

Cabinet

Wednesday 27 January 2016

4.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room GO2A, 160 Tooley Street, London
SE1 2QH

Supplemental Agenda No. 1

List of Contents

Item No.	Title	Page No.
8.	Deputation Requests To consider any deputation requests.	1 - 9

Contact

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Date: 25 January 2016

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 27 January 2016	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Deputation Requests	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Proper Constitutional Officer	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That cabinet considers whether or not to hear a deputation from the groups listed in paragraphs 4 – 6 of this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. When considering whether to hear the deputation request, cabinet can decide
 - To receive the deputation at this meeting or a future meeting; or
 - That the deputation not be received; or
 - To refer the deputation to the most appropriate committee/sub-committee.
3. A deputation shall consist of no more than six people, including its spokesperson. Only one member of the deputation shall be allowed to address the meeting for no longer than five minutes. After this time cabinet members may ask questions of the deputation for up to five minutes. At the conclusion of the questions, the deputation will be shown to the public area where they may listen to the remainder of the open section of the meeting.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Deputation requests

Mint Street Adventure Playground

4. Mint Street Adventure Playground (MSAP) deputation states:

“We are making a representation on behalf of volunteers and parents at Mint Street Adventure Playground (MSAP), Friends of Mini Mints, Sporty Mints, SE1 Parents, BoroughBabies.

We appreciate that Southwark Council is currently in a very difficult position and needs to make major cuts too many services and that we are lucky that MSAP will remain open. However, we are also very concerned that cuts will have a extremely detrimental impact on our community due to the significant reduction in high quality supervised play sessions and don't understand why the cuts are not being considered on a site specific basis. The community have volunteered hundreds of hours over the past 10 years and have contributed significantly to the design of a new, larger building that is due to be constructed next year. This has been designed specifically to provide further commercial opportunities to help fund an increase in free supervised play service provision at MSAP, not a reduction. We believe MSAP should be used as an example of thriving

community facility that can even contribute financially to other facilities that don't have the capacity to raise funds. The success of MSAP means that we live in an area with a strong community and limited youth crime. We are very concerned that a reduction in supervised play operating hours will effect the most vulnerable in our community and could result in children hanging around on the streets unsupervised and lead to the creation of youth crime and violence. Maintaining community cohesion and building bridges with the wider social context is what MSAP does best and this can only be done with a strong team of play workers supported by an even wider group of parent and community volunteers. MSAP will go through a significant period of transition over the next 2 years during the build process and it is important that we are able to retain our existing and very experienced staff. These staff are seen as much more than just workers but rather are important members of our community. Whilst we know other experienced staff could be brought in, the existing staff know the children of our community, provide advice on personal and interpersonal difficulties which helps those children to regulate their emotions. They help to foster good relations between children who don't necessarily get along well and are also able to manage questionable behaviour of adults to protect the play environment of our children. It is important to recognise that continued provision of 35 hours of supervised play generates huge returns for the kids and wider community thereby reducing costly interventions by police and social services later on."

On behalf of Service Users of Adults with Learning Disabilities

5. The deputation states:

"On behalf of my friends and fellow customers of Family Mosaic I would like to make a deputation regarding changes in floating support services provided in Southwark for adults with learning disability. We are disappointed in the cuts made to our service and feel that the council has not adequately involved us in making decisions about our support.

This group represents 61 adults with learning disability living in Southwark. We are upset at the recent termination of our floating support service provided by Family Mosaic. We have not been giving long enough to deal with this and we are angry at the way it has been done. We were not involved or asked if we are happy. Our opinion matters and we are disappointed by the way Southwark has dealt with this."

Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers

6. The deputation states:

"Southwark Council has indicated that it wishes to be perceived as a 'refugee friendly' borough in spite of cuts, and yet has made funding cuts to a number of local Refugee Organisations with whom we work or have worked very closely. The council intends to make a cut of £7,998 in addition to the projected cut of ca. £29,000 funding to SDCAS from Children's Services from 1 April 2016. [...]

If this decision of cuts does go ahead, it would make it very difficult for us to continue to support a campaign for Southwark to be considered as a 'refugee friendly' borough."

7. Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers have submitted a number of documents in respect of their deputation, including a longer statement and a

letter of support from Southwark Law Centre set out at Appendix A, and two recent case studies circulated separately to cabinet members.

Community impact statement

8. The Southwark Constitution allows for deputations to be made by groups of people resident or working in the borough.

REASONS FOR URGENCY

9. The deputation requests were received in line with the constitutional deadline for the receipt of deputation requests and are therefore eligible for consideration by cabinet as to whether or not to hear the deputations at this meeting.

REASONS FOR LATENESS

10. The deadline for the receipt of deputation requests was midnight 21 January 2016, after the main cabinet agenda despatch on 19 January 2016. It has therefore not been possible to send out this report five clear days in advance of the meeting.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet procedure rule 2.11 on deputations (page 163 of the constitution):	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Virginia Wynn-Jones 020 7525 7055 or Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395
Link: Cabinet procedure rule 2.11 (deputations)		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	Submission from Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager	
Report Author	Paula Thornton / Virginia Wynn-Jones, Constitutional Officers	
Version	Final	
Dated	25 January 2016	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	25 January 2016	



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 Website: www.sdcas.org.uk

22nd January 2016

Deputation Report:

Thank you for agreeing to accept a deputation from SDCAS. The context for this is as follows:

