

**(1) The Mayor's crazy plans: Abandoning the Extension of the Congestion Charge and the Bendy-Bus:** Question asked by Councillor Belton of the Leader of the Council –

- (a) What is the Council's best estimate of the potential cost of abandoning the westward extension of the Congestion Charge?
- (b) What is the best estimate of costs arising from scrapping the Bendy-Bus and the cost of a replacement vehicle?
- (c) Where in the Mayor's manifesto was there a promise of 20% fare increases and reductions in bus and tube services?
- (d) Does the Leader agree that the recently announced fares increases and service cuts are a massive kick in the teeth for the Londoners, particularly the least able to protect themselves?

**Answer:** (a) TfL estimate that Londoners will save £70million per year in no longer having to pay the congestion charge, which has not reduced congestion. There will be a one-off cost of removing the western extension of £3-£5million. There will be a saving in processing costs of between £3-£4million.

(b) The cost of replacing bendy buses is estimated at £12million. Fare revenues are estimated to increase by £5million, as a result of the replacement buses being less susceptible to fare evasion.

(c) The Mayor has announced his fares package for 2010. Nearly all Travelcard prices are frozen, and the concessionary and free travel schemes are protected. Single pre-pay bus and tube fares rise by about 20% and cash fares rise by varying degrees. The Mayor has announced that these measures are needed to address the effects of recession and the policies of the previous administration. There will be no increase in the TfL element of Council Tax, and the Mayor's element of Council Tax will be frozen again. The Mayor has not announced reductions in bus and tube services, but has warned that current levels of subsidy are unsustainable, and of the damaging financial effects of the collapse of the Government's PPP and of potential loss in government grant. TfL is also trying to cope with the budget pressures created by the previous Mayor's failure to manage expenditure in a controlled and effective way.

(d) No. Free and concessionary travel for children, elderly and disabled people, and those on low incomes are protected. 40% of bus passengers will continue to travel for free or at a substantial concessionary rate.

**(2) Council Charges 1:** Question asked by Councillor Belton of the Leader of the Council –

- (a) Where sensible comparisons can be made on charges for Council services (i.e. there has been no change in service provision or Government grant), what has been the percentage increase in charges since 1st April 2006?

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- (b) What has been the inflation level in the same period?
- (c) Which have been the largest percentage increases in charges?
- (d) What has been the increase in parking fees, both per hour and for residential and business permits?

**Answer:** (a) As Council Belton will be aware, there are a wide range of charges levied by the Council across a whole range of services . The average increase in charges over the period was 16%.

(b) Inflation as measured by the RPI, excluding mortgages and indirect taxes, has risen by 12.7% since April 2006. However, a market-accurate comparison would be with the October 2005 index which would have been the base date for the 2005/6 charges. Since then, inflation has been 14.5%.

(c) The largest increases in charges were in relation to Social services as set out below:

Adult day care : 148% (£5.00 to £12.40)  
 Meals on wheels: 38.7% (£3.10- £4.30)  
 Home Care: 48.5% (£10.30-£15.30)

All of these charges are designed to recover actual costs incurred.

Other significant increases relate to parking permits and related costs, as shown in the answer to part (d) of this question.

(d) Increases in parking charges are shown below.

<b>RESIDENTS PERMITS</b>		<b>2006/7</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
<b>Petrol</b>	<b>Annual</b>	66.00	95.00	<b>43.94</b>
	<b>Six Monthly</b>	42.00	61.00	<b>45.24</b>
	<b>Three Monthly</b>	27.00	39.00	<b>44.44</b>
<b>Hybrid/LPG Temp Cover Permit</b>	<b>Annual</b>	16.50	23.75	<b>43.94</b>
	<b>ADC - 5 days</b>	25.00	29.00	<b>16.00</b>
	<b>ADC - 6 days</b>	30.00	35.00	<b>16.67</b>
	<b>OHC - 5 days</b>	6.00	8.00	<b>33.33</b>
<b>Discount smartcard – replacement</b>		5.00	5.00	<b>0.00</b>
<b>RESIDENTS VISITOR PERMITS</b>				
<b>All day controls</b>		5.00	5.00	<b>0.00</b>
<b>All day controls - 65+/disabled</b>		2.50	2.50	<b>0.00</b>
<b>1 hour control</b>		1.20	1.50	<b>25.00</b>
<b>1 hour control - 65+/disabled</b>		0.60	0.75	<b>25.00</b>

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**BUSINESS PERMITS**

Individual Zone Permit	Annual	375.00	540.00	<b>44.00</b>
	Six Monthly	220.00	320.00	<b>45.45</b>
	Three Monthly	125.00	180.00	<b>44.00</b>
All Zones	Annual	480.00	720.00	<b>50.00</b>
	Six Monthly	280.00	425.00	<b>51.79</b>
	Three Monthly	160.00	240.00	<b>50.00</b>
Outer Area Permit	Annual	185.00	250.00	<b>35.14</b>
	Six Monthly	110.00	130.00	<b>18.18</b>

**PAY AND DISPLAY**

Putney/Clapham Junc	High Tariff	1.50	2.20	<b>46.67</b>
	Standard Tariff	1.20	1.80	<b>50.00</b>
Other Zones	Standard Tariff	1.20	1.80	<b>50.00</b>
	Short Term Bays	0.70	1.80	<b>157.14</b>
	Low Tariff	0.60	0.70	<b>16.67</b>

**(3) Controlling Public Expenditure:** Question asked by Councillor Mrs. Clay of the Leader of the Council –

Given the fiscal fiasco which will be Gordon Brown's legacy, does the Leader think it a good idea to follow the NHS's example and to employ management consultants to identify areas in which the Council could reduce wasteful expenditure?

**Answer:** This Council does not need any lessons from either the Government or the NHS in identifying areas where wasteful expenditure can be reduced. Since 1978, the Council has reduced expenditure by a gross sum of over £3.8 billion at today's prices and has still been able to provide services that are the most highly rated by the public of any local authority in England. Rather than employing management consultants, the NHS could perhaps spend some time learning from a public authority that knows how to provide both value for money and quality services – this Council.

**(4) Future cuts:** Question asked by Councillor Gibbons of the Leader of the Council –

Can the Leader outline the impact of David Cameron's proposed 10% cuts to public expenditure on Wandsworth Council's ability to provide services to residents?

**Answer:** It is too early to say what impact any reductions in public expenditure will have on the services that Wandsworth Council provides after next year's elections. However, it is fair to say that even under the current government's spending plans all local authorities will be looking for areas to reduce expenditure. In the light of this, the Director of Finance, in consultation with service directors, is

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currently undertaking the annual budget review process which will inform both the development budget process and Council Tax setting for next year. To look beyond that is difficult due to the significant number of specific grants which are due to expire in 2011 and the fact that the current three-year Revenue Support Grant also runs to that date.

To speculate on the effect that a random percentage in terms of cuts will have on service provision is, in my view, at best scaremongering and at worst reckless, and is something that on this side we will not do until we have better knowledge on the level of Government grant post-March 2011.

**(5) New Library:** Question asked by Councillor Hope of the Leader of the Council –

Does the Leader agree with me that the opening today by the Mayor of London of our new library represents a major leap forward in the development of our key town centre as a cultural heart of our Borough?

**Answer:** I am certainly glad to agree with Councillor Hope. As he knows, the Council has wanted a library in the heart of Wandsworth town centre, to match those in Putney, Clapham Junction, Balham and Tooting, for many years and one of the aims of all of our public libraries is to be the focal point of the community. The new library is a key component of the Council's regeneration strategy for Wandsworth town centre which includes the redevelopment of the Ram Brewery site, itself the catalyst for £1 billion worth of regeneration in the core area. We therefore hope that the library will become a focus for Wandsworth, both literally and metaphorically.

