

Council

20 January 2010

Questions from Councillors

1. **By: Councillor Jeremy Clyne (submitted on 17.12.09)**

To: Councillor Lib Peck – Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

Decent Homes Funding

When were you informed that the percentage of Lambeth non-decent homes under this Labour administration is estimated to have risen from 32 per cent to 40 per cent?

Now that this fag-end Labour Government has finally produced a statement about the funds that would supposedly be made available should Lambeth Living ever attain a Two Star level, can you tell us when does the Council expect that any of this money will be released? And further what would be the funding gap resulting from a 40 per cent non-decency level?

The December Cabinet report on the Ashmole Estate stated that if its transfer to Housing Association did not proceed further capital would be required which would require approval from the Homes and Communities Agency additional to the bid already made. Has such an additional bid been made in respect of the Leigham Court Estate, and for how much, given that its planned transfer did not proceed, following a negative vote two and a half years ago, and if not why not?

Is the money announced by the Housing Minister meant to include the needs of the Leigham Court Estate?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

I was very pleased to see the recent letter from the Housing Minister confirming Decent Homes funding which will be released once Lambeth Living is inspected and reaches a 2 star standard. We expect this to happen in Spring 2011 and we will of course continue to work with Lambeth Living to ensure they achieve this. It is worth remembering that we are only able to access Decent Homes funding thanks to a Labour Government and Labour Council working together.

As Councillor Clyne is aware from a similar Public Notice Question he raised through Housing Scrutiny on 26 November 2009, the figure of 40% non-decency is not a figure recognised by officers. Although work is being done to integrate and update the latest stock condition information, Councillor Clyne is aware that this exercise will not be completed until the first week in February. He is also aware through the response provided to his Public Notice Question that an increase in

non-decency does not necessarily mean an increase in funding provision, as it will be dependent upon which elements are failing the standard. As such, it is not possible at this moment to know whether or not there is a funding gap.

Leigham Court along with Ashmole Estate was not included in the original Building Cost Model submitted to CLG or in the first revised version submitted in October 2006. In May 2008 a further revised Building Cost Model was submitted with a covering letter which indicated that both Ashmole Estate and Leigham Court was not included in the original submission and that we may need to revise the Building Cost Model to reflect that. It also indicated that Ashmole was to be re-balloted which took place in July 2009 and residents positively voted to transfer.

2. By: Councillor Clare Whelan (submitted on 17.12.09)

To: Councillor Rachel Heywood – Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities

Service Provision for Leisure, Libraries and Parks

How many of the Council's leisure facilities are in better condition now than a year ago? How many of the Council's libraries are in better condition now than a year ago? Are there more or fewer Park Rangers in post than four years ago?

Party: Conservative

Answer:

This administration is investing considerable resources in ensuring that our much loved leisure facilities - leisure centres, parks and open spaces and libraries amongst others - are maintained and improved for our residents. The allocation of £1.6million of additional capital for these ends demonstrates our very real commitment to this ambition. This is to say nothing of our success in securing significant investments to develop outstanding new leisure centres in Clapham, Norwood, Streatham and North Lambeth.

Members are well aware of the problems which have led to the closure of Streatham Leisure Centre, which is due to be replaced by a new state of the art facility as part of the major regeneration programme for Streatham. Considerable work has now been done to enable local residents to access alternative facilities in the short term and work continues to seek more local alternatives prior to the provision of a new facility.

Clapham Leisure Centre has now closed to prepare for its demolition ahead of the construction of a fantastic new state of the art leisure facility.

As far as the other three centres are concerned major improvements to Brixton Recreation Centre have been undertaken and include investigations and repairs to leaks, the roof safe system and flashings whilst a £600,000 project to improve facilities for families and people with disabilities is about to commence. This is in addition to the massive investments of over £3million which have resulted in Brixton having some of the best facilities for children and young people in Europe. At

Flaxman repairs and improvement have been made to the showers as well as cyclical decoration. The centre at Ferndale was assessed as not requiring any major works during this year.

In libraries, unplanned closures due to heating and power failures have been fewer so far than last year. However, the injection of £355k capital expenditure is in recognition of the need to make some important improvements and has been used to both establish the condition of the buildings and to begin approximately £315k worth of improvements to Streatham, West Norwood and Durning libraries in the remainder of the financial year. This represents unprecedented investment in our libraries and will begin to improve the library estate as is appropriate.

As far as parks and open spaces are concerned, there appear to be three determinants in considering whether they are “better” than a year ago. These are, physical improvements, external assessments and awards and user/resident surveys. Against these three areas, the following comments apply.

Physical improvements to parks:

The Council's parks are undergoing a rolling programme of continuing improvements and refurbishments . We have been extremely successful in attracting funding from a wide variety of external sources. During the past year, in addition to general maintenance, nearly 30 different projects have been completed, are in progress or about to begin. Through the Capital Improvements Programme there are a wide range of improvements currently taking place, including bringing the water drinking and ornamental fountains back to life and refurbishment of paths, fences and sports pitches.

External assessments and awards

Improvements in Lambeth's parks have been marked by our achievement of 6 Green Flags and two Green Pennants. The Green Flag sites are:

- Ruskin
- Vauxhall
- Myatts
- Archbishops
- Milkwood
- St Pauls Churchyard in Clapham

The Green Pennant sites are:

- St Pauls Churchyard Community Garden in Clapham
- Brockwell Community Greenhouses

National Performance Indicators – resident satisfaction with council services

The recent MORI poll has determined that Lambeth residents have a 73% satisfaction rating with the parks and open spaces; this places Lambeth in 14th position in London and ahead of boroughs such as Hammersmith and Fulham, Croydon, Ealing and Enfield.

Overall, compared to a year ago, evidence suggests that parks are considered to be in better condition than they were. However, the service continues to find ways to make improvements to the physical appearance of the parks, through improved maintenance, capital improvement programmes, stronger partnerships with stakeholders and improved perceptions of safety.

In 2004, there was a full complement of Rangers staff; the team consisted of 20 including a Manager and Senior Ranger. However, this was never affordable within the cash envelope set aside for the purpose and the team was reduced through natural wastage to its 2009 level of 14. Currently, the team is 12 strong due to two of the staff being promoted to other posts in the service.

3. By: Councillor Pete Robbins (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Jim Dickson – Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

2010/11 Budget

Could the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources explain how, despite the current tough financial climate, he intends to present a budget for 2010/11 that allocates more money for frontline services whilst also freezing council tax bills for the second year running?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The council has for a number of years worked hard to set, monitor and deliver a prudent and robust general fund process and position. Significant savings of £9.6m have been funded to address Council spending priorities amounting to £10.3m. There are a number of indicators that demonstrate this success such as a strong financial position for the council, outturn against budget, and delivering a zero percent council tax increase last year. The council's 3 year revenue process has meant that we have been planning the financial resources available for 2010/11 for the past 2 years. The council is therefore well placed to consider the full budget position for 2010/11.

The following years, from 2011/12 onwards are expected to be extremely difficult. The current economic climate is challenging and this, together with ongoing uncertainty in all markets, creates an environment in which it is difficult to plan into the future. The council has been planning against a worst case scenario of a significant reduction in resources across 2011/12 and 2012/13. These plans are being continually considered and will need to be strengthened throughout next year.

The council continues to seek efficiencies from its back office functions rather than its front line services. Savings agreed through the February council tax setting report over the past few years demonstrate this. Whilst the medium term economic and funding climate is gloomy the council is in the strongest position in general fund terms for some years to help weather the storm.

4. **By: Councillor Ashley Lumsden – Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group (submitted on 18.12.09)**

To: Councillor Jim Dickson - Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Equalities and Street Cleaning Service

Does Councillor Dickson consider that the council's Equalities Service and Street Cleaning Service are back-office functions or front line services?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

The equalities service is an important support function which plays a key role enabling the council to deliver its core objectives of delivering quality and tackling inequality.

