

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 1

Priority 1

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Ray Woolford

Member to reply: Councillor Maslin

Question

Can the Council confirm what was its total heating and electricity bill for all council buildings and estates in the past financial year?

Can the Council please confirm how much was spent on street and estate lighting?

Reply

The total gas and electricity bill for council buildings and estates in 2012/13 was:

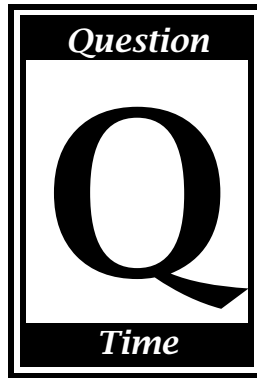
- Council buildings: £1.28m
- Estates £2.68m

The total electricity bill for streetlights (excluding estates lighting) is £0.64m.

The total electricity bill for streetlights on estate roads is £0.12m

For the purposes of the above, "council buildings" have been defined as the operational estate including all corporate office and service buildings.

Note that the cost of gas includes the cost of hot water as well as heating. It is not possible to separate out heating from hot water.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 2

Priority 2

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Hamilton

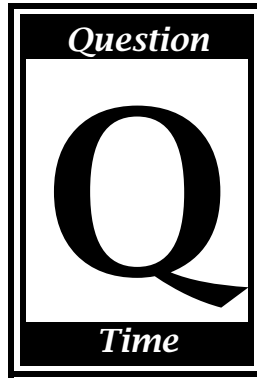
Member to reply: Deputy Mayor

Question

Will the decision of the Mayor of London to call in the proposal by Hutchison Whampoa have consequences for the Section 106 money to be provided by the developer to Lewisham Council for the provision of services on or off the site?

Reply

The letter sent by the Mayor of London to the Council on 30 October states that he will consult the Council on any draft planning obligation and/or conditions. The Council has identified the need for investment in a range of community infrastructure projects directly attributable to the impact of the new development as well as core strategy policy objectives in terms of providing affordable homes and job opportunities and will be seeking to ensure that these are included in the Section 106 Agreement.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 3

Priority 1

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Dermot McKibbin

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

What are the implications of the recent Court of Appeal decision in Superstrike Limited v Rodriguez (2013 EWCA Civ 666) for tenants and landlords in the private rented sector in Lewisham? Have all relevant Council staff been trained on this case and will the Council provide training for private landlords, private tenants and advice agencies in the borough and encourage its partners in the South East London Housing Partnership to do so likewise?

Reply

The recent Court of Appeal case of Superstrike vs. Rodrigues concerns an assured shorthold tenancy that was created in the private rented sector in January 2007, prior to the introduction of mandatory tenancy deposit protection on 6 April 2007. The tenancy continued on a statutory periodic basis from January 2008 and the deposit remained unprotected.

In 2011 a notice was served to end the tenancy. The Court of Appeal has ruled that when the tenancy continued on a statutory periodic basis in 2008 a *new* tenancy was made and a new deposit was deemed to have been received, and therefore fell under the requirements of tenancy deposit protection legislation. Having not met those requirements (to protect the deposit and other conditions) the landlord was not entitled to serve a notice to end the tenancy.

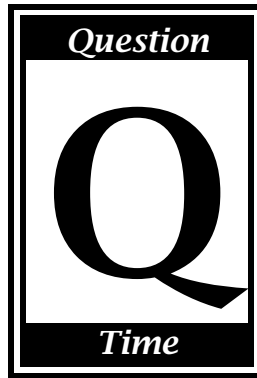
This was a very technical case that has caused some confusion about the legal position of some aspects of deposit protection and will in all probability remain so until further case law is developed to clarify the implications of this judgement or a legislative change introduced.

To date the Tenancy Relations Officers have not been approached by any landlords or tenants as a result of the Superstrike judgement. The Council does not hold any other data to be able to quantify what the implications of this decision will be for landlords and tenants in the private rented sector in Lewisham.

The Council would strongly urge landlords and tenants to seek advice from either the Tenancy Relations Service or their own legal representatives if they have any concerns over the status of their deposit protection.

The Tenancy Relations Officers in Lewisham are fully aware of the ramifications of the Superstrike judgement and are able to provide advice on the case to both landlords and tenants. Specific training will be provided to groups of landlords at the next landlord's meeting scheduled in the new year.

The case has been highlighted by the authority to the Co-ordinator of the South East London Housing Partnership and will be included as an agenda item on the next meeting of the Private Rented Sector Sub Group which will ensure that all the sub regional Councils are aware of the judgement and its implications.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 4

Priority 1

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Ambrose

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

A survey of 359 English councils has revealed that some are generating huge cash surpluses from parking charges, and that in the league table that has been assembled Lewisham is ranked at number 28 with a surplus of £4,603,000. Could you tell the borough's residents what this surplus parking revenue is spent on, and will you now reduce the charge for parking and permits. Transport minister Norman Baker said: "The law is quite clear. Councils should not be pricing their parking in order to make a profit. Any monies raised from parking, in excess of the cost of administration, has to go back to transport purposes which can be dealing with potholes, improved road management or can be investing in public transport to encourage people to free up the roads".

Reply

The RAC Foundation produced the survey referred to in the question and based it on 2011/12 parking income surplus. It is unsurprising that Lewisham as an inner London Borough was ranked at number 28. There were 15 other London authorities, 6 unitary authorities and others like Birmingham ranked

higher. The level of surplus reflects a wide range of factors other than the charges such as the size of the local authority, the density of population, the level car ownership, transport infrastructure, local transport polices and demand for parking spaces.

The Council is transparent on all parking matters and produces a Parking Annual Report that goes to Mayor and Cabinet setting out all financial matters. This includes income and expenditure along with what the surplus is spent on. The Parking Annual Report for 2012/13 went to Mayor and Cabinet on 23 October 2013 and can be found at:

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s25050/Parking%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

The Council's parking policy has to balance the needs of those living, working, visiting and trading in the borough as well as ensuring that the cost of parking controls is met. Complicating matters further is the increase in car ownership and the insatiable demand for parking spaces along with the need to reduce the harmful effects of car use on the environment. The Council's parking charges reflect the need to not only cover the costs of delivering parking controls but also managing these issues.

The parking charges are fixed in accordance with the requirements of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Section 122 of the Act imposes a duty on the Council to use them to *'secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic including pedestrians and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway'*.

Charges have been set at a level which is in line with the median level in London. Setting charges at this level ensures that the borough does not become a 'car park' for those travelling into London from the south east. It also ensures the Council continues to meet the objectives set out above and comply with the requirements of Section 122 Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984.

There is a very real danger of an inner London Borough like Lewisham becoming a 'car park' for commuters. The introduction of the congestion charge in 2003 saw the number of commuters driving into central London reduce but the risk was and remains that they park in car parks in the surrounding areas. The Council has multiple transport links into central London which makes it a very real risk. The improvement along the East London line has also increased the capacity. This is especially the case as Lewisham is just inside zone 2 with cheaper fares and at the end of the Docklands Light Railway. Added to this is the fact that access to Lewisham and its car parks is relatively easy for commuters driving into to London but becomes more difficult the further into London they travel as travel times increase.

