

**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 1**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Ray Woolford

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor

**Question**

Which Council Officer is responsible for selling community land at Millwall Football Ground, without bothering to consult with the Millwall Owners Management?

Do you agree that the first line of duty for a Council selling of community asset is to secure the best price. Who made the decision to sell this land without seeking to secure the best deal for Lewisham Tax payers?

It is looking increasingly likely that due to the poor way in which Lewisham has handled this matter, the Council if it does not change this decision will be fighting a Legal Challenge and an enquiry from the Local Government Ombudsman at huge cost to local tax payers. Therefore, who gave the legal advice in this matter, confirming what was proposed in secret was Legal?

In light of the huge International interest in Millwall and Lewisham's mishandling of this case, will the Council as a matter of urgency seek a meeting with Millwall to give them the same chance to bid as the other deal on the table?

Will the Council, in light of the Convoys Wharf decision being taken away from it, and the huge widespread anger about the way it is constantly putting the interest of developers before the community it is elected to serve, can the Council make a pledge to be more open and consult more widely on planning issues in the future?

### **Reply**

No one Council officer is responsible for sale of the freehold. The Council has sought independent financial, legal and planning advice on this matter. The decision to sell the freehold was taken by Mayor and Cabinet at a public meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 enshrines the statutory duty on local authorities to achieve best consideration in the context of land disposals. In 2013 the Council took independent legal, financial and planning advice to ensure that the Council received the best consideration for the freehold sale of land on the Surrey Canal Triangle site.

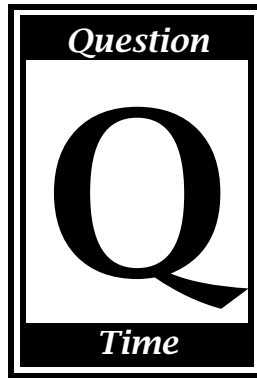
Independent legal advice was sought from both lawyers and Counsel specialising in Local Authority powers and duties. The Council has followed due process and satisfied it's statutory duties for the disposal of land.

Millwall FC were notified of the Council's intention to sell the freehold in advance. The decision to proceed with the sale was taken at a public Mayor and Cabinet meeting. No representations were received from Millwall FC at the public meeting.

Over the years, Millwall FC has raised several different proposals for our consideration. Unfortunately, the Club has not submitted an acceptable proposal. Furthermore, the new architects' plans they have sent us were not accompanied by a sound delivery plan for the proposal, including evidence of agreement with other key stakeholders, a business plan and a funding strategy giving sufficient comfort that the Club was in a position to implement the proposals as we have requested on many occasions. No offer was received from Millwall FC at the time of making the land disposal decision, and up to that date the Club had been free to make such an offer.

The Council will continue to ensure that plans for the regeneration of the Surrey Canal site take into account the long-term future of the football club and the public interest in the comprehensive regeneration of the area. We will continue to work with the Club as the plans develop.

The extent of consultation undertaken by the Council on planning applications is commensurate with the scale of development being proposed. On larger developments the Council undertakes very significant levels of consultation. For example, on the current Convoys Wharf planning application, more than 9,600 letters were sent to residents and business in the surrounding area.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 2**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Patricia Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor Best

**Question**

CEL students recently received notification of a survey being conducted by the Skills Funding Agency. Did all students receive posted notification? If so, how much did this cost and who paid the bill, the SFA or CEL or some other funding? Notification was also sent by e-mail.

**Reply**

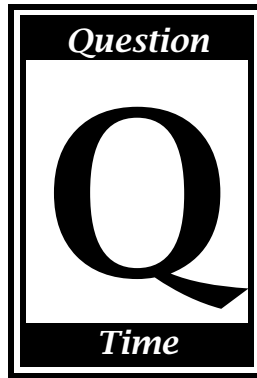
The Skills Funding Agency annually ask providers to participate in the survey. There are a minimum number of returns required in order for CEL to have the survey registered against the details held on the Further Education (F.E) choices database. It is an important survey for CEL to participate in as the results are available on line on the FE choices website which is accessible to anyone seeking to undertake a course. This allows prospective learners to compare a variety of information from providers and to select the one that most suits their needs.

