

**Appendix B to Council Minutes:  
Councillors Questions  
2 November 2015**

**London Borough of Sutton  
Council: 2 November 2015  
Questions from Councillors  
Under Standing Order 8.6**

**1. Question asked by Councillor Mary Burstow to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

We keep on hearing in the press that Ash Tree die back will affect the UK badly and could be as bad as Dutch Elm disease. Is this true? Given how many Ash Trees there are in Sutton and the number of roads which are lined with them, what steps is Sutton Council taking to mitigate its impact?

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

Thank you very much for your question on Ash Tree die back disease. It was only a year ago that I answered a similar question when it was asked by Councillor Graham Whitham, and the answer is the same, we haven't yet got Ash die back in Sutton, it hasn't been identified in the borough to date. But if it were we do have an action plan in place and our tree officers would liaise with the Forestry Commission to identify the best course of action to contain the spread of the disease. We have had a lot of media publicity on Ash die back this week, it's been on the television, in the newspapers and the radio. From what I can gather it's mainly present in Kent at the present, it's come from Europe from places like the Netherlands and Denmark. It's a very slow moving disease compared to Dutch Elm disease which we had, I think, in the 1970s. But I understand that Ash trees have more genetic diversity than elm trees and there's currently a lot of scientific research into which Ash species are disease resistant to help fight that. So I hope I won't be in the same position in a year's time to say that we have Ash die back but at the present we haven't.

**Supplementary Question asked by Councillor Burstow**

Should Ash tree die back ever come to the borough, do we have a budget for it?

**Reply by Councillor Whitehead**

We don't. As you know, our budgets are very limited and I would hope that the government would intervene and provide a budget for all councils affected in this way.

**2. Question asked by Councillor Richard Clifton to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy and Business Committee**

Is the Lead Member for Housing, Economy and Business aware of the concerns minuted by the Council's Planning Committee at its meeting on 15 July concerning the decision of the Government to withdraw without replacement the Code for Sustainable Homes and if she shares these concerns?

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**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy and Business Committee**

Thank you, thank you Councillor Clifton for your question. I am aware of the concerns raised by the Planning Committee and I do indeed share them. This is an example of the Conservative's lack of commitment to carbon reduction and tackling climate change and is now fettered those of us that were trying to meet that challenge by no longer enabling us to introduce higher standards in our planning policies.

**Supplementary Question asked by Councillor Clifton**

I'd like to thank Councillor McCoy. Can I ask her this: what concerned the planning committee and is why I wanted to take this opportunity this evening to draw this matter to the attention of councillors more generally, was that many planning permissions granted by the council used to include a condition that a code for sustainable home certificate issued by the building research establishment or an equivalent body, must be obtained prior to the development, and the withdrawal without replacement of the code by the conservative government, quite suddenly with little consultation, meant we were asked to approve revised permissions. There was a simplicity and transparency in requiring that the certificate is obtained, submitted and approved prior to construction. My question is, can we be assured that we will continue to pursue policies to maintain standards and push for higher standards wherever this is appropriate?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

I think we should do everything in our power to try and push up the standards where we can. What was particularly worrying, there was a report recently that showed that despite all the agreed targets at the recent climate change summit, we're still going to fail to achieve the 2% reduction in global warming deemed necessary to prevent cataclysmic events threatening our planet. I think this is really, really serious. It's dangerous to our future and I'm just disgusted that this Conservative government have gone back on their word and all that husky hugging at the beginning of their original term just shows what a con that was. Thank you.

**Supplementary Question asked by Councillor Tony Shields**

Whatever the reasons the government have come to remove the sustainable code, I mean, I, as an aside heard it's actually stifling new home build, but of course we have Sutton Living now don't we. So Sutton Living can abide by the code for sustainable homes. Just because other boroughs don't do it, there's no reason for you now not to do it, so we fully expect the Felnax site to be up to the code for sustainable homes. Now's your chance to shine, isn't it?