I should add that the conversion of the old Grade II listed Courthouse into a modern and exciting library has not been without its challenges. On the one hand we have had to be careful to preserve the character of one of the Borough's most historic buildings. On the other, we have had to meet the expectations of the public for a modern library with the latest technology - from WiFi to self-service points. A truly great blend of old and new.

The project cost £1.5 million, all of which came from the Council's coffers, and I am sure all will agree that there can be no better example of wise investment of local taxpayers' money – an investment in learning, in leisure and in our children and young people who will use this library.

And I am pleased to be able to report that users of the library support my views. When the library opened to the public on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2009 1,600 people visited on its first day and around 5,000 people are now visiting every week – a figure which continues to increase. The Children's Library has been overwhelmed by its users and Baby Rhyme Time has become quickly established and exceedingly well-attended.

The comments coming from the public are highly positive and I will share with you just three of the dozens received:-

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“the library looks amazing, can’t wait to use it” ;

“this is the perfect place and building for this service”

“The library is among the best I have been to in the UK. The work from an architectural point of view is outstanding”

I congratulate all concerned on such a magnificent achievement.”

**(6) The Mayor and Transport for London:** Question asked by Councillor Bowes of the Leader of the Council –

Does the Leader wish to square the Mayor of London’s boasts at Conservative Party Conference that he could easily save £5 billion from TfL’s budget with, at the same time, his inflation-busting hikes in tube and bus fares and a long list of cancelled, delayed, but much-needed improvement schemes, because of a shortage of funds in the TfL budget?

**Answer:** The gap in TfL’s finances left behind by the previous administration at City Hall, requires both long term capital and revenue savings, while fares also need to be raised to maintain income in the light of the recession and to protect spending priorities. There is no long list of much needed improvement schemes in Wandsworth being delayed or cancelled.

**(7) Choice in Education:** Question asked by Councillor Dawson of the Leader of the Council –

The Leader will have seen recent comments by the Minister for Schools and Learning that seem to encourage Battersea parents to set up a new secondary school. Is he able to explain how this is feasible under the current inflexible Labour Government policies and guidelines? Alternatively, does he agree with me that it will only be the return of a Conservative Government that will offer parents a real choice in education?

**Answer:** An answer to the first part of your question is somewhat difficult. First, we should ask whether a new school is needed. If it is, then a group of parents would be able to propose that they should establish the new school. In Wandsworth, the grounds for creating a new school would be choice and diversity as it could not be justified purely on numbers. The Council already has sufficient school spaces and there are two schools within less than two miles of the area suggested where children’s progress is in the top 5% nationally. Setting up a new school would also require purchasing a site and refurbishing or building the school; the funding for this, given the cost of the purchase and size of any building scheme and its impact on other capital needs, would depend upon Government finance and thus be subject to Ministerial approval. Given the level of investment already committed by the

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Labour Government's quango, Partnership for Schools, to the Council's existing schools for the Building Schools for the Future project, it is clear that the lack of flexibility in the current system means that the wishes of Battersea parents could never be realised.

This Council has pioneered choice and diversity only to find the stifling centralisation of this Government has squeezed out innovation, stamped on creativity and curtailed parental choice. I have no doubt whatsoever that an incoming Tory administration will free up the school system, allowing good schools to flourish and new ones to replace failing institutions, and will give parents a greater say in the schools that they want and where they want them.

**(8) Canvassing for Electoral Registration:** Question asked by Councillor Maurice Johnson of the Leader of the Council –

(a) Can the Leader tell me the full schedule of re-canvassing for electoral registration purposes that the Council has been conducting since 1st January 2008 and what it intends to canvass up to June 2010?

(b) Is this schedule any different in any significant way from that conducted in the period 2005/06?

(c) What is the annual programme of canvassing for this purpose?

**Answer:** (a) Electoral Services has undertaken an on-going review of its work since January 2008 and several initiatives were carried out to improve and enhance quality and service delivery in order to achieve an accurate electoral register. Prior to 2008, work had commenced in close liaison with London Elects, the Electoral Commission and the Association of Electoral Administrators towards registration for the 2008 GLA elections. This included continuing links with existing outreach groups, schools, universities, community groups and establishing links with new ones in the Borough promoting the GLA elections by publicity on the Council website, poster campaigns and press releases.

The annual canvass carried out in the autumn of 2008 saw an increase of 2.6% in household registrations to 92.7% from 2007 due to the continuation of four personal calls to non-responding households, the use of the Electoral Reform Society telephone re-registration system, which was enhanced by the introduction of Text (SMS) re-registration, in addition to the freephone and on-line internet re-registration systems. A revised and clearer registration form and information leaflet, was delivered to every household in the Borough. Other methods to improve the accuracy of the register included carrying out all postal canvasses in areas of the Borough where there is difficulty in gaining access and investigating other Council records.

In addition to the work carried out in 2008/09, the current annual canvass is working towards the Local Borough Elections in May 2010 and Parliamentary (General) Election by June 2010.

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(b) Yes, Electoral Services has undertaken an on-going review of all its work in order to achieve an accurate electoral register, and some of the initiatives mentioned in answer (a) above were not in place in the period 2005/6 and have resulted overall in increases in household registrations since then by 5.2% to 92.7%. I should mention that the Chief Executive and Director of Administration has advised me, however, that the same fundamental approach is still in use that was initiated in the mid-1980s after discussions with the then MP for Battersea South, Mr. Alf (now Lord) Dubs. This used success levels in obtaining returns after the first stage canvass to target any canvass areas with registration levels below a threshold level set uniformly across the Borough. Extra resources are then directed to these low return areas to ensure higher return levels are uniformly achieved. In this way, the average response level has gradually been improved to the current record levels.

(c) The annual canvass starts in August and finishes in November and the new version of the register is published in December. After the register is published residents can apply to join the register under the rolling registration provisions which allow them to apply for registration up to 11 working days before an election. For the purposes of the council election on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010, residents can apply to be added to the register up to 20<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

The Government has stated its intention to introduce individual registration on a voluntary basis from the Autumn of 2010 and this may become compulsory from 2015. When this is compulsorily introduced, the whole process of compiling the electoral register will become a great deal more difficult.

**(9) Local Partnerships:** Question asked by Councillor Govindia of the Leader of the Council –

What is the current health of the Council's partnership with the Borough Police?

Does the Leader sympathise with those local residents who feel let down by the recent increase in reported crime – particularly in violent attacks and gun crime?

**Answer:** I am pleased to say that the Council's direct partnership with Wandsworth Police, and throughout the wider Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, is stronger than ever.

I can assure Councillor Govindia that the Council has worked very closely indeed with the Police across many service areas and we will continue to maintain this close working to implement any necessary measures in the interests of wider public safety.

This was validated externally by the recent CAA report which stated that 'The Partnership has been successful in preserving Wandsworth as the safest borough in Inner London. The Police and Council are working well together to

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tackle crime in the areas that matter most. These include violent crime; theft and burglary; drug-related offences; crimes committed by young people in particular; and, the fear of crime itself.'

It is important to note that, although there has been a recent spike in violent crime, with a number of recent high profile incidents involving the use of a firearms, burglary and robbery, the long-term trend is that the level of crime committed in Wandsworth continues to fall year on year and between 2008 and 2009 recorded crimes have lessened overall by 10%.

There were also some real successes, including a notable decline in gun crime, which fell by 41% and burglaries from houses which fell by 22%. Good progress has also been made in relation to robberies against the person (down 16%); vehicle crime (down 6%); and serious acquisitive crime (down 14%).

There is, however, a clear increase in the first half of this year in terms of the levels of burglary and robbery, and more worryingly a recent and very noticeable increase in serious violent crime, including a spate of shootings, although our statistics always appear disproportionately bad as we have comparatively low numbers of crimes to start with compared to other boroughs and any spike therefore shows as a proportionately high percentage increase.