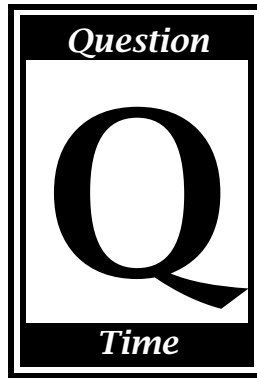
Using the power awarded to the Council under Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 we have established a range of CPZ's where resident demand was evident and where there was clear evidence to suggest a need for one existed. There are now 18 CPZ's in the borough.

In 2012 the Council reviewed its parking policy in response to comments from some residents. The Council conducted a detailed consultation exercise on all aspects of parking, including charges. The outcome of the review was a report to Mayor and Cabinet on 10 April 2013 with 37 recommendations. The Mayor agreed all 37 recommendations including the following that specifically related to parking charges:

- Freeze charges until 2015/16 and review annually thereafter
- Consult on any increases after 2015/16 that exceed inflation
- Introduce a concessionary rate of £30 for low emission vehicles (tax bands A and B)
- Maintain the flat rate charging model rather than charging by the number of cars
- Reduce the weekly visitor permit from £28 to £20
- On application, provide 10 x 1 hour visitor parking permits free of charge annually to resident permit holders.
- On application, provide 10 x 1 hour visitor parking permits free of charge annually to elderly residents living in a CPZ who are not resident permit holders and are in receipt of Council Tax Benefit
- Provide carer permits free of charge
- Maintain the business permit at £500
- Maintain current pay and display charges
- Maintain 30 minute free short stay bays but with the option of up to 1 hour where appropriate
- Continue to provide Blue Badge holders with free resident permits
- Present an Annual Parking report to ensure parking arrangements remain transparent

It is considered that the changes to the parking charges and concessions are in accordance with the requirements of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The full financial impact of these changes will not be evident until at least the end of the 2014/15 financial year when they have been in place a full year. However, a significant reduction in income is anticipated along with a reduction in fines issued. A further reduction in income is anticipated as a result of the introduction of cashless car park payment via mobile phone which enables drivers to extend their parking sessions remotely.

The Parking Annual Report for 2012/13 provides more detail on how the charges are set.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 5

Priority 1

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mrs Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor Best

Question

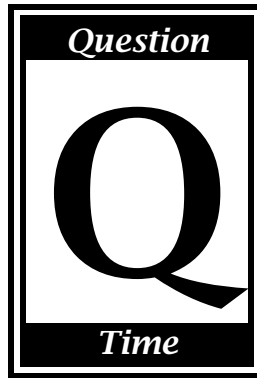
The Local Government Association recently (12/9/2013) held a "Free Libraries Leadership Seminar for new library portfolio holders."

As Cllr Best (Cabinet Member for Community Services) was one of the contributors on the topic "Shared services and community engagement", will she be issuing a report to the public in Lewisham on the outcomes of this seminar? Will the LGA be issuing a report covering the content and outcomes of the whole seminar, for the benefit of the wider public, which pays for these services?

Reply

The Local Government Association provides support to newly elected portfolio holders and as part of this organises information sessions so that new elected members can increase their awareness and share knowledge of areas of public service provision that is new to them. I was happy to contribute to one of these sessions.

There was no additional outcome to the session other than described and there is no follow up report.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO 6.

Priority 1

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Dave Edgerton

Member to reply: Councillor Klier

Question

How well equipped is the education department in Lewisham in recognising the needs of a child with neurofibromatosis?

How well is Lewisham able to ensure any child with Neurofibromatosis is not failed in a way I was?

How can Lewisham be assured that no child with neurofibromatosis will suffer bullying whether at the hands of another child or by a teacher?

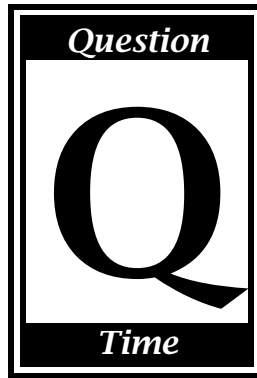
Reply

Neurofibromatosis is a genetic disease that leads to the growth in small tumours on the nerve cell endings and under the skin. The presentation of the neurofibromatosis can vary from discolouration of skin pigmentation to bone malformation. It can affect vision within a smaller proportion of those diagnosed with it and in some cases result in a learning disability.

In Lewisham we have a designated team of school nurses based throughout the schools across the borough. School Nurses will pick up any medical conditions that children may have in the school and support the school to meet the needs of that child.

Lewisham has an anti-bullying policy that is currently being reviewed as part of our local Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board. Lewisham also initiates involvement from an educational psychologist when incidents of bullying are reported.

Lewisham has also become a signatory to the Disabled Children's Charter via our Health and Wellbeing Board and, as such, has made commitments to improve the quality of life and outcomes experienced by disabled children, young people and their families, including children and young people with special educational needs and health conditions.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO 7.

Priority 1

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Kenneth Maxton

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

Can a complete picture of the Milford Towers decant please be given since it began in the spring of 2012, mentioning the number of secure tenancies remaining, the presence and activity of housing associations by name and other housing bodies and agencies on the estate? Is the proposed date for complete evacuation of the properties still the end of 2015 ?

Reply

Milford Towers consists of 276 properties, including 22 leaseholders. The Council started re-housing secure tenants in April 2012 and since this time, 190 have moved by agreement, across the borough using the Council's choice based lettings scheme Homesearch.

Milford Towers is currently being used as mixed tenure accommodation to address a variety of housing needs including existing secure tenants who will be decanted, homeless households waiting for permanent social rented

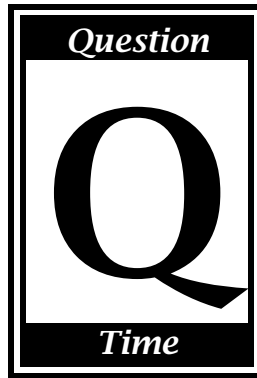
housing and locally employed people on lower salaries who cannot afford full market rents or access low cost home ownership.

At the start of the process, the Council considered a range of security measures and developed a bespoke approach in order to maximise security and maintain a positive living environment through use of occupation rather than grills. All 2 bed units are used as temporary accommodation to house homeless households who are then able to bid for suitably sized permanent social rented housing. For the other properties, the Council initially used property guardian company Ad Hoc to provide live-in guardians and a small number have been grilled where the condition was such that other occupation at the time was not possible.

In January 2013 the Council began a private leasing scheme with partner Notting Hill Housing Association. Notting Hill lease units on short hold tenancies to local people at below market rents. The scheme was introduced to meet a gap in the market and the needs of local employed people on low salaries who cannot afford home ownership or full market rents. Notting Hill has a waiting list for these properties and are bringing back into use many of the properties that had previously been grilled.

Currently there are 54 secure tenants; 151 properties are managed by Notting Hill; 22 are leasehold; 35 are used as temporary accommodation; there are 9 long term voids being bought back into use; one will remain void; two are void awaiting void works for temporary use and secure tenants are currently moving from a further two.

The Council is still working towards obtaining vacant possession of Milford Towers by the end of 2015. The Council also continues to look at the options for the whole of Catford Town Centre and so the detailed timetable for Milford Towers will respond to these wider plans as they develop.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO 8.

