

To the Mayor and Councillors of the London Borough of Lambeth

YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING of the COUNCIL to be held in the Lambeth Town Hall,
SW2 1RW on Wednesday 24 January 2018 at 7.00 pm

Council Questions



ANDREW TRAVERS
Interim CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Further Information

If you require any further information or have any queries please contact:
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AGENDA

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Council, 24 January 2018

Questions from Councillors

Wards: All

Report Authorised by: Strategic Director Corporate Resources, Jackie Belton

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Report summary

Questions and answers submitted by Councillors, in accordance with Standing Order 12, are set out below.

1. Councillor Louise Nathanson

To: Cabinet Member for Culture and Equalities, Councillor Sonia Winifred

Events on open spaces

Despite the work of Conservative councillors and activists in opposing the Labour-Lambeth Events Strategy, residents that live near Clapham Common and Streatham Common, and now recently Brockwell Park, have realised that they now have almost no say over the size and duration of huge music events on their local green space that have deafening levels of noise, trash the grass, leave litter strewn across their streets, and encourage anti-social behaviour such as people urinating in their basements and front gardens. Conservative councillors support some events but want the over-exploitation and mismanagement of our green spaces and parks to end.

Amazingly despite the huge income from events on public land, Labour councillors still manage to run events in Lambeth at a financial loss, the cost to residents this year being a staggering £485,000.

What plans do Labour councillors have to turn around another memorable strategy failure?

Party: Conservative

Answer:

The Council has committed to delivering a safe, sustainable and accessible events through its Events Strategy. The strategy is aligned with the council's ambitions and priorities, particularly sustainability, health and wellbeing, community cohesion and partnership.

Lambeth Council Events Strategy, adopted by Cabinet in 2016, limits the number of major commercial events in each area (Brixton, Clapham, Norwood, Streatham and North Lambeth) to eight days a year. The policy also brought in a maximum noise level for events. These major commercial events are charged a higher Park Investment Levy (PIL) rate which goes back to the parks service and the park/open space that hosted the event.

All event applications are considered in line with the [Event Strategy](#) and the processes clearly publicised <http://www.eventlambeth.co.uk/organising/planning-your-event/> There are several layers of scrutiny before any event is permitted, including the Safety Advisory Group which considers Health and Safety Issues, engagement with local Friends and other community groups, as well as the statutory processes of Licencing and Planning. Every event is assessed on the positive and negative impacts - environmentally, economically, socially and culturally.

The Events Strategy manages that fine balance and the PIL supports local parks, community events such as concerts at Clapham Common bandstand.

In the past year, our award winning events service EventLambeth has worked on 245 events across 31 locations, involving over 750,000 people in attendance not including the Lambeth Country Show which had over 150,000 last year. To date, in 2017 there has been over 1,664 event enquiries in to the team, 55 event applications have been rejected and 35 event applicants have cancelled their event applications. The event service generated income of £1,107,432, expenditure was £1,034,201 with a surplus of £73,231.

When events do not meet our high standards, there are consequences. For example the Sunfall event which took place over the last two summers will not be taking place in 2018 following a review of their management of the event which fell short of the standards we expect of event operators.

The council has published a full budget for the Lambeth Country Show to demonstrate how public money is spent on the show. While the costs (such as health & safety, security, crowd management and medical cover) are carefully monitored, income for the show continues to increase. We are proud that the Lambeth Country Show remains a free event for everyone, enjoyed by over 150,000 people last year that would not have been able to if Lambeth Tories had followed through their bizarre plan to cancel the Country Show.

2. Councillor Scott Ainslie

To: Cabinet Member for Housing & Environment, Councillor Jennifer Brathwaite

On what date was the petition organised by Lambeth labour councillors and MPs presented to London Mayor Sadiq Khan, against the closure of Streatham police base and other bases in Lambeth?

Party: Green

Answer:

As an online petition, decision makers – in this case the Mayor of London and the Home Secretary - were notified automatically when the petition was launched and at regular intervals as signatories were added. By the end of the consultation nearly 1,000 people had signed the petition (which was supported by local MPs, councillors & activists). As a result, Amber Rudd and Sadiq Khan were sent a clear message about the scale of local opposition to the proposals.