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**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy**

Actually we've been previously wanting to have higher standards and now we're just limited, we can only do the minimum, we can't increase that, that's what it says. It actually limits us, and the reason it's been changed isn't to release house building because, well from the government's policy it's quite clear that they haven't got a clue how to develop house building and how to stimulate it because all their policies seem to do exactly the opposite, including this one. The reason that they've changed it is because they were lobbied by big businesses and developers who said it's far too difficult for us to do it.

**3. Question asked by Councillor Manuel Abellan to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy and Business Committee**

What impact does the chair of the Housing, Economy & Business Committee think the current Government's housing policy will have on the provision of affordable homes in Sutton?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy and Business Committee**

Well I'm sorry that I'm showing up some of the horrendous government policies that you should actually be ashamed to be associated with rather than proud of. For example, recent policies introduced by this government are going to actually reduce the amount of homes that are affordable for local people and I think that it's going to mean that social housing is set to become a thing of the past. Some of the policies, the rent reduction policy means that councils and housing associations are having to pull back on their plans to build more homes and I know that because housing associations are telling us this. Then we've got the requirement for councils to sell off their high value properties, well that's going to reduce the amount of affordable social housing available. So there's going to be less houses out there and there's no actual plans to replace those properties and it's going to be very difficult to anyway, to try and find ways of doing it. We're concerned that those properties that are sold off are going to end up in private hands under right to buy because what happens three years down the line we see that a lot of them are actually no longer owned by the person that bought it but are being rented out in the private sector. So I think the figure for London was about 40% of properties sold on to right to buy and now are being rented privately. Other policies, we've got the no longer requiring developers to provide affordable homes but to provide starter homes as an alternative which disincentives developers from ever providing an element of social housing and it also lets them off the hook to contribute to CIL and to Section 106 obligations to provide the infrastructure that's going to support that housing. So in summary, as I said in answer to the previous question, the policies that have been introduced by this government are set to worsen the housing prices, not make it better.

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**Supplementary Question asked by Councillor Manuel Abellan**

I'm not surprised to see the opposition sort of sinking in their chairs when we talk about this issue. I was wondering if the chair could talk about what Sutton can do to mitigate the impacts of these policies?

**Reply by Councillor McCoy**

Well, it's an uphill struggle to try and mitigate these things because they keep coming in thick and fast and as soon as we think we'll try and stimulate housing one way we find that it's fettered another. But we did recognise that there's an inability of the government interventions to actually deliver and adequately address that to deliver the housing that's needed to address the housing crisis, so we did decide to take action ourselves and that's why we set up Sutton Living Limited, the housing development company, and yes, I'm very proud of it because it is being used as an example of the way that other boroughs should do things. And the key thing to this company is it is going to increase the supply of housing across all tenures, that's for sale, private for rent and social housing, social housing particularly is the thing that we think is under threat so we're glad that we're still retaining the ability to provide that. And to provide the kind of housing that our residents need rather than just providing investment properties for rich overseas landlords. We're also building new council houses, we're on a programme to build over 100 new council houses using the right to buy receipts that have been generated before the government finds a way to stop us doing that, and we've also achieved housing zone status which also helps speed up the delivery of housing in the borough and helps ensure that we will get a decent element of affordable housing in the private development. And that is something that I will actually give the Conservative London Mayor credit for because I thought it was a great scheme and noticeably he contradicts his own party by following that sort of method.

**Supplementary Question asked by Councillor Nick Mattey**

When we're talking about sustainable housing, if I remember correctly the Felnex development, which is in the London Borough of Sutton was originally mooted to have 21% affordable housing but under this administration it's now been reduced to 17.5%, well I have to give the background. My answer is, if the council reduces the amount of social housing, surely it is to blame for creating less social housing?

**Reply by Councillor McCoy**

Again this is one of the problems from government policy whereby they introduce the need to prove viability for developers to deliver affordable housing. Unfortunately they didn't actually give a definition so developers often manage to make the case. But in Sutton we've got a very good track record of arguing very hard, of trying very hard and getting as much affordable housing as possible. And actually on the Felnex site we're getting 20%. We're getting 20%, 145 of the 725 houses will be affordable.