It is worth noting that the council has met level 4 of the Equalities Standard for Local Government, which requires high levels of commitment, understanding and delivery throughout the organisation. As reported in the Audit Commission's Corporate Assessment 2009, "The Council ensures that diversity and equalities permeate the way in which it works". As such, equalities has increasingly become everyone's business, rather than the exclusive work of a central, back office, team, and cannot be categorised as a service but should be considered as a responsibility held by all staff.

The street cleaning service is a highly effective service directly contributing to the quality of life for local residents and the trading environment for local businesses and one which has improved greatly since 2006 and is now regarded as one of the best in London.

5. **By: Councillor John Whelan (submitted on 17.12.09)**

To: Councillor Lib Peck - Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

Squatted Property Managed by Lambeth Living

What precautions were taken by Lambeth Living to deter squatters from occupying 15 Chatsworth Way in Thurlow Park Ward and what steps were taken to safeguard the personal property of the decanted tenants at Flat 1? What is the estimated cost of evicting the squatters and why has it taken more than six months for the Council to decide on whether or not to proceed with major repairs or dispose of the property?

Party: Conservative

Answer:

The precautions taken at 15 Chatsworth Way to deter squatters included security panelling to all doors and windows and internal audio alarm. The steps taken to

safeguard personal property of the decanted tenants include: the movement of their possessions to temporary accommodation and additional independent secure storage. The cost of evicting the squatters will depend on the complexity of the possession actions we are taking. We are using the shortest route to repossession therefore we envisage the costs will be modest but cannot be precise until the actions have been completed. It has not taken six months to decide on disposal or repair of this property as it has always been out intention to repair and improve the property

6. By: Councillor Florence Nosegbe (submitted on 17.12.09)

To: Councillor John Kazantzis - Cabinet Member for Employment and Enterprise

Improvements to Lambeth's Town Centres

Following the visit of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the Rt Hon John Denham MP to Brixton, can the Cabinet Member for Employment and Enterprise outline what work is currently being undertaken to further improve Lambeth's Town Centres?

Party: Labour

Answer:

A number of initiatives are being taken forward to further improve Lambeth's Town Centres. These fall under the Lambeth Empty Shops Programme. The initiatives range from grant funding to engagement and practical advice for Landlords and prospective tenants.

Funding Sources

Two main sources of funding have been identified for initiatives in vacant shops:

Dept. of Communities & Local Government ('DCLG') – Vacant Shops Grant

DCLG announced on 04.12.09 LBL would receive a grant of £52,632 to encourage the use of vacant shops on its high streets.

Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI)

A proposal has been made to allocate an additional £50,000 from the local authority business growth initiative funding to match the CLG grant.

Proposed Programme

The programme would consist of:

Town Centre 'Space Exploration' Schemes – Streatham and West Norwood

Building upon the success of the Brixton Village Space Exploration Night, it is proposed to develop and deliver equivalent schemes in Streatham and West Norwood.

Working with partners and developing our own capacity, we would deliver a successful model over 12 months, this might consist of:

- A rent free period, discount or trial period on empty shop units for new businesses or temporary occupiers – to be negotiated with landlords rather than subsidised directly
- Event(s) to publicise the availability of empty shops in town centres on the above basis
- An application process and management of an accompanying programme of temporary exhibitions and uses
- A package of business support to new occupiers

Arts in Empty Spaces – Small Grants

In addition, a small grants programme would be developed in collaboration with Lambeth Arts to offer direct funding support to a number of arts projects across the borough.

Individual grants would be awarded up to £2,500. The grants would be used to pay for direct costs of the art project as well as towards maintenance, business rates, utilities and insurance for premises.

The criteria for this programme would be developed, but as a guide it would seek to support projects which:

- Improve the appearance of the shop or area and promote footfall for surrounding businesses
- Increase the likelihood of longer term, sustainable occupation of the vacant property
- Deliver benefits for the community in terms of arts, education and/or employment

The use of the grant as match funding for applications for Arts Council funding would be encouraged.

The venue for the projects could be identified in the application or the award could be made contingent on suitable premises being identified.

Retail start-up spaces

A number of organisations are developing variations on the idea of 'pop up shops' where start-up businesses are given an opportunity to 'test trade' in a retail space.

The proposal would be to support several initiatives in the borough that would provide opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs in a managed environment. This would likely allow for longer term use than typical empty shops projects and therefore funding would be required to support costs such as rent and business rates.

Supporting Activities

Advice and Guidance.

In addition to programme management, there will be a need to continue to make officer time available within Business Growth and Enterprise to provide individual advice and guidance to projects.

Business Rates, Planning and Licensing

Key Council departments need to be involved to ensure decisions reflect the wider strategy around empty shops. This is particularly key for discretionary business rate relief, which receives a 75% central government subsidy and would therefore be a highly efficient way to offer support if policies could be revised to favour empty shops projects.

Landlord Engagement

Subject to available funding, more general landlord engagement work in various areas of the borough is also being explored.

7. By: Councillor Julian Heather (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Lib Peck – Cabinet for Housing and Regeneration

The Hub

Why did the council promise at an October public meeting to report back on negotiations around the Hub/Ice Rink site within 8 weeks? Why did the council fail to keep to that timetable? Is the Council committed to continuity of Ice-Skating in Streatham?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

Negotiations with Tesco are progressing well but they are also commercially confidential. Despite the Council and Tesco working to meet the 8 week deadline the nature of the issues encountered required further investigation. An update by the said deadline was therefore not possible and indeed, would not have been helpful to our negotiations. The Council has advised stakeholders that it is our intention to hold a public meeting early in 2010 where we can provide a proper update and give more complete details. The Council reaffirms its previous statements that it is committed to ensuring continuity of ice-skating in Streatham.

8. By: Councillor Irene Kimm (submitted on 17.12.09)

To: Councillor Paul McGlone - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Rosendale Playing Fields Improvement Project

Why have the proposed £250,000 improvement works for Rosendale Playing Fields been deferred into the 2010-2011 financial year and is the funding still secure? What consultation has taken place with Elm Green School on the future management of the site and why has the Building Schools for the Future team failed to communicate effectively with local residents and users of the playing fields including the Lambeth Primary Schools Football League?

Party: Conservative

Answer:

Works to re level the playing fields were due to commence in late 2009 following planning consent. Unfortunately, the application was not granted and councillors requested further consultation with local residents. That is why a meeting with local residents was subsequently arranged in early December. Sadly, Thurlow Park ward councillors and residents declined. The meeting is now planned for January.

The BSF team will be submitting a revised planning application but the works are now not expected to be completed within the grass growing season and therefore works may be delayed by a year. Funds allocated for the project are being moved into future year's budget and should remain secure. It is theoretically possible that a change to a Conservative government would impact on the funding and this risk should be noted.

In terms of communication, meetings have taken place with The Elmgreen School regarding the management of the field and are progressing well. They have been temporarily put on hold whilst the school concentrates on the opening and operation of the school at their new premises but are due to restart shortly.

I do not accept the contention that the BSF team have failed to communicate with local residents and users of the playing fields. Local residents have been kept informed through a local flyer and the team have had meetings with representatives from the residents associations. We have consulted extensively with the existing users, including the Lambeth primary school football league since 2008, and incorporated the majority of their requirement for junior pitches. We continue to communicate with them through Gary Cornforth to advise on progress of the project.

The BSF team hope that any new issues arising from the local residents consultation can be resolved quickly so the children using the field for football can have the benefits of a level pitch and improved playing surface.

