

QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

Question Number	Question asked by Councillor:	Subject
CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES, REGENERATION AND PLANNING Councillor Alison Butler		
CQ008-17	Creatura, M	Housing and Veterans
CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, SAFETY AND JUSTICE Councillor Hamida Ali		
CQ002-17	Creatura, M	Pub Closures

CQ008-17 **from Councillor Mario Creatura**

Councillor Alison Butler

The London Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee recently commissioned a report from the Kent Law School that revealed 24 London Boroughs fail to make specific reference to housing priority given to veterans. Croydon is sadly one of them.

The Armed Forces Covenant was signed by Croydon Council in 2011 and law provides a particular duty of care on authorities to veterans and their families.

What is the Council's policy towards housing and veterans? If priority is not currently offered, will the Cabinet member pledge to rectify this and make specific reference to providing priority support to veterans struggling to find housing?

Reply

Thank you for your question and concern over this issue. I am pleased to advise you that this article is incorrect and Croydon does give priority on the waiting list to former members of the armed services.

Former members of the British Armed receive are accorded priority within the Council's housing allocation scheme. This is reflected in two ways;

1. Generally, an applicant has to have lived in Croydon for at least **three years** before s/he can go on the housing register. A member or former member of the British Armed Forces or Reserved Forces who is applying for housing is exempt from this qualification requirement.

The following related groups are also exempt;

- The bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family.
 - A serving or former member of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service
2. The housing allocation scheme has three bands. Band one contains applications with the highest priority and greatest urgency, and band three contains applications with the moderate housing needs and lower urgency.

The following are accorded Band 1 priority.

- Former members of the Armed Forces or Reserve Forces.
- Serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move due to a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of service.

- The bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.
- Serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.

CQ002-17 **from Councillor Mario Creatura**

Councillor Hamida Ali

What is the Council's policy on pub closures in Croydon?

Does the Council acknowledge the power that a good quality pub has as a community hub, serving the needs of many isolated and lonely residents, as well as encouraging moderation and the sensible consumption of alcohol?

Reply

Unfortunately, the decline in pubs is a relatively long-standing national trend not confined to Croydon and the debate on its causes is fairly wide ranging – including changes in consumer behaviour and commercial conditions – many of which are beyond the council's control.

However, as a planning authority, the council has taken positive steps. Through the proposed Local Plan, the Council has set out policy to provide greater protection for existing pubs through local planning policy. The proposed Local Plan has been amended specifically to define public houses as 'community facilities' that require protection. Indeed, Cllr O'Connell's own research for the London Assembly on 'How to Save London's Pubs as Community Resources' is listed as a key supporting document. In addition a new policy within the proposed Detailed Policies and Proposals, Policy DM22, sets out the council's proposed policy Protecting Public Houses which states that the Council will "resist the loss of these facilities unless it can be demonstrated that it is no longer required in its current use".

Furthermore, the Council's work to promote Croydon and attract further inward investment towards a more vibrant evening economy can support the prospects of our pubs in Croydon - in both town and district centres. As a licensing authority we will be reviewing the Council's licensing policy – which can also better reflect these ambitions.