

## Leader's Public Question Time

### **1. What steps is the council taking to improve the landscape of Walworth Road and Burgess Park?**

In 2016 a timed waste collection scheme was implemented in Walworth Road to improve the street by removing 40 large commercial waste containers. Also as part of the scheme, restrictions were introduced on the times when it is permitted to leave waste out for collection and when it is must be collected. This means that for most of each day the pavement of Walworth Road is free of waste, which improves the appearance of the street. The scheme has been fully supported by community wardens and the environmental enforcement team, who visited every commercial premise, providing education and informing them of their obligation (S47 notices) under the timed waste collection scheme. In the last twelve months Environmental Enforcement Officers have undertaken 106 waste related investigations for Walworth Rd resulting in 69 fines being issued.

The council is currently developing proposals for improving the northern and southern most sections of Walworth Road. We will consultant on these plans in 2018/19 with implementation within the next four years.

Significant investment has been made at Burgess Park creating a £2m urban Games area with skatepark, parkour etc. The Park was awarded a Green Flag award in 2017 for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row.

### **2. What is the Council doing to prevent rat runs and cut throughs in e.g. Ruskin Walk in Herne Hill?**

We work closely with Transport for London and adjacent boroughs to ensure the most appropriate use of the highway network. TfL manage the traffic signals across London and can dynamically manage a majority of these to reduce traffic. If there are locations where traffic is avoiding signals by using the local highway network we can raise this with TfL for review.

The borough actively monitors traffic levels across the borough annually and compiles the Annual Transport Monitoring Report. We welcome comments from the community identifying areas were they feel that traffic levels are inappropriate for the local highway network.

In the Dulwich area, the council is currently preparing, with stakeholders, the Dulwich Area traffic management study. This study will inform the council on how best to approach the distribution of traffic across different modes and different types of street in the Dulwich area. This study was undertaken expressly following feedback from the local community about the need to tackle issues of traffic congestion and pollution in the Dulwich area. This study will inform future bids for funding from TfL or other sources.

### **3. What plans does the borough have for improving mental health services, particularly for ethnic minorities?**

Southwark Council with NHS Southwark CCG – our local clinical commissioning group – have been working with local residents over the last year (and more) to develop a shared vision and strategy for mental health and well being in Southwark.

A draft version of the strategy was put out for formal consultation in late summer 2017 and has received a very high number of responses. The process has been collaborative across all ethnicities – and Cllrs Helen Ward and Richard Livingstone have sat on the reference group.

The five areas of focus for the Joint Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy were:

- Prevention and promotion of wellbeing
- Community based care and activating communities
- Improving clinical and care services
- Improving recovery
- Improving quality and outcomes

Working with partners from across the NHS and with charities such as the Samaritans, we'll shortly be launching a new suicide prevention strategy for Southwark.

In the summer Southwark became one of the first London boroughs to launch the London THRIVE programme – a movement that aims to reduce stigma and address the barriers that prevent good mental health in our capital.

#### **4. How is the council tackling Tideway sewage construction noise which is causing anxiety, stress and mental health issues?**

As part of the council plan we are committed to create a borough where people can lead healthy and active lives. It is well known that one of the major stresses of modern life is unwanted noise and disturbance.

It was a government decision for Chambers Wharf to be developed by Thames Water, against the advice of its planning inspector and the council, which was imposed on us placing a major infrastructure work site in the middle of a residential community.

In the Council Plan we have committed to use our regulatory powers to minimise the impact of the 'super sewer' tunnelling on local residents and schools. We are working hard to minimise the number of complaints from residents and have promised to respond within 24 hours to any complaints received. A further commitment is to ensure that all sites associated with the super sewer must be compliant with the Control of Pollution Act to ensure construction work disruption is minimised at all times.

To achieve this, a number of technical measures have been put in place to control noise from the Tideway sites and we do everything possible within the law to protect residents from the impacts of this project. However, we are not satisfied with just ensuring that the planning and regulatory framework is enforced. We have gone beyond what we as a council are required to do and put in place a number of other measures.