9. By: Councillor Lib Peck (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor John Whelan – Leader of the Opposition Minority Group

Norwood Hall scheme

Does Councillor Whelan support his colleague, Councillor Graham Pycock, who recently expressed at Housing Scrutiny Committee his opposition to the Norwood Hall scheme. Could Councillor Whelan confirm that this is the collective view of the Conservative Group and that he is not in favour of the many benefits that that this development will bring to all residents in the south of the borough?

Party: Labour

Answer:

Councillor Peck is careless with her facts as always. The meeting to which she must be referring is not Housing Scrutiny, but Overview and Scrutiny on December 10, which she attended. As a member of this committee, Councillor Pycock did not oppose the Norwood Hall scheme, but explicitly welcomed it. He did however express concern at the complexity and cost of the PFI funding proposed, which Councillor Peck and other members of the committee actually shared. Councillor Pycock also made several detailed criticisms, in particular relating to the administration's continuing failure to provide a new primary school on any other site in Norwood including the Norwood Hall option. This flies in the face of the administration's pledge to have a temporary school up and running in West Norwood by 2011 and a permanent one by 2013.

As Councillor Pycock pointed out at Overview and Scrutiny, the proposal contained in the Norwood Master plan, to site a new school on the Travis Perkins premises in Norwood High Street, would involve the relocation of Norwood's second biggest employer. This proposal was highly misleading. If it was serious, when will a planning application for change of use and a compulsory purchase order for the site be set in train? It would be helpful if Councillor Peck would give a definitive statement and in any case supply Travis Perkins with an explanation as to why the company has not been informed, never mind consulted.

According to CYPS figures, the requirement for primary places in Norwood increased by 37 per cent last year and yet a site for a new school has yet to be identified. Two or three years have already been wasted, and it will take at least another two or three years to plan, design and build a new school. The Council's Labour administration has already condemned several generations of Norwood's primary pupils to overcrowded conditions and temporary classrooms. The Conservative group condemns Labour's failure to genuinely consult, failure to listen, failure to plan and failure of joined up government. Councillor Peck and her Cabinet colleagues' resentment of the scrutiny process is a major part of their failure.

10. By: Councillor Roger Giess (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Paul McGlone – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Primary School opening

If the Labour Council had accepted Liberal Democrat demands to open a primary school on the Woodfield site in 2007, by when would a school have opened to pupils on that site?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

The Woodfield Centre has been used by the Council's BSF programme for various decant purposes, including under the Liberal Democrat Council from 2002 to 2006.

It was most recently occupied by the Park Campus before its move to its new premises in Gipsy Road at the end of October 2008.

Councillor Giess will also be aware that in June 2009, an emergency asbestos issue at Paxton primary school resulted in the school needed to be immediately decanted for 6 weeks into the Woodfield Centre. Had the Woodfield Centre not been available at this point, there would have been a significant risk that the Council would not have been able to have provided alternative accommodation for the pupils from Paxton primary school.

The Cross-party Primary Expansion Board which included Councillor Giess worked through each Town Centre area to agree which primary schools sites were capable of expansion. It was a matter of cross-party consensus that the Woodfield Centre be returned to its former use as a primary school. To suggest anything else is untrue. In February 2009, the Council's Labour Cabinet formally agreed to the use of the Woodfield Centre site as a primary school, as part of the Expansion of Primary Schools Strategy. The proposal is to open primary school provision at the Woodfield Centre in September 2010.

11. By: Councillor Betty Evans-Jacas (submitted on 17.12.09)

To: Councillor Lib Peck - Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

Senior Managers - Lambeth Living

How much is Lambeth Living spending on senior managers in 2009-2010 and what has Lambeth Living spent to date in 2009-2010 on outside consultants and temporary staff?

Party: Conservative

Answer:

The following costs relate to the period 1 April 2009 to 30 November 2009 inclusive. Lambeth Living has spent £256,023.99 on Senior Managers. Total spend on outside consultants is £1,068,630.75 and £633,918.43 on temporary staff. The total company payroll cost is £10,246,580.41.

12. By: Councillor David Malone (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Paul McGlone – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Primary School Places in Norwood

Given the pressure on Primary School Places in Norwood and in light of the Government's recent contribution of £9 million to relieve this pressure, can the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People outline what action the council is taking to permanently resolve this situation?

Party: Labour

Answer:

Due to the close working relationship between this Labour administration and the Labour government, Lambeth now has £47,000,000 Capital to invest in expansion and rebuilding of our primary schools. The additional £9m funding that has been secured from our Labour Government for Lambeth has enabled us to confirm that we can now build a new 2FE primary school in Norwood, subject to the resolution of the site. Additional places will also be provided at the Woodfield centre in Streatham Hill which will also alleviate some of the Norwood pressure. There are longstanding plans to rebuild and expand Julian's school upon confirmation of further funding from a future Government.

The council is currently undertaking the permanent expansion of Kingswood from 2FE to 4FE by converting the old Norwood Park School (formerly the interim Elmgreen site), this is planned to be operational by September 2010.

Councillor Malone will also be aware that the council has been very successful in working with schools to provide temporary solutions. In 2007, Julian's school took an additional class. In 2008, Kingswood and Elm Wood took additional temporary classes. In 2009, Kingswood, Crown Lane, Rosendale and Hitherfield schools took additional classes. These additional classes have had a very positive effect on families by providing expansion in schools of their choice

13. By: Councillor Steve Bradley (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Lib Peck – Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

Halsmere Road

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing confirm whether the £140,000-170,000 required to bring 11 Halsmere Road back into use will be made available to Patmos Area Community Conservation Association (PACCA) TMO? If not, can she confirm what the administration plans to do to bring this long-term derelict property back into use?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

There is not an allocation in this year's capital programme for this project and a bid has not been submitted for 2010/11. As part of the allowances agreement with TMOs, the Council has created a small capital pot for TMOs, which PACCA would be eligible to bid for. It should be noted that bids should prioritise Health and Safety and Decent Homes improvements and should also demonstrate value for money. I understand that council officers have been working on a proposal, which I would hope to see in January.

14. By: Councillor Suzanne Poole (submitted on 17.12.09)

To: Councillor Paul McGlone - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Land Assembly for a New Primary School in West Norwood

What steps have been taken to date to prepare land assembly or acquisition of a site for the proposed new primary school in West Norwood and have any Council owned sites for the school been considered?

Party: Conservative

Answer:

CYPS has examined a number of sites in Norwood, including council owned sites, to assess their suitability for a primary school. We have commissioned work to examine a variety of sites and to advise us on compulsory purchase processes and property cost estimates. We have liaised with colleagues in planning to get outline planning advice for each site, and the CYPS school improvement team have examined each site and given their views on educational suitability.

In an attempt to avoid a compulsory purchase order, the council has held discussions with a number of local landowners in order to explore the potential for a commercial deal. It would not be prudent to release this information to anyone at the current point as the council remains in negotiation with third parties and any leak of this information would adversely impact the council's ability to obtain a fair price from any forthcoming commercial deal.

15. By: Councillor Mark Harrison (submitted on 17.12.09)

To: Councillor Steve Reed – Leader of the Council

Decent Homes Funding

Would the Leader of the Council please update Members on his conversations with the Housing Minister regarding Decent Homes funding?

Party: Labour

Answer:

I am delighted to report that Housing Minister John Healey MP has recently confirmed Lambeth will receive £230m to improve 10,000 sub-standard council homes subject to Lambeth Living reaching a 2 star standard when inspected by the Audit Commission. This is expected to take place in Spring 2011. The council needs the additional money on top of almost £2m a week already being spent to bring all council homes in the borough up to minimum standards.