This is not a local issue but is the trend across London with the increase in burglary and robbery very closely linked to the recession and a very worrying London-wide trend of an increase in the level of violent crime and increased tension and violent incidents between gangs, often related to the drug trade.

This level of violent crime is not normally associated with our borough, but you can be reassured that the Police are taking this very seriously and have committed a substantial resource to the local area.

It appears that all of the shootings are linked one way or another, and that in general are either people known to be gang members or are linked to gang members. As such, these are not indiscriminate acts that the general public should be threatened by, although there is always the risk of an innocent bystander being affected.

As these are serious violent crimes they are immediately referred to the central Police units, namely Trident and SO19 (serious crime squad) for investigation and they will lead on these cases. Although the Police have been very open with their reporting of individual events, information is not distributed widely due to the sensitivity of the crimes. Similarly, the policing activities in the borough specifically to address these crimes, are kept in confidence to ensure that information is not released into the public domain which may assist those under investigation.

I would certainly sympathise with those local residents who have witnessed or been affected by these events, particularly those of violent attacks and gun crime, but do not feel that it would be reasonable for our residents should feel let down by our local Police.

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I am aware that there have been a number of arrests in connection with these incidents and not surprisingly the number of Police officers, with significant Met Central support, is currently at its highest ever in the Trident Teams, Surveillance/undercover teams, SO19 fast response and pulse teams and other specialist units undertaken general and targeted policing activities.

There is very clear intelligence being gathered to inform the investigations and heavy use of the Council's CCTV to co-ordinate operations and to monitor and target individuals. The known/suspected individuals are under very close scrutiny and this will be maintained until the issue is brought under control.

The Police are also working very closely with our Housing Services with regard to the estates and affected tenants as well as with Children's Services, schools and specialist support services where young people are identified as being involved or at risk.

The Police surveys show that Wandsworth has the third highest level of confidence in the Police of any borough in London and that residents remain reassured about levels of crime in the area. I am confident that this recent spike will be brought under control quickly and effectively, but if Members become aware of any "intelligence", however minor this information may appear, we would encourage you to contact the Police, directly or through the Community Safety Division of the Technical Services Department.

**(10) Transport Cuts:** Question asked by Councillor Bowes of the Leader of the Council –

In the ongoing bonfire of transport improvement schemes by the Tory Mayor of London, can the Leader list those cancelled or delayed initiatives that affect Wandsworth, including proposals to scale back certain bus routes?

**Answer:** The biggest priority for the Council in terms of additional transport capacity and journey options is the East London Line extension to Clapham Junction, which is now agreed and wasn't under the previous Mayor.

We have seen no plans to scale back certain bus routes in Wandsworth. However, we do receive comment about underused buses and would not rule out that they may be scope to make savings in Wandsworth without affecting the quality of service. The Mayor has cancelled projects that were never funded and that gave rise to unnecessary expectations. These included lifts at Tooting Broadway and Clapham South Underground Stations. TfL has cancelled plans for a contraflow bus lane on Battersea Bridge Road, but the Council was opposed to it. The timescale for improvements to the District Line are uncertain in the light of the collapse of Metronet and the failure of the Government's PPP. At last we have a Mayor of London prepared to tackle these issues with common sense to achieve realistic and sustainable solutions, a task not made any easier by his predecessor's financial profligacy.

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**(11) Anti-Terrorist Legislation:** Question asked by Councillor Randall of the Leader of the Council –

Would the Leader tell us how many times the Council has used anti-terrorist legislation to find out information about residents for checks concerning Council Tax liability, parking offences and school admissions, etc?”

**Answer:** The Council has not used any anti-terrorism legislation to investigate Council Tax liability, parking offences or school admissions. Councillor Randall is suffering from the same delusion and misapprehension as are the media unaware of the real purpose behind the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). So let me help dispel that delusion and misapprehension and focus on reality and protecting the public purse from fraudsters.

RIPA was enacted as a result of the Human Rights Act that provided under Article 8 the following rights:-

- Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence; and
- There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Consequently RIPA was enacted to provide the control mechanism for authorising any breach of this Article. RIPA sets out the purposes for which its powers can be used and there are 7:-

- (a) in the interests of national security;
- (b) for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime or of preventing disorder;
- (c) in the interests of the economic well-being of the United Kingdom;
- (d) in the interests of public safety;
- (e) for the purpose of protecting public health;
- (f) for the purpose of assessing or collecting any tax, duty, levy or other imposition, contribution or charge payable to a government department; or

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(g) for any purpose (not falling within paragraphs (a) to (f)) which is specified for the purposes of this subsection by an order made by the Secretary of State.

So only purpose (a) of the 7 permitted purposes is in fact in part an anti-terror purpose (although there are other less alarming areas of national security) and this purpose is not available to local authorities. Indeed local authorities are further restricted to the type of surveillance that they are allowed to employ by RIPA and subsequent orders made by the Secretary of State. Local authorities can only use RIPA for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime or of preventing disorder and therefore providing they are diligent in authorising its use properly for this, they are using RIPA for its intended purpose.

So what the Council has done is to use the RIPA for the lawful purpose of the prevention and detection of crime on 320 occasions in around 7 years, in relation to the fraudulent use of Blue Badge Parking Permits for the Disabled. The Director of Technical Services' investigation team has in fact won a British Parking Association Award for this very work that has resulted in some 246 successful prosecutions. The Courts have never found that the information obtained from the surveillance was obtained unlawfully. The Blue Badge Scheme was set up to bring great benefit to genuinely disadvantaged members of society and in recent years, it has become increasingly abused by able-bodied individuals seeking to take advantage of the financial benefits that the Scheme offers. As well as the misuse of genuine badges by family and friends of badge holders potentially using parking spaces specifically provided for valid Blue Badge Holders, there is now a thriving "black market" in stolen and forged badges.

The whole system is regulated by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner (OSC) to ensure that authorisations are necessary in that they are to prevent or detect a crime and that there is no other way of getting the information, as well as being a proportionate measure, namely the information acquired justifies the level of intrusion. Judgments are to an extent subjective, but they are overseen by this system of regulation. I am pleased to be able to tell you that Wandsworth Council has received very positive feedback on all of the inspections carried out by the OSC, the last as recently as August 2009 and indeed has reported their outcomes to its Audit Committee thus making Members aware of the use made of RIPA and the independent inspector's opinions.

The Council has taken, and continues to take, a very robust stance against those who seek to commit a crime against it and RIPA provides one of the means – but not the only one – that it uses. Indeed, the very principle of necessity makes RIPA a last resort method, but one that the Council uses responsibly and will continue to do so.

Any attempt to brand this as use of "anti-terrorist legislation" is doing a great disservice to those officers seeking to protect the Council from fraudsters, is scare-mongering in that this clearly does not provide an accurate view of the real purpose for RIPA and is seeking to dilute a powerful, but infrequently-used power, in the Council's fight against fraud.

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**(12) Paper Chase:** Question asked by Councillor Govindia of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources –

Given the continuing unreliability of Royal Mail, does the Cabinet Member think it would be opportune to have a through review of the Council's use of paper-based communication that can only work if there is a functioning Royal Mail?

If so, would he ensure that such review looks at ways of reducing the reliance on paper-based mail, and where this is unavoidable, could the review identify other providers particularly for Wandsworth Council generated mail for delivery in the Borough?

**Answer:** Yes - I'm sure Councillor Govindia is aware that our initiatives on greater use of e-mail communications rather than hard copy - with Members, residents and voluntary groups, partner agencies and central organs of government - have been increasingly put in place as part of our sustainability and environmental policies. These have also benefits in terms of cost savings and less reliance on Royal Mail or other distributors.

I understand the Directors' Board recently agreed to aim for a target of a further 10% reduction (over the next year) in the use of hard copy correspondence, which would include a significant proportion of Royal Mail distribution. I would imagine that to achieve this target a review must already be planned or in train, but I am happy to ask the Chief Executive to ensure that the Board do undertake the thoroughgoing review Councillor Govindia envisaged.