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**4. Question asked by Councillor Tony Shields to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy and Business Committee**

This council has long trumpeted the economic benefits of Tramlink to the borough. Are they also aware of the lost opportunity cost created by this and previous administrations due to their incompetence and ineptness in being able to manage and deliver large projects with budgets given to them by successive London Mayors? In the light of the above will the administration now allow a more inclusive approach to ensuring that Tramlink has a chance of becoming reality?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy and Business Committee**

Right, well first of all in answer to this, it's not just the Council that's trumpeting the economic benefits of Tramlink, in fact it was us listening to Sutton businesses who have been making the case right from the start.

Well I'm just wondering if this question is actually about Councillor Crowley suddenly deciding that he's quite like to get involved in the Tramlink project so that he can claim any credit if we do actually win the bid for the extension. Interestingly, that your interest was only sparked about two years into the project after we've done all the work, by working with TfL and the London Borough of Merton providing all the financial reports and the economic feasibility evidence required to support our bid, not to mention the borough wide consultation that showed amazing and widespread support for bringing the tram to Sutton. So it's obviously a bit of a winner there, so probably safe for you to get involved in that one, which is in sharp contrast to other projects and steering groups that we've invited the opposition onto but which they only attend when they actually think they can obtain some inside information that they can tweet about later. Or, we've offered them plenty of times, briefings, we've almost had to beg them, Councillor Shields, to attend briefings so that you are fully informed about some of the decisions we're trying to make. But, bearing in mind the track record you'll have to forgive us for our reluctance to actually accept your offer on this one Councillor Crowley because we've been burnt before by trying to be inclusive only to see confidential documents leaked, deliberate misinformation distributed and failure to take any responsibility for decisions when you do sit on the boards.

**Supplementary Question asked by Councillor Tony Shields**

The bottom line is we clearly want and need as a borough for our residents to get Tramlink here, of course we do. And the trouble is for the London Mayor when he's seen successive schemes and large ticket items, large amounts of money given to the London Borough of Sutton to administer, and you're the only tier 1 authority under Lib Dem control, I have to look at what he gave you money for. Sutton High Street, Hackbridge, Wallington High Street, blocking the viable site at Rosehill, the Life Centre's a disaster, anything high ticket you can't handle. So is it any surprise that it's taken this long for Conservatives working behind the scenes with the excellent Councillor Steve O'Connell to bring this forward when clearly the people at front of house do not know what they're talking about and can't put a business case together which we will expand on a lot more later about business cases won't

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we? What is a business case? The one you put for the tram isn't good enough which is why you've not got any further, but we're pushing and working hard.

**Reply by Councillor McCoy**

I'm not quite sure where the question was there but I can respond to the sentiment I think. I'm not even aware that you've really looked at the business plan in any detail so I don't know how you qualify to comment on that. But I do love the opposition's propensity to write off any project even if there's so much as a screw works loose. You know every project encounters problems, very little in life goes without hitch but you can't just write off the whole project as a failure as you love to do. And of course, only those projects that do encounter problems are the ones that make the news and get talked about. All those many, many projects the council's done that have gone smoothly have slipped quietly under the radar. Because actually Sutton's got a very good reputation with our partners for delivering on projects which is why we keep winning all these bids and in regular cases Sutton is actually quoted as best practice for many of the projects it's undertaken. Because of course, you're not going to mention our Skills Match project which is mentioned as a best practice case study, getting people into training and apprenticeships, or our Sutton Hello project, another best practice example, which addresses loneliness and isolation against older people. Then we've got our Our Price initiative which brings together sport and employment opportunities for people with mental health issues, I think that one's been quoted as well as good practice. Then we've got huge amounts of work supporting older people to stay in their homes rather than being placed in residential care, which not only delivers better outcomes for those individuals, but also delivers thousands of pounds of saving for the council. That we've had our director at the time who goes around the country talking about the work we've done on that as a good practice. Successful shared services projects with other boroughs, covering IT, insurance and Legal Services. There's the successful refurbishment of Westcroft. We've got skate parks and other public realm successes delivered by our local committees, or if you want a really big successful project let's talk about the Lavenders. That was a major regeneration project that's delivering new and more quality social housing and community centre on the old Durand estate. And in fact our regeneration team have a fantastic record of delivering difficult and sensitive projects, like Elizabeth House for example. We've established business improvement districts, they weren't without issue. And we've got an apprenticeship hub due to be launched on Wednesday. They're just a few of the projects that have been successful and don't get a mention because there aren't any wooden animals to moan about, or a design feature that they can complain about. But what's clear is that the opposition fail to put themselves forward to champion any project in the borough because it's far safer for you to sit there and just throw stones and criticise rather than rolling your sleeves up and taking a risk. This is a good example, the only time you're willing to get involved is with Tramlink when everyone else has done all the work, you're guaranteed that it's popular and there's some success that we ride on the back of. At least we've got a track record that we can be judged on.