Priority 1

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor Best

Question

Some pedestrians visiting the Manor House, Lee, during library opening hours have been complaining to us that the Old Road entrances are being blocked by vehicles. In addition, at certain times, several library visitors who arrive by car, frequently can not find parking space in the drive. Clearly there is a problem and it is strongly believed that some of the cars parked in the drive belong to people who do not use the House facilities and instead visit Manor House Gardens or use the shops located on the nearby Lee High Road.

Would it be possible to display a sign on one of the entrance piers to announce "Parking restricted to House visitors only" - or something similar?

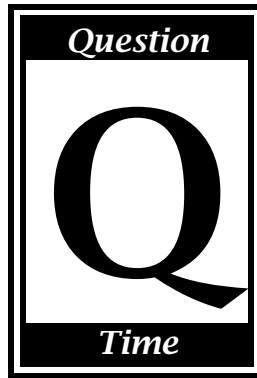
This could be quite a cheap remedy if it were for example, a laminated A3 printed sign which may prove to be effective and relieve the annoyance experienced by genuine users of the building.

Reply

This issue has come to our attention and it is being monitored closely.

Our current thinking to address this issue includes the following measures:

1. raising the grass curb to make it impossible to park on the grass
2. improving signage for the existing parking spaces
3. consideration is being given to an entry camera monitoring system, which would issue a fine for overstaying a maximum number of hours (e.g. 2 hours).



PUBLIC QUESTION NO 9.

Priority 1

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Steven Mills

Member to reply: Cllr Wise

Question

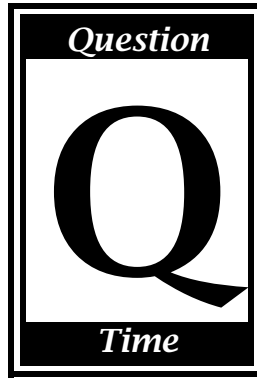
In September, I asked the following question of the Mayor:

Can the Mayor advise how many revised Major Works bills have been re-issued to date to leaseholders in Brockley, reflecting the determination of the Upper Tribunal in February that Higgins Construction had charged excess profit in its charges to leaseholders.

His answer referred only to the 23 leaseholders who were involved in the legal case against Lewisham and its PFI agents. Is he able, this time, to comment on how far his PFI agents have progress in reimbursing the remaining 480 or so leaseholders in Brockley and Ladywell?

Reply

All leaseholders in the Brockley PFI area have been awarded the 2% reduction on the profit level levied on the Refurbishment Works, as per the ruling of the Upper Tribunal, and individual leaseholder accounts have been credited accordingly. All leaseholders were written to w/c 11th November 2013 advising them of this credit.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO 10.

Priority 1

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Nundy

Member to reply: Councillor Maslin

Question

According to the accounts, Lewisham Council spent £14.37m on agency staff in 2012/13. For an agency employed member of staff on £12 per hour how much are the agency charging Lewisham Council per hour?

Reply

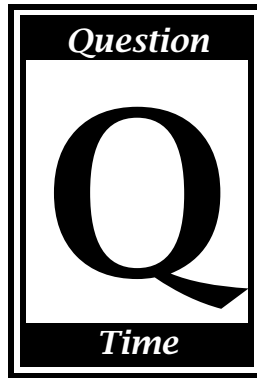
The agency and the Councils Managed Service Provider charge fees which cover the cost of supplying the worker, these range between £0.77 (Admin & clerical staff) to £3.51 (Legal staff). These fees are dependent on the category of worker supplied.

For example a Care worker working 35 hours a week, receiving £12 an hour would cost the council £16.28. This would include National Insurance and holiday pay (approx £2.92) and the agency's and managed service Provider's fees (£1.36).

Agency usage is reported to the Public Accounts committee, in July 2013 it was reported that the total number of agency staff employed as at March 2013 was 608 compared to 671 in March 2012. This reduction in agency numbers in 2012/13 had led to a 7.6% reduction in agency spend from 2011/12.

The main reason for agency usage over the last year has been for additional staffing/flexible resourcing pending reorganisations and to deal with an increased workload.

The greater majority of the agency staff are engaged in two areas i.e. adult social care and refuse collection/street sweeping for the reasons described above.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 11

Priority 2

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Ray Woolford

Member to reply: Councillor Best

Question

At the Council Meeting on 28 November 2012, I asked a public question inviting the Council to confirm what monitoring and checks were in place across Lewisham Care Homes. This question was raised after a BBC Dispatches programme and concerns People Before Profit had about monitoring of our vulnerable residents.

Have you now considered the damning report by the Care Commission this month who made a random visit at the Manley Court Care Home in John Williams Close, New Cross which clearly shows Lewisham failed in its Duty of Care to protect the residents ?

Which Councillor is responsible for this lapse? And why after I had raised this issue as long ago as November 2012, did Lewisham Council fail to ensure monitoring and checks were being carried out regularly .

Can you explain why People Before Profits' consistent calls for monitoring of Council responsibilities are ignored and brushed aside at the expense of the well being of the Boroughs most vulnerable residents. Will the Labour Group take responsibility for this failure and make a public apology?

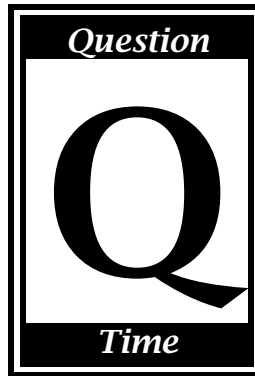
Reply

I believe you have based this question on inaccurate information. I am pleased therefore to have the opportunity to clarify the position.

It is absolutely not the case that the Council has been unaware of quality concerns at Manley Court. Council officers have been working in partnership with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) over a period of many months to improve quality of care in all provision at Manley Court. The Council raised these concerns with the CQC.

The provider has been very willing to work to improve and self-imposed a restriction on new admissions as from September 2013 to enable them to continue to address quality of care in a stable environment.

Many of the CQC and Council's original concerns have been addressed but there are outstanding areas outlined in the July visit which although better are still not at the level of performance required. Council officers in agreement with the CQC continue to work with the provider to address these outstanding issues.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 12

Priority 2

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Dermot McKibbin

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

Does the Council have a strategy for dealing with housing problems in the private rented sector and encouraging improvements in the private rented sector and will the Council encourage other neighbouring local authorities to draw up a joint strategy for the private rented sector in South East London as a whole?

Reply

It is one of the key priorities for the Council to deal with various issues within the private rented sector. To deliver on this priority the Council recently established the Private Sector Housing Agency (PSHA) with critical focus on:-

- Increasing the supply of good quality, well managed private rented sector accommodation accessible for citizens of Lewisham
- Improving the quality of the private rented sector by guiding and empowering landlords, setting, implementing and where necessary

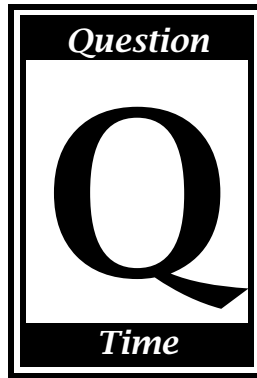
enforcing property standards incorporating the housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS)

- Targeted approach to locating and identifying unlicensed houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and to ensure they are licensed and comply with relevant property standards.
- Targeting and tackling rogue landlords a new multi agency task force including internal and external agencies such as Housing, Building Control, Planning, Environmental Health, Housing Benefit, other South East London Local Authorities, Fire Service and Police etc
- Reducing the number of empty properties by bringing them back into use through the empty property grants programme
- Drastically increasing the number of accredited landlords through the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme, incidentally, the next training session is taking place at the Civic Suites on Friday 29th November 2013 at 9.30am
- Holding regular landlord forums to train, communicate and disseminate best practice, ensuring our landlords are aware of their responsibilities around property standards. Lewisham is also directly working with the Greater London Council through membership of their London Rental Standard Steering Group, which has been set up to deliver London Rental Standard (LRS).

