sandra Rhule
Councillor Jeff Hook	Councillor Lewis Robinson
Councillor Michelle Holford	Councillor Jane Salmon
Councillor David Hubber	Councillor Martin Seaton
Councillor Kim Humphreys	Councillor Mackie Sheik
Councillor Helen Jardine-Brown	Councillor Tayo Situ
Councillor Peter John	Councillor Bob Skelly
Councillor Jenny Jones	Councillor Robert Smeath
Councillor Susan Elan Jones	Councillor Althea Smith
Councillor Paul Kyriacou	Councillor Nick Stanton
Councillor Jelil Ladipo	Councillor Richard Thomas
Councillor Adedokun Lasaki	Councillor Dominic Thorncroft
Councillor Lorraine Lauder	Councillor Nick Vineall
Councillor Evrim Laws	Councillor Veronica Ward
Councillor Richard Livingstone	Councillor Ian Wingfield
Councillor Linda Manchester	Councillor Lorraine Zuleta

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1.1 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE OR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Councillors Nick Stanton, Peter John, Kim Humphreys and Jenny Jones paid tribute to former Councillor Anne Yates, Past Mayor of Southwark 2004-05, who sadly passed away in August 2008. The tributes were followed by a minute's silence.

The Mayor:

- Introduced her Chaplain, the Bishop of Woolwich and her brother, Mr. Moses Mann, her consort for the municipal year.
- Welcomed Councillor Wilma Nelson, who had been elected in the recent by-election.

The Mayor informed members about the following events:

- The launch of the Mayor of Southwark's Diabetes Awareness Week (10 to 14 November) on Monday 10 November at the BME Conference in Cator Street.
- The Mayor's karaoke evening at the Castle Pub in Camberwell Church Street on Friday 12 December.
- That a facility to make a gift aid donation to the Mayor's chosen charity, Diabetes UK, was now possible to complete online. The link can be found on the Mayor's page of the council's website.
- Reminded everyone that there were several civic remembrance ceremonies across the borough on Sunday November 9 2008. She encouraged everyone to attend and to also support the poppy appeal.

The Mayor went on to announce:

- That the council had taken part in the London in Bloom Campaign, which is run by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). This year Southwark was awarded a Silver Gilt in the competition for the third year running. Dulwich in Bloom was awarded a Silver and the borough also won a Silver in the biodiversity category in recognition of the excellent work taking place to encourage biodiversity in the borough.

In reply to Councillor Ian Wingfield, Councillor Nick Stanton undertook to write to the President Elect of the United States of America, Barack Obama, to congratulate him on his election and extend an invitation to visit Southwark in light of the Harvard connection between Mr Obama and the borough.

Councillor Adele Morris, executive member citizenship, equalities and communities announced that Communities and Local Government (CLG) had published a list of beacon themes for the next round of applications.

Councillor Lewis Robinson, executive member culture, leisure and sport, made an announcement about the swimming facilities at the Seven Islands Leisure Centre.

1.2 NOTIFICATION OF LATE ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no late items of business.

1.3 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Members declared the following interests:

Item 7.1 – The Licensing Act 2003 – Consideration of local saturation policies in Camberwell and Peckham

Councillors John Friary and Althea Smith declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in this item as they lived in or near the saturation zone.

Motion 8.6 – Heygate Decant

Councillor Veronica Ward declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in this item as she has a family member who lives on the estate.

Procedural motion

At this juncture Councillor James Barber, seconded by Councillor Linda Manchester, moved that under council assembly procedure rule 1.11(c), the order of business be varied to enable Motion 3 – Anne Yates Children’s Library – to be debated at this point.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The debate on motion 3 is set out on pages 8 to 9 in these minutes.

1.4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ola Oyewunmi and Abdul Mohamed.

2. MINUTES

Councillor Tim McNally made a statement regarding page 17 of the minutes, the content of which was circulated at the meeting. Following his statement council assembly agreed to amend the minutes as outlined below.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the ordinary council assembly meeting held on Wednesday July 9 2008 were agreed and signed as a correct record with the following amendment:

On Page 17 – Public Questions – Appendix 1, page 2, Question 2.

In the response from the executive member for resources to the supplemental question, first sentence, line 1, **delete** after “supplementary question”:

From “and it is nice to note... “ **to** “...April 8 executive meeting silently.”

3. PETITIONS

There were none.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (see page 1 of the main agenda and page 1 of the lilac paper circulated at the meeting)

One member of the public submitted a written question the answer to which was circulated at the meeting. One supplemental question was asked of the leader of the council. The questions and answers are attached as Appendix 1.

5. MEMBERS QUESTIONS (see pages 2-9 of the main agenda, and pages 1-28 of the papers circulated at the meeting)

There were two urgent questions to the leader, the answers to which was circulated on blue paper at the meeting. The leader answered a supplemental question on each, the questions and answers are attached as Appendix 2.

At this point Councillor James Gurling made a point of personal explanation in relation to question 36 stating he did not use the words attributed to him. In response, Councillor Martin Seaton accepted the statement and withdrew question 36.

Members submitted 49 questions. Members questions and written responses were circulated on yellow paper. There were 15 supplementary questions, the answers to all questions are attached as Appendix 3. The time for supplemental questions having expired the written responses to questions 22-49 were noted.

6.1. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION FROM THE EXECUTIVE

The report was noted.

OTHER REPORTS

7.1 THE LICENSING ACT 2003 – CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL SATURATION POLICIES IN CAMBERWELL AND PECKHAM (see pages 13-46 of the main agenda)

The clerk drew members attention to revised recommendation 3, which had been circulated around the chamber, and stated that as a result of legal advice the first part of Amendment A relating to recommendation 3 had been withdrawn. The revised Amendment A would comprise of the second part only proposing a new recommendation 4.

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.10(1), the chair of the licensing committee, Councillor Linda Manchester, formally moved the recommendations contained in the report to council assembly.

Councillor Dominic Thorncroft, seconded by Councillor Danny McCarthy, moved revised Amendment A, the second part only proposing a new recommendation 4.

Following debate (Councillor Paul Kyriacou, David Hubber and Alison McGovern), Councillor Linda Manchester exercised her right of reply.

Revised Amendment A (new recommendation 4), was put to the vote and declared to be lost.

Following debate on the substantive motion (Councillors Dominic Thorncroft and Ian Wingfield), Councillor Linda Manchester exercised her right of reply.

The recommendations contained within the report were put to the vote and declared to be carried.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That council assembly approved the recommendation of the licensing committee that a local saturation policy is appropriate and necessary to address the effects of the cumulative impact of licensed premises in the following areas:
 - a) Camberwell; and,
 - b) Peckham.
 2. That the boundaries shall be as set out in the report (for Camberwell see paragraph 23 and for Peckham see paragraph 37).
 3. That the classes of licensed premises to which the policy shall apply in each area will be:
 - night clubs
 - public houses and bars
 - off licences
 - supermarkets
 - grocery stores, convenience stores and similar establishments.

7.2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF ROTHERHITHE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (see pages 47 - 48 of the main agenda)

The Mayor informed the meeting that one nomination had been received for Councillor Richard Livingstone. The nomination was proposed by Councillor Chris Page and seconded by Councillor Peter John. The Mayor invited further nominations from the floor.

Councillor James Barber, seconded by Councillor David Hubber, nominated Councillor Columba Blango for the chair of Rotherhithe community council.

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 1.13 (6) the nominations were put to the vote in alphabetical order and it was agreed that Councillor Columba Blango be appointed as chair of the Rotherhithe community council.

- RESOLVED:** That Councillor Columba Blango be appointed chair of the Rotherhithe community council for the remainder of the municipal year.

8. MOTIONS

At this juncture Councillor Chris Page, seconded by Councillor James Barber, moved that under council assembly procedure rule 1.11(c), the order of business be varied to enable Motion 6 (Heygate Decant) to be debated as the first motion and Motion 5 (Child Poverty) to be considered as the fourth motion. With the revised order of motions being as follows:

1. Motion 6 - Heygate Decant
2. Motion 1 - Violent Crime Summit
3. Motion 2 - London Living Wages
4. Motion 5 - Child Poverty
5. Motion 4 - Agency Reduction
6. Motion 7 - Secure Entry Doors - Nelson Estate
7. Motion 8 - Banner for Tooley Street
8. Motion 9 - Boris Johnson's First Six Months.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

In the minutes the motions are set out in the order listed on the main agenda.

8.1 MOTION 1 – VIOLENT CRIME SUMMIT (see page 50 of the main agenda)

Councillor Kim Humphreys, seconded by Councillor Anood Al-Samerai, moved the motion.

Councillor John Friary, seconded by Councillor Ian Wingfield, moved Amendment B.

Following debate (Councillors Paul Kyraciou and Jenny Jones), the clerk announced that the guillotine had fallen and that the meeting would move to the vote on Amendment B.

Amendment B was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That council notes that while the level of violent crime in Southwark has been falling in recent years, there have been a number of particularly serious violent incidents in recent months, and that this has rightly raised the concern of local residents.
 2. That council welcomes the fact that as such, addressing violent crime is a key priority for all members of the Safer Southwark Partnership and that it has adopted a range of programmes targeted at tackling violent crime.
 3. That council further notes that in 2005, the council created the Southwark Gangs Community Group involving the community to help inform the partnership's approach to tackling violent crime issues and that the council was

instrumental in establishing the five borough alliance to tackle violent crime.

4. That council believes that these and other initiatives underline the importance of cooperation between public bodies, voluntary organisations and members of the public in seeking solutions to violent crime.
5. That council believes that the problem of violent crime – particularly involving knives and guns – is so serious that it requires the council and other agencies to continually seek new solutions, keep its approach under constant review and to try to adopt best practice wherever this is possible.
6. That council therefore welcomes the efforts of the executive member for community safety to bring together interested parties for a cross-party, cross-borough and multi-agency summit, to work on further coordinated actions to address this serious problem.
7. That council believes that the two events planned over the next 3 months should be the start of a continuing process of engagement with all interested parties working in full partnership with the community.
8. That council believes that the process will lead to:
 - a. The identification of the key practical barriers faced by those working to tackle violent crime in South London;
 - b. The creation of a set of recommended solutions for removing these barriers;
 - c. The creation of a body of organisations and individuals to develop and to raise the profile of these recommendations with the 5 boroughs, the Greater London Authority (GLA), the government and other key agencies;
 - d. The creation of a set of 'best practice' recommendations for consideration by the 5 boroughs, including Southwark, gained from examining approaches to tackling violent crime which have been adopted either within the 5 boroughs area or in other areas where violent crime is a serious problem.
9. That council assembly calls on the executive to carefully consider the 'best practice' recommendations from the summit and to identify those which could help in tackling the borough's violent crime. It calls on the executive to take steps to implement additional changes in council policy to tackle violent crime and improve the safety of people in the borough.

Note: This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the executive for consideration.

8.2 MOTION 2 – LONDON LIVING WAGE (see pages 50 -51 of the main agenda)

The guillotine having fallen, the motion was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Jenny Jones and Peter John respectively.

Amendment C was withdrawn.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

RESOLVED: That this council:

1. Supports the establishment of the London Living Wage, set at a level calculated by the Living Wage Unit to avoid poverty wages being paid in the capital.
2. Abhors the fact that around 400,000 Londoners continue to fall into a 'working poverty trap' because their families are paid less than required to fund the basic costs of living in London.
3. Notes that Southwark Council's community strategy aims to "significantly increase the number of people who are able to earn a living wage" to tackle income inequality and poverty.
4. Calls on the executive to review Southwark Council's procurement, contract and best value policies to ensure that, as far as possible within UK and EU law, the London Living Wage, at the level set by the Greater London Authority's Living Wage Unit, is the minimum paid by Southwark Council and by its contractors.

and,

5. Calls on the executive to seek commitments from Southwark's partners in the local strategic partnership to pay no less than the London Living Wage.

and,

6. Calls on the executive to promote the London Living Wage and London Citizens' Living Wage Employer Award to the private sector in Southwark.

Note: This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the executive for consideration.

9.3 MOTION 3 – ANNE YATES CHILDREN'S LIBRARY (see pages 51 of the main agenda)

This motion was considered prior to the guillotine having fallen after item 1.3 (see page 3 of these minutes).

Councillor Jeff Hook, seconded by Councillor David Hubber, moved the motion.

Following debate (Councillors Danny McCarthy, Columba Blango, Ian Wingfield, Paul Noblet and Richard Livingstone), Councillor Jeff Hook exercised his right of reply.

The motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That council mourns the sad death of Councillor Anne Yates and expresses its condolences to her family for their loss.
 2. That council notes that Anne was both a popular and well liked councillor and a true champion for the people of Rotherhithe.
 3. That council further notes Anne's particular interest in the development of young people, both in Rotherhithe and the borough as a whole.
 4. That council therefore resolves that at the new Canada Water Library, the children's library should be named the Anne Yates Children's Library and calls on the executive to take whatever steps are necessary in order to ensure that this happens.

Note: This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the executive for consideration.

8.4 MOTION 4 – FIVE POINT PLAN FOR AGENCY STAFF REDUCTION (see pages 51-52 of the main agenda)

The guillotine having fallen, the motion was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Richard Livingstone and Tayo Situ respectively.

Amendment D was formally moved by Councillors Tim McNally and Nick Stanton.

