

## Political brief from Lambeth Town Hall

This is a rotating political column, penned by representatives from the three political parties which have councillors in Lambeth. In this edition, Cllr Scott Ainslie, Green Party group leader of Lambeth



## Homes under the sledgehammer

**It's hard these days to tell whether Lambeth Council is being run by Labour or the Conservatives. Across the borough Lambeth is working with developers rather than local residents, in a strategy dictated by finance and commercial opportunities.**

The beautiful Cressingham Gardens estate next to Brockwell Park, with its vibrant community of 300 properties, faces the bulldozer. Sheltered housing communities in Streatham, West Norwood, and Gipsy Hill will be broken up, so the land can be developed. Meanwhile, in the Clapham area 'shortlife' housing co-ops set up between local people and the council over 30 years ago - but then ignored by Lambeth - are being sold off for profit and the residents evicted.

It follows a combination of chronic underspending and endemic waste by Lambeth Council which has left a backlog of repairs and a crisis of its own making.

According to last year's council's accounts Lambeth Living spent three times more (£75 million) on supervision and management than it did on repairs and maintenance (£27million). Neighbouring boroughs of Wandsworth and Southwark spend 40% more on every property they are responsible for.

But rather than get their own house in order, Lambeth has decided to kick local people out and get commercial developers in. Local residents have described it as being framed for someone else's crime. The result is a form of 'social cleansing'.

But there are plenty of alternatives. There are grants available from Government and GLA to bring empty homes back into use. Homes can be refurbished or rebuilt with extra stories, raising additional finance for repairs elsewhere. Community Land Trusts can provide permanently affordable housing. And of course, the huge inefficiency and waste of poor management should end.

Rather than breaking up housing co-ops Lambeth could empower residents to be self-reliant - just as these communities have been since the start. This is what a real co-operative council would do.

## Council to charge for fireworks

**LAMBETH COUNCIL are set to charge residents heading to the Brockwell Park fireworks display for the first time in a bid to slash the size and cost of the popular annual event, writes Hannah Skellern...**

Adults will have to pay £7-a-ticket for the normally free event on November 5, which attracted 100,000 revellers last year. A £1 discount for early-bird tickets is available for Lambeth residents only and there is free entry for children under 16.

Lambeth Council has blamed budget cuts and safety concerns

for the fees - but the decision has faced criticism from local councillors.

Conservative Cllr Louise Nathanson said: "It is extremely disappointing to hear that Lambeth are going to start charging people to attend our community fireworks event."

Green Party Cllr Scott Ainslie voiced concerns that the event may become unaffordable for local families on low incomes.

A statement from Lambeth Council said: "By introducing ticketing for its fireworks night Lambeth Council is making a safer event. Last year the show attracted an estimated 100,000

people which the police and fire brigade have advised is too many to manage.

"With pressures on the council budget, Lambeth needs help covering the bill for the hugely popular event. It ended up costing the council about £95,000 last year."



## Brixton movie picked for film festival

**A FILM set in Brixton has been chosen to feature in the London Film Festival and the director is up for a top award, writes Hannah Skellern...**

Set and filmed in Brixton, Honeytrap tells the story of a 15-year-old girl who sets up the boy in love with her to be killed.

The urban drama, inspired by real-life 'honeytrap killer' Samantha Joseph, is one of 300 titles selected to be screened at Britain's biggest public film festival.

Local director Rebecca Johnson, who has been nominated for the Best British Newcomer Award, filmed the movie in locations including Coldharbour Lane and Brixton Hill.

The first screening will be at the Ritzy cinema on October 17 and award winners will be announced the following day.

Director and writer Rebecca Johnson said: "As a filmmaker, you spend a long time working on a film in relative isolation: years writing, in

the edit for months and so on, and you really don't know how the film will be received when the time finally arrives to get it out into the world.

"So now, for Honeytrap to be screening at the London Film Festival, and for me as a director to be nominated for the award, is a great feeling.

"The icing on the cake is that our first ever public screening will be at the Ritzy - my local and favourite cinema."



Layla (Jessica Sula) and Troy (Lucien Laviscount) in Honeytrap

PHOTO: Luke Valley

## Pay cut for next council chief

**THE NEXT Lambeth Council boss will be paid up to £40k less than current Chief Executive Derrick Anderson, CBE, the council has revealed.**

Britain's first and only black Council Chief Executive, who earlier this month announced he will resign after nearly nine years at the Town Hall's top job, earned more than £190,000 this year.

Before taking a pay cut, he was paid a basic salary of nearly £215k - around £70k more than Prime Minister David Cameron's yearly wage.

Derrick's replacement, to be appointed before he leaves at the end of this year, is expected to be offered between £150k and £180k.

Jonathan Bartley, leader of Lambeth Green Party said: "The cut in the Chief Executive's salary is welcome and something we have been campaigning for, for several years. No one should

earn more than ten times the lowest paid worker."

Cllr Tim Briggs, leader of the Lambeth Conservatives, said: "I congratulate Derrick Anderson for his contribution to Lambeth and sincerely wish him well for the future.

"However, Derrick's good work aside, it is astonishing that Labour allowed a Chief Executive to earn 3 times as much as a Headteacher in Lambeth. It shows how out-of-touch the Labour administration is.

"Labour's focus now should be starting the long process of a structural reform of Lambeth Council, which has been top-heavy with highly-paid managers and directors for far too long, stifling job-creation for lower-paid workers."



Current Lambeth Council CEO Derrick Anderson

## Parents fight for Lambeth language school

**PARENTS are campaigning for a Spanish-English free school to come to Lambeth, writes Hannah Skellern...**

With the deadline for application fast approaching, supporters of the bilingual primary school are gearing up to submit a proposal to the Department for Education on October 10.

The school would take 60 children in each year, from reception to year 1, and 40 per cent of the curriculum would be taught in Spanish.

If approved, the project would be the first state school run by sponsors the King's Group, who already own a number of private bilingual schools across the world.

Campaigners say this could be the last chance for the free school to be approved, after a bid fell through last year when their former sponsors, the BPSF Trust, could not complete the project.

Joëlle Hernandez, who has a four-year-old daughter Elisa and is pregnant with her second child, said: "It is unfortunate that this country

does not put enough emphasis on language skills.

"Knowing a foreign language can give you so many more opportunities and once you know one it is easier to pick up more."

Joëlle, who can speak several languages including Spanish, added: "Unlike my daughter, not everyone has the same opportunity to develop a language at home.

"I am asking parents, who have the same vision as me, to show their support and sign up now as time is short."

Parents who want to register their support can sign up before October 6 at: <http://kingsgroupacademies.org.uk/>



Campaigner Joëlle Hernandez with her daughter