The money is only available to the council because residents voted to set up an ALMO to manage Lambeth's council homes. The Government only makes additional funding available to ALMOs, so in Southwark where the Lib Dems and Tories refused to give residents the option of setting one up there is now a staggering £750m funding shortfall that means thousands of residents will be left to live in sub-standard homes. Lib Dems and Tories in Lambeth wanted to leave Lambeth's tenants and leaseholders in the same situation as they opposed taking the action necessary to bring in the funding.

16. By: Councillor Clive Bennett (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Rachel Heywood – Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities

Streatham Library

Why has the entrance to Streatham Library been neglected so badly that paint and plaster are falling from the walls? What other maintenance is needed to secure the future of the library?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

It is true that the entrance to Streatham Library looks unsightly. This is the result of significant water ingress through a down pipe and guttering that have been in a bad state of repair for some years. The library's gutters and piping are in poor condition generally – one of the issues that has been identified in the recent condition survey of the building. This administration has allocated an additional £355k capital expenditure this year for libraries, to allow full condition surveys of all buildings and to undertake necessary work in regards to health and safety legislation and priority work arising from the surveys. At Streatham, that resource is being utilised to deal with other problems caused by the poor guttering and piping, which, whilst perhaps not as cosmetically obvious, are causing conditions which could impact upon public safety and are affecting the fabric of the building, in particular the roofing joists. The available capital will also provide a much needed new boiler for Streatham. This year all available revenue funds for maintenance have been diverted to attending to subsidence at the back of the building, which we are now repairing.

The problems with the entrance will be picked up, and costed for, in the condition surveys of buildings and it is expected that funds will be available to attend to this next financial year. In the meantime we are seeking advice on whether it would be appropriate or cost effective to carry out running repairs on the foyer until such time as we can attend to the underlying dampness issues.

17. **By: Councillor Steve Morgan (submitted on 18.12.09)**

To: Councillor John Kazantzis- Cabinet Member for Employment and Enterprise

Skills London 2010

Given the recent decision by Conservative controlled London Councils Leader's Committee to withdraw funding for Skills London 2010, the careers and skills event for young people from across the Capital and South East, can the Cabinet Member for Employment and Enterprise tell us if he regrets Liberal Democrat complicity in this funding withdrawal decision and provide an update on the work this council is doing to help young people into work or training?

Party: Labour

Answer:

Yes, I do regret the fact that some Liberal Democrats Leaders voted with the Conservative bloc to withdraw funding for Skills London 2010. At this time of recession, when young people are finding it harder than ever to find work, it beggars belief that Tory councils would vote to withdraw funding that amounts to just £15,000 per council for the UK's foremost careers event. I am pleased to say that Labour boroughs supported this proposal unanimously, but sadly some Liberal Democrats decided to flip flop on this issue.

Fortunately, this was far from the only initiative that the council has been pursuing in order to help young people into work or training. The Employment Learning and Skills team provides a broad range of vocational advice and guidance, adult learning opportunities and employment and skills support to Lambeth residents. A key element of supporting people into jobs is the provision of good advice and guidance. In 2008/09 guidance support was provided to 1,195 people.

The Council and its partners recognise that apprenticeships are an invaluable way of creating employment opportunities to ensure that people get the skills and training to set them on the path to a successful career. To support the London target of delivering 5,000 apprenticeships over the next three years via the Greater London Authority Group, the Council has a commitment to recruit 60 apprentices by 2012. Lambeth has also been successful in attracting £200,000 funding for a Department of Health pilot for social care apprenticeships.

The first Neighbourhood Employment Support Centre will open shortly in Coldharbour. This is part of the Borough's commitment to providing more services closer to where people live and improving services in the most deprived wards. The disused Green Man public house at Loughborough Junction will be called the Green Man Skills Zone and will provide practical help and advice to people in Coldharbour who are looking for work or want to improve their skills. The Hub will offer services that seek to tackle many of the barriers local people face.

Lambeth First is leading the Department for Work and Pensions initiated Future Jobs Fund project to support nationally 150,000 long-term unemployed people into employment. Lambeth Council is providing 198 jobs for long-term unemployed 18-

24 year olds through a combination of Council jobs and with social enterprises. Eight social enterprises will deliver 91 jobs, with the remainder created by the Council. There will be 38 green jobs, 65 to refurbish and renovate long-term voids and homes in poor condition, 12 to support economic change including Savings and Credit Union outreach, 35 to increase numbers of teaching assistants, sports and play activity leaders and more youth workers and 20 peer mentors to promote health and well-being. There are a smaller number of other posts delivering partnership support and additional staffing for the employment hub and other employment and employability activity. Of the 436 jobs to be provided through this scheme in the Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth district, Lambeth and its partners are providing over 230 jobs.

The Council is making an important contribution to creating jobs and developing employment skills through its work placement and apprenticeship activities under Employer of Choice. The purpose of the Employer of Choice is to co-ordinate the pockets of good practice taking place across the Council and make sure that Human Resources (HR) support was available to bring people on placements or apprenticeships into the organisation in a timely way. There are a number of council-wide initiatives that departments have contributed to over the past year including:

- IDeA Programme – four graduates through the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) national graduate development programme.
- Social Care National Skills Academy National Management Trainee Scheme – Adults and Community Services has taken on placement one of 20 graduate trainees on the first ever Social Care National Management Trainee Scheme of Children Looked After Placements – Lambeth is currently on its third phase of providing 3-6 month placements for Children Looked After.
- Trainee Benefits Assessors Scheme – Sixteen benefits assessors, who are local residents, were taken on as trainees within the Revenues and Benefits service and are now assessors.
- CIPFA graduate trainee accountants – the CIPFA graduate trainee accountants scheme was established in 2005, and Lambeth has twice the number of any other London borough. In 2009, we now have 13 trainees in post.
- HR Associates – using a similar model to the CIPFA graduate trainee accountants, 17 HR associates were taken on to study while they work within the HR services, rotating to all areas of the business during their studies.

Lambeth ELS has secured a Working Neighbourhoods Fund bid to fund the development of new Apprenticeships. This is being led by the Children and Young Peoples Service and the objective is to support employers to create 30 new apprenticeships by incentivising through a wage subsidy. The project started in September 2009 and will run in conjunction with the extensive employer engagement developing in CYPS to support the 14-19 Agenda, particularly Economic Wellbeing and Work Related Learning. This is in addition to Employer of Choice and any supply side agreements. For instance, as part of the Ethelred Regeneration project, Breyers have recruited 12 apprentices to work on construction, all of whom are Lambeth residents. Partners who sourced applicants included South Bank Employers Group and Connexions.

Future Activity includes the following projects:

Residents into Employment: ELS are currently in the final stages of agreeing a new match funded WNF/LDA project which will support residents of RSLs into employment which will include 25% of young people under 24. The project seeks to move 51 Lambeth residents into sustained employment.

Windrush Square Jobs fair: planned for mid/end February in partnership with Lambeth First. This will primarily be aimed at those eligible for Future Jobs Fund opportunities (the majority will be aged from 18-24).

In addition, Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) works to prepare young people for work and to reduce the number of teenagers who are workless. The Connexions Service advises and supports 13-19 year olds to stay in learning and to develop an understanding of the world of work. This is a statutory requirement placed on Children and Young People's Service and a complex curriculum offer is developed nationally to deliver Work Related Learning, which CYPS deliver in Lambeth. The proportion of 16-18 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) measurement is the most easily understood of the outcomes of this work, and Lambeth has been highly successful at hitting the annual target. Council and support for young people into work or training includes:

Youth Strategy

The Youth Strategy (launched in November 2009) has key focus on skills, enterprise and work. The "What's On Offer" Publication, due out in mid January 2010 will detail a range of new activities for young people, many of which are provided to help support young people into work and training.