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**Supplementary Question asked by Councillor Graham Whitham**

Thank you Mr Mayor. As stated, the extension of Tramlink to Sutton has been an objective for many years, during which we have had a Croydon Conservative GLA member for 16 of them, the Conservative Mayor for the last eight. Would the Chair please comment on my summation that in Councillor Shields' words, this shows an 'incompetence and ineptness' by conservatives to manage and deliver a large project to the benefit of Sutton residents?

**Reply by Councillor McCoy**

All I can say to that is can I have that written down please?

**5. Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus to Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

Why has it taken so long for this administration to consider the reintroduction of formal crossings within the Heart of Hackbridge scheme? You were told en masses over a year ago by residents and members on this side of the chamber how dangerous the situation was and hence how excluding it had thus become. Unfortunately a high profile accident has now occurred involving a child, and this has not been the only accident at this "black spot". Why haven't you done anything about it? Why haven't you listened and put residents first?

**Reply by Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

Actually can I just say in relation to the last question that relates to this question, Councillor Crowley did turn up in the daytime to the Hackbridge and Beddington steering group meetings but did discuss the Hackbridge project, so he does turn up to daytime meetings.

Thank you can I start?

The original Heart of Hackbridge scheme was completed in September 2014. The results of an interim safety audit carried out in autumn 2014 led to changes being made in November and December 2014. These changes included additional signage and lighting, new 'Road Layout Ahead' signs, the replacement of a roundel by a mini-roundabout and a road safety campaign.

Over the last year, the council has continued to monitor the effects of the new junction and this has included commissioning a Road Safety Audit, a separate Accessibility Audit and a User Survey. We also took on the views of local residents and disability groups, such as Sutton Vision, who expressed a need for controlled crossings.

These audits made recommendations to improve the junction, including controlled crossings at key locations and the removal of the informal crossing closest to the junction on London Road by the roundabout.

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We met representatives of Sutton Vision on site to discuss what was best for those with impaired sight and other disabilities, we listened. And I personally got soaking wet taking members of Sutton Vision and council officers to various sites in Hackbridge Road and London Road because we're so serious in looking at the concerns they had. And indeed, options for the location and design of the crossings have been discussed with, not only Sutton Vision, but a wide range of organisations including the police, TfL, London Buses, the Hackbridge and Beddington Corner Neighbourhood Group, whose idea this project was to start with, local traders, the local school and the local cycling forum.

At each stage developments have been signposted on the Council's Hackbridge Scheme website, has the opposition not read these yet?

The final options which have all been safety audited include 1. And I'm pleased to announce this, a zebra crossing on Hackbridge Road to serve the school. This will replace the current informal crossing nearest the school. This will be implemented this November and December 2015 and work is due to start very soon; A fully controlled traffic lit junction between the Felnex junction and Hackbridge Station due to be implemented as part of the Felnex redevelopment; the removal of the informal crossing immediately south of the roundabout; and different locations for another controlled crossing on London Road. From 16<sup>th</sup> November, that's very soon, the Council will be consulting widely on three options to convert informal crossings to zebra crossings in London Road, one on the south side between the roundabout and Felnex, and a choice of two options on the north side by the shops. Any crossing on London Road will result in the loss of some car parking spaces and that includes some disability parking spaces, and this is explained in the consultation material. Plans will be available on the Council's website and in a number of shops in Hackbridge and we await to hear the result of the consultation which options residents will want. Thank you.