Our comprehensive response to the consultation drew on feedback from the community and local stakeholders gathered through the online petition, local street stalls and from the nearly 20,000 survey leaflets delivered across Lambeth over several months. Lambeth's submission highlighted the potentially devastating impact on the community-focused, neighbourhood policing that is vital to keeping our streets safe and called on the Government to scrap the cuts and work with the Mayor to keep stations open.

The Government's recent announcement of a small increase in Police funding across England & Wales relies on increasing taxes on Londoners and will not address the massive gap between the cost of protecting Londoners effectively and the money available to do so.

In addition to the extensive lobbying that took place during the consultation period, Cllr Mohamed Seedat and Cllr Florence Eshalomi met with the Mayor of London to raise a number of concerns about the impact of these changes, including the unacceptable increase in travel times for residents in the south of the borough as a result of the closure of Streatham Police station.

Discussions about co-locating council and Police have also begun. A further meeting with MOPAC and the deputy mayor for policing is scheduled to assess the impact of station closures, discuss the 'public health' led strategy to reduce violence in Lambeth, and re-iterate the need to maintain focus on neighbourhood based policing.

Unlike the Greens, we were clear from the outset that the real culprit for the station closures is the Tory Government. We will continue to challenge the misguided austerity policies that will see £1bn cut from the Met's budget at a time when the force is already stretched to breaking point.

3. Councillor Christopher Wellbelove

To: Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Tim Briggs

Attendance at Committee meetings

In your speech to full council on 18th December you said how important an effective opposition is. In this spirit can you please update council on how many meetings of the children's services scrutiny sub committee the designated Conservative councillor for this body has attended in the last six months and over the same period how many times a Conservative councillor has taken up their groups allotted space on Lambeth's Planning Applications Committee?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The 3 Conservative councillors have to provide an opposition on behalf of the huge groundswell of residents across the whole of Lambeth suffering as a result of the policies of Labour councillors, which is sometimes impossible to achieve. More so after the Leader of the Council ended all administrative and office support for any councillors that oppose her Labour one-party state, yet awarded greater numbers of her Labour councillors 'special responsibility allowances' of extra money.

Even so, I am surprised that Cllr Wellbelove wants to draw attention to the record of Labour councillors attending meetings. Often Cllr Wellbelove seems only to attend full council meetings to get headlines for his 'Fear-and-Smear' leaflets making personal attacks on imaginary opponents in Clapham Town. In 2015 he attended less than half of the full council meetings (3 of 7), and only 1 of the last 3 full council meetings. In fact, only 3 of the 59 Labour councillors have missed more full council meetings than Cllr Wellbelove.

At the September 2017 meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-committee only the Chair attended, so the meeting could not proceed to scrutinise whether our children were safe

in the care of Labour-Lambeth, Children's Services having been rated as 'Inadequate' by OFSTED. So quite apart from an effective opposition, Labour councillors in control of the council turning up to their own meetings would be helpful.

Planning committee is not a political committee, but has a quasi-judicial function. Therefore planning meetings have no 'opposition' as such. Equally for more opposition, Labour councillors could stop slavishly voting as they are told in council meetings and follow their consciences, which appear to have been locked away in whatever dark place they keep their special responsibility allowances.

4. Councillor Saleha Jaffer

To: Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment, Councillor Jennifer Brathwaite

Implementation of clean air bus corridor

Like many residents in Lambeth I am delighted that after lobbying from Lambeth Labour, the council and Mayor of London have delivered the clean air bus corridor in the borough. Can I ask the cabinet member to outline the specifics of the implementation of the proposals and the potential benefits to residents?

Party: Labour

Answer:

There are two aspects to the introduction of the Low Emission Bus Zone on the A23 in Lambeth. Firstly, the bus fleet serving this corridor has been upgraded to ensure that all buses are compliant with Euro VI standards, or better. This bus fleet has been in place since October 2017. We are currently in negotiations with TfL about extending the Low Emission Bus Zone elsewhere in the borough. Secondly, TfL are developing a range of interventions to improve bus priority on the A23 corridor. Measures are advanced on Brixton Road, on Brixton Hill and Streatham and further measures are planned, with the majority of the programme expected to be complete by 2019/20. Outside of this timeframe, TfL are considering improvements to Brixton town centre. The combination of a cleaner bus fleet and enhanced bus priority measures is expected to significantly reduce air quality impacts as well as making travel by bus more convenient and attractive for Lambeth residents.