The situation is, in fact, that because of the non-competitiveness for certain types of local deliveries, the Council already has taken on a considerable volume of local delivery itself: for example all 130,000 households in the Borough receive 10 Brightside deliveries, an electoral registration 'A' form, and in an election year a poll card, all via Council staff or contractors. Further, on housing estates, contractors make specific deliveries, as do Planning Enforcement staff and other officers where small area consultation or notification is required. There are also now Town Centre newsletters (28,000 for Tooting alone), Report Back meeting fliers and other newsletters and consultation leaflets that are contractor-delivered. All together a considerable volume of Council delivery is now diverted from Royal Mail. In the event that Royal Mail's strikes continue, rather than risk loss of income streams, the Council may need to consider circulating rent review letters, service charge bills and even Council tax demands by contractors or itself – certainly to within-Borough addresses.

Of course, some residual communications should continue to be via e-mail or fax but we are still living in a day when hard copy communication cannot be eliminated entirely, e.g. for publications, or for statutory processes where bills and invoices etc. need to be sent out on time, or consultation documents require prompt circulation.

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I will, of course, be keeping the situation under regular review via the Chief Executive.

**(13) Government spending to support families:** Question asked by Councillor Gibbons of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources –

Would the Cabinet Member tell me how much Government money Wandsworth has received for:-

- (a) Sure Start;
- (b) Extended Schools; and
- (c) the Playbuilder scheme;

and how much it will received for:-

- (d) Building Schools for the Future (BSF);
- (e) the Primary Capital Project;
- (f) Think Family Grant; and
- (g) Free nursery provision for 2-4 year olds?

**Answer:** I can confirm that the amounts received in respect of grant for the Sure Start, Extended Schools and Playbuilder schemes are as follows:

	2008/09 £	2009/10 £
(a) Sure Start	Revenue	7,099,361
	Capital	2,342,805
		<b>9,442,166</b>
		<b>12,092,501</b>
(b) Extended Schools	356,886	732,976
	2008/09	2009/10
(c) the Playbuilder scheme	Capital	302,671
	Revenue	12,685
	Total	<b>315,356</b>
		<b>432,483</b>

and that the confirmed amounts in respect of grants for BSF, primary capital, Think Family and Free Nursery provision are as follows:-

	£ 2009/10	£ 2010/11
Confirmed schemes		

(d) Building Schools for the Future		76,610,000	(in total)
	ICT	22,350,000	(in total)
(e) the Primary Capital Project		3,808,826	6,186,826
(f) Think Family Grant		393,000	393,000
(g) Free nursery provision for 2-4 year olds			
	2 year olds	339,387	464,360
	3-4 year olds	500,000	2,000,000
		<b>839,387</b>	<b>2,464,360</b>

**(14) Business Rates:** Question asked by Councillor Cuff of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources –

Would the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources clarify why this Labour Government continues to refuse requests to return the responsibility for setting business rates to well-run local councils like Wandsworth?

**Answer:** I can see no reason why the present Government does not hand back responsibility for the setting of business rates to local councils like Wandsworth. This Council has long campaigned for the denationalisation of the business rates (officially called the National Non-Domestic Rate – NNDR) and the return to local accountability for the rates. Local councils are best placed to know the local area and the needs of the local economy and it therefore makes sense that this tax should be set locally rather than nationally. However, the current Government appears to have an overriding view that centralism is best and, with that in mind, any calls by them for localism are largely rhetoric. We can hope that after next year's General Election the new Government will return the rates to councils which have a track record of good financial management such as Wandsworth.

**(15) Effect of postal difficulties on the Council's administration and on recent and current Council consultation exercises:** Question asked by Councillor Farebrother of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources –

Would the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources inform the Council of the effect, if any, of the recent and current level of postal services on the Council's administration?

How has the Council reacted to this situation in attempting to conduct its administration and in particular how this has been applied to recent and current consultation exercises with the residents and businesses in the Borough?

**Answer:** The Borough has a history of suffering from poor quality postal services; both in terms of the implementation of post office closures forced on the Borough by the Government and management (widely believed to stem originally from EU Directive 97/67 EC) and also by poor performance by staff and unions with the delivery of poor quality services to the Council, our residents and businesses. It would appear that Wandsworth has been specifically targeted by the strikers.

The Administration Department's Facilities Management Service has been responsible for co-ordinating the flow of information regarding expected disruption from Royal Mail to the Council's service departments and operational managers. The Facilities Management Service has sought information on the anticipated impact of industrial action by postal workers upon the Council's operations, and advised Council managers on how they might mitigate that impact by pre-planning the date of despatch of correspondence to residents and organisations.

As a result, the inevitable disruption to the administration of the Council's business has been managed as well as possible, but this does not hide the fact that disruption has occurred and has undoubtedly inconvenienced residents and local businesses in their routine dealings with the Council.

There have been instances of items posted for 'special delivery' being delivered more than a week later than expected, and there have been particular concerns about the potential for formal tenders to be delayed in the post when a very specific deadline applies. Under the current circumstances, tenderers are being advised to make alternative arrangements for delivery by the specified deadline.

So far as recent consultation exercises are concerned, the managers involved have been alerted to the potential delays and to the need to adjust their plans accordingly. In some cases Departments are considering the viability and cost-effectiveness of using Council staff or contractors to make local, door-to-door deliveries to residents. Decisions on this option have not yet been made. One Department has already found it necessary to adopt this method to ensure delivery of documents before a rapidly approaching deadline. Preference can therefore be given to these alternative options to take account of the current situation.

Councillor Farebrother may not be aware of the Council's longstanding interest in competition for postal services. There was a paper in March 2005 welcoming Postcomm's bringing forward of liberalisation of postal services to January 2006 (Paper No. 05-264). Sadly it seems astonishing that we are not any further forward than we are here in November 2009, and the impact of this 'liberalisation' has been so limited. A subsequent paper looked at the possible impact and options for the Council as a service user.

In practice the liberalisation has had little or no impact on the residential sector and indeed anyone else who is not dealing in bulk mail. An element of this is that Royal Mail have a strangle hold on 'the final mile' – i.e. the postman's round,

also there are other barriers to full competition. The Council's volumes of mailing are generally to selected residents from a variety of business units, and can in some cases be relatively small. Major repetitive operations, such as the distribution of Brightside, Ward newsletters and fliers, etc., have been placed with contractors wherever possible.

**(16) Pension Scheme:** Question asked by Councillor King of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources –

Would the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources clarify what the costs are for local taxpayers in contributing to Wandsworth Council's staff "final salary" pension scheme?

**Answer:** For 2008/09 the amount contributed to the "final salary" pension schemes under Wandsworth's budgets was £30.847 million, broken down as follows:-

Local Government Pension Scheme	£22.586 million
Teachers Pension Scheme	£ 8.261 million

This is equivalent to £4,229.09 per employee contributing.

**(17) Council charges 2:** Question asked by Councillor Maurice Johnson of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources –

Would the Cabinet Member give figures, in cash terms, for increases in charges for the following since May 2006:

- Rent on a three-bedroom flat;
- Parking permits – domestic and business;
- School holiday activities per child per week;
- Battersea Park fireworks;
- Collection of garden waste;
- Collection of bulky refuse items;
- Annual leisure centre subscriptions;
- Hourly rate for home care for the elderly; and
- Meals on Wheels

**Answer:** The Council's charging policy is to maximise charges for specific services so as to minimise any indirect subsidy from the council tax payer, seeking wherever possible to recover the cost of service provision as a minimum. However, this policy may be relaxed where there are economic, policy or statutory reasons for charging a reduced rate.