**Supplementary Question asked by Councillor Patrick McManus**

That might be the imbueement theory Councillor Whitehead but people are actually being knocked down. When someone hasn't paid a parking ticket, they're not faced by theory but practice. We're well within 12 months, people are getting hurt. You've put crossings in an area of a capital city which only really is suitable for the countryside, you should have known that in advance. What are you going to do about that? What are you going to do about the crossing outside Sutton Station which is also only suitable for the countryside? What are you going to do about it? People are getting hurt.

**Reply by Councillor Whitehead**

We're talking about a scheme that was approved by the GLA and as we were reminded in the last question, the GLA is run by a Conservative Mayor so this is a scheme that's been approved by the GLA and TfL. And we also have to abide by Department of Transport road guidance and can I remind you that the guidance is produced by conservative government, so this Council has followed the guidance but we've also made our wishes known that the guidance is not strong enough and

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we are on record in the recent House of Lords debate that we want the guidance strengthened to improve services for those of visually impaired persons. Thank you.

**Supplementary Question asked by Councillor Neil Garratt**

Thank you very much. I'm surprised at the mention of daytime meetings. There was the memorable Members Steering Group Meeting of Hackbridge and Beddington members which only I attended. I think there were five Liberal Democrats on that group. I have to say it was an excellently well chaired meeting. On Hackbridge though, it was always obvious that the courtesy crossings were not going to work. The original consultation raised doubts, it's in the executive summary, as soon as they were installed residents raised doubts. I stood here, almost a year ago to the day, with a motion saying that the courtesy crossings do not work and that we should investigate putting in formal crossings. All of you people voted against it. You put in a wrecking amendment that basically said everything's fine, we'll continue to monitor it, but all is well. Now that it's gone wrong, suddenly it's the GLA's scheme and it's the national guidelines. I sat in those meetings with you, and I know for a fact that you were in favour of this scheme. So can I ask why it is that we are now pretending that the Liberal Democrats were not in favour of this scheme and do they not think it would have been a good idea to vote for my motion on 3<sup>rd</sup> November last year because by now those crossings would already be in place and that child who was knocked down probably would not have been.

**Reply by Councillor Whitehead**

Could I remind Councillor Garratt that the meeting at which he was the only member was held during purdah when we had a by-election for Wallington South and I could not be available and Councillor Jayne McCoy could not be available because of that by-election.

Secondly, a year ago we had a ten-point plan and we went through each item of the ten-point plan and each of those items on the ten-point plan has been initiated during the year. We have to follow the guidance provided by this government. We have to follow the road traffic acts and that's exactly what we've done. And on courtesy crossings we've received information initially from Lady Cramer which was during the coalition that her department was looking at courtesy crossings and they didn't understand at that point why some seemed to work and perhaps others didn't. And we hold our hands up that we weren't quite sure whether ours were going to work or not but we had to test it through and see. So that's why we commissioned a road safety audit, an accessibility audit and a user survey. And we went through all those procedures and the advice was that yes we do need to put some crossings back in, some controlled crossings. But we had to do all that test first to check this and we've now received information that further examination is happening in regard to courtesy crossings nationwide and we await that with interest.

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**At this point the time for member question time concluded. The following written responses were circulated to members following the meeting.**

**6. Question asked by Councillor Jane Pascoe to Councillor Wendy Mathys, Chair of the Children, Family and Education Committee**

Could you give me the comparative site sizes for the 2 Form Entry (420 pupil) primary school planned to be built on the Metropolitan Open Land in Hackbridge, and the 8 or 10 Form Entry (approximately 2000) Secondary school planned for the 1.6 hectares of Land owned by LBS on the Sutton Hospital Site?