The survey requires learners to access a website and provide their learner number which is detailed in the personal letter to them as well as CEL's centre number. Posters are displayed at centres encouraging learners to participate.

CEL participated last year but the survey only applied to Adult Skills Budget Learners. This year a second survey is being trialled for Community Learning Learners.

Learners were sent a letter asking them to complete the survey and notification was also sent by e-mail to learners who had consented to their e-mail address being used by CEL. Links to both surveys were added to iCEL, CEL's learning portal, to assist learners to participate.

The costs of £820.00 were met by CEL from its Skills Funding Agency funding allocation.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 3**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Mr Sorba

Member to reply: Councillor Klier

**Question**

Following the termination of full funding for the Generation Play Clubs, enforced by government cuts, what steps has the Council taken towards maintaining or replacing those services?

**Reply**

As part of the consultation on the proposed closure of Generation Playclubs at the end of 2012, the Council sought expressions of interest from parties who may wish to deliver services to the community from the Generation Playclub sites. In response to the consultation, several expressions of interest were identified.

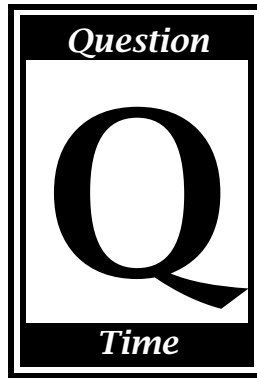
Officers held meetings with interested parties to support the development of proposals for alternative provision within the Generation Playclub sites.

Alternative provision is now available at six of the seven sites. Each site offers a different range of provision, aimed at local young families – some examples

include stay and play sessions, storytelling, forest schools, parenting support, toy libraries and cooking sessions.

- Clyde Children's Centre have been delivering services at **Deptford Park Generation Playclub site** since October 2013
- Dowlerry Children's Centre have been delivering services from Forster **Park Generation Playclub site** since October 2013.
- **Friendly Gardens Generation Playclub site:** Two existing members of Generation Playclub staff will be setting up an organisation to develop a community facility. This provision will begin in early March 2014
- **Telegraph Hill Generation Playclub site:** Provision will be run by local volunteers from St Catherine's Parochial Church Council and representation from The Telegraph Hill Centre Group. They have been in the site since December 2013.
- **Bellingham Green Generation Playclub site:** Provision at this site will be run by a community-based partnership of Eco Computers and Pre-School Learning Alliance from the beginning of March 2014.
- **Grove Park Generation Playclub site:** Provision will be managed by Grove Park Community Group (GPCG) from the beginning of March 2014. The GPCG is a registered charity formed in 1972 and currently manages the Ringway Centre in Grove Park.

London and Quadrant own the remaining site, the Lewington Centre which housed **Silwood Generation Playclub**, and are therefore leading on discussions around alternative provision there.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 4**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Mr Coughlin

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor

**Question**

Are you aware that a recent report by Centre for London indicates that up to 5.2% of people working in Lewisham aren't even paid the National Minimum Wage (NMW)?

Could Lewisham Council please:

- 1) approach HMRC's National Minimum Wage teams to request a local investigation in to NMW compliance? and
- 2) launch a campaign to encourage reporting of employers who pay below the National Minimum Wage, highlighting the impact this has on health, education, housing and, ultimately, welfare costs?

**Reply**

Lewisham's approach has been to support the payment of the London Living Wage since 2009. The approach with regard to the LLW has three strands,



which mirrors the Living Wage Foundation's accreditation scheme, to which Lewisham was an early signee.

The first strand was to ensure that all employees, whether permanent or temporary are paid the LLW; permanent staff have always been paid above this amount and temporary staff since Autumn 2011.