Connexions

The Connexions Service has a Personal Adviser in each school, in Lambeth College and in Training Providers. The provision of high quality Information Advice and Guidance is the principal activity of these advisers, through what would be recognised as a 'Careers Interview' as well as the use of ICT and classroom teaching. In addition to the work of the Connexions Personal Advisers in education, a number give one to one support in community settings, in two access points in the North and South of Lambeth and in the very busy One Stop Shop on Acre Lane.

Co-ordination and support of Work Experience placements

A package of activities are designed and delivered to prepare young people, mainly in Year 10, for work experience. Number of employers that offered placements last year:- 1,111 from 179 organisations. Lambeth Council departments: 94 placement offers from 19 areas.

Implementing the new the Diploma

The Diploma is a principal component of the 14-19 Strategic aim of making the curriculum more vocationally focussed, so that that group of young people more interested in this learning style will be better supported into work or training. In September 2008 Lambeth began to offer the new Diploma in Engineering, then in September 2009 a further 4 Diplomas became available to Lambeth schools. (Business Admin and Finance, Society, Health and Development, IT and Creative and Media). CYPS supports schools to introduce the Diploma, and to engage

employers in its delivery. Around 200 young people in Lambeth decided to take the Diploma alongside their GCSEs in year 10.

NEET

Since 2006 the Council has reduced numbers of young people 16-18 not in employment, education or training from 15% to 8%.

18. By: Councillor Darren Sanders (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Lib Peck - Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

Charges for CCTV to Tenants and Leaseholders

Does the council agree with me that it is wrong to charge council tenants and leaseholders for CCTV that is not in proper working operation? If so will the council refund and charges levied for CCTV at times when it was not working. What is the total amount expected to be charged to tenants and leaseholders for CCTV in 2009/10 and what proportion of the CCTV cameras were fully operational on 18 December 2009?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

In limited situations, the Council may in its discretion decide to compensate tenants and leaseholders if it believes there has been a fundamental failure in the service promise. These cases need to be assessed individually on their merits.

Total charges in 2009/10 amount to £761,779.

19. By: Councillor Marcia Cameron (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Paul McGlone – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Fenstanton Primary School

Following the recent cabinet decisions to start delivery of a rebuilt Fenstanton Primary school and fourth new secondary school on the Fenstanton site, could the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People please explain how the concerns raised by St Martin's Estate residents during the consultation on Fenstanton proposals are being addressed and outline how his promise of new youth and community facilities will be fulfilled?

Party: Labour

Answer:

As a result of the consultation, officers set up a master planning stakeholder group which worked closely with the master planners and the primary school as a number of options were tested out.

The key concerns expressed by residents were: that the expansion of the school would require the taking away of land from the surrounding estate; furthermore that this would result in the loss of estate trees and change the green frontage of the school facing on to Christchurch Road. There were also concerns about

- The numbers of pupils from the secondary school entering and exiting the new school from the estate
- The possibility of the arrival of an unwanted parking scheme
- How the schools might relate to each other in terms of separation
- The potential for the schools not having enough space
- The ability of the community and youth on the estate to have use of the new facilities provided by the school.

School Expansion and Estate Land: As a result of the stakeholder involvement in the master planning process (both the current Chair and the former Chair were present at each of the master planning meetings to represent the estate), the master planners focussed on a solution that balanced the concerns of the community with the amenity value of the land. The scheme as proposed strikes a careful balance between these two considerations: on the one hand the need to listen to local residents and keep all of the green space surrounding the site, with the need to get 'best value' from the redevelopment of Council land for the benefit of local children. Officers in Planning have confirmed that the outline planning application takes not one square centimetre of additional land from the estate. Furthermore, it is confirmed that the redevelopment will not require the removal of any estate trees and that the majority of the important trees on the school site, as identified by independent Arboricultural Advisors, will also remain. What this means for local residents, is that the current aspect of a fine green wall of trees facing along Christchurch Road will stay.

Pupil entry and exit: As a result of the consultation, the outline planning application is proposing that the main entrance for the secondary school is from Christchurch Road and that parking for the primary and secondary school is restricted to 40 cars with access from the current vehicle entrance. The entrance to the primary school will be separated from its present location, where it is adjacent to vehicular access to make it both safer and more welcoming for pedestrian use. The schools themselves will be physically separate and it will not be possible to have unrestricted access between the two schools. Officers have also confirmed to local residents' representatives that they will not be proposing any parking scheme on the estate, because the school travel planning work indicates that there should not be a large increase in the use of cars as a result of secondary school pupils coming to school.

Space for teaching and play: The 'Building Bulletin' guidance for expected site area sets out simple, realistic area guidelines for both primary schools and secondary schools. An early concern was that somehow the Council would be squeezing two schools on a site that could only realistically take one. This fear has been proven to

be without foundation and the outline planning application provides for at least 10% additional space in excess of the guidance. Indeed in respect of the primary school, following comments on the draft guidance published in 2003, the recommended gross area of primary school buildings contained in the guidance, was increased to an average of 25% above the upper limit set in 1996.

Youth facilities: At one of the initial master planning meeting with stakeholders, which was itself attended by young people (as indeed all the master planning stakeholder meetings have been), it was made clear that young people needed and wanted some safe space of their own, that they themselves had a part in running and that this needed to be separate from the community facilities within the school which they would also be able to access. A political commitment to deliver on this aspiration was given publicly at a meeting by myself as the Cabinet Member in the presence of the Leader of the Council, and the outline planning application submitted has duly prioritised the early provision of such discrete facilities.

Community Facilities (Existing Community Centre): In addition to the use of the extensive facilities for sports afforded by the regeneration of the land on 'the Dip' site and within the school (which will be available outside of the hours when they are in use by the school/s), the Council has also offered resources to cover the cost of the rebuilding of the current community centre and extending it to provide additional youth and community facilities.

This additional space (dependent of the rebuilding of the community centre), would be intended primarily for youth provision but perhaps it could also, as some residents have suggested, include a small number of business units. This would not only make the community resources more economically sustainable (at present there is some question as to whether or not the current provision is), but also provide some limited local employment and training opportunities.

Anything of this nature would of course, have to be done in consultation with our RSL partners and local stakeholders and the Council has made it clear that it would not wish to force a rebuilt community centre, if the community did not wish this outcome to be progressed.

20. By: Councillor Gavin Dodsworth (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Sally Prentice – Cabinet Member for Environment

Popes Road Car Park

The most recent Annual Property Performance Report identified that that the Pope's Road Car Park was suffering from "major structural issues." and went on to say that "the Council is trying to stop further deterioration as there is insufficient funding to refurbish or replace. Currently scaffolding along is costing £20k pa". Why was sufficient action not taken as a result of this report to avoid emergency closure of the car park and will the scaffolding be removed while the car park is closed to the public to save £20k a year?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

A survey conducted in 2005 showed that the Car Park was generally in a very unsatisfactory condition and that it was structurally unsafe. The report provided some recommendations listed below if the car park were to be used for the next few years.

- Remove the top three floors of the car park and make one of the lower levels the roof
- Provide fans above pavement level to prevent falling objects from hitting passer-by.
- Carry out a panel by panel inspection to determine the extent of rusting shims (*A thin piece of metal placed between two parts to make a fit*) and remove all of the steel shims that are rusting and replace with stainless shims
- Remove all enclosure panels and replace with temporary enclosures that would act as balustrades to the complete perimeter
- Make good all of the internal defects e.g. potholes
- Carry out inspections, month by month, to determine if additional chunks of concrete are becoming loose and remove these as found to be necessary

Since the survey was conducted, interim measures were put in place. The top three levels have been closed, all pot holes were filled up to level 8. Scaffolding was erected all around the car park to protect the public from any falling pieces of concrete. A regular safety assessment was done on the scaffolding and reports were provided to Lambeth on a fortnightly basis with any necessary follow-up actions being taken to ensure the scaffolding remained safe.