Amendment D put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That council assembly notes that in the first 23 weeks of the 2008-09 financial year the council spent nearly £17 million on agency staff and that if it continues at its current rate it will spend almost £40 million over the course of the year.

2. That council notes that last year the council spent £32.6 million on agency staff and that the executive pledged in its budget in February to cut spending on agency and temporary staff.
3. That council assembly notes that as of September 16 2008 there were 416 members of agency staff working at the council who had been on placement here for over 6 months. It further notes that 103 of those so-called 'long-term temps' had been on placement at the council for over two years.
4. That council assembly notes that many of these 'long-term temps', particularly in certain professions, such as finance, project management or planning, appreciate the flexibility offered by working as temporary staff and choose to work in this way.
5. That council assembly notes that employing temporary staff can be necessary for a variety of reasons, including:
 - a. Providing cover for short-term vacancies such as maternity cover, or short-notice vacancies such as sick leave;
 - b. Providing cover for particularly busy periods, or to undertake work which is seasonal in nature;
 - c. Providing staff for those positions which are difficult to fill because of national pay restrictions which make recruitment in London particularly difficult;
 - d. Providing staff for those positions where repeated attempts to recruit permanent staff have failed;
 - e. Managing staff needs in those professions where staff actively prefer to work on a temporary basis;
 - f. Managing staff needs and workforce planning in the most appropriate and cost-effective way as needs change as part of the modernisation programme.
6. That council assembly notes that the council has a policy of only using temporary staff where strictly necessary to meet workforce needs, either to fill vacancies in existing posts which could not otherwise be filled, to meet seasonal or short-term staff needs or to manage fluctuating staff needs over the course of the modernisation programme.
7. That council notes that while in some cases it may be necessary to pay a premium to meet these staff needs, this should be set against the reduced overheads incurred as a result of using agency staff rather than permanent staff.

8. That council assembly welcomes the work being undertaken in the council's modernisation programme which, while in the short-term will require a greater use of temporary staff to manage staff needs through the transition, over the course of a 3 year programme, will see a significant reduction in the number of temporary staff which the council employs.
9. That council assembly therefore calls on the executive member for resources to keep this process under review and to report back on its progress at the time of the council's annual budget.

Note: This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the executive for consideration.

8.5 MOTION 5 – CHILD POVERTY (see pages 53-54 of the main agenda)

The guillotine having fallen, the motion was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Lisa Rajan and Jonathan Mitchell respectively.

Amendment E was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Veronica Ward and Susan Elan Jones respectively.

Amendment E was put to the vote and declared to be lost.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That council notes that in 1999, the then Prime Minister Tony Blair committed the Labour government to halving child poverty by 2010 and eradicating it by 2020 and that this commitment has been reaffirmed on more than one occasion.
 2. That council notes that child poverty is particularly acute in inner London boroughs like Southwark and notes that 51 per cent of children in inner London live in income poverty, compared with 29 per cent in England.
 3. That council notes that the government is set to fail to meet its target of halving child poverty by 2010 and that on June 10 2008, the Department for Work and Pensions reported that child poverty has risen again for the second year in a row.
 4. That council believes that after more than a decade of Labour government, these figures demonstrate the abject failure of the Labour party nationally to tackle problems of poverty in deprived areas.

5. That council therefore welcomes the steps taken by Southwark Council to do what it can to address the causes of child poverty, notably:
 - 1) Maintaining the Southwark Credit Union which provides 5,300 Southwark residents with flexible savings and low cost loans – an example cited as ‘good practice’ by the London Child Poverty Commission.
 - 2) Reducing the time homeless families spend in bed and breakfasts to just one week.
 - 3) Reducing the number of young people Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) to 1 in 10.
6. That council further therefore welcomes the fact that Southwark intends to sign up to the London Child Poverty Pledge and that the leader has agreed to be the borough’s ‘Child Poverty Champion’, reflecting the key strategic importance of this issue to the borough.
7. That council notes however that there is much still to be done and notes the report by the Department for Work and Pensions, ‘Public Attitudes on Child Poverty’ which highlighted the central role of the national government in tackling poverty.
8. That council believes that real progress can only be made if the government acknowledges its failure to tackle child poverty and adopts the recommendations of the London Child Poverty Commission, matching the commitment shown by authorities which have signed the Child Poverty Pledge.
9. That council therefore calls on the executive to write to the Prime Minister, seeking a renewed commitment to meet the 2010 and 2020 targets, to adopt these new policies and to work with Southwark and other local authorities to support their efforts to tackle child poverty.

Note: This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the executive for consideration.

8.6 MOTION 6 - HEYGATE DECANT (see pages 54-55 of the main agenda)

This item was considered prior to the guillotine having fallen.

Councillor Kirsty McNeill, seconded by Councillor Paul Bates, moved the motion.

Councillor Kim Humphreys, seconded by Councillor Paul Noblet, moved Amendment F.

Amendment F was debated (Councillors James Gurling, Nick Stanton, Martin Seaton, Tim McNally, Peter John, Mary Foulkes, Richard Thomas, Toby Eckersley and Lorraine Zuleta). During the debate Councillor James Gurling made a point of personal explanation. Thereafter, Councillor Kirsty McNeill exercised her right of reply.

Amendment F was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

Following a speaker on the substantive motion (Councillor Paul Bates), Councillor Kim Humphreys exercised his right of reply.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That council notes that the Heygate estate is now nearing the end of its natural life and that:
 - a. the projected cost of bringing the estate up to decent homes standards was estimated a number of years ago as £120 million;
 - b. reactive repairs and maintenance of the estate buildings place a disproportionate burden on the council's repairs service;
 - c. maintaining the lifts and heating system on the estate is becoming increasingly difficult.
 2. That council notes that considering these issues, the Heygate is not a fit place for people to live and that in 2007, Heygate tenants and their ward councillors pressed the council to bring forward re-housing because of the problems with repairs and maintenance of the estate.
 3. That council believes that for these reasons, the decision taken in 1998 to demolish the estate was the right one and further believes that – given the rapid deterioration of the estate – the decision taken in 2007 to bring forward the demolition date, and re-house people before replacement housing would be complete was also the right one.
 4. That council notes however that the process of re-housing is stressful, disruptive and difficult for tenants and residents and believes the council has a duty to do all it can to minimise the negative impact on tenants who are being re-housed.
 5. That council therefore welcomes the commitment of the case management team and the work it is doing to make the process of re-housing as painless as possible for Heygate tenants.

6. That council notes that as a result of this work, to date, 400 secure tenants, 203 non-secure tenants and 96 leaseholders have moved off the estate, representing 57% of the original residents and that when tenants in phase 1 were surveyed in June, 70% of respondents rated the service overall as very good or excellent.
7. That council notes that to date, no tenant with a legal right to live on the estate has been evicted and that the council's express intention is to re-house residents on a voluntary basis without recourse to the courts.
8. That council notes however that in the Heygate action plan, agreed by the executive in 2007, it states:

"Given the experience of other regeneration schemes, the council is determined to avoid the situation of small numbers of residents living in a block that makes it increasingly difficult to provide adequate support and services."
9. That council notes that community safety officers have advised that given the success of the re-housing programme, it is now irresponsible on community safety grounds to leave tenants living in blocks which are in some cases only 16-24% occupied, and that as a result a process of direct offers and forced re-housing is the best course of action in respect of the small numbers of tenants remaining in certain blocks.
10. That council assembly deeply regrets the delay in building new homes for Heygate residents due to problems accessing housing subsidies, the loss of development capacity due to rulings made by the planning inspector during the unitary development plan process, and a belief in responding to the comments of local residents.
11. That council assembly notes that six of the sites have now either been granted planning permission or have formally entered the planning system.
12. That council therefore believes the suggestion by Labour councillors for East Walworth that tenants should remain on the estate until new housing is built displays a total misunderstanding of the concerns of tenants and condemns that proposal in the strongest possible terms.

13. That council believes that the remaining Heygate tenants and residents should be re-housed as quickly as possible, but notes the difficulty and stress which this process can cause to residents and therefore reaffirms its commitment to managing the re-housing process in the most sensitive way possible.

8.7 MOTION 7 – SECURE ENTRY DOORS – NELSON ESTATE (see page 55 of the main agenda)

The guillotine having fallen, the motion was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Lorraine Lauder and Abdul Mohamed respectively.

Amendment G was formally moved and seconded by Councillors James Gurling and Jane Salmon respectively.

Amendment G was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That council assembly notes the high level of people sleeping rough on the Nelson and Portland estate blocks and the long-standing incidents of anti-social behaviour which has greatly distressed residents.
 2. That council assembly notes the successful campaign led by Faraday ward councillors and the local tenants and residents association for secure entry doors on the four towers of the Portland estate.
 3. That council assembly notes the delay on having the doors fitted, but welcomes their installation.
 4. That council assembly notes a recent petition signed by residents on the other parts of the Nelson and Portland estate, calling for similar secure entry doors.
 5. That council assembly notes the strong support for secure entry doors among residents, councillors and the local safer neighbourhood police team.
 6. That council assembly believes that secure entry doors act as an effective deterrent against anti-social behaviour and greatly enhance the security of legitimate tenants and leaseholders.
 7. That council assembly requests the executive to examine as a matter of urgency that secure entry doors be fitted on to the remaining blocks of the Nelson and Portland estate (Walsham House, Bridport, Harry Hinkins House, Trafalgar House, James Stroud House, Ringsfield House, etc).

8. That council assembly therefore calls on the executive member for housing to provide the estimated cost of this work to the Walworth central housing forum, together with an explanation of the impact of these proposals on the existing programme of major works for the Walworth area, in order that the housing forum can decide how to reprioritise the existing programme.

Note: This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the executive for consideration.

8.8 MOTION 8 – A BANNER FOR TOOLEY STREET (see pages 55-56 of the main agenda)

The guillotine having fallen, the motion was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Barrie Hargrove and Chris Page respectively.

Amendment H was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Caroline Pidgeon and Richard Thomas respectively.

Amendment H was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That council assembly notes that the Mayor of London has not agreed to fund the construction of the Cross River tram yet but notes that he is being constrained by the previous Mayor, Ken Livingstone, to a 10 year budget for transport works in London which makes no provision for its funding.
 2. That council assembly notes the cross-party belief that the Cross River Tram project is vital to the future development of Southwark.
 3. That council assembly notes that in recognition of this support, the executive member for regeneration recently led a cross-party deputation of assembly members and councillors to seek the Mayor's support for the tram and that the leader and deputy leader of the council met with Deputy Mayor Sir Simon Milton last week to make the case for the tram.
 4. That council assembly believes that as funding for the construction of the Cross River tram is not within Transport for London's (TfL) budget for the period to 2016, support for the scheme from the Department for Transport - as well as from the Mayor - is crucial if the scheme is to be delivered and notes that the MP for North Southwark and Bermondsey has tabled a motion in parliament to this effect.

5. That council assembly calls on the executive to continue its efforts in lobbying the Mayor for the scheme, using every available avenue of influence and to begin lobbying the Secretary of State for Transport.
6. That council assembly therefore calls on the executive member for regeneration to write to Mayor Boris Johnson, asking him to include funding for the Cross River tram in his forthcoming Economic Recovery Action Plan.
7. That council assembly further calls on the executive member for regeneration to:
 - a. Organise a 'mass lobby' of parliament to draw attention to the importance of the scheme for Southwark and south London in general;
 - b. Write to his colleagues in Lambeth, Westminster and Camden seeking their support for the mass lobby and asking them to publicise it in their area;
 - c. Seek funding for a poster van or other publicity vehicle to drive from Southwark to Parliament Square, via City Hall, to raise awareness of the mass lobby;
 - d. Write to Southwark's MPs asking them to sign the Early Day Motion on the Cross River tram and to make themselves available to meet constituents attending the mass lobby.

Note: This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the executive for consideration.

8.9 MOTION 9 – BORIS JOHNSON'S DESTRUCTIVE FIRST SIX MONTHS (see pages 56– 57 of the main agenda)

The guillotine having fallen, the motion was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Susan Elan Jones and Robert Smeath respectively.

Amendment I was formally moved and seconded by Councillors Paul Noblet and James Barber respectively.

Amendment I was put to the vote and declared to be lost.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be lost.

Conclusion of the meeting

As this was the last council assembly meeting of the year the Mayor wished everyone seasonal greetings.

The meeting closed at 10.10pm.

MAYOR:

DATED:

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY)**

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 5 2008

PUBLIC QUESTION

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM MS LYNN BURKE

While we understand circumstances may prevent a direct reply, would Southwark Council consider sending representatives to the Spike, 39b Consort Road, to view the activities carried out there in support of local community, with a view to working in partnership in the future for the benefit of a sustainable Peckham?

RESPONSE

This matter is a legal dispute and both sides are legally represented. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to comment further.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM MS LYNN BURKE

When the legal dispute has been clarified and resolved with Southwark Council will you accept an invitation from the Spike Surplus Scheme to come and visit with a view to working in partnership and as an example to young people on conflict resolution and local community cohesion

RESPONSE

That may depend on the nature of the legal resolution but I am sure that once the legalities of the position have been resolved then there should be an opportunity for discussion about what it means.

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY)

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 5 2008

URGENT QUESTION

1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN TO COUNCILLOR NICK STANTON, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

When does the leader anticipate a deal will be decided with TfL over the refurbishment of Elephant and Castle tube station? Does he not think that given the considerable financial pressures facing TfL at the moment including the replacement of bendy buses with a new Routemaster and the scrapping of the western extension of the C-charge zone that a quick resolution is unlikely? In light of these potential delays, would it not make sense to review the rate of decant so that the Homesearch system can better absorb those residents who are forced to move?

