

9 August 2011

Dear Partner

You will be aware of the criminal acts of destruction and looting which have taken place this evening within the Borough.

I wanted to write to you straight away to reassure you that the Council will be doing all it can alongside the police to ensure the perpetrators will be held to account. What happened is clearly part of a wider tale of disruption and criminality but this does not negate the requirement for the Council to act where it can. Our drive to regenerate and improve our borough cannot be driven off course by such actions.

Our clean-up teams are scheduled to be on-site from 5am seeking to clear away the debris from last evening. As I write, shops are having their frontages boarded up and the last fire is hopefully being extinguished. There are no reports on any injuries apart from one police officer who was taken to hospital at the commencement of the trouble.

We shall be seeking to engage with property owners, shopkeepers and others to see what we can do together to retain the vibrancy of our local town centres and how we can better ensure the protection of their property. We shall also be utilising Greenwich Time to publish the images of those caught on our CCTV cameras as soon as the police release them to us.

We shall seek the eviction of anyone living in council property if they are found to have been engaged in criminal acts this evening and I shall also be asking our lawyers to consider whether there are child protection issues should we find any children under the age of 16 were unaccompanied in the town last night.

I have been in Woolwich all evening and am still working in the Town Hall as the police restore order to the streets of Woolwich. Unfortunately there are reports beyond Woolwich of destruction and looting elsewhere in the borough and a full picture will only emerge in daylight.

I shall be seeking to convene a meeting with local faith leaders later this week, as well as with all the Council's Service Directors later this morning ahead of a meeting with the police to secure a full debrief. As we are able to do so, updates will appear on the Council's website as information becomes clearer.

With kind regards

Chris Roberts
Leader of the Council