Up to the end of the 2008/9 financial year, emergency lighting checks were carried out every 6 months. The dry risers and hoses were checked every 6 months and fire extinguishers and hoses were checked every year. Checks are conducted every month on the lift to ensure it is safe to use.

Following various reports on the condition of the car park over the last few years, Lambeth attempted to slow the rate of deterioration of the car park by ensuring regular safety checks and maintenance works were carried out. However the deterioration has come about over a number of years and is to some extent due to the age of the building rather than lack of maintenance; the building was not originally intended to remain in use for as long as it has.

The primary hazard, identified by a recent survey, is the risk of a panel or a part of a panel coming away from the exterior of the building. Routine maintenance was ineffective against this hazard which could only be tackled by instigating a large scale survey and repair, hence the closure of the car park.

As it would be hazardous for workers to enter the area around the perimeter of the car park in order to remove it, the scaffolding will remain in place while the car park is closed. There will be no additional cost to this.

21. By: Councillor Donatus Anyanwu (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Lib Peck- Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

Windrush Square

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration provide an update on works on the new Windrush Square in Brixton and let us know if there are any launches planned for the local community when works are completed?

Party: Labour

Answer:

Works on the new Windrush Square in Brixton are continuing but have been slightly delayed due to the adverse weather conditions, which is of course entirely out of anyone's control. The square is due to be completed within the next 6 weeks and we are looking forward to a launch event for the local community at the end of February to celebrate its opening to the public. This is great example of a Labour administration and the former Labour Mayor of London deciding to work together to invest in Lambeth and deliver real change for the area.

22. By: Councillor Andrew Sawdon (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Lib Peck - Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

Lighting on Housing Estates

How much has been paid to EDF electricity for unmetered electricity supply to lighting columns on housing estates in each of the last 3 financial years? Does Lambeth Living and the council consider that EDF charges for unmetered supply are reasonable?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

In the period which Lambeth Living has taken over responsibility for delivering the day to day housing management service there have been no payments to EDF for unmetered electricity supply to lighting columns. Instead EDF has agreed with Lambeth Living that a survey will be urgently completed which identifies all unmetered columns and this will be used as the basis for future charging for the provision of electricity. EDF have informed us of their charging policy for unmetered columns and Lambeth Living is satisfied that it is fair and reasonable.

23. By: Councillor David Malley (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Sally Prentice- Cabinet Member for Environment

Noise Control Service

I was pleased to learn that this Labour Administration has identified funding to extend our noise nuisance control service, recognising the concerns felt by many of our residents. Could the Cabinet Member for Environment provide an update on how this money has been spent?

Party: Labour

Answer:

An additional four posts have been created within the Noise Team and operational hours were extended as from 30th November 2009 to:

- Monday to Thurs - 9am through to 3am the next day.
- Friday - 9am through to 5am next day
- Saturday - 2pm through to 5am next day
- Sunday - 2pm through to 3am next day

During these times two officers will be on duty to respond to complaints about noise that is happening at the time. Target response time is 90% within 1 hour. This target has been stretched from 85% last year and is currently very close to being met.

24. By: Councillor Brian Palmer (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Rachel Heywood – Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities

Streatham Leisure Centre

The news that serious structural problems were discovered in the Streatham Pool and Leisure Centre which led to its immediate closure came as a shock to many local users and residents and councillors alike. Can we please have a detailed report on these undisclosed defects, how long they have been like it, and how long it will be before this much-loved sports and leisure facility reopens?

If serious structural problems are found it is of course only right that the Council, which receives income from the public to use its facilities, should put their health & safety first. Can the Cabinet Member kindly tell us when similar health & safety inspections were last carried out at the Clapham Pool and the Brixton Recreation Centre, especially in view of the Council's recent and rather damning property condition report, how often they are required under any legislation, and when the next one will be?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

The Council has only just received the detailed report on the Streatham Leisure Centre from the surveyors and structural engineers and officers are still in the process of considering the implications of its contents. While the Council was aware of some defects, and indeed had prepared a programme of work to address these, including major works to the roof that was due to commence in December 2009, many of the structural and related issues have only now been identified as a result of these further investigations by the surveyors and structural engineers. Therefore, it is not possible to say how long the defects that led to the centre's closure had been present and until a comprehensive assessment of the report is complete we are not in a position to give an indication as to when the centre will reopen.

In the meantime, however, we have been working hard to ensure there are alternative arrangements for all schools, swimming clubs and swimming lessons. We have been keeping all residents regularly updated on what is happening and about alternative facilities through our website, Lambeth Life, the local press and in leaflets. We are also continuing to work with Tesco's to secure a deal to bring an excellent new leisure facility to Streatham.

The safety of our users is our primary concern, which is why health and safety considerations were at the forefront of our decision to close Streatham Leisure Centre. All statutory inspections required under health and safety regulations; water testing, fire alarm and fire protection equipment testing, legionella testing, portable electrical appliance testing and gas service testing are undertaken by our contractor Greenwich Leisure Limited. In addition the Council commissions asbestos testing and condition and mechanical and electrical surveys as appropriate.

There is no statutory requirement to undertake property condition reports, but best practice suggests that one should be completed every five years. The last reports for Brixton and Clapham were undertaken in September 2008. The next one for Brixton will thus be due in 2013. Clapham Leisure Centre is about to close in order to facilitate the construction of a state of the art new leisure facility.

25. By: Councillor Kingsley Abrams (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Lorna Campbell – Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

Care Quality Commission

In light of the recent Care Quality Commission assessment of Lambeth's adult social care services could the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing give some more information about Lambeth's performance and how we fared compared to other London boroughs?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The 2008/09 annual performance assessment of adult social care services published by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on 3 December 2009 rated Lambeth as 'performing well' overall and 'performing well' for each of the seven outcome areas assessed. Performing well actually means GOOD and recognises that Lambeth is assessed as consistently delivering above the minimum requirements for people.

Successes within Lambeth which were recognised in the CQC report include:

- A number of initiatives have been implemented to improve health and wellbeing such as: the bikes in parks project, structured exercise for the frail and annual health checks for people with learning difficulties.
- The launch of Gateway Network an initiative that provides low level services to Older People focused on health and wellbeing and building capacity in the voluntary sector around community networking
- A focus on employment and training for people with disabilities
- The number of people requiring residential care has decreased
- The range of mechanisms for consulting with service users and carers
- The council have significantly reduced the time people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health issues wait for assessments
- Increase in the number of people receiving Direct Payments to manage their social care support
- Every Pound Counts benefit take up campaign has increased income for people in the borough by £5k per annum per claimant
- There is joint NHS, Housing and Social Care Centre located in Streatham (Gracefield Gardens), allowing people to access a range of services from one location.

While it is not always possible to compare councils like-for-like given the different demographics, challenges and priorities, we can give an overview of how Lambeth performed compared with London councils for adult social care.

In 2008/09 there were 33 London councils assessed for adult social care by CQC. Of these, 11 were judged to be performing excellently. The majority (of which Lambeth is one) were judged to be performing well, and 2 were rated as performing adequately (Bromley and Southwark).

Lambeth can be seen to not only have done well across the board but also to have significantly improved more than other authorities against a much tougher test.

- Lambeth was one of the 22 authorities (66%) to achieve 'performing well' or higher across all 7 outcome areas
- Lambeth improved in 3 of the 7 outcome areas and sustained scores in 4 other areas. This is a significant achievement. Only 4 other authorities in London showed this level of sustainment and improvement in three or more areas (Ealing, Richmond, Havering, and Hillingdon).
- The tougher test is also evident in that 8 authorities in London were assessed as deteriorating in at least 1 outcome area (Hackney, Hounslow, Sutton, Waltham Forest, Haringey, Brent, Bromley, and Southwark). Lambeth did not drop in any areas and significantly improved in 3 outcome areas.