**Reply by Councillor Wendy Mathys, Chair of the Children, Family and Education Committee**

The approximate size of the site that has been identified to expand Hackbridge primary school on to is 1.675 ha inclusive of playing field space. The land that is currently in the Council's ownership for the development of a secondary school at the Sutton Hospital site is approximately 1.6 ha. Subject to discussions with the EFA, the secondary school is likely to be no larger than 6FE + 6<sup>th</sup> form but this will not include on-site playing field space. It may be possible for the school to secure further land or share facilities with the wider London Cancer Hub proposals should these come to fruition.

**7. Question asked by Councillor David Hicks to Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy and Business Committee**

The Council approved the planning application for the South Sutton Medical Centre against its own core planning policies and massive public objection. The residents of Belmont are aware that the Sutton Hospital site will eventually be developed, but wish the development to be complementary to the area. The Council hasn't listened to or taken notice of Belmont public opinion in the past. So how can local residents have any faith in the Council listening this time about a school on the site?

**Reply by Councillor Jayne McCoy, Chair of the Housing, Economy and Business Committee**

The decision to grant planning permission to develop the former Henderson Hospital Site was in accordance with the Council's Development Plan and is legally sound. If Cllr Hicks wishes to suggest otherwise then he should follow the correct legal channels to test his claims or withdraw his statement.

I would remind Cllr Hicks that simply disliking an application does not count as sound planning grounds on which officers can refuse an application. I am aware that due consideration was given to the valid representations received.

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The decision on this planning application was taken by the former Development Control Committee (DCC) and having regard to all material planning considerations including the representations received. This decision is sound in law and has not been challenged in the Courts. The decision was taken after two public meetings and several rounds of consultation including detailed discussions post DCC in relation to a specific clause in the legal agreement which included Belmont ward members and the Belmont and South Cheam Residents Association.

The conversations around the future use of the Sutton Hospital Site have already begun and the London Cancer Hub (LCH) Partnership has held two community engagement events. These events have been the first step in a comprehensive engagement and consultation programme. The LCH Partnership will be formally consulting on the proposals for the LCH in the New Year concurrently, with the Issues and Options document which forms part of the review of our Local Plan. The current Development Plan (LDF) allocates the site for residential and health use and the site will be included as an allocated site within the Issues and Options document which we will be consulting on New Year. That document will include several possible options for developing the site and all of these include a school.

It is important to recognise that there will be more than one opportunity for the residents to make representations on the future of the Sutton Hospital Site; the Plan making stage and, should an application come forward for a school on the site, at the planning application stage. The discussion around the Plan making stage is particularly important as the Plan that the Council proposes for submission will be subject to the scrutiny of an Independent Examiner appointed by the Planning Inspectorate and there will be a thorough engagement around the issues concerning this and other key sites as part of the Local Plan Review.

**8. Question asked by Councillor Nick Matthey to Councillor Ruth Dombey, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee**

According to Mr John Drage Viridor chief executive Mr Colin Drummond entertained him with such lavish hospitality in 2012 that he felt it necessary to record this matter. I have asked Mr Drage if during this meeting that rekindled their long-standing friendship if Mr Drage had discussed the parlous state of repair of the Holy Trinity Church a grade 2 listed church, within 10 miles of Beddington landfill that could qualify for a Viridor Environmental credit donation. I have also asked if Mr Drage mentioned to Mr Drummond that and his wife both financially supported Mr Tom Brake a local MP who was opposed to large incinerators or indeed the fact Councillor Drage was a member of the South London Waste Partnership that were considering Viridor as the incinerator supplier. Mr Drage has so far refused to answer these questions. Sutton Council must ensure that these unanswered questions are put to Mr Drummond and Mr Drage will it take this seriously and investigate this?

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**Reply by Councillor Ruth Dombey, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee**

No, the Council will not investigate this matter further. As set out in the report and recommendations agreed by the Standards Committee on 16 September, the Council does not have powers to compel external individuals or organisations to answer its questions.

For clarity, members are required to record any hospitality received over the value of £35 which hardly counts as "lavish hospitality".