Lewisham Council is also working with its sub-regional partners through the South East London Housing Partnership (SELHP) to take forward various joint initiatives which will benefit the private rented sector in the South East London such as the SELHP landlord website, allowing private sector landlords from South East London to advertise their properties, FREE. It also gives me great pleasure to confirm that Lewisham Council successfully hosted the South East London Landlords Day at the Civic Suite on 20th November 2013, organised by the South East London Housing Partnership and all five boroughs were well represented. The event was supported by exhibitors from various fields but all relevant to housing and was attended by landlords from all over the South East London sub-region who had access to various workshops such as:-

- Tackling damp, condensation and mould
- Sustainable and effective tenancies
- London Rental Standard
- Making your property more energy efficient etc

The Council is continuously developing and implementing local and sub-regional strategies to increase accessibility into the private rented sector at the same time improving property standards to provide good quality homes.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 13

Priority 2

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Ambrose

Member to reply: Councillor Daby

Question

I have just read the report by the The United Kingdom Peace Index and I am shocked by it's findings. It lists Lewisham as coming bottom in this survey.

Bottom 20 Least Peaceful Local Authority Areas in England and Wales, 2013

Rank	Name	Score	Region
343	Lewisham	4.529	London
342	Lambeth	4.494	London
341	Hackney	4.402	London
340	Newham	4.364	London
339	Tower Hamlets	4.360	London
338	Hammersmith & Fulham	4.352	London
337	Islington	4.343	London

Rank	Name	Score	Region
336	Southwark	4.314	London
335	Brent	4.235	London
334	Haringey	4.221	London
333	Waltham Forest	4.076	London
332	City of Westminster	4.061	London
331	Greenwich	4.002	London
330	Ealing	3.949	London
329	Croydon	3.931	London
328	Camden	3.914	London
327	Barking & Dagenham	3.842	London
326	Manchester	3.752	North West
325	Birmingham	3.724	West Midland.

The United Kingdom Peace Index is the first comprehensive measure of levels of peacefulness within the UK from 2003 to 2012.

Have the Council any plans to meet with the local police and discuss these disgraceful findings in this report.

Reply

This question was asked in June and the following answer was provided which has not changed.

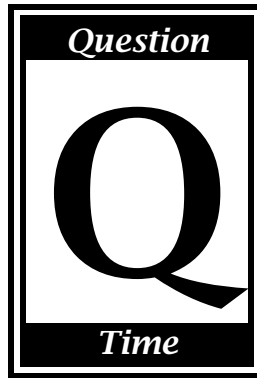
I can confirm that the Council has discussed this report with the Police. The data used for the report stretches back over 10 years and therefore presents a 10 year average for rates of homicide, weapons crime, violent crime and violent disorder. This does not reflect the downward trend in violent crime which has been particularly marked in recent years.

Serious youth violence and knife crime have been reduced by 39% and 29% respectively over the last 2 calendar years. These figures are also supported by NHS data.

These reductions have been driven by a zero tolerance approach to the carrying of knives and those intent on inflicting serious harm in our communities. Extensive work with schools and community groups has also been undertaken

and remains a key component of Lewisham's strategy to reduce violent crime. Putting the needs of victims first is the overriding priority, and in putting our strategy together we were guided by the views of local people, as expressed through such bodies as the Lewisham Community and Police Consultative Group. It should also be noted that work undertaken in this area is audited by external bodies such as the Home Office, which recently cited good practice undertaken by the Council's Youth Offending Service in the anti-gangs strategy and other partners' work in this area.

Despite these reductions the Safer Lewisham Partnership is not complacent and in its annual review of the borough's Crime and Disorder Strategy the Board opted to renew its commitment to reducing knife crime and serious youth violence, and continue to work with the Police, partners and the community to reduce the numbers of our citizens victimised by violent crime.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 14

Priority 2

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mrs Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

The NewsShopper recently reported that Lewisham Council has taken the "First step to dealing with housing crisis" by giving planning permission for 6 family homes of 2/3 bedrooms, as part of the New Homes Better Places programme for 250 council homes over the next 4 years. The Council has given planning permission for large numbers of new apartment blocks to be built within the borough, and still on-going. How did these units meet the needs of local people over the last 4 years? As some were advertised abroad, how many were sold to non-residents? Did any of these new units help to meet the Council's admitted housing crisis?

Reply

Unfortunately, the Council has no power over headlines in the NewsShopper. However, the questioner appears to have missed the point of the story which is that the Council will be building these homes itself, the first such instance for more than 30 years. This is possible because of a change to the way in which council housing is funded, a reform which was initially put in place by the previous Labour government.

The Planning Service, monitor housing completions each year and publish the data in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) each December. The number of residential planning permissions granted each year is also recorded but not published in the AMR. The completions data for the last 4 years shows that about 95% of completed units are in flats and about 5% in houses.

Residential planning permission is granted to the applicant who can be either a provider of social housing or private housing. Increasingly social providers also build homes for private sale. The social housing element is known in planning terms as affordable housing and is defined as housing for eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing is usually let by the social providers to local households who qualify. The private sales element is sold or let on the open market to anyone who can afford to buy. In recent years it has become clear that many volume house builders have sold the private stock to foreign investors or buyers. However, the council has no records of the private sales so is unable to say how many are sold abroad.

The Council's planning policy on affordable housing is that on any private scheme over 10 units it will seek the maximum affordable housing provision possible with a strategic target of 50% to be affordable subject to viability.

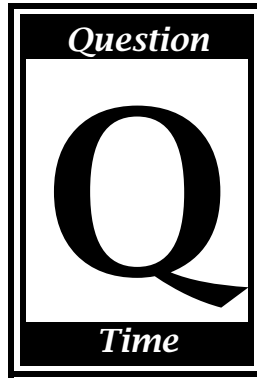
The table below shows data for housing completions for the last 4 years. The total net affordable homes are those provided to local people who qualify, that is, affordable homes. The total private sales can be sold to anyone who can pay. It is likely that the majority of private sales are made to those who live in the UK but the Council does not have records on this matter

Residential Units Completed in past 4 years				
Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
private	614	369	634	1,241
affordable	168	359	554	564
Total permissions	782	728	1,188	1,805

With regard to planning permissions many more are granted each year than are actually constructed. The planning records for permissions for the last 4 years are shown in the table below.