26. By: Councillor Diana Braithwaite (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Sally Prentice - Cabinet Member for Environment

Larkhall Lane Raised Pavement

How much did it cost the Council to remove the raised pavement that until recently prevented northbound traffic coming up Larkhall Lane from turning into Priory Grove? And why was it removed? The inevitable consequence of levelling the area was to give motorised traffic illicit access to Priory Grove. This has now had to be stopped by the installation of unsightly temporary red and white barriers. Could the relevant member please explain these costly and apparently senseless changes to a traffic control system which was installed only a few years ago?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

Works have been undertaken at this location with the specific intention of improving road safety and accessibility for both pedestrians and cyclists. The existing design did not cater for any pedestrian movement or north/west cycle movements. It was also designer's intention to make it more difficult to make the illegal turn into Priory Grove.

The cost of the work is approximately £40,000 which has been funded directly from TfL's London Cycle Network (LCN+) programme.

The final design was such that vehicles were able to easily negotiate the raised island and access Priory Grove. We have undertaken the installation of bollards to mitigate this illegal manoeuvre and appreciate the significant delay which resulted in 'barriers' being temporarily installed. This was exacerbated by the long supply times for specialised 'cycle' bollards'.

The 'low kerb' design (which facilitated the abuse) was undertaken to allow easy and uninhibited passage of cycles. This was the first trial of the low kerb design in Lambeth and we have learnt lessons from this situation.

With the exception of the vehicles performing illegal manoeuvres the revised layout has significantly improved the environment and accessibility for both cyclists and pedestrians.

27. By: Councillor Jackie Meldrum (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor John Whelan- Leader of the Opposition Minority Group

Upper Norwood Joint Library

Could the Leader of the Conservative Party update on the effort that Lambeth Conservatives are putting into persuading Croydon Conservatives to match Lambeth Council's financial contributions in 2009/10 and 2010/11 onwards to

ensure Upper Norwood Library can continue as a jointly funded library to provide a good quality service to residents in the south of Lambeth and north of Croydon?

Party: Labour

Answer:

This question, when set in its factual context, is morally odious, and Councillor Meldrum disgraces herself by her cynicism. The facts are as follows. Over the past decade and more, whenever Conservatives have been in power, whether in Croydon or Lambeth, they have increased the budget of the Upper Norwood Joint Library (UNJL). Whenever New Labour has been in power, whether in Croydon or Lambeth, it has frozen the budget (a cut in real terms).

Gipsy Hill's Conservative councillors, most notably Councillor Pycock, have suggested many times during the current council, that the two councils sit down together and negotiate an agreed long-term budget strategy for the UNJL. This has been rejected by Lambeth New Labour, including on one occasion a typically intemperate response to Councillor Pycock from Councillor Meldrum's superior, Councillor Reed. In each of the budget debates during the current council, Lambeth Conservatives have suggested a budget increase for the UNJL. Lambeth New Labour voted down every such proposal: a fact we shall be bringing to the attention of Knights Hill residents during the coming months. Councils are under a moral and indeed legal obligation to provide to residents equal access to libraries, yet Lambeth New Labour has frozen the budget to the UNJL. Lambeth New Labour's cuts perhaps reflect the views of the New Labour candidate for Gipsy Hill, who scorned Gipsy Hill residents who – he said – lived on “posh streets”. This disgraceful comment, if acted upon, would negate the council's legal responsibilities.

Regarding Croydon Council, my very first act of this council in 2006 was to go to Croydon Town Hall with Councillor Gibson and put the case for the UNJL to the new Cabinet Member for Cultural Services at Croydon Council. Councillor Gibson also met Upper Norwood Ward Member Councillor Askey to make the same point. Croydon Conservatives agreed with us that Croydon New Labour's Policy of freezing the UNJL's budget for years on end was disgraceful. They could not understand how a party (Labour) that talks so much about public services could be so neglectful of a library. They lauded the work of Gipsy Hill Conservative councillors, such as former Councillor A'Court, who are such champions of the UNJL and who ensured that from the Lambeth-end under Conservative control the library's budget was increased. Croydon Conservatives noted that their council gives aid-in-kind to the UNJL, which fact Councillor Meldrum seems ignorant of, but even so they agreed that Croydon New Labour had been insufficiently supportive of the UNJL and that Croydon New Labour's policy of many years that the budget should be frozen was unsustainable.

Conservative-controlled Croydon therefore agreed to increase the UNJL budget by £10,000 per year for three years, an increase of £60,000 over that period. This was in part a result of Lambeth Conservatives' lobbying, but it also reflected the fact that Croydon Conservatives value the UNJL more than Croydon New Labour ever did. Councillor Gibson and I continue to press Croydon Council for increased funding for the library. We are grateful that Croydon remains open to talks about the long-term

funding of the library and regret that such talks are held back by the intransigence of Lambeth New Labour.

Council will note that Councillors Meldrum and Reed, and Val Shawcross and the MP for Dulwich and West Norwood were all perfectly happy with Croydon's contribution to the UNJL until April 2006. This was despite the fact that the budget was frozen - a cut in real terms - every year for many years, including when Ms Shawcross was Leader of Croydon Council. Yet in May 2006, when the residents of Croydon dislodged New Labour from power due to its mismanagement (including its freeze on the UNJL budget), Meldrum, Reed, Shawcross and Jowell suddenly found the Croydon share unacceptably low – despite the fact that it was increased by £10,000 pa over the New Labour figure which they had accepted with such equanimity for many years. In this light, Councillor Meldrum's question is not just ignorant: it is an example of moral turpitude. In truth, New Labour has never shown any interest in the UNJL except as a photo backdrop for its mendacious campaigns.

It is interesting that Councillor Meldrum has put this question to me. She has rarely, if ever, attended a meeting of the UNJL Committee. Similarly, Councillor Malone was made Committee Chair to encourage him to take an interest in library affairs, yet he failed for months to call a meeting and has been conspicuous by his inactivity. Given his record, it seems gratuitous to add that Councillor Fitzpatrick does not attend Committee meetings or champion the library. In view of this, Councillor Meldrum's sudden (pre-election) interest in the library is transparent fakery. It is behaviour such as this that brings politics into disrepute and which accounts for New Labour's continued poor showing in the polls. I shall be bringing my answer to the attention of voters in Knights Hill, many of whom use the UNJL and are rightly dismayed by New Labour's and Councillor Meldrum's cynicism.

28. By: Councillor Faye Gray (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Lib Peck: - Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

1-3 Stockwell Gardens

What are the Council's plans for the three former flats at 1-3 Stockwell Gardens, which used to be a drop-in centre managed by the South London & Maudsley Hospital until the project moved to Brixton over two years ago?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

I share your concerns regarding the current status of this property.

However, as you are aware the South London & Maudsley Hospital (SLAM) - a key Council Partner, has statutory rights to the premises under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 Pt II (L& T Act) and the Council has over some time being in negotiations with them regarding either a termination or the formalisation of their current occupation. Although SLAM continues to indicate the inclusion of the property in their plans for service delivery in the locality, the Council has no other recourse

other than to instruct its external property consultants to bring matters to a conclusion as provided under the L&T Act.

29. By: Councillor Pete Robbins (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Nigel Haselden – Deputy Cabinet Member for Sustainability

Sustainable Transport

In light of the need for us all to look at ways to cut our carbon footprint, could the Cabinet Member for Environment update on what Lambeth Council is doing to get people out of their cars and to encourage more sustainable means of transport?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The Council is the only borough in London with two officers dedicated to raising awareness of sustainable transport through campaigns and various events held throughout the year. This resource illustrates how serious the council is about creating modal shift away from single occupancy car use.