The event referred to took place in 2012 which was after the SLWP had awarded the contract for the ERF to Viridor in 2011 so the premise of the question is incorrect.

Although the Standards Committee Independent members are non-voting, their (independent) views are recorded in the draft minutes for the 16 September meeting:

"Mr Evans stated that the petitions raised allegations against the Council which had to be taken seriously; however, no evidence of Council wrong doing had been presented and in order to recommend an enquiry there needed to be something more concrete than allegations."

**9. Question asked by Councillor Holly Ramsey to Councillor Wendy Mathys, Chair of the Children, Family and Education Committee and Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

About 2/3 of school visits to the Life Centre are from outside the borough, and 1/3 are from independent schools. We subsidise this to the tune of nearly £0.5 million every year. Meanwhile the Lib Dems plan to cut our youth services to the bare legal minimum. Those are the spending priorities of this Lib Dem council – does Cllr Mathys think they're the correct priorities?

**Reply by Councillor Wendy Mathys, Chair of the Children, Family and Education Committee and Councillor Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee**

The total net cost of operating the Sutton Life Centre is £463,496. This includes the costs of operating the Library, the meeting and conferencing facilities, the sports facilities, the media lab and the school tours.

In addition there are many services and projects provided in or by the Life Centre that directly benefit Sutton's young people including:

- Crystal Palace Football Club -Foundation Kicks programme engaging between 15-30 young people on a weekly basis in sports activities.
- Barclays premier league works – a 16 week employability programme offering accredited training

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- Citizenship Media Club for young people to learn skills and express themselves through film, music and photography
- Time Out Youth Club sessions engaging over 50 young people a week in education and a creative programme
- Presto Performing Arts engaging young people in dance and drama
- My Life, My Future – an 18 month programme for young people aged between 10-18 who are either in care or care leavers

Since opening in September 2010 over half a million users (554,760) have visited the Life Centre with a further 23,253 young people having attended school tours through 492 organised school visits.

Of the 42 primary and 14 secondary schools in Sutton, over the last two years 20 primary and 6 secondary schools have visited for a tour. Just under half of all Sutton schools are customers of and have visited the Life Centre.

Every pupil visiting the Life Centre for a school tour from outside Sutton pays between £7.50 and £9.00 for their place.

It is not therefore correct to assert that the Council subsidises school tours to the tune of half a million pounds.

As a result of the significant central government cuts, we have no other choice but to consider every single service we offer across the council. This includes the youth service. We will take very seriously what young people and our staff will say about the youth service and make the best decision that we can within the current financial constraints all local authorities face.

**10. Question asked by Councillor Mary Burstow to Councillor Colin Stears, Chair of the Adult Social Services and Health Committee**

Why was the Memory Lane Cafe closed? It was held twice a month at St John's Church in North Down road, Belmont. This is a vital support service used by people with dementia and their carers

**Reply by Councillor Colin Stears, Chair of the Adult Social Services and Health Committee**

Sutton Alzheimer's Society decided to temporarily close the cafe until November to enable it to reopen in a different format. From November the cafe will provide information, guest speakers, refreshments, peer support and other meaningful activities for people with dementia that will help people living with dementia keep essential skills for as long as possible.

This model is used nationally by the Alzheimer's society with very positive outcomes.

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**11. Question asked by Councillor Nick Mattey to Councillor Ruth Dombey, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee**

At the final planning meeting for the Viridor Incinerator at which Mr Robert Ryan a Viridor Executive was present. Councillor Mary Burstow asked Mr Robert Ryan that if she did not vote for the Viridor incinerator would Sutton Council lose the £1.6 million, which was part of a 106 agreement. He said this was indeed the case. We have a Viridor executive telling an elected member that the council will not get money due to an agreement regarding landfill unless they vote for an Incinerator. This if true is wrong, as landfill and incinerators are two distinct and separate entities. Councillor Burstow worried that the council would lose this money may have used Mr Ryan's explanation as a justification for voting for incinerator. This is completely unacceptable and has resulted in in the perversion of the planning process. Viridor have been allowed to gain access to councillors and the result is the planning process has been perverted to build an incinerator. is the council going to take action and seek the help of the police to remedy a planning process tainted with corruption and seek an injunction to halt any more building work by Viridor before this scandal is resolved?