TfL has advised that the monitoring regime for LEBZs is still under development. There are however fixed air quality monitoring station on Brixton Road and diffusion tubes along Brixton Hill and Streatham High Road which will show if there has been an improvement in air quality from the LEBZ.

We are committed to improving air quality. In the last year, Lambeth has:

- Successfully campaigned for a new clean bus route between Brixton and Streatham.
- Launched a comprehensive Air Quality Action Plan, setting out 59 specific actions the Council will take to clean up local air

- Organised the first ever Clean Air Week, including a number of initiatives to get schools, businesses and community groups to work together for cleaner air.
- Campaigned for guarantees that Brexit will not lead to a dilution of environmental standards.
- Invested in a range of local initiatives such as Green Screens at schools, anti-idling patrols, planting new trees, new cycle storage and Santander docking stations.

5. Councillor Jack Holborn

To: Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Tim Briggs

Funding for fire safety improvements

The government failed in November's budget to keep to its promise to provide Lambeth with the £3.1 million needed to cover the necessary safety improvements to Lambeth's high-rise accommodation following the Grenfell tragedy. Can I ask what pressure Lambeth Conservatives are placing on their government to ensure that this funding is provided?

Party: Labour

Answer:

In seeking to answer this question, I could not find any letter or statement made by central government suggesting that fire safety risks should be paid for by anyone other than the property owners. I am happy to be corrected if Labour colleagues can show me a letter or statement from the Government, in the event of which I will do what I can to try to help them.

It is odd that Labour councillors always seem to express such contempt for property owners, despite many of them being landlords themselves, yet when it comes to fulfilling their own responsibilities as landlords at the council they always want financial help from outside bodies. It is illogical to expect central Government to be responsible for fire safety in buildings that are managed and formally owned by Lambeth Council, and to do so would dilute and blur a single responsibility for fire safety. I also note that without any requests to central government for extra money, responsible landlords like Conservative-run Wandsworth are spending ten times the amount as Lambeth, £30 million, retrofitting sprinklers for the safety of its tenants and leaseholders.

In September 2016, well before the Grenfell disaster in June 2017, Corporate Committee members were reassured that all fire safety risk assessments had been completed. In November 2016 councillors were told that fire safety assessments had not been completed, and that disciplinary action was being taken against one or more council officers. Since then opposition Conservative councillors have been trying to get satisfactory answers to questions previously asked about urgent recommendations on fire safety risk assessments, or the validity of risk assessments which are unsigned.

So I would urge Cllr Holborn to help me find out why Lambeth Housing has been so dysfunctional for so many years and what impact that has had on fire safety, rather than trying to make a point about the 'evil Tories' in central Government borrowing money to give to

Labour councillors, for whom fire safety issues in Lambeth must necessarily remain their responsibility.

6. Councillor Joanne Simpson

To: Councillor Lib Peck, Leader of the Council

100 year anniversary of the first women securing the right to vote

2018 marks the 100 year anniversary of the first women securing the right to vote. The Mayor of London has marked this centenary with the excellent "Behind Every Great City" campaign, which will, throughout 2018, celebrate the progress that has been made on women's equality over the past 100 years and will drive forward gender equality across the capital.

The campaign was launched by Sadiq Khan at Platanos College in Lambeth, alongside the Fawcett Society. I know that the Leader of the Council participated in the event, so can I ask her what further plans Lambeth has to celebrate this important campaign and the centenary of women's suffrage?

Party: Labour

Answer:

I was delighted to participate in the Mayor of London's launch event for the "Behind Every Great City" campaign.

I am looking forward to celebrating this anniversary and the achievements of the many women in Lambeth who've contributed so much to the borough and public life, including the Streatham suffragette Leonora Tyson, our more recent first female youth Mayor and, of course, Dawn Hill whose tireless work for Black Cultural Archives was recognised with a CBE in the New Year Honours.

Working with our libraries, schools, arts and archives services we're planning a series of events including exhibitions, talks and films throughout the year. As we are now back in the refurbished Town Hall, it is appropriate that we use the statues above us that denote Art, Science, Literature and Justice to host a series of events celebrating women's achievement in those fields.

Lambeth is home to Southbank Centre and its Women of the World event which I've been privileged to take part in previously. We're planning streaming some of those events into a program in the Town Hall. We will also be taking part in the 'Equaliteas' events at the end of June, promoted by UK Parliament.