RESPONSE

We are working towards completion of the deal in December, dependant on TfL. 55% of residents from the Heygate estate have already been re-housed and only 535 remain on the estate. Community safety officers have advised that it would be irresponsible for the council to slow the rate of re-housing when some blocks are now less than a quarter occupied. I am therefore of the view that remaining residents should be re-housed as quickly as possible although I understand what a difficult and often stressful process this is.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

Madam Mayor thank you to the leader for his answer. Obviously we all support the redevelopment of Elephant and Castle and the Heygate estate. However we are currently in the position where we are pressing ahead with the decant and plans to demolish 12,000 homes whilst we have not built a single replacement home at this stage so with this in mind shouldn't the council at least be talking to residents on the Heygate estate about what they want to do?

RESPONSE

Madam Mayor the council is talking to tenants on the Heygate Estate about what they want to do on a daily basis through our case management team, which I am delighted to say is being shortlisted for an award for the inhibitive approach that they are taking to helping people with what we understand and sympathise with is an incredible stressful process of having to move home. I am conscious that this council decided to demolish the Heygate estate as long ago as 1998, unconsciously it has taken us longer than any of us would have wished to identify and secure planning stages for replacement of housing sites and for the housing associations to be able to raise the money that they need to be able to build up those sites. It is also a matter of great concern of course that within the last few months the impact of the credit crunch has been to slow down the

progress that had been made in them submitting their planning applications and getting on and building. But those of us who remember the council assemblies of the last two years will remember tenants from the Heygate estate turning up with rusty bits of pipe from the heating system that had fallen off, with case work complaints from councillors on these Walworth estates, about the fact that the lifts keep breaking down. Frankly we can't afford the investment that the Heygate estate needs to make it habitable for an indefinite period while we wait for the early housing sites to be developed. We took the views two years ago that we should offer tenants the option to move off the estate if they wanted. In large numbers they have chosen to exercise that option and find somewhere better to live with lifts that work and with heating systems that will come on in the winter. We always said that we were not prepared to allow the Heygate estate to fall into the same situation that has happened to the Woodene and has happened with some of the other properties on the Peckham regeneration programme, where you find some tenants left in buildings where there are very few other people with an infrastructure that is unsafe and where we can't as responsible landlords take responsibility for the community safety concerns. I think we are where we are and we owe it to the people who are living on the Heygate estate to get them off as quickly and orderly as possible, with as much help and support as possible, to give them the pick of whatever stock we have available with the commitment that as and when the housing sites around the Elephant & Castle are developed they have the right to return there, which is something this group has consistently fought for.

2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS TO COUNCILLOR NICK STANTON LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

In light of yesterday's announcement by the Children's Secretary and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury that the current government does not believe that the London Living Wage is "necessary or appropriate", can he confirm that this council's existing policy of paying the London Living Wage to all council staff will continue unaffected?

RESPONSE

I can confirm that we will continue to pay the London Living Wage, set at £7.45 and will continue to do so while ever it is set at a rate which we believe is reasonable and affordable for the council.

SUPPLEMENTAY QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR KIM HUMPHREYS

I would like to thank the leader for his answer. Could he comment on whether this announcement has an impact on his response to the motion we are debating on this issue tonight.

RESPONSE

It is a grim irony Madam Mayor that the Liberal Democrat group were to move an amendment to a motion about the London Living Wage tonight. We are just going to make the point that the easiest way to ensure that Londoners get paid a London minimum wage – all Londoners and not just those who are employed by organisations like Southwark Council which have voluntarily adopted such a policy - it would be for the government to introduce a London weighting to the national minimum wage and it is a matter of great concern that yesterday we read that the Secretary of State for Children's Schools and Families and the

Chief Secretary to the Treasury have launched an attack on the so called living wage. I am quoting from the Guardian which they claim would be sufficient inflationary and not necessary or appropriate. It seems to me in light of being told, and in advance of asking the question, the answer is no. There is not a lot of points in us moving an amendment tonight to lobby the government to do something they have already said they are not going to do and it may be that the Labour group will need to reconsider whether they want to move a motion which their own government says is not necessary, not appropriate, artificial and inflationary.

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
(ORDINARY)**

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 5 2008

MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE ZULETA

What impact is the credit crunch likely to have on the council's capital programme?

RESPONSE

The credit crunch will inevitably have an impact on our capital programme. However, the council will continue to keep the programme under constant review, not least in terms of the resources available to support the 10 year programme agreed by the executive in 2007 and the associated costs.

Major Projects

The credit crunch will provide special challenges for Southwark as it seeks to deliver the most demanding capital programme of any London borough. Recent pressures have been acute, especially around construction cost inflation and the impact of the Olympics building programme and other initiatives underway in the capital.

Alternative funding sources are being constantly pursued, not least for the ambition of the Elephant and Castle, Aylesbury and Canada Water projects. Equally, the pressures on property development are recognised by the council given its extensive recent experience of circumstances impacting on this market.

Disposals

The other main pressure will be around the valuation of property and the sales value that the council may achieve through its controlled disposals programme. These disposals are necessary to help support the resources available to deliver the capital programme. The downturn in all markets have led to an average decrease in values of residential property of approximately 15% for this year from its high point in 2007.

Both these factors affect the capital receipts programme in the short term. However the disposal programme covers a five year period and has been designed to accommodate some fluctuations in the market.

Whilst there will be in the short to medium term a decline in capital receipts for each transaction, overall there are additional disposals which will compensate. It is only where there may be a sustained period of recession that the capital receipt programme could be affected.

The council has a policy of only disposing of property at best consideration and where such criteria are not met then the policy is to hold until such time as market conditions improve.

The situation will remain under review and the capital programme may need to be adapted by the executive if necessary.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE ZULETA

Thank you for your answer. The government has bailed out the banks that have been hit by the credit crunch. What support, if any, are we expecting from the government to mitigate the impacts of the credit crunch on our capital programme and on other aspects of the council's finances which include the revenue budget, the HRA and the pension fund?

RESPONSE

Madam Mayor, Southwark Council has over the last 10 years developed an institutive approach to inner city regeneration which is essentially that we seek to capitalise on the value of our land holdings, to do deals with the private market, to establish both community appropriate development to further our regeneration aims and we have been so far largely successful in that approach. The problem that we now face, particularly around the Aylesbury Estate and Canada Water and to an extent also possibly with the Elephant and Castle, is that the virtual death of the private property market at least for the foreseeable future and the fact that virtually nobody is now buying or selling homes means that some of those developments are now less financially attractive than they were and some of them the council will simply have to put on hold pending an upturn in property values to maximise capital receipts.

In those circumstances I think we will have to go to bodies like the Home and Communities Agency to try and see what government capital we can attract to keep those schemes going. I think we will almost certainly require a large investment from the Home and Communities Agency, for example in being able to kick start the Aylesbury Estate, because it was in any event something that was going to be highly likely to be an unattractive initial thing to ask the private sector to take on.

The opportunity that we have with some of the regeneration schemes is to take advantage of Alistair Darling's new found Keynesian approach to managing the economy. If we are to have a Keynesian approach to keeping public works going during the recession then perhaps Alistair would like to fund the building of the cross river tram which will both supply jobs in the construction of the cross river tram but also hopefully leaves Southwark well-placed as London comes out of recession for our residents to be able to take advantage of the job opportunities in central London.

Thirdly, I think that inevitably we are going to have to keep looking at our finances and we are going to have to keep looking at the extra burdens that government puts on them, for example, this council is having to spend at least £1million on the cost of the De Menezes inquest, something which I think most Southwark Council taxpayers would have great difficulty understanding what it has got to do with them as opposed to the Metropolitan Police or London in general or the government.

I think it is time that the government help to bear that out on the cost of the De Menezes inquest because that £1million is equivalent to 1% on council tax and I am sure many hard pressed families in Southwark will think they have better things to do with 1% on council tax than pay it toward the costs of an inquest.

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

What change has there been in the number of people receiving meals on wheels in each month since the beginning of the financial year when compared to the corresponding months in the 2007-08 financial year? What change has there been in the number of

meals that the council has distributed in each month since the beginning of the financial year when compared to the corresponding months in the 2007-08 financial year?

RESPONSE

There are approximately 14 fewer people per month receiving meals on wheels in the first six months of the financial year 2008-09 compared to the same period in 2007-08. This represents a drop of just 2.03% in the take up of the meals on wheels service. In addition some people have reduced the number of meals that they order which has added to the decreased monthly average of meals.

The monthly average in 2008 for hot meals was 10,182 compared to 10,832 last year and the monthly average in 2008 for frozen meals was 872 compared to 930 last year.

One of the principal reasons for the reduction in the total number of meals, when compared to 2007-08 relates to a piece of pro-active work that the council has undertaken to contact service users who consistently refuse or return deliveries, prior to the delivery of those meals. This has resulted in meals not being wasted and cost savings.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN

I thank the leader for his answer although slightly confusing – I assume what he is saying is as if there were 32 fewer people in July who were receiving meals-on-wheels I presume there are now 84 fewer people taking meals-on-wheels. Can he tell me, has he undertaken an enquiry of any of those 84 to find out how many of them have stopped or reduced taking meals-on-wheels as a consequence of the 50% price rise on meals-on-wheels that he and his colleagues introduced in their budget in February of this year?

RESPONSE

Madam Mayor, I am afraid I don't understand where the 32 come from, there are 14 fewer people taking meals-on-wheels than was the case previously. We have not enquired of them why that is. We have no particular reason to suppose we haven't had 14 people telling us that they can no longer afford meals-on-wheels and asking us to stop the service.

It may well be that some of them got better from whatever medical condition required them to get meals-on-wheels in the first place, it may be some of them have moved, it may be sadly some of them have passed on but we have received no feedback from customers that the price increase has stopped them from accepting meals-on-wheels and indeed it would be a surprise if it did, because if you remember the price they were charging for meals-on-wheels is exactly in line with the average for other local authorities with pensioners on the same fixed state pension.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES GURLING

Will he give an update on the review and restructure of the communications department?

RESPONSE

In February 2008, council assembly agreed to target efficiency savings in the communication costs of the council of £1m from 2008-09 onwards as part of the agreed budget strategy. As a result, a review of the objectives, responsibilities and structure of the council's communications function was implemented.

The review concluded that to deliver cost-effective communications to our residents, customers and partners, we needed to rationalise the number of communications professionals, unify the function within a more co-ordinated and cost-effective corporate team, agree a communication strategy that better reflected the council's objectives and start delivering a programme of planned and evaluated communications work.

The restructure was completed in May this year and we are on target to achieve the savings agreed for 2008-09. To date 20 full time equivalent posts have been saved across the council arising from the co-ordination of communications functions within a single team. Further work on better buying of advertising space and more co-ordinated procurement of print and design work will lead to more savings being made on the unified communications budget. I am very pleased to report that as part of a wider package of support for the council that we are negotiating, Southwark News has agreed to print free of charge all street party licence notices booked via the council.

In September we agreed a new communications strategy and a work programme of over 20 external communications projects aimed at informing residents about issues or services ranging from recycling and crime to changes in personal care for adults and what there is to do for young people in the borough.

Improvements have also been made to the functionality and content of the council's website and intranet, and its internal communications with staff. The team has also been supporting the council's move to more modern ways of working through the Modernise work streams.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES GURLING

Thank you Madam Mayor. Thank to the leader for the response. I have to say I was slightly surprised to see that there were 20 full-time permanent jobs in the communication department to be lost, but I know it must be true because I read it in PR Week Press Gazette Campaign. It is probably the most successful piece of PR that the department has delivered more recently. I am interested in the co-ordination in terms of leaflet communications and I wondered if in this might have an impact on Southwark Life and whether the leader might like to tell us what that might be?

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Councillor Gurling for his question. I know this has been a longstanding concern of members to ensure we are getting value for money for communications and that we don't have a position where these positions grow like wildfire, and sometimes I think that a degree of centralisation is called for and that's what we have done. We are also concerned I think to try and find a way of publicising services better. I sometimes feel as though it is attendance and it is not just in this council, I think it is the public sector generally; to publish a leaflet, put lots of copies in a box, send them

somewhere like a library, hope someone at the other end would take them out of box and put them in a rack and that the sort of person who wanting to find out about the service might go to that particular place and pick up that particular leaflet in that particular rack.

We have all, I think, had examples of going into Southwark Council establishments; I remember you might find leaflets about a cat neutering service and you might find posters about a particular thing, but there is nothing at all about to claim a council tax rebate or how to find out about where your nearest community council meeting is or whatever it is.

I do think that all the feedback that we get from residents is that Southwark Life is widely read, widely appreciated, trusted as a source of information about Southwark and perhaps if we increase the frequency of Southwark Life to something more like once a month then we can use that more as a vehicle for telling people what Southwark Council is up to and avoid the need for lots of separate leaflets and separate posters in the hope that they just reach the target audience.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS PAGE

Can the leader of the council confirm how he would apply the proposals of the Liberal Democrat treasury spokesman to "require" public sector workers earning over £100,000 to re-apply for their jobs to senior officers in Southwark? Can he further confirm whether he will use his office to implement this or whether this particular proposal requires a Liberal Democrat government?