**Reply by Councillor Ruth Dombey, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee**

No. The planning process is not tainted by corruption. It has been fully tested during two hearings in the courts through a Judicial Review which was rejected and the Council was found to have acted properly. There is no reason in law for the decision not to be implemented.

Cllr Mattey has supplied no evidence of his allegations. As the independent member of the Standards Committee explained on 16th September, "no evidence of Council wrong doing had been presented and in order to recommend an enquiry there needed to be something more concrete than allegations."

**12. Question asked by Councillor Mary Burstow to Councillor Tony Shields, Chair of the Sutton South, Cheam and Belmont Local Committee**

Please can I have a breakdown of Public Realm Spend by Ward, for South Sutton, Belmont and Cheam Ward over the last 3 Financial years (2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14)?

**Reply by Councillor Tony Shields, Chair of the Sutton South, Cheam and Belmont Local Committee**

The table below shows the breakdown for Public Realm capital and revenue spend (excluding TfL spend) for the Sutton South, Belmont and Cheam wards over the past 4 years.

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	Sutton South	Cheam	Belmont
2011-12	£47,522	£22,203	£31,539
2012-13	£17,048	£13,392	£8,330
2013-14	£23,578	£29,257	£20,516
2014-15	£70,273	£45,035	£18,225
<b>Total</b>	<b>£158,421</b>	<b>£109,887</b>	<b>£78,610</b>

Please see the tables below which identify the top 3 highest spend public realm schemes for each financial year (excluding TfL funded schemes).

**2011-12**

Sutton South	Actual Spend	Cheam	Actual Spend	Belmont	Actual Spend
Sutton court estate ball court	£29,375	Cuddington park nature reserve fencing	£8,280	Shanklin playground improvements	£25,846
Eaton Road parking review	£12,748	Tree planting	£5,173	Tree planting	£5,173
Devonshire Ave natural area play equipment	£6,970	BMX track in Nonsuch park	£5,750	Improvements to Knockholt Close & Belmont Pastures	£520
	£49,093		£19,203		£31,539

**2012-13**

Sutton South	Actual Spend	Cheam	Actual Spend	Belmont	Actual Spend
Devonshire avenue nature reserve	£15,721	Cheam open air gym	£4,881	Improvements to Knockholt Close and Belmont Pastures	£5,825
Benches across all wards	£222	Cheam lodge internal works	£2,281	Belmont memorial gardens bench and hedge	£1,283
Sutton Estate Ball court	£105	Cycle stands Cheam station	£2,000	Benches all wards	£222

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	£16,048		£9,162		£7,330
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**2013-14**

Sutton South	Actual Spend	Cheam	Actual Spend	Belmont	Actual Spend
Christmas Lights across all wards	£12,000	Christmas Lights across all wards	£12,000	Christmas Lights across all wards	£12,000
Parking Controls in Eastleigh Close	£6,913	Cheam Park Pavilion Improvements	£9,020	Improvements to Knockholt Close and Belmont pastures	£3,900
Hanging baskets display across all wards	£2,633	Hanging baskets display across all wards	£2,633	Hanging baskets display across all wards	£2,633
	£21,546		£23,653		£18,533

**2014-15**

Sutton South	Actual Spend	Cheam	Actual Spend	Belmont	Actual Spend
Overton Playground Extension	£56,922	Cheam Park Pavilion Improvements	£14,391	Belmont allotment improvements	£5,050
Festive Lights across all wards	£6,672	Cheam Park Playground musical instrument/trampoline	£7,252	Festive Lights across all wards	£6,672
Hanging baskets display across all wards	£2,353	Festive Lights across all wards	£6,672	Hanging baskets display across all wards	£2,353
	£65,947		£28,315		£14,075

**Note:** amend the £65 .947 from Sutton south column to read £9.025 and add the £56.922 to Belmont Overton Park amount total to read £70,997.