There's another significant anniversary this year that's special to Lambeth - the 70th anniversary of Windrush and we're working with BCA, the Windrush Foundation and others to commemorate that.

I am proud that this Labour council has prioritised equality. Lambeth Council established the Equality Commission with the aim of identifying barriers preventing our residents from fulfilling their full potential and then driving action to tackle it.

7. Councillor Alex Bigham

To: Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Tim Briggs

Bicycle hire

Does the leader of the Tory Group welcome the roll out of Sadiq Cycles to Brixton and Stockwell, especially after years of the borough being ignored by the scheme under Boris Johnson?

Party: Labour

Answer:

Mayor Sadiq Khan has now broken 6 of his election promises in the 20 months he has been Mayor of London, so it is certainly his greatest achievement so far as that he has managed to bring cycles for hire to Brixton and Stockwell.

8. Councillor Ed Davie

To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Lib Peck

Future of EU citizens in Lambeth

Can the leader provide Council with an update on any communications received from the government advising councils on how to cope with the impact of Brexit or any specific guarantees the borough has been given about the future of EU citizens living in our community?

Party: Labour

Answer:

Despite written communications from Lambeth Council to the government, including from the Leader of the Council in a joint letter with 21 other London council leaders to the Prime Minister in November urging her to guarantee the rights of EU citizens, Lambeth council has not received any response from the government. While we welcome the step forward in the Brexit negotiations that offered some reassurance to EU citizens, many people are still extremely worried that the agreement does not guarantee sufficient rights for existing residents, that the rights are time limited and are not clear on who will qualify, as the campaign group 3 Million has made clear.

We have argued consistently as a council that this government should have acted immediately to guarantee EU citizens' rights after the referendum and that it is disgraceful to use people as a bargaining chip in negotiations. We will continue to fight for their rights and make clear that a Labour government would absolutely guarantee the rights of our friends and neighbours on day one.

On the wider issue of Brexit, the government has offered no guarantees about EU funding that funds vital programmes in our borough, particularly in relation to employment.

9. Councillor Bernard Gentry

To: Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment, Councillor Jennifer Brathwaite

Drinking fountains

Single use plastic bottles are a major pollution problem, not just causing litter on our streets and open spaces in Lambeth, but in the world's oceans.

Measures need to be taken to not just recycle plastic bottles, but also to reduce the number of plastic bottles.

Will Lambeth Council commit to installing or repairing drinking fountains across the borough to remove the need for people to use plastic bottles?

Party: Conservative

Answer:

Whilst many people now carry reusable drinking bottles, we recognise that drinking fountains are favoured by many park users. Despite funding cuts we have retained all 25 drinking fountains in our parks and open spaces. A few of these do require repairs, which will be arranged at the start of the 2018 season.

The installation of additional drinking fountains is being considered in a small number of parks where opportunities for external funding has been identified or where they can be funded as part of a larger capital improvement programme.

The majority of discarded plastic bottles in parks arise from sports activities and officers are seeking to engage with those responsible to reduce this waste and provide additional bins where appropriate.

In terms of broader opportunities for accessing drinking water we have suggested in our response to the Mayor's Environment Strategy that the fledgling 'Refill' scheme is supported and rolled out across London. This sees local businesses encouraged to sign up as 'refill stations' where anyone can fill a water bottle for free. As part of our climate change action plan we will be creating a map of places in Lambeth where free drinking water is available – such as Pure at Waterloo station.

10. Councillor Liz Atkins

To: Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment, Councillor Jennifer Brathwaite

Tulse Hill Gyratory

Many residents have been shocked by the appalling death in December of the young woman on the Tulse Hill gyratory who was run over four times without anyone stopping to help. It has yet again highlighted safety concerns about the gyratory and the fact that because of government cuts Transport for London's plans to change the gyratory are now being delayed. Can I ask the Cabinet member to say what work we are undertaking with TfL to make the gyratory safer to avoid such appalling accidents in future?

Party: Labour

Answer:

Officers are working with Transport for London and the Police to investigate the circumstances around the tragic death of Justyna Kalandyk on the Tulse Hill gyratory in December.