- We helped set up independent drop-in sessions with Citizens Advice Southwark , Public Health, Southwark Law centre and other agencies to advise on what their rights and recourse to mitigation are.
- We lobbied hard to ensure that the respite payments and the mitigation measures were made available to all vulnerable residents and not just those in the immediate vicinity that triggered some specific measures.
- We have recognised that the effects of construction can affect mental wellbeing and have worked with South London and Maudsley (SLAM) to better understand this informed by a residents' focus group. A number of recommendations have been made which are being considered by our health partners and Tideway. They include: mental wellbeing training for Tideway staff, improved information for GPs, improved information on support available for residents, simplifying 1 -1 assistance for individuals affected by the construction, exploring the creation of sleep pods and the potential for wellbeing navigators.
- We have refused to allow works to go ahead until we are absolutely sure that everything possible to mitigate the impacts has been considered.
- We have continually pressed Tideway to be more open and transparent, undertaking meaningful consultation, showing how they have listened to residents concerns. One of the causes of stress has been not knowing when events or works are happening and therefore being unable to take necessary relief.
- We have persuaded Tideway to fund a community liaison officer who will be able to act as a mediator between Tideway and residents, to be based in the community engagement team- this role is being recruited to shortly.

Unfortunately the law places limitations on the Council which mean we are not able to prevent all impacts on residents that arise through this development, but we will continue to do everything we can to minimise those impacts.

##### **5. When will the council reopen Rye Hill Park estate tenants' hall?**

The works done to upgrade the building were completed some time ago and it was returned to use of the TRA. However shortly afterwards the local tenant and resident association ceased to function; at present the hall is being exclusively used as a site office for major works being carried out to improve the estate housing stock. When this comes to an end we shall be working with the local community on the hall's future place in the local community.

##### **6. Do you agree that a thriving voluntary and community sector is a vital component of healthy communities and will Southwark council maintain current level of funding for the sector?**

The council values the work of the voluntary sector and will do whatever we can to support it. Around £22m in grants and contracts in council spend went to the sector in 2016/17. The VCS

Strategy Common Purpose Common Cause sets out our shared vision for the voluntary sector with our partners.

For 2018-19 we will not know the full extent of any budget reductions until the government spending review at the end of November 2017 which will be followed by an indicative settlement in December. The council's final budget will be set in February 2018.

Every year the council writes to all funded Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations outlining the council's process for decisions on funding for the coming year.

2017-18 will be the eighth consecutive year of government funding reductions with at least two more to come. Despite a reduction to the council's net budgets of approximately 17% over the past 5 years, the impact overall on voluntary sector programmes to date has been significantly less.

The council also remains committed to the principle that, where reductions are applied to funding programmes at least 3 months' notice will be given from the date the budget is set.

#### **7. How can we get more of Southwark's school pupils walking and cycling to school?**

Southwark Council is committed to encouraging more people to travel by walking and cycling, including pupils. We have invested £30m in cycling and walking improvements over the next four years. Currently, we are working with some of our schools on a walking project. The project will create bespoke "Walking Zones" the zones through a map displayed prominently within the school and will indicate 10 and 15 minute walking zones to the school. The map will promote visually the message of walking over driving and will highlight awareness to different places of interest, cycle routes and transport routes and transport links surrounding the school environment. Practical road safety training is delivered to the majority of our Primary & Junior Schools empowering them to make a safe journey to and from their school. The training is aimed at pupils but looks to encourage parents and children to think about making a walking journey to and from school. The programme is practical and delivered by a Road Safety Officer.

Whatever your age or ability, we have free cycling training tailored for you. We provide free training for all school children.

We are also working with our schools to empower pupils to "Build a Bike": small groups of pupils attend a workshop to prepare a recycled bicycle for the road and prepare for a journey to and from schools. Pupils build their own bicycles and undertake cyclist training to prepare them for a journey to and from their new secondary school.

#### **8. Southwark has a vibrant industrial economy, how we prevent the loss of industrial accommodation?**

The industrial economy has an incredibly important role to play in the borough and across London, and one of the benefits of regeneration is we can create jobs and more affordable space for our local businesses and voluntary sector to grow and develop. Southwark Council is on course to smash its target of delivering 500 new, affordable work and creative spaces across the borough.

While we support the Mayor of London's call for no overall net loss of industrial and warehousing floor space in London (B1c, B2 and B8), however this is a London wide measure, in Southwark planning documents must consider the local area and its needs e.g. housing.

We have 153 Affordable business spaces, with another 472 in the pipeline through a range of regeneration projects such as The Artworks, Spare Street and affordable retail space at Elephant One at the Elephant and Castle, temporary space on the Aylesbury estate and the Peckham Enterprise Centre.

**9. Benefits for residents (e.g. new library, social housing units) when it is dealing with private developers.**

We are required to monitor the delivery of new homes and development through the planning process. We produce an annual monitoring report which includes for example how many homes have been completed and how many of them are affordable. We have our section 106 and CIL database that sets out what we have negotiated and what we have received and we produce an annual Community Infrastructure/s106 report detailing the resources secured through these agreements and what's been spent on what. We have secured a number of benefits from developers in recent years e.g. the Castle Leisure Centre in Elephant and Castle.