The following initiatives have been carried out:

- **Cycle Training:** Lambeth offers subsidised cycle training for those who live, work or study in the borough. Lessons are available from private instructors who give one to one lessons to adults and both one to one and group sessions for schools. Approximately 1,000 lessons are carried out each year. Research carried out by independent consultants has shown that those who undertake the training reduce their car use as a result of the training.
- **Cycle maintenance:** For the past 2 years, weekly Dr Bike sessions have been held in 4 locations across the borough (on rotation) between the months of April and October which allow public and staff to bring their bikes to be fixed for free. Useful information is also available at these events such as cycle maps, cycle training flyers, advice on safety and security. Events in September/October are themed 'Winter Wheelin' where advice is given on cycling through winter and in the dark. Free hi vis vests and lights are handed out at these events. Approximately 500 bikes are serviced each year.
- **HGV/Cyclist Events:** Lambeth have organised 6 of these events in the past 12 months. These allowed cyclists to sit in the cab of a HGV to understand the blind spots that drivers have and to educate cyclists not to cycle on the inside of large vehicles. This initiative was as a result of the high number of deaths of cyclists caused by large vehicles turning left and was organised in partnership with the police, Veolia and Cycle Training UK. The Council has also been providing cycle training for HGV drivers at Veolia. This is designed to help promote understanding between cyclists and HGV drivers. This initiative recently won the LCC Best Workplace Cycle Initiative and has been short listed for a London Transport Award.

- Bike Maintenance Courses for residents: Lambeth is the only borough in London that offers these on a regular basis and free of charge. Such courses provide people with the practical skills to look after their bicycles and undertake minor repairs such as changing brake blocks, adjusting gears, fixing punctures etc
- Working with schools: All schools must have a school travel plan in place by 2009. Approximately 98% of schools now have a travel plan in Lambeth. Lambeth also has 2 officers who work closely with schools promoting walking, cycling and public transport use. This includes campaigns such as WOW (Walk on Wednesdays), Walk to School Week, Cycle Training and also works with schools to improve the physical environment outside of schools. e.g. Introduction of traffic calming etc.
- Sustainable transport events: Lambeth's Sustainable Transport Officers attend and organise events throughout the year such as Walking Works, Bike Week and European Mobility Week. At these events practical advice is offered on changing mode of transport. This includes handing out cycle and public transport maps, information on Oyster cards, cycle training, local walking guides. Plus attendance at other organised events such as street parties, Brixton Splash, PCT AGMs etc where information is distributed including cycle and public transport maps, information on Oyster cards, cycle training, local walking guides etc
- Lambeth Business Travel Network: over 100 Lambeth businesses are now signed up to this network, which meets on a quarterly basis. The network discusses issues relating to transport that affect them. Practical advice is given, along with help on funding to implement things like cycle parking, setting up car share databases. Themed events include meetings on car clubs, writing a travel plan and eco driving.
- Car Clubs: Lambeth is the leading borough for car clubs in the country. 3 operators provide car clubs with access to 144 double bays spread across Lambeth. The borough now has over 6,000 residents signed up to a car club. Research has shown that members of car clubs reduce the amount of mileage driven as a result of joining a car club.
- Council Travel Plan: Lambeth won a European Award due to the numerous promotions which are carried out to encourage its own staff to switch mode. These include regular cyclist and walking breakfasts, Dr Bike, Bike Maintenance Classes, competitions, installing cycle parking and showers in Council buildings. Staff travel surveys are carried out every two years and continue to show a downward trend in single occupancy car use
- Innovative campaigns: Bicycle Belles and Me and My Bike in Lambeth. Over the last two years the sustainable transport team have organised photographic competitions to encourage cycling in the borough. Bicycle Belles sought to encourage women to take up cycling by removing barriers such as image and safety. The competition culminated in an exhibition of photos received including an event where each photographer was invited to bring along a non-cycling female. Also in attendance at the event were cycle trainers, clothes designers and female bike mechanics who were on hand to give advice. Similarly, Me and

My Bike asked for residents to send in a photo of them on a bike and why they liked cycling. These images are being made into a booklet with information on cycle training and routes in Lambeth.

In conjunction with these campaigns, the borough continues to implement various physical measures which help smooth traffic flow and reduce congestion. These include the installation on cycle friendly junctions, resurfacing of roads and traffic calming across the borough.

30. By: Councillor Brian Palmer (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Sally Prentice – Cabinet Member for Environment

Parking Fine Numbers

Why is it necessary for Lambeth to issue more parking fines to motorists last year than the two cities of Birmingham and Manchester combined? Just for comparison, Lambeth has 10.5 square miles of road, Birmingham 103 square miles and Manchester 44 square miles. Also why is Lambeth one of the highest in London after Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Islington which all have central London profiles? And between 2007 and 2008 Lambeth issued £13 million-worth of tickets. Do these extraordinarily high figures equate with Labour's so-called fairer parking regime?

Party: Liberal Democrat

Answer:

The majority of Penalty Charge Notices are issued in controlled parking zones (CPZs). The reason for higher PCN issuance is that both Manchester and Birmingham have fewer CPZs and more open flowing roads than Lambeth, additionally, there are fewer large houses converted to flats in narrow streets which leads to congested streets and parking related issues.

Lambeth is one of the top 5 London Boroughs who issue PCNs due to the number of vehicles stopping and passing through the borough. The PCNs are issued on bus lanes for moving traffic offences and on street for stationary vehicles. Since the introduction of bus lane enforcement the borough has seen a significant reduction in congestion on the main roads for buses. The number of Parking Charge Notices (PCNs) issued is reflected in the high volumes of vehicles entering and stopping in the borough. The change in enforcement contractor and our internal policy of being firm but fair has reduced the number of PCNs issued in the last 18 months.

In accordance with Standing Order 12, no written answer is provided to the remaining questions (nos. 31-33).

31. By: Councillor Donatus Anyanwu (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Mark Bennett- Cabinet Member for Community Safety

Vice-squad re-introduction

Like many Lambeth residents I was very happy with the decision of this Labour administration to re-instate the vice squad as part of its commitment to make Lambeth a safe and secure place for all residents and I would be grateful if the Cabinet Member for Community Safety could provide an update on the work of the vice squad and other community safety initiatives?

Party: Labour

32. By: Councillor Steve Bradley (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Lib Peck – Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

Holland Town TMO

In October 2008 the Tenant Management Unit of Lambeth Living declared Holland Town TMO insolvent. Yet it wasn't until June 2009 that Lambeth Living were appointed by the council to take over the management of that estate. As Lambeth Council doesn't manage any properties itself, can the Cabinet Member for Housing therefore explain who was actually managing Holland Town estate in the intervening period, and what happened to the TMO funds that would otherwise have been spent on the estate across that period?

Party: Lib Democrat

33. By: Councillor Steve Bradley (submitted on 18.12.09)

To: Councillor Lib Peck – Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

Holland Rise House

In June 2009 a suicide jump led to a large hole being created in the roof of the entrance way to Holland Rise House (Vassall Ward). The suicide occurred at 7:30am on a weekday morning, and many residents and children passing through the area saw the remains of the victim - resulting in a number requiring counselling for trauma. Since then the TMO and Councillor Steve Bradley have been pushing Lambeth Living to fix the roof, as it provides a daily reminder to residents of that horrible event. Can the Cabinet Member for Housing explain why this vital repair work remains uncompleted six months later, why Lambeth Living refuses to repair this damage, and why this administration is therefore condemning the residents of Holland Rise House to live with a constant reminder of this horrific event?

Party: Lib Democrat
