

Government bail-out may be too late for some

Small businesses could still go under unless the £20bn survival plan announced by the Government is rolled out immediately, according to a local chamber of commerce.

Gordon Brown revealed his plan to hand out loans to small and medium-sized firms to help them survive the downturn.

But Ray Hall, chairman of the Crystal Palace Chamber

of Commerce, said businesses were scared the money would not come in time.

He said: "What I am hearing from small businesses is: 'None of this will help me. My business can't hold on that long. I am facing closure.'"

"I think what is proposed is good if it can be delivered direct to businesses in need."

Part of the plan unveiled

by the Government is a £10bn Working Capital Scheme, designed to help banks lend much-needed capital to small and medium-sized businesses.

The Government will provide guarantees on 50 per cent of short term loans to businesses with a turnover of up to £500m.

But there are worries the banks will not lend sufficient funds to help business

access the much-needed cash, with the economic state continuing to make banks reluctant to lend.

Business secretary Lord Mandelson said "smaller, credit-worthy firms will be able to borrow a maximum of £1m, with per cent guaranteed by the Government."

Get more business stories at www.breaththeguardian.co.uk/news/business

Calling all mini mayors

Young people are needed to decide how £25,000 of funding on youth projects in Lambeth should be spent.

Lambeth Council is looking for its next youth mayor, as well as a representative for the UK youth parliament, who will decide how to use the funding.

The elected positions are open to anyone living, working or studying in the borough aged between 14 and 21.

Anyone eligible for the post-

tion can also vote in the elections that will take place throughout February.

For more information, email the youth council development officer Alex Goodie at agoodie@lambeth.gov.uk or phone 020 7328 2152.

Alternatively, visit youthmayor.lambeth.com

For stories about youth projects in the borough visit www.breaththeguardian.co.uk

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Repairs: Some residents of Streatham Mansions, Streatham Hill, are among those who will receive bills

3,500 to get delayed bills

Lambeth Council has come under fire for billing leaseholders for works done on council estates up to eight years ago when its own errors meant bills were not sent out at the time.

By the end of the month some 3,500 leaseholders of properties on Lambeth Council estates should receive bills totalling £5m for work carried out on properties between 2000 and 2005.

Some bills for works like window and roof replacements are expected to be as much as £30,000 - and represent a serious problem for leaseholders cash-strapped by the credit crunch.

The council has revealed the delay in issuing bills has partly been caused by "inconsistent practices" and difficulties in transferring information across different areas of the council.

Many residents who received estimates of charges at the time of the works or after, but no final bill, will be billed. However some will escape because the council has insufficient information. Some £4m of works are expected to be written off by the council as a result.

Lib Dem housing spokesman, Councillor Jeremy Clyne, said the

council should not be sending out bills in an "unfair leasehold lottery" at a time of great financial difficulty for many residents.

A council report admits leaseholders will have to "cope with a large debt in a difficult financial climate".

Conservative housing spokesman Irene Kibb added leaseholders were going to face huge bills because of the council's "incompetence".

Many leaseholders are expected to challenge the bills by querying costs or the quality of work that was done - but Cllr Clyne said this would be harder to do because of the time elapse.

A Lambeth Council spokesperson said that before it centralised the bill generating service, it needed to ensure all records were accurate which, due to the number of leaseholders, added to the delay.

She added: "We are offering a range of repayment methods including interest free periods and access to loans in some cases."

Are you a leaseholder affected by the charges? Share your views at www.breaththeguardian.co.uk

NEWSbrief

LEST WE FORGET: Community leaders paid their respects to the millions of Jews killed during the Second World War at a Holocaust memorial service held at Lambeth town hall on Sunday.

Extracts from eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust were read by young people from the South London Liberal Synagogue.

The mayor, police, councillors, a student rabbi and the council's hate crime coordinator all spoke.

DO THE HOP: Free hip hop dance classes for teenagers are being held in Streatham and West Norwood.

The sessions are open to boys and girls aged 10 to 16 and those taking part will be offered the chance to take part in performances and competitions.

The hour long classes take place on Mondays at 4.30pm at Streatham Leisure Centre and 5pm at Nettlefield Hall on Tuesdays.

MODEL CALL: A Cancer charity is looking for inspirational models to take part in a catwalk show.

Breast Cancer Care is searching for models who have had or are living with breast cancer to be transformed for the day in October to celebrate their lives after diagnosis.

The closing date for applications is February 9. For further information call 020 7960 3551 or visit breastcancercare.org.uk/theshow

AFTERCARE: Representatives from Lambeth Primary Care Trust (PCT) were set to meet with other PCTs on Tuesday to discuss Healthcare for London's plans to improve care for acute stroke and major trauma services in the capital.

Major trauma centres would be built around the capital to offer worldclass specialist care, under the plans mooted by the organisation.

'Sympathetic addition' likely to go ahead

An application to extend an eighteenth century home is set for approval, despite concerns about how a grade II listed building next to it will be affected.

Owners of the home in Streatham Common South, which is in the Streatham Common Conservation Area, are hoping to knock down an

existing building and build a single storey ground floor rear extension.

Concerns have been raised about how the proposed extension would impact on the conservation area, the adjoining Grade II listed building, and neighbours and their properties.

But Lambeth Council's planning

officers believe the proposed rear extension is "a sympathetic addition" to the house which would preserve the character of the conservation area.

A planning committee will decide whether the extension should be approved at a meeting next Tuesday.

Wanted: Youth mayor for Lambeth

6:40pm Thursday 29th January 2009

Young people are needed to decide how £25,000 of funding on youth projects in Lambeth should be spent.

Lambeth Council is looking for its next youth mayor, as well as a representative for the UK youth parliament, who will decide together how to best use the funding.

The elected positions are open to anyone living, working or studying in the borough aged between 11 and 21-year-old.

Anyone eligible for the positions can also vote in the elections that will take place throughout February.

For more information email youth council development officer Alex Goode at agoode@lambeth.gov.uk or phone 020 7926 2192.

Alternatively visit youthmayor4lambeth.com

• **Got a young family? See our Families section for top hints and help**

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