**10. What is affordable housing?**

Affordable housing, as set out in London Plan policy, meets the needs of households whose incomes are not enough to allow them to buy or rent decent and appropriate housing in their borough. (Southwark's Draft Affordable Housing SPD 2011)

The various types of affordable housing include:

Social rent housing – Housing owned by local authorities and housing associations that are let to households on the basis of need and where rents are set in accordance with the Governments national rent policy. This covers all Council housing and most housing from housing associations.

Intermediate housing - This mostly refers to Shared Ownership homes. However can also include shared equity and discount market rent.

**11. I would like to know why Southwark is not using the land it has to build council homes to its full capacity? Can the council leaders tell me what they are doing to provide genuinely affordable stable housing to the people of Southwark?**

Southwark is a leading borough for homebuilding in London. More homes of every type have been built in Southwark in recent years than any local authority in London and the borough has delivered the second highest affordable housing levels in the country.

The 2010 Spending Review reduced the DCLG's annual housing spending, which supports social housing, by around 60%. Government spending on the construction of affordable rented and shared ownership homes has been cut by three quarters between 2010-11 and 2013-14 and the number of social rented homes being built has dramatically decreased in that time.

Most local authorities do not have the funds or the ability to borrow to deliver major programmes building new social homes and have therefore had to rely increasingly on private sector partnerships, with affordable homes funded by the sale of private homes within new developments.

The council is committed to delivering new homes of all types to meet local demand, including a record council home building programme of 11,000 new council homes over 30 years. We are ensuring a mix of high quality homes for those on a range of incomes, including social rented homes and affordable homes for those who do not qualify for social housing but cannot afford to buy a home.

We will build 11,000 new council homes by 2043, with the first 1,600 either complete, on-site, or with planning permission and funding in place by the end of 2018.

So far the council has delivered 357 new council homes, with another 100 on site, 170 with planning permission and ready to go on site, and another 1,000 being consulted on and designed in partnership with our residents. 600 new council homes will be fully completed by the end of 2018

7,625 new homes have been built in Southwark between 2011/12 and 2015/16. In developments of 10 units or more (where the council's 35% target applies) 42% of those homes are affordable.

#### **12. What is being done to address the council's response to queries?**

Southwark has a number of processes in place to deal with cases and queries. We are happy to hear from any resident via the Complaints, comments and compliments page.

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-comments-and-compliments>

#### **13. We are an organisation representing the Sierra Leone community in Southwark and the organisers of the Sierra-fest event in Southwark that also bring communities in Southwark together. What support is available for local communities in the borough and meaningful events like ours?**

The council is supportive of events like Sierra Fest that bring our communities together within the limited resources we have available and bearing in mind that there are a large number of demands for use of our public spaces for events like this.

The council has over the last six years worked with the organisers of Sierra Fest to support their aspiration of holding an annual festival. For any event of this nature and scale (now between 10 and 15,000 people) the council needs to work with our partners in the emergency services to ensure that it is safe and well managed for all those that attend and that plans for organisation of the event are scrutinised by the Safety Advisory Group that considers all such events. These groups include representatives of council staff and emergency service staff. No outdoor events can get licences without them going through this essential process.

#### **14. Why are special needs schools allowed getting away with excluding children?**

Special Needs Schools are not being allowed to get away with excluding children. Permanent exclusions from Special Needs Schools are extremely rare. Southwark Council provides advice and guidance to parents of children at risk of exclusion and is always willing to support outcomes that

are right for the child and in their best interests. Southwark Council is not directly involved in exclusion decisions, which are a matter for schools, and this enables us to objectively support children and parents well. If there is a concern about any school exclusion then we would welcome hearing about that directly.

**15. What are you doing about Rye Lane?**

Southwark Council, working with the Greater London Authority, is proposing to regenerate the area in front of Peckham Rye Station. The project will transform the narrow, dimly lit passageways that lead to the station into a generous, vibrant public square. The exposed viaducts along the north and south side of the square will create new places for local and independent business to trade, animating the square and providing a sense of safety. The refurbishment and extension of the Blenheim Grove corner building will create space for a community groups to meet alongside a garden roof and affordable work space.

Southwark Council was awarded £1.675m by the Heritage Lottery Fund from funds raised by National Lottery players in 2014. The money will go to the regeneration of Peckham by repairing and restoring some of the historic buildings in Rye Lane Conservation Area. Southwark Council added funds to this grant, creating a common fund totalling £2.3m. The majority of the funding will contribute to the cost of restoration and repair work.