As well as any immediate recommendations, the findings of this investigation will be considered during further development of plans to improve the road network at this location. Officers have been supporting the local community to identify proposals to change the road layout at Tulse Hill in order to make it safer. Transport for London has supported this process with officer time and resources. Further work, including traffic modelling, is required in order to assess and finalise a preferred option.

While all other major transport operators in the world receive some form of central government subsidy, the Government has taken £2.8bn away from TfL's operational funding. In this context, TfL have informed officers that, although funds for the removal of the gyratory are still allocated within its recently published Business Plan, these have been re-profiled so that delivery of the scheme will be delayed by a year. The Business Plan shows a total of £5.1m allocated through to 2022/23, with the bulk of expenditure shown in 2021/22 (£2.5m) and £1.4m in 2022/23. TfL are now investigating an allocation for 2018/19 to keep the design and modelling work moving forward and will continue to support and assist the project to ensure that all preparatory work is completed as quickly as possible.

11. Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Tim Briggs

To: Cabinet Member for Housing & Environment, Councillor Jennifer Brathwaite

Fire safety risk assessments

Labour councillors say that fire safety risk assessments on all Lambeth council properties have now been completed, after many were not carried out for years. Yet many of the fire risk assessments now being provided are not signed to prove they were actually done. In Clapham Common ward Conservative activists and councillors discovered that 93% of the urgent recommendations on the assessments, requiring urgent changes to be carried out within 2 months, had not been done.

Under Labour, the worst rogue landlord in Lambeth is Lambeth Council.

Instead of Labour councillors refusing to answer questions by claiming that holding them to account on fire safety is 'scaremongering', or by simply refusing to answer the question as at the last council meeting, can Labour councillors live up to their responsibilities as landlord and confirm how many urgent recommendations on fire safety risk assessments across Lambeth ('P1', 'P2' and 'P3' in some cases) have now been completed, and how many are outstanding?

Party: Conservative

Answer:

All 2,800 council structures which require a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) have one and there are 6,482 Priority 1,2 and 3 actions (FRAs and associated actions are updated on an ongoing basis. This data is as at January 2018).

Given the scale of actions the council is prioritising the approach to complete FRA works based on risk, taking into account the nature of works required, the profile of the structure (eg High rise, sheltered), and whether a Planned Preventative Maintenance programme (PPM) is in place.

All actions deemed an immediate risk are called through from site and attended by the relevant team immediately. All other actions are recorded on the FRA.

Out of the 6482 Priority 1, 2, 3 actions;

- 1603 actions have been completed
- 4786 will be completed within an ongoing planned works programme by March 2018 (signage, Door Fire safety, Chutes compartmentation)
- 93 are being completed in the annual Planned Preventative Maintenance programme -(Electrical testing, lighting, alarm testing)

The council has also prioritised FRA actions relating to its Medium/High rise blocks with cladding arising from the FRA 3 and 4s. Cladding has been removed from one estate and in total 365 actions arising from the FRA 3 and 4s have been completed. 109 actions are completing within an ongoing planned works programme to March 2018.

Significant improvements are being made on the way in which FRAs are carried out and actions completed. There is a 10% minimum quality check on the documents received and Repairs have employed a new contractor to concentrate solely on FRA works. We are launching an IT App that will allow real time updates for Fire Risk Assessors and instant raising and closing of jobs for technical officers and estate housing officers. The new Estate action plans will include the current FRA and actions that will be monitored and reviewed at monthly meetings by estate officers and the TRA rep.

Clapham Common

In terms of FRAs being unsigned, 10% quality checks are carried out and all were signed. It is likely that when FRAs are sent out on public circulation, the assessors' names are redacted. Also the absence of a signature does not indicate the absence of an FRA. However any specific cases or queries can be directed to our Health and Safety team dealing with Fire Safety.

In terms of actions there are 245 priority actions arising from FRAs of which 86 have been completed , (35%) 160 are being progressed in ongoing programmes completing by March 2018 (signage, compartmentation checks, fire door safety)

12. Councillor Rezina Chowdhury

To: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Councillor Jackie Meldrum

Adults paying for their care

With adult and social care in crisis because of a lack of government funding, many residents are being forced to make difficult choices about whether to use their property and savings to pay for care. Can the cabinet member outline how many people Lambeth estimates are taking up the option of selling their property to pay for their care?