Vince Cable's conference speech was intended to draw attention to the public perception of waste and inefficiency in the public sector. He spoke of the need for public bodies to seek to increase efficiency and divert expenditure to front line services.

Mr Cable's suggestion that those earning over £100,000 should be asked to reapply for their jobs was not a substantive policy announcement. It was intended to draw attention to a different way of looking at reducing public sector expenditure, as opposed to simply seeking a blanket reduction in public sector pay.

Therefore, I do not believe it necessary to investigate implementation of this suggestion. I will not be seeking to implement it as I believe this could only be implemented across the public sector as a whole, rather than on an individual local authority basis.

RESPONSE

Vince Cable's conference speech was intended to draw attention to the public perception of waste and inefficiency in the public sector. He spoke of the need for public bodies to seek to increase efficiency and divert expenditure to front line services.

Mr Cable's suggestion that those earning over £100,000 should be asked to reapply for their jobs was not a substantive policy announcement. It was intended to draw attention to a different way of looking at reducing public sector expenditure, as opposed to simply seeking a blanket reduction in public sector pay.

Therefore, I do not believe it necessary to investigate implementation of this suggestion. I will not be seeking to implement it as I believe this could only be implemented across the public sector as a whole, rather than on an individual local authority basis.

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR ADE LASAKI

Can he tell me how many of the borough's schools are involved in the council's junior street leaders scheme and what reaction the scheme has had from the young people involved?

RESPONSE

Our Junior Street Leaders scheme allows Southwark's young people to learn about environmental awareness from a young age. With 1,400 young people in 48 of Southwark's schools participating in the programme they are able to make a real difference to the areas in which they live.

The young people who participate are keen and positive about the programme and want to learn about the world around them. Events such as litter audits have been seen as important by the Junior Street Leaders and help make Southwark a better place to live.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ADE LASAKI

Thank you Madam Mayor. I thank the leader for his response. Does he believe that the leader of the Opposition was wrong to refer to the Junior Street Leader scheme as child labour?

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Councillor Lasaki for his supplementary. No I don't agree that the Junior Street Leader scheme is child labour. It is a complete nonsensical thing to do as I know from my own son and the involvement his school has had with the Junior Street Leader scheme – it is a way of teaching children about the environment, its a way of encouraging them to be young active citizens, its a way of showing them that they can take an interest in their environment. Lets face it if our kids don't solve the problem of climate change, which we the current generation are dumping on them, then the future for the human race is pretty bleak indeed. I think it is fantastic that we have children who want to play a part in making Southwark cleaner, greener and safer. I have no problem at all in this council working with them to do that. I think this is a fantastic scheme and I am slightly alarmed if the chair of the school governor should have made that comment about the Junior Street Leaders scheme.

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

What impact does he believe proposals from the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) to restrict the backdating of benefit claims from 1 year down to 3 months will have on Southwark's most vulnerable people?

RESPONSE

Prior to October 2008, housing benefit and council tax benefit claims could be backdated for a period of up to twelve months where a signed, written request for backdating had been received, where eligibility for benefit during the backdated period could be demonstrated, and where "good cause" for not claiming "in time" was shown by the claimant.

Following the introduction of pension credits in October 2003, the government introduced new backdating provisions for older people (those aged 60 and above). Older persons claiming pension credit could now have their claims for pension credit, housing benefit and

council tax benefit claims backdated for up twelve months without a written request for backdating, and without demonstrating “good cause” for not claiming “in time”. This was one of a range of measures introduced to encourage take up of the then new pension credits. Many older Southwark residents who had not previously claimed pension credit were already claiming housing benefit and council tax benefit. The aim of our joint team (a partnership working initiative with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Pension Service) is to ensure that anyone claiming any one of these benefits is automatically offered an opportunity to claim all three.

Last year, Southwark Council paid out £184,000 in backdated housing benefit to 507 council tenants and £157,000 to 545 private tenants. A further £48,000 was paid in backdated in council tax benefit to 746 households. Typically backdated awards are for periods of less than twelve months. The full cost is met through central government subsidy. We estimate that backdated pension credit with a value of approximately £750,000 was paid to some 350 older Southwark residents in 2007-08. Pension credit is funded and administered by DWP Pension Service.

The government’s initial proposal was to reduce the maximum benefit backdating period from twelve months to three months for all age groups. The DWP say that the aim of the change is to bring the backdating rules for housing benefit into line with those for other income-related benefits.

However, after formal consideration of these proposals by the independent Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC), the government has decided to phase in the changes. Accordingly, the proposed changes to the backdating time-scale are now to be introduced incrementally for working age customers, reducing to six months from October 2008. The new arrangements will be reviewed at the end of 2009.

I remain concerned about the impact of reducing the period for back-dated claims on those vulnerable people who would otherwise lose out.

I will continue to monitor the situation and ensure that the council responds to the SSAC review at the end of 2009.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

Thank you Madam Mayor, and thank you to the leader for his response. I am really worried about this issue. I think this government’s policy is going to have a serious detrimental effect on some of our most vulnerable residents who are actually entitled to benefits and won’t be able to get them back. In light of that would the leader write to the Secretary of State for the Working Pensions to ask him to review this decision?

RESPONSE

Madam Mayor, yes, I agree that it is appropriate that authorities like Southwark should have a discretion in cases where through no fault of their own people who are vulnerable, who may not have appreciated that they were entitled to a scheme, the way that you have to claim for these benefits sometimes requires so much paper work, so many visits to so many different offices and it can’t be right that we are robbed of the discretion in some cases when someone is able to show us genuine hardship and that through no fault of their own they were unable to claim benefits in time that we should not be able to help them out.

Also, frankly, the risk we run as an authority is that what you end up with is a case where we get council tax arrears which we are never going to collect from someone where if we are able to exercise a bit of common sense we could give them council tax benefit or the same with housing benefit – it can’t be right that as a local authority we run the risk of our

debt going up because we can't do something sensible about sorting out a benefit claim. I am more than happy to make those representations to the Secretary of State and to the Advisory Committee.

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

What is the estimated cost to Southwark of supporting the De Menezes Inquiry?

RESPONSE

Following the abolition of the Greater London Council in 1986, the Home Secretary divided the Coroner's Court Service into seven districts which led to the formation of the Inner South London district comprising the London Boroughs of Southwark, Lambeth, Lewisham and Greenwich. Southwark was appointed as lead borough by the Home Secretary as the Coroner's Court and offices were situated in Southwark.

The Coroner announced the inquest into the fatal shooting of Jean Charles De Menezes would be held within the Inner South London District Coroner's Court. It is normal practice that the consortium authorities would share the cost of the service for inquests held in their area over the course of the year.

The De Menezes inquest is exceptional due to the nature of the incident and as such has attracted large scale public and media interest. The appointed Deputy Coroner, Sir Michael Wright deemed the existing premises unsuitable for the inquest and therefore alternative accommodation was approved – The Brit Oval. Given the scale of the inquest expenditure is expected to be approximately £4m of which Southwark will be responsible for 26.41% (approx £1.06m).

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR LINDA MANCHESTER

Thank you Madam Mayor. I know the leader has already touched on this subject but given the exceptional circumstances does he believe that Southwark's Council taxpayers should have to bear these costs and will he lobby the government to review this decision?

RESPONSE

Madam Mayor, we have made representations to government to try and get them to agree that this is an exceptional inquest. It can't be right; there is something which is virtually turning into a public inquiry, something which has intense media interest, something which has people flying in from around the world to watch it, something where clearly people want to get to the bottom of what happened and that is going to take a long time.

It seems to me this runs the risk of being able to go on and on, quite properly in the public interest to try and establish what happened. It can't be right that in this individual exceptional case it has been treated just like any other inquest with a consortium of inner London authorities having to pick up the tab. As I understand it the government is prepared to look at reimbursing councils for the cost of staging the inquest into the victims of the 7/7 bombings. It seems to me that there is a case we can make to government that they could cover, on a one off basis, the exceptional costs of this particular inquest that does not involve them creating a precedent and then gets lots of other local authorities trying to get inquest costs paid for them. It is a service councils have to subsidise, we understand that, but the costs of that are just so great, the circumstances are just so unusual, the public interest is just so intense, that it can't be right that this council is facing a £1million which we weren't able to budget for, an additional strain on the budget at a time when we are already having to take out £35million as a result of the inadequate settlement we had last year.

8. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON

Will he give an update on the progress of the Elephant and Castle regeneration project?

RESPONSE

Officers and I have had regular meetings with Lend Lease and we are continuing to work through various legal and financial issues to finalise the development agreement for the Elephant.

The final major hurdle to signing the agreement is the cost of transport improvements in the area, primarily renovations to the Northern Line and remodelling the northern roundabout. We have worked very closely with Lend Lease to negotiate with Transport for London over the finances of the project and are close to securing the final details.

The council is continuing to work with Lend Lease to produce a revised master plan for the area so we can hit the ground running once the deal is signed, and have been very encouraged by Lend Lease's willingness to engage with us and to spend a large amount of money developing plans for the area.

I can also report that the leader and deputy leader of the council recently met with Sir Simon Milton to discuss the Elephant and Castle regeneration project.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON

Thank you Madam Mayor, and thank you to the executive member for his answer. Can I ask him to update members on the latest discussions with Lend Lease and City Hall about the Elephant and Castle?

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Councillor Salmon for her supplemental question. I suspect this won't be the first time this particular issue comes up this evening; in fact I think there are further questions down the agenda paper on it and so I will try to cover some of the points here and if there are any outstanding then I can follow up later on.

I think it would be worth just referring to the last paragraph of my written answer, which is Sir Simon Milton and Ian Clements joined the leader and deputy leader on a tour of the borough two weeks ago. Many regeneration areas were visited, but mainly a lot of the focus was on Elephant and Castle and Sir Simon has kindly offered to host a meeting with Lend Lease and ourselves at City Hall with him to give some of the reassurances I feel that in the current economic climate Lend Lease Australia will be wanting to seek from Lend Lease Europe.

I can also report that I have met recently with the leader and outgoing chair of Lend Lease, Nigel Hugo, and that yesterday the director of major projects met with the incoming chair of Lend Lease Europe in what was a very positive meeting. I think things are progressing well there and they are certainly having a great deal of positive conversation both with Lend Lease themselves and at all levels of London government.

9. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD THOMAS

What steps is he taking to ensure that the views of East Dulwich residents – that the area should be designated as a suburb – will be taken into account in the Southwark core strategy?

RESPONSE

I am determined to listen to local views from across the borough, including the residents of East Dulwich. I will ensure that such views are taken into account in drafting the preferred option. I would encourage residents and councillors in East Dulwich to write to me or respond to the consultation if they want their area designated as a suburban area.

The core strategy is subject to several different stages of public consultation and local residents and businesses are encouraged to give us their views on the document during this time. The first stage of consultation (known as the issues and options) will take place between November 3 and December 15 2008 and will be widely publicised by letter, website (www.southwark.gov.uk/corestrategy), local publications such as Southwark Life and Southwark News, public exhibitions and drop-in sessions. A questionnaire is available for people who want to give us their views and people can fill this in on-line or print off a copy and e-mail, post or fax this to the planning policy team. For more details visit www.southwark.gov.uk/corestrategy.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD THOMAS

Can I thank Councillor Noblet for his answer. The compromise we reached on the suburban or urban states of East Dulwich was the right one in the circumstances when we are faced with a negotiation with an obstinate Mayor backed by an equally obstinate government but now that we have got a new Mayor who has pledged to listen to local boroughs and the views of local people, will he make sure that we reinstate in our local plan the status of East Dulwich as suburban, and which is what we always wanted, and will he make sure that the Mayor is forced to be held to that promise that he made to London's electorate and make sure that East Dulwich is designated suburban also in the London plan?

RESPONSE

I think the short answer is yes, but to expand a little, we have had some positive discussions already with the new planning regime at City Hall. Suburban is also an issue which affects my own ward so I have a little parochial interest in this too. I am meeting with officers to discuss finalising our response to the 'planning for a better London' document, which is a precursor to a revision of the London Plan, over the coming months and years so I am very happy to do that and it is always a joy to work with my predecessor and if he and his colleague from East Dulwich ward would like to meet with me at my doors – I don't have a door, but if I did it would be always open.

10. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PIDGEON

Can he update us on the most recent developments in the campaign to secure the future of the cross river tram?

RESPONSE

In September, as both the executive member responsible and as chair of the Cross River Partnership I took a lead role in putting the case for the cross river tram to the Greater London Authority's (GLA) Transport Committee.

In October I led a cross party delegation of GLA members and councillors, including the leader of Camden Council to meet with the Mayor of London to discuss ways of moving this issue forward to the benefit of residents and businesses across Southwark.

Last month the leader and deputy leader of the council met with Sir Simon Milton to discuss a range of regeneration and transport issues including the case for the cross river tram.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PIDGEON

Thank you Madam Mayor. I would like to thank the executive member for his answer. I would like to ask him that, given that in the document that was produced called 'Way To Go' from the Mayor of London, it says in it is often London councillors with an intimate knowledge of their neighbourhood who have wonderful ambitions for the future of their streets. It is our job to listen and learn from the boroughs. Given the cross river tram was a scheme that came from the borough some decade ago what are your plans for your next step to lobby the Mayor of London and the government to secure funding for this scheme?