**16. Why do you not consult with service users regarding the policies and procedures regarding changing services?**

We consult the public on changes made to our services including service users. We are currently consulting the public on changes in the Borough through the Southwark Conversion. Please check out the Consultation Hub for all the consultations we are currently conducting:  
<https://consultations.southwark.gov.uk/>.

**17. Why are you closing Hawker House?**

Hawker House had its licence renewed at committee on 16 October therefore it is not closing.

**18. Are you able to please boost Business venues especially Motor vehicle Repair Centres as well as GP Surgery by providing reasonable Parking facilities in line with other high business performing London Boroughs?**

Unfortunately Southwark is a very busy central London borough with a limited kerb space and free parking on the highway is only available outside of our controlled parking zones. Motor vehicle repair centres will not be given any special treatment in regards to parking facilities or enforcement. This is replicated across all inner London boroughs.

GP surgeries often have dedicated 'Doctor's Only' parking where doctors at the surgery buy a doctors bay parking permit to park. We allow medical professional working in Southwark to buy an AM parking permit which allows them to park for up to two hours while visiting patients. Medical professional can also apply and buy the London wide Health Emergency Badge scheme run by London Councils. This represents the critical nature of their services to the community.

**19. Employing locally in regards to section 106 e.g. construction**

A Section 106 (S106) is a legal agreement or deed, signed by the council and an applicant, developer or another party. They are generally required to mitigate impacts that a development will have on its immediate locality. It sets out what financial contributions will be paid to the council and what additional, non-financial obligations they are required to meet. Making use of local businesses and provision of employment are often non-financial obligations that are required. We also support local people into construction jobs through the construction skills centre in Elephant and Castle.

**20. What are the Council's plans to monitor air pollution whilst the QW7 roadworks are undertaken in Dulwich Village and after they are complete?**

Southwark Council monitors the whole borough as part of the Authority's Nitrogen Dioxide Diffusion Tube survey; there are 16 sampling locations in the Dulwich area. Since the 11th November, Southwark Council has installed 4 No AQMesh sampling monitors at the Dulwich Village / Turney Road junction.

**21. What is happening with the Quietways e.g. Dulwich?**

Quietways are a network of bike routes for less confident cyclists using mainly low-traffic back streets. The routes are not just for current cyclists, but are for people who have always been put off cycling by the thought of sharing the road with high volumes of cars, vans, buses and Lorries. Introducing Quietways forms an integral part of the Mayor of London's vision for cycling and the council's objective to significantly increase the number of residents using cycling as their preferred mode of transport, particularly for local journeys. Dulwich Wood Avenue to Farquhar Road will be constructed Summer / Autumn 2017, consultations for this route were carried out in 2015 and 2016. We have taken issues raised in the consultation on board in the plan. All current civils works will be completed by 22 December. The only exception is for the section of footway between Court Lane and Calton Avenue which will require about 10 days work in January and resurfacing.

**22. What is happening with Dulwich Hamlet Football Club's ground?**

Dulwich Hamlet football club is a fantastic asset for the local community. We are hoping that Meadow will come forward with new plans that better meet all our objectives, but either way we will work with the club to secure their future.

**23. Why is there a lack of visible and effective security on council owned plots leading to unauthorised encampments?**

We are one of the biggest landlords in the country, owning nearly half the total area of the borough. These landholdings include sites along the river Thames from Bankside to Rotherhithe, as well as within the town centres of Peckham, Dulwich and Camberwell - a genuinely diverse portfolio. We secure this land where possible though this is not always cost effective or possible.

Every year the council has to manage a number of unauthorised encampments in the borough. The council has an Unauthorised Traveller Camps protocol which must be followed by council staff when LBS land is occupied. Council land is managed by different teams/Departments e.g. housing, education, parks and leisure, and it is the responsibility of each service area to resolve the encampment on its land.

When the council becomes aware of an encampment on its land, officers are required to go to the site and seek to engage with the travellers. In addition to telling them they are not allowed to remain and that the council will obtain a court order to move them off, we also enquire about any welfare needs the travellers may have and assess the risk to the travellers of the site they have occupied. We also inform local stakeholders that the council is aware of the encampment and is seeking to end it as soon as possible.

The responsible service area works with the council's legal team to prepare and serve the notice to leave, to secure a court order and arrange for the eviction of the travellers. Usually, travellers leave before the eviction is enforced. If necessary, the council will arrange for police support at the eviction.

Following the removal of the occupiers, the council cleans up the site and secures it against further trespass.