As regards council housing rents within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Government sets a guideline rent increase assumption each year and increases 'negative subsidy' payable by the HRA by an equivalent amount. The Council has increased average rents by £1.10p per week less than the Government guideline over the specified period.

The specific information requested by Councillor Maurice Johnson is as follows:-

Rent on a three-bedroom flat	£18.78 per week before Benefit
Parking permits - domestic and business	Resident £29 Business £165
School holiday activities per child per week	£4.50 (£3.00 on Income Support)
Battersea Park fireworks	£1.00
Collection of garden waste	£1.50
Collection of bulky refuse items	£2.50 standard first four items with bins; £5.50 ground floor surcharge where entry required
Annual leisure centre subscription	Adult £3.30
Hourly rate for home care for the elderly	£5.00
Meals on Wheels	£1.20

**(18) Unison Pension Scheme:** Question asked by Councillor Ellis of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources –

Would the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources comment on reports that the Local Government union, Unison, is proposing to withdraw from the “Final Salary” Pension Scheme for their own staff?

**Answer:** Even Unison have realised that their final salary scheme is not sustainable and that they need to meet the deficit in their scheme. According to *The Times* they have seen papers which show that Unison is looking at raising retirement age from 60 to 65, possibly even for current members which would reduce immediately the cost of their scheme by some 3.6 per cent of salaries each year. It is reported that the Unison papers add - “Given the seriousness of the deficit, it is unlikely that a recovery package is going to be possible without an increase in employee contributions”.

So, Unison, for their own pension scheme, are calling for higher employee contributions and reduced member benefits in recognition of increasing longevity and reducing investment returns. I wonder why neither the Government nor Unison are supporting the same stance with respect to the Local Government Pension Scheme? Perhaps, it's the Ostrich effect again?

Nonetheless we look forward to Unison's reality-check being continued with the next Government in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

**(19) Increase in Business Rates:** Question asked by Councillor Mrs. Clay of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources –

Would the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources comment on reports that the local business rates are to increase by 10% while other areas of the country are in line for a 10% drop!

**Answer:** The Communities and Local Government Department's own business rates information letter states that the average percentage increase in business rates bills in London before transitional relief will be 10% in 2010/11. The comparative figure for the East Midlands will be a 10% decrease. The valuations are based on 2008 values before the credit crunch and the effect will be that many properties in the Borough will have a doubling of business rates in the middle of the worst recession since the Second World War. This comes on top of the Transitional Relief fiasco in the Spring of this year which again saw businesses - often small family-run affairs - facing 100% increases.

**(20) Tax on Local Businesses:** Question asked by Councillor Larsson of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources –

Would the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources explain what will happen to Wandsworth local traders if Labour Party plans to increase business rates get the go-ahead by Parliament?

**Answer:** If the revised valuations proposed by the Valuation Office Agency are implemented, businesses within the Borough will be hit with increases in rateable values that in many cases will exceed 100%. Some small businesses will have the double whammy of having their business rates increased by such an extent that they lose Small Business Rate Relief and will face real hardship.

The increase in business rate valuations is a tax on successful regeneration. It is a tax which stifles investment because businesses that have benefited from this Council's policies with regard to town centre regeneration are

forced to pay more just to stay in business. It is tax for some small firms which will be a tax to far - a tax which will see them fold and, rather than there being a self-sufficient small business supplying the local community, there will be an empty shop with a family on the dole. The latter is the reality of the effect on businesses of the Government's planned revaluation.

**(21) Concessionary Fares Scheme:** Question asked by Councillor Wilkie of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources –

Would the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources

(a) confirm that the Concessionary Fares Scheme for London's elderly and disabled is under threat of massive financial cuts from the Minister of Transport whose Minister is Sadiq Khan (MP for Tooting); and

(b) condemn the threats made by the Minister for Transport, Sadiq Khan (MP for Tooting) for threatening to reduce the contribution from Government to fund local Concessionary Fares for the elderly and disabled in Wandsworth by £1.8 million.

**Answer:** Firstly, I should explain that the Freedom Pass in London differs from the England-wide national concessionary travel pass. The Freedom Pass is operated by London Councils on behalf of the London boroughs. London Councils runs the scheme. It allows more than a million Londoners who are aged 60 and over, or who are disabled, to travel free on the capital's buses, Underground, Docklands Light Railway, Croydon Tramlink, Overground and local rail services. Rail travel concessions in London are not part of the statutory England-wide concession. They are offered only as part of the Freedom Pass concessionary travel scheme.

The England-wide concessionary travel pass, for those aged 60 and over and eligible disabled people living in England outside London, gives the passholder the statutory minimum concession of travel on local buses in any part of England from 9.30am to 11pm Mondays to Fridays and at all times at weekends and bank holidays. This took effect from 1st April 2008. Although this is a national minimum standard, the passes are issued by local councils which are responsible for administration of their schemes and they may, if they choose, offer enhancements which are more generous than the statutory minimum, funded locally from their own resources.

The new funding for the improvement to the statutory off-peak bus travel concession is made through a special grant allocated by the Department for Transport. This grant is paid to all Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) in England. London's share of the special grant is £56.748 million in 2009/10 and this will rise to £58.317 million next year. The special grant funding is solely for the "out of area" elements of concessionary bus travel, that is, concessionary journeys in London by visitors who live in other areas of England. This is because the local authority (TCA) where a concessionaire boards a bus must reimburse the operator for the whole of that

journey. Each TCA is responsible for reimbursing bus operators for concessionaries who begin journeys in their area.

Following discussions with Whitehall officials on the Scheme's future funding, London Councils was concerned that Ministers may be considering reducing the funding the capital would receive in 2010/11 by up to £50 million. They wrote to the Department of Transport warning that covering any possible shortfall could see average council tax bills increase by £18 or leave councils having to make "painful decisions" over the levels of services. The response from the DfT was not helpful since it said that they would need costs from authorities later on in the year before being able to confirm the scale of the funding problem.

I would hope my colleagues in the Minority Party would join us in pressing Sadiq Khan to ensure that this important facility for London and Wandsworth is not jeopardised and the DfT funding is maintained.

**(22) Final Salary Pensions:** Question asked by Councillor Mrs. Usher of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources –

Would the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources comment on

(a) what is the impact on local taxpayers if the local government final salary scheme is not changed? and

(b) the Prime Minister Gordon Brown's unannounced abolition of dividend tax credits in 1997 which has hit pension funds by £6 billion+ a year, and led to hundreds of final salary schemes in the private sector closing to new members;

and further what does he think of the remarks by the Leader of the Opposition at the last Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee 'that all pension schemes should be final salary'? Would he agree that these were at best harking back to the 1970s, and at worst a blatant disregard for the reality of the economic situation that his Government have led us to?

**Answer:** (a) The new Local Government Pension Scheme provides pensions for life of two-thirds of final salary at retirement at age 65 after 40 years service and pensions for dependants and spouses after death. Pretty good it sounds too, if you are the one receiving it!

Until, that is, you realise the horrendous disparity in costs - employees' are only paying between 5.5% and 7.5% of their pay but the Council is paying 19% of pay, up to four times more.

And it is likely to get worse. The taxpayer has to meet whatever costs arise in the future regardless of their size, effectively a taxpayer blank cheque to members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. So if, as expected, people live for longer then the local taxpayers will have to pick up the bill for paying pensions for

a longer period. Or if this Government's economic policies continue to result in low investment returns then local taxpayers will have to pick up the bill.

This is plainly unsustainable and, unlike the private sector - where virtually all firms have closed their final salary schemes to new employees - the position presented in the Government's recent consultation reported to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23rd September, asks future generations to pay for pensions in the public sector that are not available for other taxpayers. This pensions 'apartheid' must be ended now.

And it is not just a belief, a recent report by auditors, PricewaterhouseCooper, commented that 96% of private sector defined benefit schemes were deemed to be unsustainable.