- Southwark Council has indicated that it wishes to be perceived as a 'refugee friendly' borough in spite of cuts, and yet has made funding cuts to a number of local Refugee Organisations with whom we work or have worked very closely. The council intends to make a cut of £7,998 in addition to the projected cut of ca. £29,000 funding to SDCAS from Children's Services from 1st April 2016.
- We feel this cut from Children's Services is part of a very unjust process, for instance, the report to Councillor from [officer name deleted] Children's Services implies that as an Organisation, we had been made aware that the funding from Children's Services for the last three years was 'transitional' and due to expire in March 2016. We have however, this has never been communicated to us. We have asked for evidence that this information was communicated to us and Neil Gordon-Orr has not yet replied to our communication with him on this point.
- The report from [officer name deleted] to Councillors implies that the funding was principally to cover crèche costs. Our Service Level Agreement however refers to a considerably wide range of services including safeguarding issues, emotional and practical support, apart from advice relating to immigration issues and providing crèches. Crèches are not just for children they offer adults time to talk about their situation in confidence, to an advisor without the children listening in on what could be very traumatic situations. Crèches also offer children developmental and language support.
- Moreover, the work done by the crèche cannot simply be excised without affecting other areas of our work. Taking our cue from the Service Level Agreement we have always used the Children's Services funding for key posts so if funding is withdrawn it will mean not only the loss of a Play Leader job but also the closure of that whole daycentre.
- The report from Children's Services also implies that our Community Capacity grant will still continue. It has however been reduced from £53,319 to £45,321. In addition to this both cuts could also adversely affect the grant we receive from the Big Lottery as we always have to notify them of any changes to our income from the council that matches their funding for our services.
- The impact of the funding cut means family Centre Worker (10 hours a week) and Play Leader (21 hours a week) being made redundant. These are key posts. At the Day Centre families receive so much more than advice and support. They have opportunities to gain skills and confidence to become more integrated into the wider community. Without such a channel, isolated and vulnerable families including already traumatised children would cost the borough considerably more than the amount of grant we have received.



- At our centre families receive more than just advice on their case. They have the chance to gain the kind of confidence and skills which are hard to come by elsewhere. To limit these pathways to integration seems short-sighted, most especially at a time when there is so much concern around tackling radicalisation.
- We currently work with ca. 77 families, all of whom live in a 'limbo-like' situation while they wait often for years for a decision. A wait of 10 years is not uncommon, and it is often even longer. The impact on their mental health can be devastating. We have been providing specialist support that kind of situation demands. Another cost to the borough more than the cut would save. The cuts means that families fail to access mainstream services before reaching crisis point. The cost is likely to be greater in the long term.
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- We are also very concerned at the potential impact of the new Immigration Bill on families. In this context too, the Immigration Bill 2015 focuses on changing entitlement to support for refused asylum seekers, including families with children. If the Bill becomes law, refused families who previously remained on Section 95 support will no longer be eligible for this. Asylum seeking children will also no longer be protected under the Children Act 1989. Instead, two new forms of support will be introduced (under Section 95a and Schedule 3 of the 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act), forming a confusing and inconsistent patchwork of support which threatens to leave children and their parents destitute.
- The implication of this is that SDCAS will pick up this work and at a time when additional families are likely to be coming into the borough, this does seem a particularly inept decision.
- Given the level of trauma virtually all our Clients experience before they come to us, they are inevitably wary of people perceived to be in positions of authority. SDCAS acts as a 'bridge' to enable families to access mainstream services. And as we have been working in this field for nearly 20 years, we have gained specialist knowledge and trust.
- If this decision of cuts does go ahead, it would make it very difficult for us to continue to support a campaign for Southwark to be considered as a 'refugee friendly' borough.
- Attached are two very recent case studies of families we are currently working with.

Gillian Reeve.

Chair of Trustees

SOUTHWARK LAW CENTRE

Councillor Vikki Mills

15th December 2015

Dear Vikki

I am writing in support of Southwark Day Centres for Asylum Seekers as I understand there is a proposal to reduce the funding they receive from Children's Services.

Southwark Law Centre has worked closely with SDCAS for many years and are currently providing monthly outreach advice sessions for street homeless clients in their premises.

SDCAS helps some of the most vulnerable people in our Borough. They provide a service that is seen as safe and welcoming for families who may have been completely off the radar of the statutory services. SDCAS enable us to reach people who need legal advice but do not know how to access it, or have the confidence to do so. Attending SDCAS can also be the first step for families to register with Children's Services and to start the process of integration. This is a vital part of the safeguarding process.

We understand that the impact of the loss of funding will mean that SDCAS will no longer be able to employ a Children and Families Worker for 10 hours per week. The social/economic value of the work of SDCAS is huge and we would say on a cost benefit analysis it is not good monetary sense for the council to reduce their funding. For example SDCAS work closely with Southwark Law Centre and Citizens Advice Southwark to regularise the status of families and apply for the restrictions around 'No Recourse to Public Funds' to be lifted. This helps the council to save money as they will no longer need to support these families.

The Children and Families worker currently liaises around Section 17 support and with the NRPF teams. They coordinate case conferences for families on the at risk register, provide destitution services, food parcels, and hardship money. They help with school issues, and identify parents to attend parenting workshops

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Community
Legal Service



The loss of funding will also mean the loss of the crèche service. This will make it much more difficult for parents to attend advice sessions which can lead to a better situation for them and a saving to the Council.

I would urge you to reconsider the cut to the SDCAS funding. I realise that the Council is in a very difficult position and that the likely budget cuts will be at least 25% but this service is vital for some of the most disadvantaged members of our community and the small saving to the Council will not equate to the problems that this reduction will cause.

Yours sincerely

Sally Causer
Director

CABINET AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015/16**

NOTE: Original held by Constitutional Team; all amendments/queries to
Paula Thornton/Virginia Wynn-Jones Tel: 020 7525 4395/7055

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