



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SAFETY SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SAFETY SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE meeting held on Wednesday, 5th February 2003 at 7.00pm at Southwark Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

MEMBERS Councillor Barrie Hargrove (Chair)
PRESENT: Councillors Gavin O'Brien (Vice-Chair), John Friary, Linda Manchester and Anne Yates (reserve).

ALSO Councillor Richard Porter (for agenda item 23 only)
PRESENT: David Stock - Southwark Disabilities Association
Natalia Sali - Southwark Children and Families Alliance
Kay Betinelli - Southwark Pensioners' Forum

OFFICERS: Bob Coomber - Chief Executive (for agenda item 23 only)
Maggie Sullivan - Corporate Strategy
Nathalie Hadjifotiou - Head of Social Inclusion
Ian Hughes - Corporate Strategy
Eleanor Rees - Constitutional Support Unit

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Margaret Ambrose, Alfred Banya and Sarah Welfare (reserve).

NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no interests and dispensations declared at the meeting.

RECORDING OF MEMBERS' VOTES

Council Procedure Rule 1.17(5) allows a Member to record her/his vote in respect of any motions and amendments. Such requests are detailed in the following Minutes. Should a Member's vote be recorded in respect to an amendment, a copy of the amendment may be found in the Minute File and is available for public inspection.

The Sub-Committee considered the items set out on the agenda, a copy of which has been incorporated in the Minute File. Each of the following paragraphs relates to the item bearing the same number on the agenda.

REORDERING OF THE AGENDA

The Chair agreed to take agenda item 23 – Meeting with the Executive Member at the beginning of the meeting, followed by item 24 – Disabilities, then item 22 – Review of the Southwark Plan (UDP) and then the minutes of the previous meeting.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Community Support and Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 7th January 2003 were agreed as a correct record.

22 REVIEW OF THE SOUTHWARK PLAN (UDP) (see agenda pages 381 – 384)

Members considered the briefing note provided on the agenda and agreed the following:

RESOLVED:

- 1 That the Sub-Committee receive a further briefing regarding the aspects of the Southwark Plan that relate to community support and safety issues.
- 2 That the officer responsible for the Southwark Plan, and the Chair of the Planning Committee both be invited to attend the next Sub-Committee meeting to discuss the issues relating to community support and safety in the Plan, and answer questions from Members.

23 MEETING WITH THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER (see agenda pages 385 – 410)

Question 1: Recommendations from the scrutiny reviews by the Sub-Committee to date (see agenda page 386)

- 23.1 The Chair asked the Executive Member for his response on the recommendations made by the Sub-Committee to date.

Campaign Against Hate Crimes – SRB6 Board

- 23.2 It was noted that the Councillors on the SRB6 Board had not had the opportunity to discuss the issues raised by the Scrutiny review to date. However, a meeting with the Chair of the SRB6 Board had been arranged for mid February, as a result of which Councillors would co-ordinate their response to the scrutiny recommendations and report back to the Sub-Committee. It was further noted that Councillors' attendance at SRB6 Board meetings had increased since the Scrutiny review.

Enviro-Crime: Graffiti

- 23.3 It was noted that new legislation had been brought in to ban the sale of graffiti paraphernalia to minors, and this would be enforceable from the 1st April 2003. A London-wide conference on enviro-crime was to be held on 13th February 2003, to be hosted by Southwark and would include Members of GLA organisations to share in good practice. The Executive Member offered to provide further information on the Conference to the Sub-Committee in writing.

23.4 It was further noted that initially, there had been some concern regarding the cost of setting up a database to track and log graffiti tags, however the issue had been resolved, the database was set up and provided a geographically coded tags register. The Capital Standards Working Party was developing a code of conduct for retail outlets selling graffiti related paraphernalia, following on a local scheme would be developed. Officers were in the process of researching innovative ways of preventing graffiti. With regards to publicity, the Executive Member noted that positive initiatives were frequently published in Southwark Life, but newspapers were not as forthcoming in publishing good news stories, however, a publicity strategy would be further considered.

Neighbourhood Renewal

23.5 The Executive Member noted that the first strand of the process was to bring in interested groups, meetings at the neighbourhood offices had been programmed, and money had been allocated to identify groups to receive NR funding. The Chair commented that from £7.9m, only £2.7m was being allocated to priority areas. The Chair requested the Executive Member provide the Sub-Committee with a breakdown of how the money would be allocated.

Community Wardens

23.6 The Executive Member had written to John Denham MP, Minister of State for the Home Office, requesting environmental enforcement powers be given to the Wardens at Bermondsey and the proposed Scheme at Camberwell, but this had been refused. If the Council were to wholly fund the Community Wardens they would be able to delegate the powers to Wardens, however the schemes were part-funded by central government and permission to delegate powers to Wardens had not been forthcoming. The Executive would continue to lobby for such powers to be delegated to Wardens.

23.7 The Southwark model for Community Wardens was being progressed, and in time the Warden service would be less tied to specific areas. With regards to recruitment of Wardens from BME groups at the Bermondsey Scheme, it was noted that any vacancies for Wardens would be advertised in the Voice, and further work was to be done to encourage applications for Warden posts in Bermondsey from prospective candidates from BME groups.

