

QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

Question Number	Question asked by Councillor:	Subject
CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY AND JOBS Councillor Mark Watson		
CQ086-17	Creatura, M	Uber Licence
CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES, REGENERATION AND PLANNING Councillor Alison Butler		
CQ091-17	Hale, L	Council housing

CQ086-17 **from Councillor Mario Creatura**

Councillor Mark Watson

In the light of Transport for London's decision to revoke Uber's licence, various media outlets have suggested that Lyft, Uber's biggest competitor in the United States, is planning to enter the London market.

Does the cabinet member believe in competition in the private hire sector, and would he welcome Lyft to the streets of Croydon?

Does he believe that Croydon's burgeoning tech city would benefit from a company of Lyft's stature, not just operating in Croydon, but making Croydon the base for its UK operations?

What actions has he taken to improve the prospect of Lyft opening its UK office in Croydon?

Reply

Does the cabinet member believe in competition in the private hire sector, and would he welcome Lyft to the streets of Croydon?

I believe that mini cabs should be regulated and that there should be fair competition in the mini cab market – this means that the rules and regulation should apply to all companies equally, that staff should be treated fairly, that they pay their fair share of tax and that customers safety protected. If Lyft (or Uber) are willing to play by our rules, then they would be welcomed.

Does he believe that Croydon's burgeoning tech city would benefit from a company of Lyft's stature, not just operating in Croydon, but making Croydon the base for its UK operations?

I believe we have a vibrant and thriving tech city in Croydon and that local mini cabs are already using apps similar to those used by Uber and Lyft. However Croydon is an ideal location for any international company to base its operations and we would especially welcome those that are will to sign up to our Good Employer Charter.

What actions has he taken to improve the prospect of Lyft opening its UK office in Croydon?

I have met with local mini cab companies and continue to support local, Croydon based businesses, where we can. We have a number of very good mini cabs companies already in Croydon and I don't believe we need to be encouraging US corporations to set up here to compete with them, especially as we have seen some use aggressive and unfair pricing tactics to deliberately drive out the competition.

CQ091-17 from Councillor Lynne Hale

Councillor Alison Butler

1. How many properties – flats, maisonettes, bungalows, houses - does the Council own – number per year from 2012 to date
2. How many of these properties have been checked to ensure that they are being correctly occupied - number per year from 2012 to date
3. How many have been found correctly occupied and how many incorrectly occupied
4. Of those incorrectly occupied – what were the reasons for the breach?
5. What actions have been taken?
6. How many cases have gone to Court and successfully prosecuted?
7. What was the length of time between an incorrect occupancy being identified and the situation remedied: 1-4 weeks; 5-9 weeks; 10 – 14 weeks; Longer.
8. What was the longest period of time to remedy an incorrect occupancy and the reason for this.

Reply

1. How many properties – flats, maisonettes, bungalows, houses - does the Council own – number per year from 2012 to date

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Houses/Bungalows	5466	5436	5399	5329	5323	5273
Mais & Flats	8604	8590	8570	8523	8470	8373
Relo	24	24	24	14	14	14
Total	14094	14050	13993	13866	13807	13660

2. How many of these properties have been checked to ensure that they are being correctly occupied - number per year from 2012 to date

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total
Tenancy	1350	1350	1350	1350	2403	6453
Housing Standards	1338	1419	1317			4074
Total						10527

Overall total of 10,527 checks.

From 2012 to 2015, the tenancy team conducted an average of 1350 occupancy checks per year. In 2015 the Council introduced an ICT process management system which records and holds the data for our occupancy checks. From 2015 to Jan 2017, the tenancy team conducted 2,403 checks. Total numbers completed 6, 453. From 2012 to 2015, the Housing Standards conducted further 4,074 checks. From 2015 this team has been focusing on temporary

accommodation visits rather than Council tenancies.

3. How many have been found correctly occupied and how many incorrectly occupied

For the tenancy team visits, 6,439 have been found to be correctly occupied and 14 were not. For the housing standards team 22 cases were recovered for non-occupation. Many more cases were investigated for suspicion of non-occupation.

4. Of those incorrectly occupied – what were the reasons for the breach?

For the tenancy team visits, 13 were sublet cases and 1 found to be abandoned. Various reasons for breach e.g. grandmother or other family members living in the property and the tenant living elsewhere, tenant living in a nursing home and other family members living in property.

5. What actions have been taken?

In all Subletting cases a referral to the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT) was completed and Notice of seeking possession or Notice to Quits served, Home visits and checks to the property carried out by Tenancy and CAFT team.

In:

2013/14 – 3 properties received outright possession order from court and evictions executed following full investigations

2015/16

Following an amnesty in approx. 2014/15

- 5 properties were recovered - Sub tenants returning the keys to property and vacated following notices served.
- 1 abandoned property – Notice served and outright court order obtained – full possession gained

2016/17 (up to Jan 2017)

- 1 property – received outright court order waiting on eviction warrant
- 1 property – assignment of tenancy was granted instructions from solicitor
- 3 properties were recovered – sub tenants returned keys to property and vacated

6. How many cases have gone to Court and successfully prosecuted?

4 properties and further 2 properties for criminal prosecution by CAFT

7. What was the length of time between an incorrect occupancy being identified and the situation remedied: 1-4 weeks; 5-9 weeks; 10 – 14 weeks; Longer.

Cases vary - some can be very quick, 2-3 months, but in most cases they take approx. 6-9 months due to CAFT investigation and evidence building - including multiple home visits, interviews, Experian checks, service of notices and surveillance. Once the investigation stage is complete there is a legal stage/process to go through. With officers managing other caseloads and given the processes touched upon, it is therefore impossible to give a clear timescale.

8. What was the longest period of time to remedy an incorrect occupancy and the reason for this.

Approx. 9 months to 1 year – Full investigation to be carried out by Tenancy and CAFT team, to retrieve evidence of subletting – retrieve bank statements, employers details, home visits, serving of notices, locating tenant to ensure of intentions to return to property. However some

complex subletting cases can take over a year.