The second strand related to staff indirectly employed by the borough on contracts and a Mayor & Cabinet report recommendation on the 10th June 2009 was agreed, it stated " That the Mayor determines to implement the London Living Wage such that in letting all future contracts (excluding those where tenders have already been invited as at the date of this decision) due consideration, to the limit legally allowed, will be given to whether or not a contractor proposes to pay its staff the London Living Wage".

Since that time an assessment has been carried out at the start of the tendering process to identify where potentially staff employed on Council services would be paid below the LLW, if this is identified as likely, tenderers are asked to submit two pricing schedules (with/without LLW). All contracts except one have been awarded including paying staff providing services to Lewisham via a contract the LLW. The one contract where it was not legally possible to procure the service to include the LLW was Residential & Nursing Care Homes. The Educational catering contract is the last major contract where this requirement will be included in the contract requirements, and this is being tendered in March 2014.

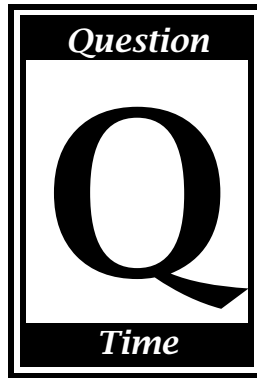
The last element relates to third party sub-contractors and local businesses, and the borough is starting on this final element. It is planned to include this requirement for sub-contractors as part of the 'Social Value' Act within our major contracts upon renewal. In terms of other businesses within the borough, we will use our influence to push for their adoption of paying the LLW.

Regarding independent businesses, the borough tends to have smaller businesses and ones that would be considered by the Low Pay Commission to be in low-paying occupations such as hospitality, retail and security. These types of businesses are less likely to sign up to London Living Wage and this is reflected in the larger businesses that have already made the LLW Mayor of London pledge.

As part of the Council's communications with business sectors the benefits of LLW will be promoted through our e-newsletter and appropriate events.

As part of the council's business support service, guidance is provided on legal requirements for businesses to pay the LMW.

Non-compliance with NMW legislation is an extremely serious matter. We will undertake to contact HMRC to ascertain the best way of identifying those who break the law in Lewisham and take appropriate action.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 5**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Peter Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor Best

**Question**

It appears that some book titles requested for library reading groups are unable to be accumulated in a sensible space of time and therefore have to be deferred until sufficient numbers can be drawn from Lewisham's own stocks. I understood that Lewisham Library Service was part of the London Libraries Consortium which offers Londoners up to 9 Million books.

Is there a facility within this organisation which could provide sufficient volumes to satisfy the requirements of a reading group within an acceptable space of time?

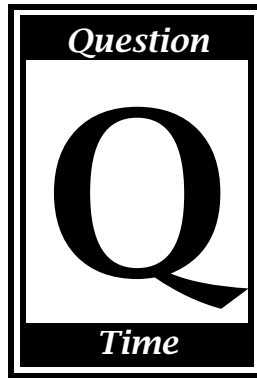
**Reply**

Any registered library member can request any book title from within the LLC.

However, there is an expectation that individual authorities aim to be self-sufficient in terms of fiction titles which are in print. Lewisham and other LLC authorities endeavour to provide paperback formats, which reading groups select to read and discuss.

Indeed, LLC collectively agreed that member authorities should not loan 'reading group sets' to each other (as institutional loans). For this reason, as it is the case in neighbouring authorities, Lewisham sets aside a small element of the Book Fund to create temporary reading group sets of 8 copies, which are acquired to service our reading groups. After some reading group use, those copies are then dispersed into general stock whereby they become more widely used and immediately available to more readers.