RESPONSE

Can I thank my colleague for her question. I think we've set out in the amendment to the motion about a banner for Tooley Street, which discusses some of the ways that I would like to pursue a lobbying strategy to try and secure the cross river tram. As I refer to in my written answer, I did lead the cross party deputation including Councillor Pidgeon wearing her GLA hat and also Councillor Jones as well recently. I found the Mayor to be very receptive to the argument and I think actually one of the things he was surprised by was perhaps the fact that he had not had all of the briefings by his officers giving the case for trams rather than buses. So I think there is a 'pushing a door which is open' philosophy and ideologically to trams, but I think it is an issue of securing the government funding.

I think it is something that has been made clear today and I think I saw Val Shawcross on the news earlier making that point. To that end it is set down in the amendments to the motion, but I will be writing to colleagues in other boroughs who have been involved with this project – that's Camden, Lambeth, Westminster and Corporation of London – to see if we can organise a mass lobby of parliament to get supporters there. Having already been to City Hall perhaps its best for us to move on to see if we can secure funding through other routes, as it is the distinct impression that I took away from my meeting with the Mayor a couple of weeks ago that if we the borough or the government can come up with the money for this he is probably more than happy to build it.

So I think we are going to be pursuing a range of options and perhaps a poster lobbying the Mayor and also the Department for Transport and indeed MPs might be a portable way of raising this issue. Of course we want it to be a low carbon emitting poster van.

11. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBA BLANGO

Does he agree with the Labour candidate in the recent Rotherhithe by-election – and with me – that money raised from the sale of council-owned land in Canada Water should be invested in Rotherhithe?

RESPONSE

Where regeneration takes place I believe it is important that local communities see the benefits of the development in improved amenities in their area. In addition, where, as in Canada Water, regeneration means an increase in local population, the council has a duty to ensure that local amenities and infrastructure are sufficient to meet the needs of the new population.

For these reasons, I agree that it is right that money raised from the sale of land in Canada Water should be used to provide new amenities, such as the library, and address infrastructure issues, such as the local road network. I will continue to work with officers to ensure that these projects progress and that local residents benefit from the Canada Water development.

However it should be noted that the council also needs to use its resources strategically to meet the needs of Southwark's population as a whole and as such it is not possible to ring-fence all funds raised from regeneration land sales for use in a given area.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR COLUMBA BLANGO

Thank you very much, Madam Mayor. I would like to thank the executive member for his brilliant answer to the question. Definitely you have hit on all the right stuff, and I am sure the Labour candidate in the recent by-election will agree with your answer; but you have also said that you will continue to work with officers to ensure that benefits come to the community – but you will also agree with me, and the Labour candidate in the Rotherhithe election will also agree with the member for regeneration and development, that the benefit is about the community, it's about the people who live there that should be following the political leadership.

Would you assure us that in your effort to make sure all these benefits come to the Rotherhithe area that you will work with residents and the politicians there as well, meaning local councillors to ensure that all of us, officers, residents and yourself work together for the benefit of everybody. Would you ensure us of that?

RESPONSE

Can I thank Councillor Blango for that follow-up. Yes, that was a mere slip of the pen referring to only officers. It was not a Freudian insight into the psyche that I have gone, as they say, native. I have already been knocking on doors in the by-election, and Councillor Nelson has filled my ear already with some suggestions for improving some of the area and investing some of the money which will be coming through from the area in the form of S106. So yes very much so; and again if I had a door it would always be open to you.

12. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN JARDINE-BROWN

What can I and councillors do to ensure that their constituents are able to respond to the consultation on the Southwark core strategy?

RESPONSE

The core strategy is subject to several different stages of public consultation and local residents and businesses are encouraged to give us their views on the document during this time. The first stage of consultation (known as the issues and options) will take place between November 3 and December 15 2008 and will be widely publicised by letter,

website (www.southwark.gov.uk/corestrategy), local publications such as Southwark Life and Southwark News, public exhibitions and drop-in sessions. A questionnaire is available for people who want to give us their views and people can fill this in on-line or print off a copy and e-mail, post or fax this to the planning policy team. For more details visit www.southwark.gov.uk/corestrategy.

I would ask all members to bring the core strategy to the attention of their constituents at every opportunity, be it at tenants and residents meetings, community councils or at other community forums as I want to hear from the maximum number of people about their views on how their communities and this borough should move forward. I would also encourage members to respond to this document in detail, either as ward members, or as members of a community council so that key issues are brought to light at the earliest opportunity.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN JARDINE-BROWN

If I could thank the member for regeneration for the answer to my question, and I am sure he would agree that the core strategy is a crucial tool to help shape the future of the borough and as such local people should be encouraged to have their say. Will he therefore write a letter for publication in both the Southwark News and the South London Press encouraging local residents to respond to this consultation?

RESPONSE

Thank you to my colleague for the follow-up question. I would be delighted to do that. I think often planning documents can fall by the wayside in terms of publicity and this is a very key document in planning out the future of housing of businesses and of various other improvements to our communities; and yes, I would be no stranger to writing letters to both papers. I would be happy to highlight that issue and hopefully they would be print those letters.

13. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER

Can he confirm that there are no plans to build on the Surrey Docks Farm?

RESPONSE

I can confirm that there are no plans to build on Surrey Docks Farm. This is a much loved local resource which serves communities across Southwark and an increasing number of schools. The farm have plans to rebuild sections of the farm following fire damage a number of months ago and I offer them every support of the council in realising these plans.

14. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR WILMA NELSON

What progress has been made in locating a site for the new Rotherhithe Academy?

RESPONSE

The need for a new secondary school in the Rotherhithe area was demonstrated two years ago through the outline business case (OBC). It was clear that there was a significant problem with local children not being able to get a place at either Bacon's College or City of London Academy.

When the unitary development plan was formulated in 2005, a possible site for a new secondary school was identified at Quebec Way and was designated for educational purposes.

Since then, officers have appraised 19 sites across Rotherhithe, including Quebec Way and Rotherhithe Primary School, and work continues into finalising a site that meets the educational and financial criteria.

We intend to have identified a site which will go into an expression of interest later this year, and I will be happy to update Councillor Nelson once this decision has been made.

15. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES

Can the executive member give a cast-iron commitment that Lend Lease are not having funding difficulties that will negatively impact the Elephant and Castle regeneration project? What discussions has he had personally to reassure himself and his executive colleagues that the company remain 100% committed to the scheme?

RESPONSE

Lend Lease and the council are involved in close negotiations within the framework of the partnership agreement signed last year. Over the course of the last six months, Lend Lease have re-focused their priorities for their UK operations. As a result of this process, the Elephant and Castle project has become even more central to their operations in this country.

I have regular contact with Lend Lease. Officers are continuing to work through various legal and financial issues to finalise the development agreement for the Elephant. We are working with Lend Lease to produce a revised master plan for the area so we can hit the ground running once the deal is signed, and we have been very encouraged by Lend Lease's willingness to engage with us and to spend a large amount of money developing the master plan.

The final major hurdle to signing the agreement is the cost of renovating the transport infrastructure. We have worked very closely with Lend Lease to negotiate with Transport for London over the finances of the project and are close to securing the final details.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL BATES

Thank you, Madam Mayor. Can I thank the Executive Member for his response. Notwithstanding all the positive noises that he is reporting back on his discretion with Lend Lease. Could the executive member explain what the plan B is should Lend Lease decide they do not want to persist with the project?

RESPONSE

Thank to Councillor Bates for his supplemental question. I think the two things in life which are certain are death and taxes, so I do not think I would ever be in a position to give 100% commitment to any of the schemes, be they small or large, in this borough. In terms of a plan B I think perhaps the one thing I can say about it is, and the leader has already indicated, Lend Lease and council are deep in negotiations with Transport for London about the price for funding improvements to the northern roundabout at the Elephant and Castle and to whether potentially there could be money forthcoming to help TfL pay for the improvements on the Northern line station in the area.

We have taken the view all along that we don't feel as a borough we should be funding station improvement for TfL. However, I am confident we are going to get to a position where we can agree on that. I still expect very much that it will be in December, but in terms of a plan B and perhaps to give reassurance to members across the chamber, Lend Lease has given us clear indications that if for whatever reason we are not able to get agreement from TfL in December they are not going to walk away from this deal.

So in a way I think that is plan B; and if we need to have a plan C we will draw up a plan C and I am always open to suggestions from other local ward councillors or indeed Councillor Bates who I work very closely with on the Aylesbury, and I think that has been a success, so I would be very happy to continue that once you have done that project.

16. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR KIRSTY MCNEILL

Can the executive member explain the budgetary increase for the Canada Water library?

RESPONSE

Since the funding was originally allocated for the project, the cost of both materials and labour has risen considerably, in part due to the focus of the construction industry on delivering Olympic projects.

17. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION FROM COUNCILLOR ABDUL MOHAMED

Can the executive member outline his plans to lever in potential local authority new build dwellings on the Aylesbury estate as part of the larger private finance initiative scheme? What percentage of the total residential units might be council housing?

RESPONSE

The private finance initiative (PFI) is not currently available for use as a whole stock option. In terms of the total percentage of units that might be council housing, I am pushing for it to be the highest amount possible. However, it is too early to speculate on the number of units as we do not know how much credit we will secure from central government as the cross party submission of interest to Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was only submitted on October 31 2008.

The DCLG provides investment funding for two types of PFI housing projects. Those relating to an authority's council housing under their housing revenue account (HRA), known as HRA PFI projects, and those for housing outside of the authority's housing revenue account, known as non-HRA PFI projects.

For HRA PFI schemes, housing management services including repairs, improvements and maintenance are packaged in a long-term contract, usually for 30 years. Private companies or a group of companies are invited to bid for the work.

The successful bidder is responsible for financing the up-front renovation or construction costs of the stock and receives an annual management fee from the council in the form of a unitary charge. Part of this payment is financed out of existing resources and part out of the additional subsidy delivered by the PFI credits which have been allocated to the council, by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

Tenancies remain unchanged and rents remain subject to the authority's rent policies. After the term of the contract, the services revert back to the council.

18. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR BOB SKELLY

Could the executive member provide a full breakdown of GCSE results for each Southwark Secondary School or their direct predecessor in 2008, compared with those in 2001?

RESPONSE

The full verified results will not be available until January 2009 and so I am unable to provide final percentages at this time. However, a number of schools have released their provisional results and they are presented below.

When schools did not give permission for their results to be released into the public domain, I am unable to include them.

The convention for reporting results for comparative purposes is to cite the percentage of students achieving 5 GCSEs grade A*-C including English and Mathematics. However, for 2001, the year requested, the percentage including English and maths was not calculated. I have therefore provided two sets of figures, one comparing the percentages for the years requested without the inclusion of English and maths; and one comparing the figures inclusive of English and maths for the first year that they were included, which was 2002.

School	5 A* - C Grades	
	2001	2008
Kingsdale	17%	52%
Geoffrey Chaucer	19%	47%
The Charter School	n/a	62%
St Saviour's & St Olave's	40%	Not published
St Thomas The Apostle College	53%	61%
St Michael's Catholic School	43%	78%
Notre Dame	55%	67%
Sacred Heart	63%	79%
The City of London Academy	n/a	Not published
The Academy at Peckham	n/a	Not published
Harris Academy Bermondsey	n/a	58%
Harris Girls' Academy East Dulwich	n/a	Not published
Walworth Academy	n/a	41%
St Michael and All Angels CE Academy	n/a	42%
Bacon's College	n/a	Not published
Southwark	33.60%	55.30%
National	47.20%	64.60%

School	5 A* - C Grades (Inc English and Maths)	
	2002	2008
Kingsdale	17%	32%
Geoffrey Chaucer	13%	28%
The Charter School	n/a	52%
St Saviour's & St Olave's	49%	Not published

School	5 A* - C Grades (Inc English and Maths)	
	2002	2008
St Thomas The Apostle College	45%	57%
St Michael's Catholic School	26%	60%
Notre Dame	53%	55%
Sacred Heart	47%	70%
The City of London Academy	n/a	Not published
The Academy at Peckham	n/a	Not published
Harris Academy Bermondsey	n/a	41%
Harris Girls' Academy East Dulwich	n/a	Not published
Walworth Academy	n/a	36%
St Michael and All Angels CE Academy	n/a	24%
Bacon's College	n/a	Not published
Southwark	24.50%	42.00%
National	42.10%	47.20%

We have made great progress in closing the gap between Southwark's results and the national average. However, we are far from complacent and will continue to work with schools to improve results even further and deliver the best education we can for local children. I am happy to update Councillor Skelly with the full results when they are published.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BOB SKELLY

I thank the executive member for her answer and its good to see that we more than half the discrepancy between the Southwark average and the national average over those years, but I would like to ask her what her further ambitions and ideas about improving GCSE performance in the future.

RESPONSE

I thank you, Madam Mayor. I think it is absolutely vital that we do further improve attainment in our schools at GCSE level. It has a huge impact on the life chances of our young people in the borough. In motions further down our agenda tonight we talk about child poverty and breaking that cycle; and I think their education is absolutely vital to doing this, so I do have several things I am focusing on to try and improve that further. Before I outline a few of them I would like to give my huge congratulations to all our young people who sat their GCSEs this summer and to also the staff at our schools, to the young people's families because I think it is a real tribute to the amount of hard work and effort they have put in and I would just like to have that go on the record.