Party: Labour

Answer:

It is not known how many people in Lambeth are using their property and savings in order to pay for their care as many people will be doing so independently of the council.

A key factor to bear in mind is the level of home ownership in the borough. About 30% of Lambeth's households are owner occupiers. This is a low level of home ownership when compared with 50% home ownership across London and 65% over the UK.

Tenure is important because Adult Social Care is means tested. Anyone with over £23,250 of savings (excluding their main home) is likely to be required to contribute to the cost of care. For an owner occupier where their care is a residential care home the value of their home is also taken into account when the council assesses for financial contributions to their care.

During the general election the Tory manifesto proposed that people should pay for all their care until their savings and assets were down to £100,000. This protected limit was up from up from the present £23,250 but the change proposed was that a person's home would be counted among their assets when they were means-tested for care in their own home. And so many more people would have to pay.

Following instant massive opposition to her manifesto, Mrs May made one of her U turns and has now promised instead a long delayed Green paper on funding of social care by summer 2018. Whether a government that has lost its majority after the social care row and seems incapable of dealing with major challenges such as Brexit is capable of addressing such a problem remains to be seen.

In the meantime there is already a small scale scheme in use from which we can learn. Owner occupiers with less than £23,250 savings can avoid having to sell their home during their lifetime to pay for residential care home fees by borrowing money from their council which will be paid back from their estate after their death. This is the Deferred Payment scheme. In Lambeth, only a handful of people have made such arrangements in recent years and currently around 10 people have loans totalling about £700k.

Relying on home owners to pay for their care is a hugely unpopular solution. And in areas like Lambeth the small proportion of home owners will be insufficient to bridge the growing financial gap in the public health & care system.

If the Green paper on funding social care does materialise it is important there is a local debate on the issues. New national policy is desperately needed but it must take into account the variations in local regions and communities.

13. Councillor Jacqui Dyer

To: Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Tim Briggs

Future funding of our local NHS

The resignation of Lord Bob Kerslake from his post as Chair of King's College Hospital was greeted with widespread dismay by experts across the political spectrum and patients in Lambeth. Will the Conservative Group leader take this opportunity to disown the dreadful smear campaign launched by his government against Lord Kerslake and join me in calling for an urgent meeting between Lambeth and the Secretary of State for Health to discuss the future funding of our local NHS?

Party: Labour

Answer:

I do not know anything about a smear campaign, but I understand that NHS Improvement, the independent regulator for Kings College Hospital, has said there was a 'very serious' deterioration in Kings College Hospital's 'unacceptable finances', and as a result the hospital has been placed into special measures. Whilst need is obviously great in our part of London, Labour peer Lord Kerslake being responsible for running the worst deficit in the entire national health service suggests gross incompetence which will impact most of all on vulnerable patients, just as all poor management in Lambeth impacts on those who are on the receiving end of poor services. It is not just incompetent but immoral to allow money to be spent unsustainably that can be used for life-saving treatments elsewhere.

Whilst Conservative councillors would like more money for the NHS, I note that given the huge extra funding for the NHS (real terms funding this year will be £12.5 billion higher than 2010-11), the Director of Acute Care at NHS England and the Head of NHS Providers have both suggested that the NHS is better prepared than ever before for winter pressures. Of course this funding will never be enough for some Labour councillors who think money should be borrowed indefinitely to fund the NHS, which our children would then need to pay off.

I have great respect for the work done by Cllr Dyer, and I would be happy to try to help her get a meeting with the Secretary of State for Health. However, when it comes to health funding, Lambeth and Southwark have been an echo-chamber for many years, with the same sorts of well-intentioned people repeating the same mantras to one another about not enough Government funding and blaming others for their failures, and the state of Kings finances is clear evidence that, at the end of the day, all of those involved in making decisions on spending simply have not applied themselves effectively.

14. Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Tim Briggs

To: Cabinet Member for Housing & Environment, Councillor Jennifer Brathwaite

Change to resident engagement model

The new arrangements of resident engagement in Lambeth have been criticised by leasehold representatives, tenant representatives and Conservative councillors and activists as a complete failure. Conservative plans which copy some of the most effective resident engagement structures used by other local authorities were not even included in the papers for consideration by cabinet.

In effect there is no resident engagement in Lambeth that holds Labour councillors to account, and the recommendations of Labour councillors from the Resident Involvement in Scrutiny Commission have been ignored. The worst rogue landlord in Lambeth is the Labour Council.