So for many years the Council has been aware that increasing life expectancy and lower future investment returns means that the liabilities building up in the Local Government Pension Scheme would be unaffordable for taxpayers. The Council has been urging the Government to reform the Scheme to introduce stabilisers that would control the cost of meeting these liabilities. We have urged the Government to close the defined-benefit segment of the Scheme for new staff in favour of a money-purchase scheme and to increase employee contributions to 10% for all staff.

(b) The Government has compounded the Pensions Crisis in the UK by its raid on tax credits in the summer budget of 1997, one of the first actions it took on coming to office. Taken on its own, actuaries advised that the abolition of the tax credit on dividends by the Government could increase employer's contributions by up to 4% of payroll. This clearly put further pressure on those pension funds which were already significantly under-funded. This tax raid continues to this day and is estimated to cost the Council over £4 million each year, equivalent to £13,354 per pensioner.

It is commendable that Councillor Belton - as Leader of the Opposition - continues to tow his Party's line to defend defined benefit pension schemes but his rose-tinted view of what is possible denies the public the choice to decide who pays for what. And his Party's Government are even worse: despite promising a consultation on other changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme in June, nothing has happened. It appears that the Government just want to stick their heads in the sand and hope the problems go away until after the General Election. If the situation wasn't so serious, the Government's apparent denial could be seen as almost comical.

So, perhaps the Leader of the Opposition could suggest to his Party's Leader that instead of using the moniker "Prudence" he could campaign for the next General Election as Gordon Brown and "Emu".

**(23) Effectiveness of the Council's Communications:** Question asked by Councillor Farebrother of the Cabinet Member for Communications and Strategic Planning Co-ordination –

Would the Cabinet Member comment on the effectiveness of the Council's communications including the recently introduced new website?

**Answer:** I do not need to comment generally on the effectiveness of the Council's communications as that has been covered in recent reports including AQPRs. Surveys of residents have regularly reported high satisfaction levels with our communications, including Brightside. The new website has been a ground-breaking piece of work which has taken many months to implement. The changes mean we can now meet the key government standards and, more importantly, have a site that is faster, easier to use and offering many more features.

The previous site had undergone continuous development and improvement for over 10 years and work is still in hand to ensure the new site uses its greater potential to first give the full range of facilities and speed of customer use that was on the old site. Migration took place on 12th August and this was followed by enhancement and adaptation work to ensure optimum ease of navigation for users of the new site. This is now completed. The new site has been 'future proofed' so that it can adapt easily to further changes in web and social media trends. By adopting national standards for navigation, vocabulary, accessibility and local government service structures the site now ensures wider access to a broader range of information for customers. It contains a powerful Google search engine at its heart and also has a standard categorisation of services with a highly detailed A-Z guide to speed up access. Users therefore no longer require any knowledge of the Council's structure to obtain information about a service.

The new site provides a range of Web 2.0 functionality and social media tools that provide integration to popular sites such as YouTube, Flickr and Twitter. To transfer all the content from the old site involved creating more than 3,500 new pages, 3,500 downloads, 1,500 directory entries, 676 A-Z records and hundreds more FAQs, forms and events.

This is just the starting point for social media which will be extended in functionality over the next 12 months. The site will also be adding more and more transactional features using its in-built online forms system.

A customer survey carried out soon after the new site had been switched on showed that 80% of users could find what they were looking for; 74% said it was easy to find their way around and 73% said they were able to do the things they wanted on the site.

It was also encouraging that the proportion saying the website was now their preferred way of contacting the council had gone up from 50% earlier in the year to 55%

The new site marks a major advance in the council's use of website technology and is now clearly positioned as one of the most forward-thinking in local government today. It has moved from being a valued information provider to becoming a versatile online resource that offers users many different opportunities for

engaging with the council, accessing services and becoming involved in their community. I have no doubt that it will be seen as an example to others seeking to align the power of the web to a radical service modernisation agenda.

**(24) Tooting Councillors Surgery:** Question asked by Councillor Ms. Gasser of the Cabinet Member for Communications and Strategic Planning Co-ordination –

How many people have attended Tooting constituency surgeries since the Library has been closed?

Would the number have been greater if Brightside and the website had informed people of the new surgery venues?

**Answer:** Apologies are due to Councillor Ms Gasser and other councillors in the south of the Borough, for problems with the information we have published about their surgeries over the last few weeks. Out-of-date information was used initially when the Council's new website was launched and although this was corrected, the October edition of Brightside also contains an advert which wrongly gives Tooting Library as the current venue rather than the Samaj Hall. We have since drawn attention to the correct venue on the website news pages and drafted an advert with the correct information for the November issue of Brightside.

It is difficult to say what impact this incorrect information may have had on attendance. However, total attendance in the last five months of surgeries at Tooting Library was only 12 customers and when they were held at Tooting Leisure Centre, councillors filed nil returns most weeks. There have been no returns since the move to the Samaj Hall, indicating that the attendance continues to be very low. As this continues a pattern going back to the use of other venues and periods when there were no publicity errors, I can only conclude that the impact of the incorrect information has been minimal. Perhaps Councillor Ms.Gasser would agree that with the enormous growth in other means of contacting councillors, time may have come to review the use of traditional surgeries. However, of course, the publicity errors should not have occurred and I apologise to councillors and residents for that. I look forward to the opening of the new Tooting Library when we can return to a more consistent and reliable arrangement for surgeries in this part of the Borough.

**(25) Cost of Frameworki:** Question asked by Councillor Gasser of the Cabinet Member for Adult Care Services –

What are the total costs of Frameworki, and contributions from each partner, to date? How do these compare to original budget figures?

**Answer:** The total cost of supporting the Frameworki application and its use in 2008/09, including the costs of staff within the Department of Adult Social Services, investment in additional hardware, such as servers, and the recharging of corporate overheads, was £1,152,101 compared with our original budget of £869,480. In

2009/10 the current comparable projected outturn expenditure is £1,521,889 compared with an original budget of £973,310. The additional spending between the years reflects additional investment in staff, equipment, the infrastructure and software to enhance both the performance and reporting capabilities of the Frameworki application, all of which have been the subject of scrutiny by Members during the course of the past eighteen months.

To date the Primary Care Trust have contributed £44,000 in relation to costs incurred in 2008/09, whilst negotiations are continuing with the PCT to secure additional funding in relation to 2008/09 and 2009/10 and beyond. It is anticipated that these negotiations will be concluded within the next few weeks.

**(26) Frameworki and NHS Wandsworth:** Question asked by Councillor L. Cooper of the Cabinet Member for Adult Care Services –

Has agreement been reached with NHS Wandsworth over their contribution towards funding Frameworki in financial years 2009/10 and 2008/09?

**Answer:** May I refer Councillor L. Cooper to my answer to the previous question.

**(27) Cycle Training: Wandsworth Council or Ting Ting Tooting:** Question asked by Councillor Osborn of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure –

1. Following the inadequate answer I was given at last full Council meeting

(a) Is there any formal requirement, at Wandsworth Council or at TfL, for Wandsworth voluntary organizations that provide cycle training to consult the Council's Road Safety Team, or to discuss their training with the Council, or to agree proposed training with the Council, before submitting a bid for TfL funding for their training courses?

(b) If there is such a formal requirement, where is this formal requirement documented and was it provided to Ting Ting Tooting before they submitted their bid to TfL for funding for the provision of cycle training?

(c) If there is no such formal requirement, when I asked, at the most recent Council meeting, why Wandsworth Council had stood in the way of TfL funding for Ting Ting Tooting's cycle training, why was I answered by saying that

“Following a meeting with Council officers, Ting Ting Tooting (TTT) were advised to consult the Council's Road Safety team before submitting the Cycle Training element of their bid to Transport for London's Community Cycling Fund”.

And

“There was no discussion with the Council prior to TTT submitting their bid and at no stage were the classes being proposed by TTT agreed with the Council”.