In terms of improving results further, one of the things I intend to do is ensure that the 'Southwark Schools for future' the programme remains on track, and we are shortly to appoint a local education partnership to work with us on delivering our Schools for the future and that is currently moving bang on schedule and I intend to make sure that that continues.

We offer a great deal of support to our secondary schools and I think that the success of that and the way that that is working very well is reflected in the results this year, not just at GCSEs but at all key stages that pupils go through. We have a team of head teachers employed by the council that we can deploy as and where needed to offer extra support for schools, and I think there have been incidences this year when that has become extremely useful and has had real benefits. In the two new secondary schools that we have planned

we are already looking at sponsors that can help contribute educational expertise as well as increased opportunities for young people and I think that that's another way to get some value added into our schools.

I am also intending to look at the role of teaching assistants for younger pupils to see if we can tailor what they do and make them more effective in improving a team to key stages 1 and 2, because of course the levels that children achieved at these lower key stages has a massive impact on how they achieved later on and of course the success that they achieve earlier on translates into success at GCSE. So I think looking at how we develop our teaching assistants could be a very good way to improve that as more of a long term goal and also we have a gifted and talented programme which offers extra support and extra encouragement to some of our more gifted and talented students and helps to push them to achieve a lot higher than floor targets, which I think improves their own chances of success and helps with their future educational studies or work.

19. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR MACKIE SHEIK

What is being done to support young people to get work experience and access job opportunities?

RESPONSE

The council leads a number of initiatives that helps young people to get work experience and access job opportunities both through economic development tools, such as Southwark Works and the educational system.

These are as follows:

Southwark Works

Supporting Looked After Children

This programme supports and engages with young people (aged 16+) leaving council care. Particular priority is given to those aged 18-21 who are in the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) group through the provision of an advisor on training, employment and enterprise opportunities.

Work Experience

Provision of 2-4 weeks of work experience within the council.

Employment Engagement Programme

This provides employer liaison, linking clients to jobs and directly engaging employers with the programme and work experience schemes.

Learning Disabilities

This provides employment and training support for those with physical and learning disabilities with day centres and day care services.

Education and Schools

Diplomas

By 2013, we will be able to offer all 17 lines of learning of the diploma, with many building on successful cross-borough collaboration established with Lambeth on both the engineering and business diplomas.

Education Business Alliance

The council is in partnership with local agencies, including the private sector, to offer young people over 2000 work experience places. It has also successfully mentored over 150 pupils in the past year and successfully linked five business partners to nine secondary schools.

The Aim Higher Programme

This supports and encourages young people (16-19) to remain in education post 16 through a range of activities, including facilitating visits to universities and outreaching to potential underachieving groups such as looked after children and offenders.

Connexions Personal Advisors

The seven advisors are used to develop the skills of young people that they can use in later life. Examples of these include:

- the Creative Media Project
- New Deal for Communities (NDC) and the youth offending team (YOT) as part of the transition through regeneration of the Aylesbury Estates
- The Dance Group Illusion.

I am happy to provide more detailed information on any of these schemes and initiatives if required.

SUUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR MACKIE SHEIK

I would like to thank the executive member for her answer. My supplementary question is because of the huge challenges we have out there does she have any particular ideas about how to encourage young people to get work while they are still in education?

RESPONSE

Thank you, Councillor Sheik. I do have a particular idea to try to improve the opportunities for our young people to get part-time jobs. It arose out of a meeting between Southwark Youth Council and the Young Southwark Executive, our Children's Trust Executive, which meet regularly with the Southwark Youth Council and in which a lot of young people were saying that they would really like to work part-time after school and at the week-ends but they weren't being given the opportunities to by local businesses. This seems to be a problem that was particularly affecting young Afro Caribbean people, particularly boys.

So it has made me think is there a way that the council can play a role in trying to facilitate this for young people; because obviously if they are engaged in part-time employment they are able to earn their own money, they are also doing something constructive after school, they are improving their own CVs, they are improving their future opportunities and chances. I am very pleased to announce that within the next few weeks the council is going to be launching a scheme which we calling 'Fit in the Door', which is going to be encouraging businesses to employ young people.

I think more details will come out about this when we launch the project but I am very happy to tell councillors about it this evening because I think it is a very exciting initiative. We have already had a lot of interest from these local businesses, some of whom want to participate in the scheme and some of whom have said 'we can't believe that young people felt this way; and they felt that they have been discriminated against and we would love to give them opportunities'.

I think the timing of this is very important as well – that's why we have been working very hard to get this going at this time of the year because of course a lot of shops and businesses will be employing in time for the Christmas shopping season and I hoping it will be a big success. We already have interest from businesses to sponsor the scheme in subsequent years, so watch this space so to speak, as I am really hopeful that this will be very successful and the feedback that I have had from young people about it already has been very positive – they are all very excited and they all wonder how they can be the first to get some of these part-time jobs.

20. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR JELIL LADIPO

What progress has been made in identifying possible sponsors for the new academy in the Aylesbury area?

RESPONSE

The provision of the new school at the Aylesbury is a demonstration of the council's commitment to physically and educationally regenerate this area. We have high aspirations for this school and intend for it to be a centre of excellence to transform opportunities and life chances for young people in the borough.

There is significant support from local primary schools for this school and the choice of sponsors is integral to the success of the school and the delivery of high educational outcomes on behalf of the council.

A series of meetings are underway with the academies unit and potential sponsors. This will result in a shortlist from which a lead sponsor will be identified by the council. This lead sponsor will then work with the council to develop the expression of interest and ensure that the needs of the community are taken into account.

Because of the stage in the selection process, I am unable to disclose potential sponsors at this time but the council intends to undergo a rigorous selection procedure to secure a mutually beneficial outcome for the school, the council and the sponsors.

We intend to select a sponsor(s) that will best serve the aspirations of the community, local families and future pupils of the school.

21. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

What is the council doing to tackle homophobic bullying?

RESPONSE

Bullying, in what ever form, can be highly distressing for the victim and it will not be tolerated in Southwark.

Homophobic bullying, in particular, remains endemic throughout schools in England. A recent national Stonewall study reported that 65% of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) students said that they had been bullied because of their sexuality while 35% of LGB pupils reported that they do not feel safe in schools.

However, Southwark is leading the way in tackling homophobic bullying and have recently been chosen to be one of only five local authorities to pilot Stonewall's Education Champion Programme. This is a resource which allows local authorities to work with Stonewall and help each other to promote a safe and inclusive learning environment for all young people and establish practical ways of addressing homophobia in schools.

Working in partnership with other public bodies, such as the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the Police, we have agreed a partnership-wide anti-bullying strategy which supports a whole system approach to the issue. We are working jointly with schools to deliver a wide range of activities to reduce bullying including peer mediation, mentoring, "bully boxes" to support anonymous reporting, and a range of forum theatre projects coordinated by our Agencies Supporting Schools Programme (ASSP). This has resulted in 68% of schools having adopted our active anti-bullying strategy and 53 schools participating in the launch of our first anti-bullying week during November 2007. I am keen to encourage all schools to take up our anti-bullying strategy and I will be writing to the school governors in order to encourage them to sign up to our scheme.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DENISE CAPSTICK

Thank you Madam Mayor. I would like to thank the executive member for her answer, and it is actually reassuring to know that Southwark is doing so much to actually combat this very worrying problem but I would like to ask her why do you think this extent of homophobic bullying actually exists in this country and what do you think are the consequences of letting such bullying continue?

RESPONSE

Thank you Councillor Capstick. I think at the moment the government does not require schools to statutorily report homophobic bullying in the same way that they do with racist bullying, and although we encourage it in our Southwark schools to report this kind of bullying it makes me very grateful that Southwark is part of the Stonewall programme on this. Because it's not statutory, many schools don't perceive it to be a problem or they don't regard it to be a serious kind of bullying. I think nationally only a quarter of schools say that homophobic bullying is wrong in their schools.

I think it definitely needs to be taken as seriously as racist bullying, because in a lot of instances with young gay people there may not be any support at home. In some cases their family may not know they are gay, or it may be something that they have had a lot of difficulty talking to their families about. So I think when you don't have support from your own family it makes it even more serious.

Over 60% of the respondents to Stonewall said that they don't have a grown up to turn to. According to Stonewall half of those who experience homophobic bullying start to skip schools. Many have been threatened, particularly physical threats, and something like seven out of ten said it had huge impact on their work. Nick Legg and Stephen Williams of the Lib Dem have been campaigning for the government to take this lot more seriously and I hope that the government do take notice so that fewer people both nationally and in Southwark have to suffer with this.

22. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE

What proportion of applicants in Southwark got their first choice of secondary school this September? What proportion of parents failed to get any of their top six choices?

RESPONSE

The proportion of applicants in Southwark who got their first choice of secondary school this September was 52.4%, compared with 48.9% in 2007.

The proportion of parents who failed to get their children into any of their top six choices was 10.1%, compared with 17.3% from the previous year.

23. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION FROM COUNCILLOR TAYO SITU

How has the council pushed academies to encourage local parents to become governors? What proportion of governors at Southwark's academies are parent governors? Why has the executive managed to secure so few parent governors for Southwark's academies?

RESPONSE

Academies are accountable to the Secretary of State, and not to the local council, through the requirements of a funding agreement between the academy's sponsors and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The Articles of Association contained in this agreement determine the composition of the governing body. All of Southwark's academies have one or two elected parent governors, as prescribed in their articles. These are all local parents, who live in the London Borough of Southwark, except for one parent governor at the City of London Academy who lives in the City.

The proportions vary, depending on the size of the governing body and the number of governors, from 1:7 at City of London Academy, through 1:10 at Walworth Academy to 1:14 at the Harris Academies and St Michael & All Angels Academy.

Despite the limited control the council has in relation to the selection of the governors of academies, the council has been proactive in the recruitment of governors for our other schools. This includes providing information sources, such as leaflets, encouraging parents to become governors. The governor development unit, in collaboration with the community involvement and development unit, have actively encouraged BME parents to apply to be governors, as well as free induction training and information packs once they have become governors.

Given our success in recruiting parent governors, and Southwark's strong reputation with the DCSF as a leading academies authority, I will be writing to the Secretary of State to ask him to consult local authorities on the governing body arrangement.

24. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DOMINIC THORNCROFT

Residents in Nunhead have been disappointed to hear that a planned lighting renewal scheme for a number of roads between Linden Grove and Howbury Road has been delayed yet again. We have been told work will start in the new year. Can the executive explain why this work will have taken nearly three years to get on site? And who has been responsible for the delays in this scheme to date?

RESPONSE

This £1m programme will result in the renewal of lighting columns in 17 roads in Nunhead. All of the technical work in relation to this scheme has been completed, the orders have been placed and officers are physically marking out the locations of the columns in order to aid installation.

Work will commence in January rather than December because it is more difficult to resolve problems with the London Electricity Board over the Christmas period. Residents will receive letters giving them at least three weeks notice of the commencement of works. The original programme was designed as an environmental improvement scheme aimed at improving the lighting on main roads and gateways in and out of Peckham and Nunhead.

The scheme was redesigned to take more account of community safety issues and the feedback from the Nunhead Community Forum and other local groups about their wish to enhance the Victorian nature of the area. This has resulted in a delay but on balance the scheme now reflects much more closely the views of local residents and addresses the worst existing lighting columns in respect of the quality of the light which is emitted as well as those roads with the worst columns in respect of structural stability.

NOTE: Any supplemental question to be answered by the executive member for regeneration.

25. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE

Can the executive member for environment explain to what extent “levels of complaints” played in deciding which roads received investment as part of the highways capital programme as agreed by him on August 22 2008? Could he provide council assembly with an example of a road scheme from amongst those agreed as planned works to non-principle roads 2008-09, whose inclusion was in any due to “levels of complaints?”

RESPONSE

Whilst as a council we are keen to have people feed their views into the services we deliver we are also mindful that a fair and equitable distribution of funds is essential. To ensure that we have such a process when we are allocating funds to road projects we have a set of criteria against which decisions are made. The criteria include:

- listed priority from the annual condition survey
- coarse assessment by the highway inspector when conducting safety inspections
- location on the network (main roads, busy bus routes, proximity to rail and bus stations, category 1 and 2 footways and proximity to schools, hospitals, libraries and homes for the elderly)
- records of frequent minor repairs and
- coordination with known works proposed by the transportation division and utility companies.

At the heart of all we do is safety: therefore our decisions are driven by this consideration and are shown in the criteria listed above. As such the number of complaints made does not form part of this process; rather our main focus is the condition of a road based upon the annual inspection. For this reason no such road scheme was approved because of the level of complaints.

26. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR NICK VINEALL

To ask the executive member for the environment to identify any decisions falling within their portfolio that they expect will be made within the next 12 months (whether by the council's executive, or as an individual member decision or by officers under delegated powers) and which could either

- a) sensibly be delegated to community councils; or
- b) in relation to which they believe formal community council consultation would be appropriate and potentially useful

and, in relation to each, to say what steps they have taken or intend to take either to delegate those decisions or to engage in formal consultation with community councils?

RESPONSE

The Council has a statutory duty to publish in its forward plan decisions to be taken over the next four months. Other decisions to be taken over the next 12 months can also be added to this plan. In this period, I am expecting the following decisions from within the environment portfolio:

Executive Decision:

Accessible transport strategy
Gateway 1 and 2 procurement of gas to sites consuming more than 25,000 therms
Gateway 1 – markets and Street Trading contracts
Environment Education Policy
Gateway 1 and 2 procurement of supply of gas to interruptible sites.