Residential Units Granted Planning Permissions in past 4 years				
Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
private	1918	896	5234	348
affordable	1373	501	1251	268
Total permissions	3291	1397	6485	616

The Council has 100% nomination rights to all new build affordable rented properties and these are let to applicants on the authority's Housing Register in accordance with the publically available Allocations Policy. All households on the Housing Register will have a recognised need for housing and have a local connection to Lewisham.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 15

Priority 2

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Dave Edgerton

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

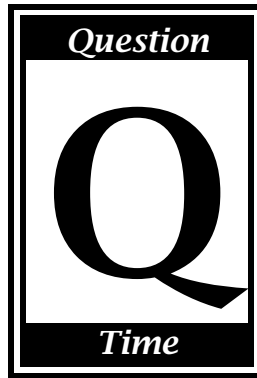
How well is Lewisham complying with the clean air act and what improvements can be made?

Reply

Under the Clean Air Act 1993, Lewisham is complying with requirements; and in 2011, declared the whole Borough, a 'Smoke Control Area'; and aims to reduce air pollution, making it an offence to produce smoke from a chimney, furnace or boiler. It is also an offence to emit dark smoke from a bonfire on any trade or commercial site.

Practically we advise residents on smoking chimneys, burners, commercial fires and exempt appliances; reminding residents that, under air pollution laws, it is illegal to burn coal or wood in an open fireplace unless the fuel is smokeless or appliance exempt. We also respond to complaints and follow up with cautions and enforcement when required.

Also please note requirements attaining to the Environment Act 1995 Part IV, are being progressed through the Air Quality Action Plan. Earlier this year the Borough adopted measures to extend it's air quality management areas (AQMA), to cover the Crofton Park area to help improve local air quality attaining to the reduction of Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) levels.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 16

Priority 2

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Kenneth Maxton

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor

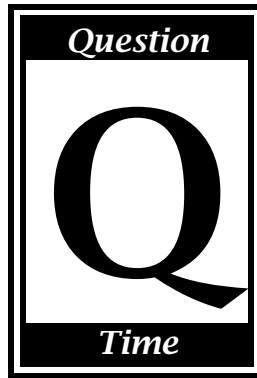
Question

Mindful of the requirement for confidentiality in the particulars of land acquisition and the business affairs of parties with whom the Council negotiates, is the present general state of affairs concerning the Tesco supermarket in the Catford Centre such that the Council is optimistic for a satisfactory settlement within the timescale set out for the Centre's redevelopment ?

Reply

As is well documented Tesco corporately have been undergoing changes in direction and reviewing their approach to both existing and proposed stores. The Tesco supermarket is one element of the redevelopment of the Catford Centre, however, the Council's ownership of the Catford Shopping Centre (excluding the long lease of Tesco) as well as Milford Towers and other key town centre sites means the Council can influence future regeneration plans including the Catford Centre.

Following improvement in the economic climate and increased interest in Catford the Council is currently reviewing the best way forward for the regeneration of Catford town centre and the Catford Centre within this. This will involve consideration of potential programme. Currently the Council believe that the timescales set out within the Catford Plan could be achievable. Albeit , this is still subject to many factors, including identifying a deliverable scheme and agreeing commercial terms with the key parties who are, or will be, involved in the redevelopment of the site.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 17

Priority 2

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor Best

Question

The Manor House at Lee now has a licence to perform Marriages and Civil Ceremonies. The numbers so far performed are relatively few. Since the facilities inside the House are first class, I suspect the reason for this may be due to the unfortunate neglect of the grounds at the entrance. Not only are 4 of the light-stands lining the drive broken and laid askew on the ground and have been for some considerable time, but the garden borders have been allowed to become distastefully untidy. This must be 'off-putting' to prospective couples eager to "tie the knot" at what should be a very attractive Borough venue. Fixing the broken light-stands is well overdue. Does the Library Budget have a contingency fund within it which may be used to rectify matters and possibly provide some periodic garden attention in order to increase its attraction?

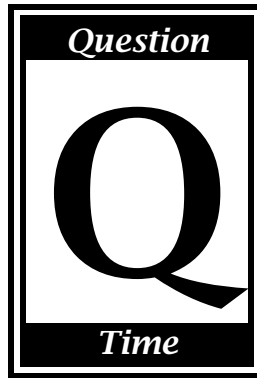
Reply

The number of ceremonies taking place at Manor House is increasing steadily. This is expected to increase more markedly when the new marketing material is

produced as earlier material did not include Manor House as a suitable venue for ceremonies.

The issue with the lights has been reported to our property services department, and a survey of the site has taken place. Regular maintenance is carried out in the garden.

The Library and Information Service has no provision in its budget allocation for building maintenance as these resources are provided from elsewhere in the Council.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 18

Priority 2

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Mills

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

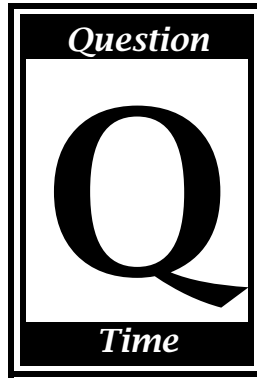
Question

Can the Mayor comment on why elements of Regenter Brockley's website are no longer working, in particular the payment portal, or as to why material on the site is so out of date to render it useless?

Reply

RegenterB3 apologise for the temporary suspension of some aspects of their website, in particular the customer payment portal. RegenterB3 is currently in the process of renegotiating the contract for this element of the website and full services will resume by January 2014.

Pinnacle has also put in place a web development plan, which has been agreed by the Council, and a Project Group will commence delivery of this plan in the new year. The plan focuses on the requirements to improve both the overall content and functionality of the site. Pinnacle will continue to undertake consultation with residents about the ongoing development and maintenance of the site.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 19

Priority 3

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Ray Woolford

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

Can the Council please confirm what the Council's policy is on metal gates on front doors of Council homes in light of fire chiefs calls that they cause real concerns in the case of fire, and with police concerns that metal gates cause real concerns with gaining access.

Are you further aware that Tenants and Residents Associations also report that many of these metal gates cause real noise and anti social behaviour with banging and clanging at all hours causing real misery for residents in adjoining homes.

Reply

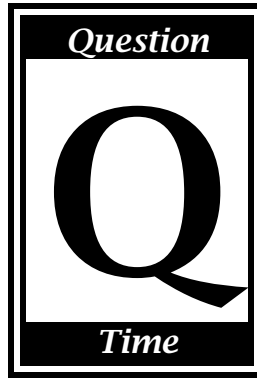
The Council recognises the potential hazards that metal grilles can cause and it strongly urges housing management providers, tenants and leaseholders not to install grilles and, where they are installed, to remove them. This is particularly the case now that tenants and leaseholders have benefitted from receiving new

high quality front doors which meet current fire and secure by design standards which therefore negate the need for grilles.

There is no specific legislative requirement which calls for the removal of grilles and therefore this is a management issue that requires the balance of the risk against the wishes of tenants who perceive a safety or other benefit from having a grille. As such, officers are currently taking legal advice about the potential to insist that grilles are removed and to make sure that this position is legally enforceable. In conjunction with this, a draft letter has also been written that will be sent to residents but the content is also being reviewed by legal advisors to ensure the approach is appropriate.