It should be added that the general ethos of reading groups is that of reading more widely with others, rather than providing priority access to hardback or prize shortlist titles. For this reason, new titles are never available to reading groups soon after publication but every effort is made to provide our reading group sets on or soon after request.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 6**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Mr Keogh

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor

**Question**

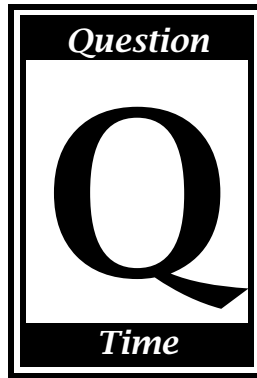
During January the well used foot tunnel between Cornmill Gardens and Molesworth St was impassable or closed intermittently as a result of flooding. Do these problems have any connection with the new development in Loampit Vale overloading the local infrastructure of sewage and drainage system? Have there been any problems of the resulting overflowing foul waters spilling into the nearby River Ravensbourne and potentially causing fish kills? If there is a connection, then what planning restrictions or requirements are the Council able to impose upon the developers to improve the infrastructure given that there are many more developments in progress locally?

**Reply**

The problem, first identified in the Autumn, was due to a collapsed foul sewer situated under the foot tunnel. This led to Thames Water having to arrange for contractors MetroRod H2O and UKDN Waterflow to pump sewage 24/7 from the affected sewer into tankers which were stationed in Cornmill Gardens until arrangements could be made to replace the damaged pipework. We understand that the sewer connects the existing housing development

upstream of the bridge and therefore unlikely to have anything to do with the new development at Loampit Vale. We are not aware of any leakage onto the pathways or into the river.

*Foot note: Incidents of this nature i.e. spillages into the river – Thames Water would have to report any spillages to the Environment Agency.*



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 7**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Mr Phoenix

Member to reply: Councillor Best

**Question**

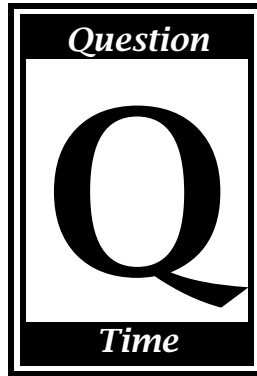
A set of Apple Mac computers were purchased in 2009 for the use of the general public. These computers have been stored at the Leemore Centre. I have been informed that to date these computers have not been made available for public use. Can the Council explain why?

**Reply**

The Apple Mac computers were transferred to the Library Service to enhance their existing resource of publicly accessible computers.

Three of the Apple Mac computers and 1 Base unit (missing a monitor) have been moved to Lewisham Library last month. The computers are being prepared with updated software and booking system functions. It is envisaged that they will be available to the public in the next month or so.

We regret the delay in making these resources available to the public and will be making the improvements needed as soon as possible. Meanwhile, Apple Mac computers are available at Deptford Lounge and Downham Health and Leisure Centre.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 8**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Patricia Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor Best

**Question**

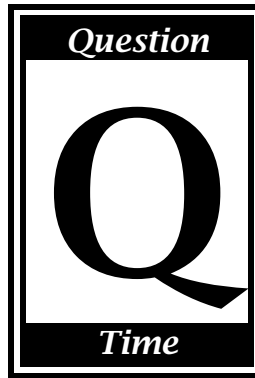
Does the Skills Funding Agency place any requirement on the Council as to maximum or minimum provision of Adult Education?

Is there any stipulation about the number of sites in a borough which are thought necessary to successfully meet any SFA conditions?

**Reply**

The Skills Funding Agency provides detailed funding guidance regarding the provision that they will fund for learners. This details the amount of study available and which qualifications will receive funding. There are no SFA conditions regarding the number of sites or the scale of the provision in a borough.

CEL provides learning from three well resourced premises across the borough. CEL also uses a range of community venues which successfully widens participation in learning as over 75% of learners now come from areas of the borough where deprivation is high.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 9**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Peter Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor Maslin

**Question**

In my experience dealing with issues created by outsourced companies such as Skanska, NSL, Glendales and Lewisham Homes, I have been referred to them directly by Lewisham Council departments, which at one time had responsibility when held in the public sector; or have found my Ward Councillors having to do the same.

As these bodies are unelected, outside the scope of the democratic process, where is my right to democratic accountability?