Can Labour councillors confirm how long they will continue with the new resident engagement model before they accept it is not fit for purpose, and how much poor management, waste and fraud in housing it will take for them to start speaking properly to residents' representatives again?

Party: Conservative

Answer:

There was a growing consensus that the previous resident engagement structures were not working and needed streamlining. All residents were consulted in April 2016 and a majority of the 1,238 respondents supported the Cabinet proposals to improve the way we engage. Extensive work then took place over the next twelve months with resident representatives from both Tenants and Leasehold Councils. Unfortunately, despite lengthy discussions, agreement on a final structure could not be reached. Cabinet therefore agreed to pilot the new Area Boards and Assemblies for twelve months. In doing so it took on board the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Housing Commission recommendations, particularly the need to make engagement far more flexible and inclusive. Hence the Lambeth 500+ initiative to allow any resident to be involved in service areas in which they are interested.

The new Area Boards have been specifically designed to hold the Council and its contractors to account and, for the first time, to actively involve residents in reviewing services. Its members are tenants and leaseholders who have been nominated from the local TRA as well as members of Lambeth 500 to ensure the broadest representation from council tenants and leaseholders.

Performance data for Housing Services, which is published monthly, clearly demonstrates improving satisfaction from residents across a range of key service areas.

Advice from Internal Audit and referrals to Legal Services do not indicate there has been any increase in tenancy related fraud and Internal Audit report that there is no evidence of any increase in housing fraud.

15. Councillor Nigel Haselden

To: Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Jobs, Councillor Matthew Bennett

Cooperative local investment plans

Can the cabinet member provide an update on the progress of the Cooperative local investment plans?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The Investment and Growth team has completed Co-operative Local Investment Plan (CLIP) engagement exercises with local communities in three of the seven CLIP areas to date: Stockwell, Norwood, and North Lambeth. CLIP engagement is currently underway in the fourth CLIP area, Waterloo (Bishop's ward), where local communities can respond to the questionnaire between the end of November 2017 and 25 February 2018. The Council plans to carry out engagement in the remaining three CLIP areas of Clapham, Brixton, and Streatham, in 2018/19.

The Council has published reports for two of the three completed CLIPs – Stockwell and Norwood – and it plans to publish the North Lambeth CLIP in spring 2018. Similar priority themes have arisen across the three engagement exercises, such as project suggestions relating to activities for young people, employment and training support, parks and open spaces and support for community-led projects. In January 2017, Cabinet decided to allocate NCIL more flexibly across the borough to meet priorities in the Borough Plan and Equality Commission recommendations. Subsequent to this decision, based on the findings of three CLIPs, Investment and Growth officers have worked with teams across the Council to identify five borough-wide programmes which address common themes. The following borough-wide programmes will draw on up to 15% of NCIL:

- 'Crowdfund Lambeth', a borough-wide crowd-funding platform to provide a maximum £1,250 match funding for individual community projects that meet CLIP criteria with funding decisions guided by local ward councillors;
- Neighbourhood Champions, a pilot to deliver improvements to parks and open spaces in the north of the borough (Stockwell and North Lambeth CLIPS) and air quality projects (borough-wide);
- Small improvements on estates, with the first phase in existing CLIP areas (Stockwell, North Lambeth, Norwood) to include: landscaping and greening, cycle storage, play equipment and MUGAs, and recycling facilities/improvements;

- Young People and Community Programmes, with the first phase in existing CLIP areas to include: grants for sustainability; resilience Funding (eg. leadership training, small improvements to premises), and a pilot to provide affordable access to sports pitches;
- An outreach jobs and training programme to include estate-based enterprise/start-up workshops.

Should the same priorities emerge from the remaining CLIP engagement exercises, these programmes are scalable and adaptable to local contexts. Delivery teams are currently preparing business plans for the borough-wide programmes to secure financial allocations for the three completed CLIP areas through the Council's normal schemes of governance. Approvals have been secured for all the programmes above which will get underway shortly, with the exception of the jobs and training programme which will come forward later this year.

In addition, 10 per cent of NCIL will be allocated to local infrastructure priorities in individual CLIP areas. Officers are working with ward councillors in each of the three completed CLIP areas to identify priority infrastructure projects for delivery in the short, medium, and long term.