In the interim, where a metal grille is identified in the course of Decent Homes or other refurbishment works the following procedure is followed:

- Where tenants and leaseholders have fitted grilles and security gates to their properties that need to be removed to carry out major works, these will be removed and handed back to the resident.
- Grilles and security gates will not be replaced following the works, unless approved by the relevant Health and Safety Manager, as they pose a health and safety risk in the event of a fire.
- Where residents have fitted grilles and security gates to a property that has subsequently become void, if the void property is being refurbished as part of the major works programme, the grilles and security gates will be removed prior to the new tenant moving in and not replaced.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 20

Priority 3

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Dermot McKibbin

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

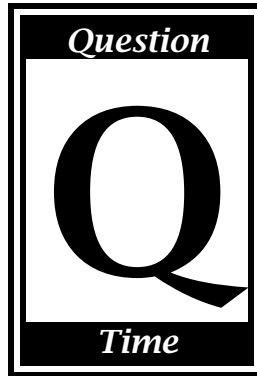
Question

How many staff does the Council employ who deal with tenancy relations work in the private rented sector and how does this figure compare with other neighbouring authorities?

Reply

Lewisham employs two dedicated officers to carry out the Tenancy Relations Officer function. Local authorities can also discharge their duties to private sector tenants in differing ways and the Tenancy Relations Officer role can be incorporated into other roles such as Environmental Health Officers or Housing Options Officers.

There are no published statistics on the number of officers allocated to this work on a borough basis. Each borough will have its own approach and therefore specific comparisons do not necessarily reflect the amount of work undertaken or indeed the specific challenges faced. Broadly Lewisham's resources are in line with similar local Authorities in the region.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 21

Priority 3

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Dave Edgerton

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor

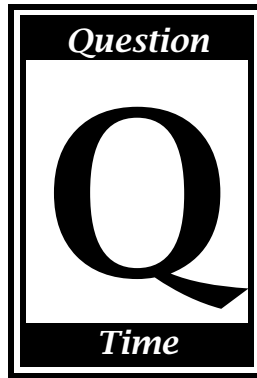
Question

As a councillor I spent years campaign for a safer pedestrian crossing at the junction of Courthill Road and Lewisham High Street. How far is Lewisham and TfL away from a solution?

Reply

Lewisham High Street, as part of the Red Route network, is the responsibility of Transport for London (TfL), not of the Council. Also all traffic signals in London are the responsibility of TfL.

TfL now have a scheme, which they are currently completing detailed design on. We understand that the works should begin on site in April 2014 and will continue for 3 months. The scheme will include, the Lewisham High Street/Courthill Road junction. A toucan crossing is proposed across A21 (north side) and also crossings on Whitburn Road and Courthill Road "arms".



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 22

Priority 3

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mrs Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor Best

Question

In view of the changes in charging for CEL classes and the alterations involved in enrolment requirements as introduced from September 2013 has the Council noticed any downturn in enrolment for the seniors, who used to receive a concession, but no longer do so? How do these figures compare with those who still receive a seniors' concession for certain classes?

What are the overall enrolment statistics for each centre?

How many classes and which classes have been cancelled due to lack of numbers, if any? Which centres do they affect?

Reply

CEL continues to offer concessions to learners on Skills Funding Agency (SFA) provision. The only change to concessions for this type of delivery is for women, being an increase from age 62 in 2012/13 to age 63 in 2013/14.

The number of these learners has remained relatively stable at 561 in 2012/13 & 538 in 2013/14. This is against a backdrop of a known increase of learners on employability and Skills for Life provision.

Learners enrolled at 18 Nov	Not Senior	Senior	Grand Total	% Senior
2012/13	2188	561	2749	20%
2013/14	2467	538	3005	18%
Of which; 13/14 Studio classes only	308	63	371	17%

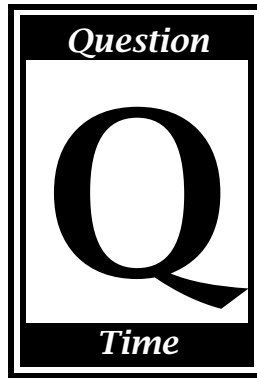
For other provision, the only significant change to delivery are studio classes where there are no concessions for learners of any age. The proportion of older learners on these courses is comparable with SFA funded courses.

What are the overall enrolment statistics for each centre?

Enrolments to 18 Nov in each year	Year		% Difference
	2012/13	2013/14	
Venue			
Brockley	2793	3117	12%
Granville Park	1183	1585	34%
Grove Park	498	758	52%
Offsite	461	808	75%
Grand Total	4935	6268	27%

Changes in curriculum design in Skills for Life, a stronger web presence and an increase in minimum class size are likely to be the main contributing factors to the increased enrolment levels.

Provision closed so far in 2013/14 (analysis on 13/11/13) shows closures are 3% lower than 2012/13 for the same period. Only one planned Studio class, across the whole service, was cancelled for not meeting the minimum class size. It is not possible to give details on individual class closures as this information affects tutor contracts and the future viability of courses.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 23

Priority 3

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Richardson

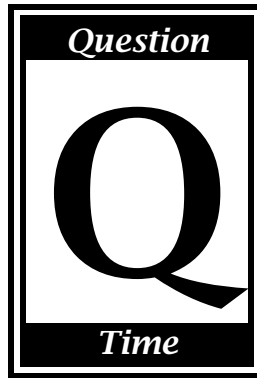
Member to reply: Councillor Best

Question

The number of housing units scheduled for the development of Convoy's Wharf is considerable and thus portends a major increase in population for that area. Are there any plans for the construction of, or provision for a local Lewisham Library Authority branch library, which would offer full library facilities for this expected growth in population?

Reply

The Council has relatively recently constructed the Deptford Lounge in the heart of Deptford High Street as part of a development that also includes Tidemill Academy, with which the community shares space and facilities, plus Resolution Studios, consisting of 38 affordable apartments with nine studios for local businesses and an exhibition space. The Lounge was constructed to be the main hub for existing and new residents and businesses in the Deptford area.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 24

Priority 3

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Mills

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

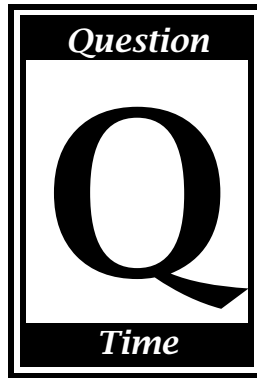
Leaseholders in Brockley received formal notification in October that service charge bills for 2013/14 would be delayed. While this is the first time that formal legal notice has been given for the delays, it is the fifth year in a row that bills have not been issued on time, in spite of assurances from council officials to the Brockley Leaseholders' Association last year that reconciliation and auditing processes would be streamlined.

Can the Mayor explain what specifically has gone wrong this year?

Reply

I assume that you refer to service charge bills for 2012-13. Regenter B3 and Pinnacle have undertaken a review of their service this year and taken steps to improve the processing of service charge bills. Pinnacle regrets the delay in processing the service charge bills for 2012-13, which was caused by delays in processing some elements of the service charges.