**Reply**

It is true that a number of Council services including those referred to in the question are now managed by external providers. However, the functions have not been transferred to those companies and the provision of the services is subject to a strict performance regime including a requirement to have a robust customer care system in place for the recipients of the service, which includes a help desk for dealing with enquiries and a complaints system which ensures that complaints are recorded and investigated. The

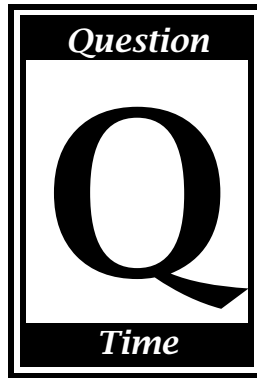


performance of the contractors is monitored by officers and is subject to scrutiny by the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Contract with Skanska relating to street lighting is a joint PFI street lighting contract with Croydon and there is a Joint Committee with a supervisory role which has equal representatives from members of both Councils who meet regularly to examine the performance of the contractor.

Lewisham Homes Limited is a wholly owned company of the Council which was created to manage part of the Council's housing stock. The Council has a monitoring role in relation to the performance of Lewisham Homes. It reviews its Delivery Plan annually. There is an agreed protocol governing enquiries by elected members and three Councillors, together with independent members and tenant and leaseholder representatives sit on the Management Board. The company has to comply with the Tenant's Compact.

None of these contracts are outside the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure although complaints are handled at the initial stage by the relevant service provider. The monitoring role by the Council ensures that there is democratic accountability.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 10**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Mr Keogh

Member to reply: Mayor

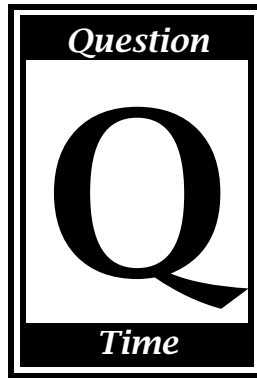
**Question**

In the light of the wettest winter on record and recent severe weather events, can the Mayor thank the Environment Agency and in particular their Chair the Rt Hon Lord Smith of Finsbury, in their efforts to over the years to prevent flooding in Lewisham's riparian town centres? Do you agree that Lewisham has been at the forefront of River Restoration, especially in Brookmill Park, Chinbrook Park, Ladywell Fields and Cornmill Gardens, thanks to the pioneering work of its small Lewisham based charity QWAG (Quaggy Waterways Action Group) which has influenced the EA's methodology of flood risk alleviation by allowing parkland floodplains to flood instead of built on areas, whilst creating valuable sites for biodiversity and amenity for people?

**Reply**

The Council would like to thank all the various partners, including Quaggy Waterways Action Group, who have successfully worked together over many years on river restoration schemes to ensure that Lewisham did not suffer a major flooding incident that may have occurred following the recent severe weather events.

The work to re-naturalise our rivers systems in Lewisham has provided space for water and delivered benefits for both people and wildlife. Improvement work at Brookmill Park, Chinbrook Meadows, Ladywell Fields, and Cornmill Gardens and the annual 3 Rivers Clean Up public event have been used by the Environment Agency and others as examples of best practice and have been celebrated both nationally and within the European Union.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 11**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Mr Phoenix

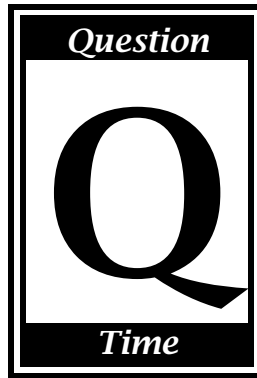
Member to reply: Councillor Klier

**Question**

Some schools refuse to let children take their maths exercise books home. Does the council have some ruling on this?

**Reply**

No. All schools are autonomous and they are responsible for deciding on issues such as this for themselves.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 12**

**Priority 3**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Patricia Richardson

Member to reply: Cllr Maslin

**Question**

Which services, provided on behalf of the council, with tax-payers money, are now outsourced to business corporations, social enterprise groups, charities or other organisations?