Was the Cabinet Member merely seeking to fob me off and “muddy the waters” with irrelevant information?

2. When I was contacted by Wandsworth Council about cycle training on 3rd July, why was it “future training with other cyclists with similar abilities” that I was offered when

(a) I had signed up with Ting Ting Tooting for one-to-one cycle training at a time of my choosing, (before Ting Ting Tooting were denied their TfL funding by Wandsworth Council and their list of applicants was taken over by Wandsworth Council).

(b) Your answer to me at last full Council clearly stated that “It was made clear to TTT that the Council’s Road Safety section already provides this service without charge” meaning, presumably, the one-to-one service provided by Ting Ting Tooting.

(c) Your answer to me at last full Council clearly stated that “Wandsworth Council’s adult cycle training is delivered on a one-to-one basis and may be carried out on any day of the week, depending on the request and arrangement between the applicant and the instructor”?

3. Why did the nature of the Council’s provision of cycle training change from “training with other cyclists with similar abilities” as stated on 3rd July 2009 to “training is delivered on a one-to-one basis and may be carried out on any day of the week, depending on the request and arrangements between the applicant and the instructor” as stated on 22nd July 2009?

4. (a) Of the applicants to Ting Ting Tooting for cycle training

(i) how many were on the Ting Ting Tooting lists that were forwarded to Wandsworth Council; and

(ii) how many from these lists have been included on the Council’s cycle training programme?

(b) If, as the Cabinet Member answered at last full Council, training “may be carried out on any day of the week”

(i) Why did Wandsworth Council send out an email on or around 9th July stating that cycle training “Sessions take place on Saturdays”?

(ii) Was this another “typing error in an email composed by a temporary member of staff in the Technical Services Department which got carried through into correspondence with members of the public”?

5. (a) I repeat the question from last full Council which the Cabinet Member blatantly refused to answer:-

“Is it also true that Wandsworth Borough Council’s ...” “... Cycle Campaign is oversubscribed and unable to provide cycle training to those who want it, because there is an overlong waiting list?”.

(b) If the training is not oversubscribed, why did Wandsworth Council send out an email on or around 9th July stating that:-

“As you are probably aware, there is a waiting list for adults (aged 16 or over).”?

(c) Was this yet another “typing error in an email composed by a temporary member of staff in the Technical Services Department which got carried through into correspondence with members of the public”?

**Answer:** 1 (a) There is no formal requirement to consult with Wandsworth Council in relation to bids for TfL funding unless the funding submission application details dictate otherwise. TfL would need to respond to this question as it relates to bids they receive directly from external organisations.

1 (b) I refer Councillor Osborn to my answer in 1(a) above.

1 (c) Let me make it clear that Council officers did not stand in the way of TfL providing funding for Ting Ting Tooting (TTT). TfL, as the project funder, asked the Council if TTT offered anything in their bid over and above what the Council was offering, and the Council was unable to say that it was; hence the funder (TfL) decided not to proceed with funding this element of the TTT bid. This is not "standing in the way" of a project, rather it ensures that public funds are not wasted on duplication of effort. It should be pointed out that the Council supported TTT in the other elements of its bid.

2. The training offered by this Council is either on a one-to-one basis or in a small group of cyclists with similar abilities, whichever is more appropriate at the time. As you state, you signed up with TTT for cycle training and you should have received clear and accurate details of the training that the Council would be able to provide, as this information was provided to TTT by the Council. However, I need to point out that TTT released information drafted by themselves into the public domain relating to training provided by the Council that had not been presented to or approved by the Council before the information was made public. As a result it contained errors that subsequently had to be corrected by the Council, with the information being provided to TTT on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009. Looking at the records held by the Council, your name appears on the first list that TTT provided to the Council.

Unfortunately at the time that the list was compiled it would appear the information being provided by TTT contained inaccurate information.

3. The nature of the Council's training for adults has always been extremely flexible as indicated in the quotations referred to in the question, i.e. one-to-one, or in small groups. For example, if there is a group of adults of similar ability then it would usually be appropriate to train this group together, with the required number of trainers, or if individuals requested it one-to-one basis would be provided. It should be pointed out that this does not represent, in any way, a change to the nature of the way that the Council's provision for cycle training is provided.

4.(a) The Council has received two separate lists from TTT relating to events held by TTT in June 2009. On the lists received there were 53 separate rows with contact details provided. All of those on the lists were contacted using the information as provided on the list from TTT and where successful contact was made and an address was received, the registration forms were sent out. As a result of the inaccurate information provided there were some applicants on the list from TTT who were not suitable for the training provided by the Council, owing to their young age. However, contact was made with the parents/guardians where possible to determine if alternative training could be provided. Those on the list were also e-mailed where an e-mail address was provided informing them that the application form was to be found on the Council's website. To date, of the registrations forms sent to those people who were successfully contacted, two have been returned and the people concerned have received one-to-one training.

4.(b) Most of the cycle training undertaken for adults usually takes place on Saturdays. This tends to be the most convenient day of the week for adults who work for the rest of the week. The e-mail sent out reflects this and does not preclude training being available on any other day or time during the week.

5. (a), (b) and (c) Currently the Council's cycle training programme is not oversubscribed. However, it is running close to capacity. This is due to the recent increase in enquiries received by the Council during the summer following active promotion by the Mayor of London relating to cycling. The issue of a waiting list should not be confused with oversubscription. The Council has enough resources to handle the level of subscription it receives.

Cycle training is provided to those people who complete the necessary application process and any waiting list that results is due to various factors such as confirmation of availability for both parties, matching of suitable instructors and cancellations. This does not represent a programme being oversubscribed; it is merely the length of time that the process takes. It should also be remembered that there is a scheduled programme for the provision of cycle training in schools that the instructors deliver both during school term time and in the holiday periods as well as other cycle training both during the week, evenings and the weekends.

Lastly, may I say I appreciate Councillor Osborn's concern that good quality cycle training should be available for all who want it but feel this particular issue, of how TfL responded to a funding application from a local voluntary organisation, is something of a diversion from what we, as a Council, should be

focussed on. The response here demonstrates that we are fully committed to providing cycle training of high quality for the people of the Borough, adults and children alike.

**(28) 10:10 Campaign:** Question asked by Councillor Osborn of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure –

Will Wandsworth Borough Council sign up to the 10:10 Campaign?

**Answer:** We believe that climate change is a serious threat and reducing our carbon emissions is one of our corporate priorities. However, we will not be signing up to the 10:10 Campaign (10% carbon saving by 2010), although we estimate that we will have made a 10% saving in our emissions over the period 2000-2010. We have a good track record on energy management and for the past twenty years have benefited from a dedicated Energy Management Team who provide specialised advice and input to ensure that the Council premises are run as efficiently as possible. As a result of this, we can demonstrate that we have already reduced our carbon emissions by 9.2% for the period 1999/2000 and 2008/09.

Despite past achievements, we recognise that now is not the time to be complacent and are participating in the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management (LACM) Programme for 2009/10. Feedback from the Carbon Trust last week highlights Wandsworth Council as one of its top 12 excellent performers so far out of the 64 authorities participating in this year's programme.

The Council needs to take account its achievements in cutting carbon prior to 2008/09. Targets should be stretching, but also realistic and achievable as that is the culture of target-setting here at Wandsworth. We are not into the bandying about of large numbers at distant future dates, which we suspect many national Governments are happy to do, without real commitment to the practicality of then translating the targets into real outcomes. We are currently considering a 10% carbon saving by 2015 and 20% by 2025, compared to the new base year of 2008/09. This is to be confirmed at our coming cycle of meetings this month.

We do not think this is unambitious in the present climate, particularly taking account of our achievement to date. Should progress prove to be good there will certainly be no lack of motivation or incentive to increase the amount of carbon savings (with financial and no doubt Government pressures too being brought to bear on this and other authorities). We will be reviewing our progress annually at the highest level and looking at setting realistic but challenging targets for reduction.