Pinnacle has confirmed that actual bills for 2012-13 service charges have now been issued and all leaseholders should have received these w/c 28 October 2013.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 25

Priority 4

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Ray Woolford

Member to reply: The Mayor

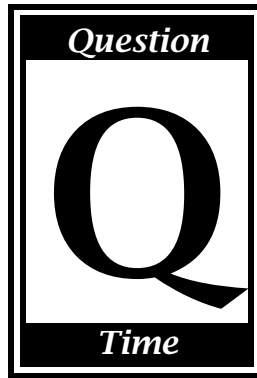
Question

The Build the Lennox project, is one of the most visionary projects ever to be launched in London with potential to generate huge numbers of jobs, kick start the local economy and give huge pride to all residents of Lewisham. Can the Mayor and Council, on behalf of all Lewisham residents, seek to work with the Trustees of the project to see how the Council's support can be used to secure funding, and to ensure that the pledge by the Convoy Wharf developers, to give over land to the project, is secured because at present the developer says that it will offer the land but feel the project will be unable to secure funding?

The full support of the Mayor and Council, would help address this issue, whilst giving real boost to fundraising and turning this vision into reality.

Reply

I have made it very clear that the Council is supportive of the Build the Lenox project following their presentation to Mayor and Cabinet in September. The Council will work with GLA, Hutchison Whampoa, and the Build the Lenox Group to review and agree the most appropriate way forward to ensure the inclusion of the project in the Convoys Wharf development.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 26

Priority 4

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Dermot McKibbin

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

How many private landlords have been prosecuted for unlawful eviction in recent years by the Council and how does this figure compare with other neighbouring authorities?

Reply

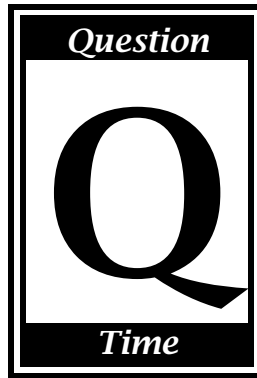
The Council undertakes civil action rather than criminal proceedings to deal with illegal evictions as this results in better outcomes for the tenants involved. The immediate concern for the Council and any household facing illegal eviction is to have the tenancy reinstated. A criminal prosecution does not achieve the reinstatement of the tenancy. Once a tenant has either re-entered their property or had to find alternative accommodation it is very difficult to subsequently get them to act as a witness in a criminal prosecution.

The Council does have a robust civil action programme in place where the Tenancy Relations Officers assist the tenants to prepare papers and claims for court action to obtain injunctions for re-entry where appropriate, attend court hearings with them and help them pursue civil action for damages which can result in financial compensation if the court feels it appropriate.

Speed is essential in commencing action to gain re-entry to a private sector property where an illegal eviction has taken place and the civil action provides a cost effective service for tenants who would not be able to pursue action through the court system without assistance and in most cases would not be eligible for publicly funded assistance from a solicitor or in a position to pay directly for legal representation.

Hence for all these reasons the Council has not undertaken any criminal prosecutions of landlords for unlawful eviction.

There is no published information available on the level of prosecutions in respect of illegal evictions that neighbouring authorities have carried out. There is no statutory duty for local authorities to report this information to the Department for Communities and Local Government and enquiries made to London Council's and the South East London Housing Partnership have confirmed that there is no collated data held on this subject centrally in London.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 27

Priority 4

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mrs Richardson

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor

Question

At CQT in June 2013 the Council answered my question (7) on the subject of street lighting, saying "The purpose of the new lighting is to illuminate the road and footway to the current British Standard, BS 5489-1 which takes account of light pollution. The authority seeks to minimise light spill and ensure that the new lighting causes as little disruption as possible. The light used is changing from orange sodium unit to white unit which has a lower impact on wildlife."

The British Standards produced were based on the results of the Royal Commission on street lighting and I am still waiting for a complete reply to my concerns that in Manor Lane Terrace the new lighting, installed after my original question, is creating maximum light spill in the gardens and interiors of houses both the ground floors and first floors. The person earmarked to answer concerns on where the British Standards were clearly not being met only dealt with some points, not the important points.

Will the Council answer these concerns properly as we now have no night time in Manor Lane Terrace and higher light levels than in some other, busier roads? In addition where is the line of responsibility and accountability drawn between the paid provider and the Council contracting the service out?

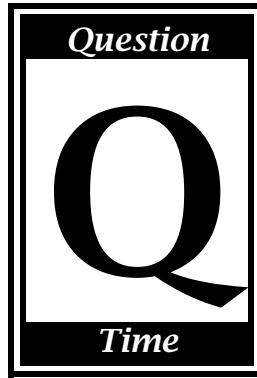
How can the Council claim there is no impact on wildlife (what about plant life?) when there is no night and the night sky has disappeared?

Reply

The scheme in Manor Lane Terrace will have its lighting levels tested once the old redundant columns have been removed, the photometric testing will be carried out to ascertain if the lighting levels for that location are what we would expect and conform to the British Standard. However, we are confident that the design is correct and this will be checked once the scheme has been completed.

As Mrs Richardson is aware, we are in the process of arranging a site visit to her property to assess what the effects are on her property.

The Council has not said there is no impact on wildlife, we stated that white light has less impact than yellow lighting. With all changes there is a balance between varying concerns, from road safety, fear of crime and the effects on wildlife and we believe that this has been taken into account in this instance.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 28

Priority 4

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Mills

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

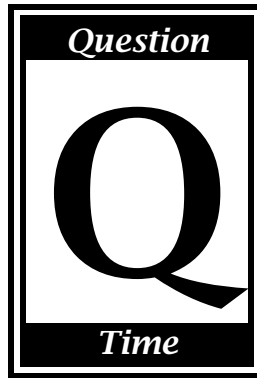
Brockley leaseholders are soon to endure a cycle of 'decorative works' being carried out by the council's PFI agents Rydon, part of the PFI consortium. Can the Mayor explain what safeguards and approvals processes he and the Council have in place, through the PFI contract or otherwise, to manage the cost of scaffolding that might need to be erected as part of any work? How will the length of scaffolding being erected be limited? Learning lessons from the 2011 Leasehold Valuation Tribunal, will more cost-efficient means of carrying out work (e.g. small cranes) be used?

Reply

The Council's priority is to achieve best value on all contracts of this nature for all of its residents. In this case, achieving best value on the works programme will also translate into lower costs for leaseholders.

To that end scaffolding will only be used in line with the necessary Health and Safety Regulations and any further statutory regulations to enable safe access

by operatives to carry out the necessary works. Consideration will be given, where appropriate, to other forms of access where Health and Safety legislation permits and where the costs of employing this are more cost effective than scaffolding. The scaffolding for the contract is procured on an annual basis at a fixed sum rate therefore the cost, and subsequent recharge to leaseholders, is not directly linked to the amount of scaffolding used and/or the duration of use on each individual property or block. The total cost of the scaffolding for the year is then apportioned to the properties/blocks where it is used and the recharges to leaseholders are then applied accordingly. Scaffolding will only be erected for the minimum period required while all necessary works take place.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 29

Priority 5

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Ray Woolford

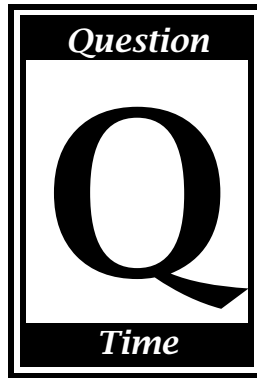
Member to reply: Councillor Klier

Question

In line with the link between food and educational achievement, does Lewisham Council have plans to extend free school meals to all children in the borough up to the age of 16?

