

# It's open season – if you're a rat

THIS week we report on how a council's housing department has slashed its pest control budget by more than £300,000. The move is one of a number of drastic budget cuts in Lambeth's bungling housing department. The thinking behind the cuts is no doubt well meant – the department is in dire straits and needs its finances put in order. But once again it is council tenants who are going to suffer as a result. It is a huge amount to shave from the department's pest control budget. It might make the balance

sheet look better – but what about the human cost? There are serious health dangers associated with disease-ridden creatures like rats, a pair of which can breed a colony of 2,000 in just one year. No one is suggesting Lambeth will be over-run by a biblical plague but it is obvious to everyone that things are going to get worse. Obvious to everyone, that is, except the decision-making bean counters at Lambeth Town Hall, many of whom have never set foot in the borough's sprawling inner-city estates.