I think that approach is likely to prove more productive than expending time and energy on one-off campaigns of this nature.

**(29) Wandsworth Air Quality:** Question asked by Councillor Randall of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure –

What are Wandsworth Council's plans to combat the build up of dangerous emission pollution in the roads with the most serious emission problems, namely

The A24;  
Mitcham Road;  
Putney High Street;  
Battersea Bridge Road.

and how quickly will these plans be implemented?

**Answer:** The air pollutants of concern within the Borough are fine particles (PM10) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2). Both are predominantly emitted from road traffic. Both of these pollutants have been predicted to be exceeding air quality objectives, derived from EU limit values. There are two objectives for each pollutant. The annual mean PM10 objective has been achieved since monitoring began, and the 24-hour mean PM10 objective has been achieved in every year apart from 2003 where monitored within the Borough. Regarding the two objectives for NO2, the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide has been exceeded (i.e. not achieved) at all roadside locations where monitored and the one hour mean NO2 objective is predicted to be exceeded at some roadside locations within the Borough.

In January 2001 the whole Borough was declared an Air Quality Management as a result of exceedences of air quality objectives for PM10 and NO2. These objectives are health-based and derived from EU limit values that the UK must meet within certain timescales.

In January 2004 an Air Quality Action Plan was published which contained measures to be undertaken to improve air quality within the Borough. The action plan contains measures in seven different categories, each of which contains individual actions; there are 34 actions in total within the plan. Two of the categories are: (a) reducing the use of cars and (b) reducing emissions from vehicles. Actions being undertaken under each of these subject areas are summarised below. More information is provided under the Air Quality Action Plan 2004, available via the Council website; and in the Air Quality action Plan Progress report 2009, which will be made available via the website very soon.

Work is undertaken to encourage local businesses to develop travel plans, and transport policies are used to promote and encourage walking. On-street parking controls are used to reduce the number of people driving to rail stations in the Borough. Public transport and cycling are also promoted. The Council also promotes school travel plans to reduce car use for the school run (mainly through walking to school as an alternative), and 91 schools (79%) in the Borough have school travel plans as of September 2009.

The London-wide low emission zone began operation in February 2008. The different phases of the scheme will bring forward emissions improvements for heavy goods vehicles, buses, coaches and light goods vehicles. A green fuelling infrastructure is being promoted and encouraged within the Borough.

Two electric vehicle charging points have been installed in leisure centre car parks, and more are proposed for the future.

### **The A24**

This road has a traffic flow through Tooting High Street of 24,496 vehicles per day. Tooting High Street is a busy shopping street where people can potentially be exposed for one hour or more to air pollutants. Therefore compliance with the one hour mean NO<sub>2</sub> objective should be assessed as there is relevant exposure of individuals. The A24 is part of the Transport for London Road Network and as such actions/interventions on these roads are the responsibility of Transport for London (TfL). TfL is planning a Cycle Superhighway along the A24 corridor to encourage more cycling along the route (in preference to motorised transport that generates emissions).

Nitrogen dioxide monitoring has been undertaken along this road by means of diffusion tubes. This is a relatively basic monitoring technique, not as sophisticated as real-time monitoring. However, where the annual mean concentrations exceed 60 ug/m<sup>3</sup> it is an indicator that the hourly nitrogen dioxide objective may be being exceeded. In some locations in Tooting High Street and Upper Tooting Road this has been shown to be the case. Very high readings were recorded at the roadside and when these were extrapolated to areas of relevant exposure the concentrations were still in excess of 60 ug/m<sup>3</sup>.

### **Putney High Street**

This road has a traffic flow of 41,840 vehicles per day. Putney High Street is a busy shopping street and, as with the A24, compliance with the one hour mean nitrogen dioxide objective should be assessed as there is relevant exposure of individuals. This is a Borough-controlled road. The Council is implementing improvements to Putney High Street to make it easier to walk. By making walking more attractive the expectation is that more people will be encouraged to walk rather than drive.

Nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes were located at five locations in Putney High Street for a two year period from October 2006 to September 2008. Extremely high annual mean readings were recorded. The lowest annual mean concentration recorded was 78.5 ug/m<sup>3</sup>, and the highest was 143.7 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. These results are an indicator that the hourly mean NO<sub>2</sub> objective will be exceeded. As a result, a temporary real-time monitoring station has been installed for a one year period. Provisional results are indicating that the hourly mean objective will be exceeded. At the same time as carrying out this monitoring, further analysis will be conducted to assess the in-depth causes of the high pollution level so that solutions can be identified and implemented. The analysis will involve the use of traffic monitoring via automatic number plate recognition cameras. This data will be used with speed data to provide details of the types of vehicles causing pollution peak at different times of the day, such as heavy good vehicles, buses, vans, diesel vehicles etc.

### **Mitcham Road**

This road has a traffic flow of 23,359 vehicles per day. Compliance with the one hour mean NO<sub>2</sub> objective needs to be assessed here as well as there is relevant exposure of individuals. Proposals have also been drawn up for Mitcham Road to improve road safety and enhance the walking environment.

Nitrogen dioxide monitoring was undertaken by diffusion tubes in Mitcham Road from April 2008 to March 2009. Annual mean concentrations exceeded the 60 ug/m<sup>3</sup> threshold. Annual mean concentrations of 67 ug/m<sup>3</sup> and 81 ug/m<sup>3</sup> were recorded. However, the real-time monitoring undertaken on this road, at a location of relevant exposure, indicated that the hourly mean nitrogen dioxide objective was met between 1st April 2008 and 31st March 2009. The objective is that there should be no more than 18 occurrences of the hourly mean greater than 200 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. At this location the 200 ug/m<sup>3</sup> hourly mean was exceeded on only seven occasions, thus meeting the objective.

### **Battersea Bridge Road**

This road has a traffic flow of 23,000 vehicles per day. Battersea Bridge Road is part of the Transport for London Road Network and as such actions/interventions on these roads are the responsibility of Transport for London (TfL).

Annual mean concentrations ranged from 52 to 93 ug/m<sup>3</sup> in a diffusion tube study between October 2006 and September 2008. As already noted where annual mean concentrations exceed 60 ug/m<sup>3</sup> it is an indicator that the hourly NO<sub>2</sub> objective may be being exceeded. However, this road is not a busy shopping street and therefore there is not relevant exposure of individuals for one hour or more (1-hour mean objective).

Nitrogen dioxide concentrations on the A24, Putney High Street and Battersea Bridge Road are predicted to exceed the one hour mean objective, but there is only relevant exposure of individuals in Putney High Street and the A24, as these are busy shopping streets. The A24 and Battersea Bridge Road are on the TfL network and therefore the Council is unable to take traffic management action other than requesting that the Mayor of London use only the cleanest buses on these routes, as stated in the Mayor's draft Air Quality Strategy. Action is being undertaken to further assess Putney High Street, over which the Council does have more control. This assessment will be undertaken over the course of the next year, with the initial phase completed by August 2010, and preliminary results being available by October 2010. Actions to reduce emissions will be considered in January 2011, or before if feasible. I can also report on a positive note that a SCOOT (Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique) tool is being implemented in Putney High Street to manage and control the traffic lights. This is an adaptive system that responds automatically to fluctuations in traffic flows through the use of on-street detectors embedded in the road. This should then be able to smooth the flow, thus reducing emissions and the consequent exposure of individuals to high levels of air pollution.

Actions are being taken through the Air Quality Action Plan to reduce the use of cars and emissions from vehicles. Such measures include the introduction

of a London-wide low emission zone, the promotion of a green fuelling infrastructure (e.g. charging points for electric vehicles) and the development of travel plans for schools and businesses.

All traffic flow information referred to above was obtained from the London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (LAEI) 2006.