Reply

The Council has no plans to extend free school meals to all children up to the age of 16.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 30

Priority 5

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Dermot McKibbin

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

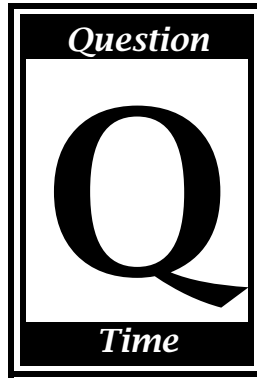
Question

How many injunctions have Council staff obtained in recent years to help private tenants who have been unlawfully evicted and how does this figure compare with other neighbouring boroughs?

Reply

At the end of October 2013 the Council has assisted 11 tenants to obtain injunctions.

There is no published information in respect of illegal evictions for other boroughs. The Department for Communities and Local Government, London Councils and the South East London Housing Partnership have all confirmed that there is no data held on this subject centrally in London.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 31

Priority 5

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Mills

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

How long will leaseholders have to pay Lewisham and its PFI agents 'Regenter B3' once cyclical works have been completed to our properties?

Reply

Repayment arrangements for the lifecycle programme works will be on the same basis as those for the Refurbishment programme.

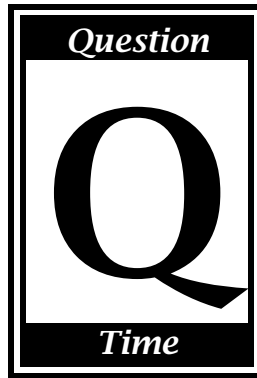
As per the terms of individual leases, all leaseholders are required to pay service charge demands within 28 days. The Council however, operates an extended repayment options policy that allows leaseholders, who sign up to an agreed repayment plan, a longer period of time to pay these charges. Leaseholders will receive written details of the payment options in place when the consultation period commences.

There are a range of options that are available for resident leaseholders, including;

- For bills under £3,000, a 24 month interest free period for lessees is available
- For bills between £3,000 and £10,000, a 36 month interest free period for resident lessees is available

Please note, all interest free periods are subject to leaseholders agreeing and adhering to a repayment plan at the onset and the Council reserves the right to apply interest to any outstanding balances not paid in accordance with the above.

In situations where leaseholders are experiencing hardship, the Council and RegenterB3 will work closely with the leaseholder to agree a suitable option.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 32

Priority 6

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Ray Woolford

Member to reply: Councillor Smith

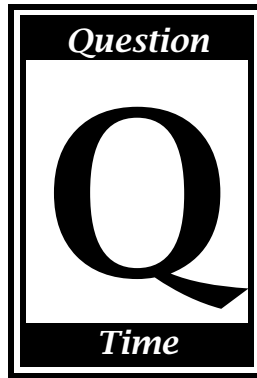
Question

The perfectly good school and 3 bedroom family home on the former site of Deptford Green School has been cleared for months. Local residents in New Cross and Deptford are concerned this space has not yet been returned to the community and fear the Council plans to develop this site.

Can the Council please confirm that it is not going back on its word about community space, and confirm when contractors expect the space to be returned to the community, and could the park plans include an outdoor gym?

Reply

The Council is currently in the process of procuring a development partner to deliver a new public park and housing scheme on the former site of Deptford Green school, in line with the planning permission (DC/10/73438) granted in 2010. The park will be public open space and the Council is requiring the development partner to complete the park before they can receive any freehold ownership rights on the housing, which means that the park will be delivered towards the start of the programme. It is likely that a development partner will be appointed in early 2014. However there is still a detailed planning process to be undertaken for the housing element of the site and it is therefore likely that works on site will not begin until sometime in 2015.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 33

Priority 6

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Mr Mills

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

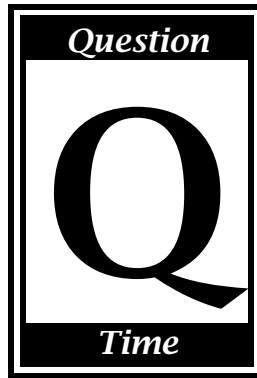
Question

What assurances can the Mayor give that his PFI agents within the Regenter B3 consortium will adhere to the terms of individual leaseholders' leases, particularly in respect of access rights and fair notice before surveys, inspections and works are carried out. What assurances can he give that no employees or contractors will turn up requiring access un-announced? Is he aware of such practice happening at the moment?

Reply

RegenterB3 has given assurances that every effort will be made to adhere to contractual obligations including the notification protocol. Fair Notices for surveys, access rights, inspections and then the undertaking of works will be programmed in line with the timescales set out in the contract. In the event that RegenterB3 is made aware of any non compliance with the protocol, then action will be taken to ensure it is not repeated.

RegenterB3 is only aware of one recent incident where a contractor visited a property on a weekend without prior notification to the resident. The contractor in question has been formally disciplined in line with company procedures.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 34

Priority 7

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Ray Woolford

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

Tenants of Bittern Court Edward Street Deptford SE8 5HW, have constant problems with condensation and extraction to kitchen and bathrooms which does not conform to Decent Homes, and is putting tenants health and well being at risk. Can the Council explain why after wiring flats in the block for installation of extractors, the blocks housing officer is telling tenants that extractors cannot be fitted, but may or may not be fitted as part of Block refurbishment?

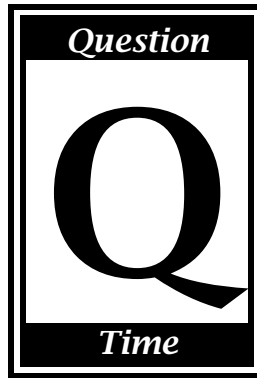
Can the Cabinet Member confirm what programme of works are planned for this block, and when the tenants' reasonable request to get extractors fitted, will be carried out?

Reply

The single pane windows at Bittern Court were replaced with double glazed units more than ten years ago, and at that time it was assessed that no further ventilation outlet would be required and as such no wall space was allocated for that purpose. All Decent Homes works have since been carried out to Bittern

Court, and no other works of this nature are currently due except for any lifecycle works that may be required to maintain the property.

The Council recognises that these are not satisfactory conditions for the residents of Bittern Court and has therefore instructed Lewisham Homes officers to review the most effective solution for these ongoing issues as part of its investment programme in the Council's housing stock.



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 35

Priority 8

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

27 NOVEMBER 2013

Question asked by: Ray Woolford

Member to reply: Councillor Wise

Question

Heston House Tanners Hill Deptford; Can the Council please confirm when it will be installing the new Kitchens promised as part of Decent Homes funding, and when it will be ensuring the extractors that have been installed will be working? Can the Council also confirm when the former drying area in the basement area will be cleared of rats and mice.

Reply

Decent Homes works for Heston House are scheduled to commence in early 2014.

Mitie, which is the contractor undertaking the works, is currently completing surveys to assess the level of works required to complete that process, and these surveys will identify whether extractors and/or new kitchens will be required to achieve the Decent Homes standard. Mitie and Lewisham Homes officers will be meeting with the Tanners Hill Tenants and Residents Association on 28 November 2013 to discuss the programme, and answer any concerns residents may have. Lewisham Homes has reported the pest control incident to the Council's pest control service who will attend and treat the area within the week.