What are the names of these providers?

When did the contracts begin and what is their duration?

What percentage of the full Council budget is used to fund these contracts?

**Reply**

While a number of Council services are provided by third party providers, there are many important services still retained in-house for example:-

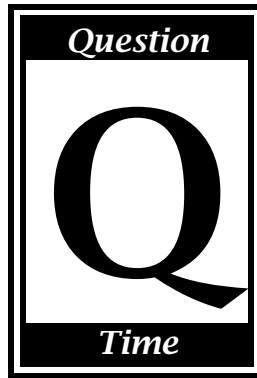
Domestic Refuse  
Environmental Services  
Fleet Maintenance  
Legal

Street Cleansing  
Transport (Coaches)

The Council has 252 contracts and framework agreements, and the contractual terms and conditions vary widely and contracts can be for one to thirty years duration; and the providers are a mixed market from multi-nationals to small social enterprises. The contracts register of the major contracts is available via the link provided below. There are also details provided on the Council's website under the 'transparency' guidelines which shows payments to third parties, this link is also provided. The revenue contractual spend in the last full financial year (2012/13) was £220,226,545 with 4271 suppliers. Of these suppliers 54% are local, and 15% are third sector organisations. As can be seen by the above data the scope requested by this question is extensive, please contact the Procurement Strategy Manager (Andy Murray) on 020 8314 8133 or [andy.murray@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:andy.murray@lewisham.gov.uk) should you require additional information.

[http://www.londoncontractsregister.co.uk/public\\_crs/](http://www.londoncontractsregister.co.uk/public_crs/)

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/finances/council-spending-over-250/Pages/default.aspx>



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 13**

**Priority 3**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Mr Keogh

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor

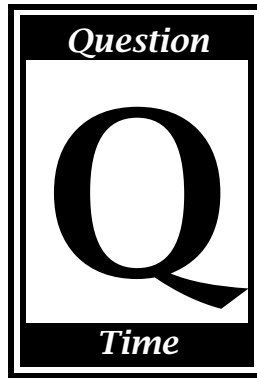
**Question**

What is the latest timetable for Lewisham Gateway with regard to the road restructuring and subsequent development?

**Reply**

The first phase of Lewisham Gateway will be built on the site of the existing bus stand (adjacent to the railway and DLR stations). Work is expected to get underway in March, once the bus stand has been moved to its new location on Thurston Road. (The relocation of the bus stand is currently expected to happen over the weekend of 1-2 March.) Prior to this, some enabling works will take place around the site's perimeter.

Site-wide infrastructure works – which will re-route the roads and rivers, and effectively create the development site for the rest of the scheme – should commence in the first half of June.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 14**

**Priority 3**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Question asked by: Peter Richardson

Member to reply: Cllr Wise

**Question**

Has Lewisham Council any plans to prevent or limit illicit parking in such places as Housing Association controlled streets and estates?  
Vehicle owners in Lee Green Ward who now refuse to purchase the current expensive car parking permits and visitors who prefer not to purchase parking tickets and are known to park in the grounds of Manor House Library and will park in other off-zone areas such as Wolfram Close and the garage spaces adjacent, often to the detriment of residents and garage renters.  
Do you acknowledge this practice must be widespread across the borough as permit charges and ticket charging is the same borough-wide?  
Is the problem being addressed? Is there some reason why Housing Association controlled areas are unable to be included in the zoned areas?

**Reply**

When parking problems exist on private land, housing association land or housing estate roads, the introduction of parking controls are implemented and managed by the relevant housing provider or management company.



Controlled Parking Zones can only be implemented on land designated as public highway and not on land designated as private or estate roads.

The Council is aware that some housing providers have taken action to introduce controls that limit non-resident parking where there is a problem.

The Council is not aware that this is a widespread problem across the borough.