Individual Decision:

Air Quality Improvement Plan – Final Report

The environment education policy can be consulted on with community councils but cannot be delegated to them. All decisions must remain as stated above.

In order to delegate decision making on a given issue to community councils would require changes to part 3(H) of the Constitution. Amongst other powers, this section outlines those aspects of environmental management and traffic management decision making which are delegated to community council and those aspects where consultation is required.

While in some cases it is important that decisions be taken on a strategic basis, I believe that decisions should be devolved to a local level wherever possible. I would therefore welcome the opportunity to work with the executive member for citizenship, communities and equalities and with community council chairs to look at where it is possible to devolve more decisions to community councils.

I believe that consultation with community councils is always valuable in ensuring that the interests of Southwark's different communities are taken into account. However, I am aware of the heavy burden of formal consultation which already rests on community councils and would not want to add to this unnecessarily. Once again therefore, I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this with community council chairs and my executive colleague to look at how consultation can best be extended.

27. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER

Does he agree with me that the South London Line offers a crucial transport link for people from across Southwark?

RESPONSE

Yes, I believe that the London Bridge to Victoria line is an important commuter link for people from Camberwell, Peckham and East Dulwich. I am greatly concerned by plans to discontinue the London Bridge to Victoria route, particularly in light of the uncertainty about the extension of the East London Line Phase 2.

I note the work which my colleague the Executive Member for Regeneration is doing to establish whether a legal challenge to the planned cessation of the service is possible and will support his efforts in this regard.

28. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR JENNY JONES

(1) What are the results of the council's monitoring of the use of the paper based liquid food and drink collection facility that was established at Sainsbury's in East Dulwich? (2) Does the council have plans to extend recycling facilities for paper based liquid food and drink containers throughout the borough and (3) if so, what are they?

RESPONSE

We are passionate about encouraging people to reduce the waste they produce, reuse what they can and recycle wherever possible and are committed to making Southwark a cleaner, greener and more sustainable borough.

As with all Sainsbury's stores across the country the site in question is now managed by Sainsbury's itself and for this reason we do not monitor the site. Whilst we are provided with overall tonnage data, this is not broken down to the specific type of waste arising. We are pleased that Sainsbury's have put in place their own arrangements for recycling and would encourage other private firms to do so.

The council is already pursuing plans for recycling facilities for paper-based liquid food and drink containers throughout Southwark. Our contractor, Veolia, with whom we have recently signed a far reaching contract to improve our recycling levels, has carried out a review of all "bring" sites in Southwark. This data is currently being analysed and suitable sites will be identified for Tetra-pak recycling. We have secured agreement with Tetra-pak for their funding five recycling banks across Southwark. Two of these sites have been identified, one at the Sainsbury's site in Dulwich and the other at Manor Place. The other three sites will be subject to Veolia's review and agreement with Tetra-pak, who will have responsibility for collecting the waste.

We are committed to increasing recycling and will improve our recycling rate to 30% by 2010-11 and half of all waste by 2020-21.

29. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR ANDREW PAKES

What is the average length of time that a Southwark resident joining the waiting list for an allotment today could be expected to wait before being allocated with a space? What proposals has the council developed to expand the provision of allotments in the borough?

RESPONSE

Allotments in Southwark are not directly managed by the council. Some sections are leased by property to individual societies who allocate allotments and manage waiting lists. These societies hold the information requested.

Given the recent increase in interest in 'grow-your-own' food, I had already planned to undertake an investigation into whether it would be possible to expand allotment provision in the borough. It is important to note that any such proposals would need to be balanced against the council's need to use its land and other resources to meet strategic priorities.

I would welcome any suggestions or proposals from the member about how the provision of allotment space in Southwark might be expanded and would be happy to discuss the findings of my investigation with him once it is complete.

30. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR GORDON NARDELL

In what ways has the council sought to encourage investment in sustainable micro-energy generation schemes on new houses and developments? How many houses and developments have been approved in the last four financial years which include such schemes?

RESPONSE

I am keen to encourage residents to use renewable energies in order to tackle climate change.

Policy 3.5 in the Southwark unitary development plan (UDP) requires all new development to incorporate renewable energy technology and design where this would not adversely affect the viability of the development. Where it is a major development outside a conservation area the Southwark UDP requires that 10% of the energy requirements is drawn from renewable energy production on-site or renewable energy sources. Since the UDP was adopted the new London Plan has come into force and this requires a minimum of 20% on-site renewable generation. This is the policy that Southwark now applies to all new development. Requiring the inclusion of renewable energy technology and design encourages the use of micro-generation technologies such as solar thermal hot water heating, solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generation, wind turbines, micro-combined heat and power (CHP), heat pumps, micro-hydro, biomass heating and fuel-cells.

As part of the local development framework (LDF) process we will be reviewing the targets for renewable energy requirements and identifying broad areas where the development of specific renewable energy technologies is appropriate. This will be set out in the core strategy and forthcoming area action plans. Southwark Council has also prepared a sustainable design and construction supplemental planning document (SPD) which is due to be adopted in February 2009. This sets out further information on how Southwark Council's planning policies on a number of different issues including energy will be applied to different types of development.

As part of the annual monitoring report (AMR) the council is required to monitor the percentage of new developments with renewable technology. We currently only have some limited data available for this indicator. In the last monitoring year there were 40 pieces of renewable infrastructure approved. We have information for 17 schemes in the borough, 10 of which supplied between 10-20% energy from renewables and 6 schemes supplied more than 20%. We also know that 19 schemes could not provide renewables because of site constraints (10 sites), heritage issues (2 sites), not financially viable (5 sites) or it was not a major development (2 sites) and therefore energy from renewables was not required. Next year's AMR should have more detailed information as a more systematic method of collecting this data has been set up.

NOTE: Any supplemental question to be answered by the executive member for Regeneration

31. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR DANNY MCCARTHY

Could the executive member update the council on progress towards the creation of a zero emission zone in the north of Southwark?

RESPONSE

The council has not made any commitment to a zero-emission zone in the north of Southwark. It would be impossible to stop all emissions. We are, however, committed to making Southwark a healthy and environmentally sustainable borough in which to live.

32. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR SANDRA RHULE

How many public toilets in the borough have a) been opened and b) closed by the council in the 2006-07 and 2007-08 financial years and in the financial year 2008-09 to date? How many of the public toilets identified as newly opened are like-for-like replacements for older facilities in the same or similar location?

RESPONSE

In December 2005 we carried out a strategic review of all public conveniences in Southwark. From this review five main actions were identified, namely:

- providing new automatic public conveniences (APCs) facilities at Camberwell Green and Atwell Road, Peckham
- closing all toilets which did not meet the Disability Discrimination Act
- opening toilets in council buildings and advertising their locations
- encouraging private companies to allow public use of their facilities and
- ensuring that regeneration schemes include public toilet provision.

This review has led to a change in what we provide to members of the public. In 2006-07 there were 13 public toilets available in Southwark which could be used by members of the public. Through the actions identified in our review we have increased this in 2008-09 to 34; this is an increase of over 150%. The breakdown, by financial year, from 2006-07 is as follows

Financial year	Opened	Closed
2006-07	2	9

2007-08	20	0
2008-09 (to date)	1	0

Those toilets closed in 2006-07 were a result of our plans to improve provision and make toilets compatible with the Disability Discrimination Act. Since then the council has taken a variety of steps to increase access to public toilets in the borough, including:

- all toilets advertised on our website so people have full access to information on what we provide
- our APCs are available for over 95% of the time and are resistant to both abuse and vandalism
- all public toilets are now Disability Discrimination Act compliant, and
- signposting to toilets.

33. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL

Can he explain the increase in fees payable by market traders and investigate the possibility of creating individual accounts for each of the markets in Southwark to encourage greater local accountability and flexibility?

RESPONSE

When dealing with markets and street trading we set fees as against the reasonable costs of running the street trading section's function. Under the London Local Authorities Act the fees and charges cannot be profit-making and are determined against:

- the reasonable costs of collection, removal and disposal of refuse
- additional cleansing of streets
- reasonable administrative costs of operating markets and street trading and meeting the provisions of the London Local Authorities Act in relation to street trading, and
- the costs of enforcement.

Over the past five years our fees and charges have not kept pace with the increase in inflation. Indeed, we charge some of the lowest fees and charges in London. This means that we have a street trading account which is in deficit; a deficit we need to tackle. Because the account is ring-fenced from other council monies and so that we can meet the demands of this self-financing fund we have to increase our fees and charges. Similarly we need to reflect the rising costs of administering markets. Whilst our increase in fees and charges is not designed to reduce the deficit, neither do we wish to see it increase. To therefore tackle our deficit we have commissioned a full review of the service and how it is best delivered.

We do not currently run individual accounts for markets, though this can be done under law and is done by some other boroughs. The review of our street trading activities will consider some of these matters and make recommendations. When this review is returned we will form our opinion on how best to take forward a raft of measures associated with markets and street trading. However, it should be noted that any changes to the way the charges are calculated requires extensive consultation in accordance with the requirements of the London Local Authorities Act.

34. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MARK GLOVER

How many recycling bins have been installed on Southwark's streets in each of the most recent four financial years for which figures are available? What is the total number of such bins currently in place in the borough? How many such bins are planned to be installed in the current financial year?

RESPONSE

For the past four years we have installed 30 new recycling bins on Southwark's streets. This is broken down, by year, as follows:

Financial year	Recycling bins installed
2004-05	3
2005-06	5
2006-07	12
2007-08	10

This takes our total number of on-street recycling bin sites to 71, with a total of 271 bins at these sites. This further supports our extensive network of recycling facilities which are located in convenient locations, for example on our estates or in private bin stores. Overall this takes our number of sites to 800, with 2,782 bins at these sites. We believe this is an impressive real choice to our residents. Furthermore there is currently a review of the borough's recycling facilities being undertaken by our contractor, Veolia. This review will allow us to make sure we have the right facilities in place, at the right locations for local people.

35. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR VERONICA WARD

Would the executive member not agree that it is often the lack of sound proofing rather than anti social behaviour that is causing misery for both tenants and leaseholders in upstairs and downstairs street properties? Would it not be more cost effective to put good sound proofing into these properties than spending hours of housing officers, SASBU and mediation time to resolve concerns like people walking noisily across floors, children playing, running washing machines late into the evening and having friends round?

RESPONSE

It is right to assume that many low level nuisance problems are noise complaints. However, sound proofing all properties would be extremely expensive and would not eliminate this problem given that the design and layout of some of many of our flatted properties makes effective sound proofing very difficult. Given that we have many pressing investment priorities we also have to consider the very high cost of soundproofing across the board, rather than in particularly difficult cases. The last estimate of the cost of soundproofing across the borough was in excess of £13 million.

One of the biggest sources of complaint is around the noise created in flats with laminate flooring above the ground floor. We are planning a review of our current tenancy agreement next year, with a view to including a provision that laminates are installed to current guidelines on soundproofing. This will mean we can take enforcement action where incorrectly installed flooring is causing noise nuisance.

36. **QUESTION 36** – Following a point of personal explanation from Councillor James Gurling, Councillor Martin Seaton withdrew question 36.

37. **QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LAUDER**

How many lift breakdowns were reported across each ward since January 1 2008 to date, compared with a full year from January 1 2007 – December 31 2007? Please make clear where breakdowns are due to vandalism/misuse and general engineering problems.

RESPONSE

Data from Jan-Oct	No. of Lifts	Repairs 2007	Repairs 2008
Bermondsey	127	1386	1621
Borough & Bank	85	598	875
Browning	11	119	153
Camberwell	122	1159	1454
Dulwich	77	336	573
Nunhead & Peckham	38	606	479
Peckham	81	887	912
Rotherhithe	72	1164	1068
Walworth	156	2077	2300

The number of repairs have risen in 2008 compared to 2007 but this would be expected considering in 2007 that contract was a comprehensive arrangement where the service provider completed all repairs under one lump payment. For this reason, not every repair would have been raised and recorded. In January 2008, the contract arrangement changed to a schedule of rates type contract, where every piece of work generates an individual order, increasing the incentive to record each repair.

We cannot produce lift breakdown figures on a ward by ward basis currently. Area performance data suggest, however, that a higher proportion of lift breakdowns occur in the Walworth area, reflecting the particularly difficult problems on regeneration estates such as the Aylesbury and the Heygate. To demonstrate this issue, the average repair per lift per month is 1.2 jobs whereas the Aylesbury lifts have 2.65 jobs per month. We do need to consider that Aylesbury lifts complete 350,000 journeys a year where on smaller estates the average number of journeys is 110,000.

In terms of vandalism, 336 jobs have been raised apportioned to vandalism over a six month period. Again Walworth is one of the main areas identified.

The lift section has introduced much more robust monitoring of the remote management system and are targeting the most problematic lift on a daily basis. We are aiming this year to make sure our lifts are available 95% of the time, our mid year performance report shows lift outage at 94.6%.

38. **QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT SMEATH**

Can the executive member please detail any cost over-runs on major repairs contracts in this financial year and explain the reason for the over-run?

RESPONSE

If the question refers to the repairs and maintenance service, our major repairs contracts are responsive. Unit costs are set through a schedule of rates, so any budget overspends are caused by excess demand rather than contractual overrun. This year we are looking at an overspend on our repairs contracts of approximately 6%, but this has been caused by excellent performance on eliminating the voids backlog and reducing void turnaround considerably. This budget overspend is fully contained within current housing management budgets. The council is working to with its partners in the repairs service to make sure we stay within budget in the coming years.

If the question refers to investment projects there are currently 60 projects on site and it is anticipated that three will lead to additional costs all as a result of delays on site. These are: Hawkstone 2 – Brydale (Rotherhithe), Astley estate refurbishment Phase 3 (Bermondsey), Silverlock 1 – Tissington (Rotherhithe). The total value of these projects is £7.6m and the cost of overruns is expected to be £225,000 or 3% of the value of these projects. In context this is against a major works capital programme of £85m.

39. QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER AND THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING FROM COUNCILLOR EVRIM LAWS

How much has the council’s housing department paid out in compensation for missed appointments in the last two years?

RESPONSE

The following figures relate to payments processed during this and the last financial year.

	2008-09 (to date)	2007-08
Total appointments misses	211	749
Projected for 2008-09	422 (44% reduction from 2007-08)	
Paid in compensation	£10,653 (£21,306 projected for 2008-09)	£37,450

During the 2007-08 financial year 225,700 works orders to individual dwellings have been raised across all housing repair contracts (repair and maintenance, heating, emergencies, door entry, asbestos, lifts, TV aerials, pest control etc).

Current customer feedback indicates that missed appointments are much reduced. During September 2008 kept appointments reported at 98.14%

The numbers of missed appointments vary across different areas and these would include; different stock profile, number of dwellings in the area, and contractor performance. The new estates property management division has been centrally re-located to Spa Road. As well as locating to one office, both the repairs team and investment and asset management team have merged areas so that we now have 4 instead of 8 areas. They are:

- North Team (formerly Borough & Bankside and Walworth)
- Central Team (formerly Camberwell and Peckham)
- East Team (formerly Bermondsey and Rotherhithe)
- South Team (formerly Dulwich and Nunhead).

This centralisation and merger of areas will result in a more consistent service delivery to customers. As well these moves, the estate property management division will be creating its own team to deal with payment (both for contractors, customers, and internal billing). This will also see a move towards a consistent way of recording and processing financial payments.

The repairs control centre (RCC) has introduced a new option within the resource scheduling system to identify missed appointments when the repair and maintenance contractor closes down works orders. Each week the list of such instances is compiled and forwarded to the area repair team to process payments to customers, and credit notes against the contractor. The missed appointment is then re-scheduled by the RCC. This process will result in some customers actually receiving compensation even when they have not requested it, and should produce a more consistent approach from the centralised repairs service

40. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN FRIARY

How many offenders in Southwark were subject to council-operated community payback schemes in each of the most recent four financial years for which figures are available?

RESPONSE

The numbers of young people who have engaged with the Community Payback scheme over the past four years is as follows:

Financial year	Young people involved
2004-05	104
2005-06	161
2006-07	324
2007-08	407

The scheme was extended in 2006 when the youth offending service developed activities for young people, in groups of 10 to 12. Examples include:

- landscaping on Network Rail property in West Dulwich
- painting and decorating
- tidying up and renovating local children’s play areas
- mending bicycles which have been abandoned and have been approved by the police to be distributed to local children, and
- carrying out environmental audits with community wardens.

These schemes give something back to the community, provide young people with an insight into what they have done and should ultimately make Southwark a safer place to be. We will continue to review and keep relevant the activities we do with young people and will do so under the recently published, national, youth crime action plan.

Responsibility for adult offenders is that of the national probation service.

41. QUESTION FOR THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON MCGOVERN

Can the executive member provide a guarantee that the Camberwell Leisure Centre will remain open for the use of the public with at least the current range of facilities up to and beyond 2012?

RESPONSE

I am flattered by the presumption in the question that I will be holding my current executive portfolio up to 2012. However, I am not hubristic enough to presume that a Conservative

administration will be the outcome of the 2010 council elections in Southwark – or, sadly, that any successor from another political party would honour a guarantee I give.

However, subject to Constitutional Council re-appointing me next year I intend to remain holding this portfolio until the end of the current administration in 2010 and I can give an undertaking that the current provision at Camberwell Leisure Centre will remain whilst I hold the portfolio. (Subject to any unforeseen major building failure)

Since 1998 there has been a long history of “political promises” being made about Camberwell Leisure Centre which have not been delivered. I believe that what residents of Camberwell want more than anything else is the executive member responsible to put together a viable financial package to secure the long term future of the centre, and I believe I have outlined that in the recent report to the executive. I am going to be concentrating all my efforts to try and ensure our application to the government’s “Free Swimming Capital Programme” is successful and that package can be put in place during my term in office, and I think the residents of Camberwell will expect no less from councillors of all political parties represented on Southwark Council.

42. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY

To ask the executive member for leisure, culture and sport to publish the latest available data on book issues at the council’s libraries.

RESPONSE

The statistics for the 6 months from April to September 2008 indicate that Southwark libraries issued a total of 625,877 items and this is a 7% increase on the same period last year. This improvement may be attributed to:

- increasing the opening hours within our existing resources at Dulwich, Newington and John Harvard libraries
- introducing the reader reward card as part of our programme for the National Year of Reading.
- improving the quality and range of stock across the libraries
- delivering a regular programme of free events including book groups for different age groups and story times for younger children all designed to encourage active library usage.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank library staff whose work and enthusiasm has contributed to this increased usage in our libraries.

43. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MICHELLE HOLFORD

To ask the executive member for leisure, culture and sport to outline details of the community sports leadership awards scheme

RESPONSE

The 'Award in Community Sports Leadership' is a nationally recognised training scheme accredited by Sports Leaders UK. Its objective is to train people of all ages to become generic sport and active recreation coaches. In Southwark the training is delivered in-house by our own community games staff. Nine of our community sports coaches have been trained to tutor this course and Southwark has just been accredited as one of the first local centres of community sports leadership in the country. The training is offered free of charge to all Southwark residents.

There are two qualifications: 'Level 1' which is aimed at young people from the age of fourteen (with no upper limit) and 'Level 2' which is designed for people over sixteen. In practice, Southwark has offered Level 2 to young people aged 16-19 (in conjunction with Southwark youth training initiative) and the newly launched Level 1 course is aimed at those aged 14-16.

On completion of the course the younger group are eligible to volunteer as assistant sports leaders. This can be turned into paid employment once they reach the age of sixteen. Those completing Level 2 are eligible for employment either through the Southwark Community Games or other generic sports programmes elsewhere.

To date thirty five local people have been trained to Level 2 of which twenty have gained part-time employment through the Southwark Community Games. Two of the cohort are now full-time Southwark Community Games Coaches. The course runs twice a year and nineteen people have already signed up for the next course in February 2009.

The new Level 1 course has been running since September, on two days per week, at the Damilola Taylor Centre. It includes twelve young people who have either been excluded from school or are at danger of exclusion. The course is running well and aims to provide these young people with focus, purpose, and the confidence to change their behaviour and make a positive contribution to the community.

This is an excellent scheme which provides training and employment to young people in the borough and I hope will provide a pathway to opportunities for participants in the London 2012 Olympics. It demonstrates again that Southwark Community Games remains at the forefront of local authority sports development.

44. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM

In the last 24 months how many slots per month have trained IT professionals been available for advice and assistance in Southwark libraries?

RESPONSE

All Southwark libraries provide free access to ICT. This includes access to the internet, online information resources subscribed to by the Council, Word and other programmes. Individual help is available for customers who are not confident in the use of technology and one to one sessions can be booked.

In addition to this, library staff are able to refer people on to the wide range of ICT learning on offer throughout Southwark including at Southwark College, Morley College and a range of community providers funded through the Adult Learning Service. These include Southwark Muslim Women's Association based in Peckham and Red Kite Learning who deliver courses in Blackfriars Road and near to Southwark underground station. There is also a Learn Direct Centre at Elephant and Castle and other organisations such as the Peabody Trust and Blackfriars Settlement offer ICT learning. All of these organisations offer subsidised rates or free learning for certain categories of learner.

Plans for the new Canada Water Library include provision of dedicated learning suites, including for ICT and discussions are progressing with potential service providers. Learning facilities will also be offered at the new John Harvard Library when it re-opens.

45. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE

How much had the 416 agency staff who had been employed at the council for six months or more as of September 26 2008 cost in total over the full period of their employment up to that point?

RESPONSE

For the 416 workers the total cost, spanning the period back to April 06 is:

2006-07	£3.97m
2007-08	£9.26m
2008-09	£7.17m

It is important to note that the 416 staff in question are meeting existing staff needs and filling vacant posts, primarily covering funded, permanent posts or work on specific projects with a defined time scale.

While in some cases it may be necessary to pay a premium to meet these staff needs through the use of agency staff, this should be set against the reduced overheads incurred as a result of using agency staff rather than permanent staff. The council's agency staff contract is based on a series of fixed rates which have been determined by reference to the market and a check against Southwark equivalence. In 2006-07 this achieved a 5% saving in agency staff costs. In a few cases rates are fixed individually to recognise the specialist skills or uniqueness of the role, e.g. IT project managers. In general though, except for specialist hard to fill jobs, agency costs are lower than would be experienced by direct employment.

On engagement of agency workers, departments are asked to record on the system the reasons for usage, against broad criteria. Each quarter, where an agency staff member is still required, assignments must be actively extended and reasons for use reaffirmed. Current snapshot monitor shows some of the reasons as:

Reason	% of workers
Pending recruitment/reorganisation	42%
Workload (includes seasonal activity)	36%
Other unplanned absence (including maternity leave)	9%
Sickness absence	5%
Specialist skills	8%

The council only employs agency staff where it would not be possible to fill a given post with a permanent member of staff. It is a fact that many people like the control offered by short-term assignments and the opportunities for self-management and choice that it offers. This is particularly true in certain fields, such as planning, finance and project management.

46. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR OLAJUMOKE OYEWUNMI

How much has the council cut from grants to voluntary sector organisations in the last two years? Please itemise the answer.

RESPONSE

The Council's funding for voluntary sector organisations comes from the Council's General Fund.

The table below shows the total core programmes funded from the General Fund. Between 2006-07 and 2008-09, there has been a 11.3% increase in grants from the general fund (£4.74 million increase). This is in comparison with a 8.76% increase in the grant funding received by the Council from the government over the same period.

	2006-07 £	2007-08 £	2008-09 £
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	41,766,375	42,378,774	46,507,376

There have of course been variations in the amounts funded to particular organisations over the years.

47. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY

How many members of agency staff were employed in each council department in the last month? Please fully itemise your answer.

RESPONSE

Using the latest available data (October 2008) the number of agency workers engaged was as follows:

Children's Services	136
Corporate Services	98
Environment & Housing	441
Health & Social Care	92
Major Projects	8
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	79
 Grand total	 854

This is in comparison to the October 2007 figure of 956 agency workers which demonstrates a reduction of 10%.

48. QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ALTHEA SMITH

Has the council been exposed to any loss of reserves due to the turmoil in the banking sector at home and overseas? Will the executive set up a credit crunch task force similar to those in Lambeth and Lewisham to look at how the council could help residents who are going through tough times as a result of the turmoil?

RESPONSE

The council holds both long and short term financial investments. The short term investments are held in cash deposits required to pay bills and meet the current costs of services; deposits are managed in such a way to optimise returns on any short term cash available to the council. Investments are subject to strict regulations and guidance with which the council seeks to comply.

Long term investments are held by the pension fund as part of a funding strategy designed to ensure the fund can meet its future pension liabilities.

The markets are extremely volatile at the moment and we and our fund managers are monitoring all our investments on an hourly basis to ensure that the risks to both short and long term investment returns are minimised.

We work closely with external fund managers and independent investment advisers to make the best decisions possible in each investment area.

Issues are arising on a daily basis and we are dealing with each as they occur; many are extremely difficult to predict. Like every council we ensure money is put into as diverse a range of banks as possible which inevitably means at times like these the impact on individual councils may differ significantly.

The council is very mindful of the difficulties created for residents and for businesses during such difficult periods of financial uncertainty and will continue to promote our nationally recognised anti-poverty initiatives locally and encourage government to provide the resources necessary to help local authorities soften the impacts of recession on communities, families and local businesses.

49. QUESTION TO EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULT CARE FROM COUNCILLOR SUSAN ELAN JONES

In the most recent year for which data is available, what was the average wait for the installation of minor home aid equipment for Southwark residents? In the same period, what was the average wait for the installation of complex equipment?

RESPONSE

There are a number of factors which contribute to the waiting period for the installation of minor home aid equipment for Southwark residents. This includes a surveyor visiting the site, drawing up plans and tender specification. The surveyor must then go out to tender prior to work commencing.

For minor adaptations, in the financial year 2007-08, waiting terms were 1.7 weeks, in comparison with 3.8 week waiting terms, for the financial year 2006-07. This represents an improvement of 2.1 weeks.

For major adaptations during the financial year 2007-08, the waiting term is 25.4 weeks, compared to 38 weeks for the financial year 2006-07. This represents an improvement of 13.4 weeks.

The national (England) average in 2007-08 for minor adaptations is 1.9 weeks. For major adaptations is 26.6 weeks.

These figures illustrate the positive reduction in waiting terms. Although we acknowledge this improvement, we will continue to work to improve the length of time it takes to install adaptations.