Fireworks

23.8 The Executive Member noted that he was eager to avoid in future the problems experienced resulting in public disorder at and around the fireworks display held at Peckham Rye. He did not wish to be negative about future fireworks displays, as, from a safety perspective, it was believed that it would be better to have well organised public events and to deter people purchasing fireworks and holding private fireworks displays. The recommendation that the Sub-Committee consider the arrangements for the next fireworks display 2-3 months before hand, to ensure full communications were to be made between the police and events organisers, and CCTV monitoring was to be in operation in the area, was welcomed.

23.9 It was further noted with regards to the suitability of Peckham Rye, that if it were not a suitable area, and had inherent problems, then the venue would not be used in future. The Scrutiny recommendation not to use Peckham Rye as a future venue was to be considered at the next Executive meeting.

Community Strategy

- 23.10 Consultation on the draft Community Strategy was extensive for the purposes it was designed for. However, there was a need to provide a more sophisticated approach to consultation, the strategy would be reviewed on an annual basis and the Community Councils would fit in with the consultation process. A letter from the joint Chairs of the SSP to the Sub-Committee would be received in response to the request for further details on the consultation mechanisms.
- 23.11 The Executive Member noted that the Sub-Committee's recommendations on expanding references to 'multi-agency- and 'root causes' of crime detailed in the draft, would be addressed and incorporated into the Community Strategy.

Question 2: MORI 2002 (see agenda page 387)

Residents' concerns regarding crime and the fear of crime

- 23.12 The Executive Member reported that the Police had targeted substantial resources on street crime, eg theft of mobile phones. Operation Safer Streets had been completed, Operation Safer Homes was on-going and Operation Safer Cars was still to be set up. There was a need to bring the press on board with good news stories to promote the initiatives.
- 23.13A follow-up question was asked regarding police response times, particularly with regards to the Surrey Docks and Rotherhithe area, and that conflicting information had been received from senior police compared to those police officers on the streets in the area. The Executive Member noted that data on response times was available from the police and that there were a large amount of trainee police officers, who required supervision and experience, and that in the short-term, response times may get worse before they get better, and this was due to the large amount of trainees, but overall improvements to the response rates were being addressed.

Extension of use of CCTV

- 23.14 The Executive Member noted that the CCTV control centre would become operational in April 2003, and it would be a couple of months after when real results could be analysed. An audit of CCTV provision in the Borough was to be carried out, to test the effectiveness of the equipment and issues regarding raising residents' confidence in the service.

Antisocial Behaviour

- 23.15 The Executive Member noted that there had been no antisocial behaviour orders issued to date. Previously, it had been difficult to obtain such orders as they were civil cases taken in criminal courts. However, they would now be taken at a civil court, and 8 antisocial behaviour orders were pending. Camden was the only London Borough to successfully issue an antisocial behaviour order to date. The Best Value Review of Community Safety would be considering antisocial behaviour in depth.

Question 3: Performance Monitoring (see agenda pages 387 – 388)

Dealing with under performance

- 23.16 The Executive Member noted performance indicators were very important in monitoring performance, and any significant concerns regarding under

performance would be investigated by the SSP sub-groups, to ensure lower performance was addressed.

Target setting

- 23.17 The Executive Member stated that he believed the targets were achievable and tough, the process for setting targets seemed to be realistic, and that police and public interaction was made in setting targets.

Public Service Agreement (PSA)

- 23.18 The Executive Member noted the main strategy in place to meet the targets regarding crime and offending or disturbing behaviour on the part of young people was the Youth Crime Strategy, which was only 2% off target at present. With regards to PSA 2 – young victims of crime, it was further noted that the baseline target was difficult to judge and there was still work to be done, however the strategy was in place to measure overall performance.

Question 4: Corporate Priorities (see agenda page 388)

Equalities

- 23.19 It was noted that the Council must lead by example with regards to the Race Relations Act, and that equalities was a corporate performance, and the Equalities Standard had in place Race Impact Assessments to be conducted in targeted areas to make a greater impact on race equalities.

Question 5: Community Councils (see agenda page 388)

How will the community support and safety agenda be progressed through the Community Councils?

- 23.20 The Executive Member commented that the decision on how the community safety budget would be allocated to the Community Council areas was under discussion, some areas would cover priority neighbourhoods, and consideration would be made on the fairest way to allocate funds. The decision would not be made until the Community Councils were operational, it was hoped that this would be in April, and each of the Community Councils were to be made aware of the strategies.
- 23.21 Southwark police were realigning police boundaries according to the Community Councils' areas, and a sector sergeant would be present at each Community Council meeting and there would be 4 police sectors, each covering 2 Community Councils.
- 23.22 A key part of judging the success of Community Councils would be attendance at meetings, and it was anticipated that the meetings would be well attended in the beginning and a 6 month review would be conducted to see if numbers had been maintained, but that attendance would not be the entire measure of success.

Question 6: Additional Issues (see agenda pages 388 – 389)

Executive Member's involvement in the community support and safety portfolio

- 23.23 The Executive Member noted he had representation on and regularly attended meetings with key stakeholders, Compact Groups, SAVO, voluntary sector organisations, Community Legal Services Group, SRB6 Hate Crimes and Safer

Southwark Partnership (SSP). There were many forums and panels that he attended and he also visited voluntary sector organisations, police stations and council offices, and was closely involved with his portfolio.

23.24 The Chair, on behalf of the Sub-Committee, thanked the Executive Member and the Chief Executive, for attending the meeting. The Executive Member and the Chief Executive withdrew from the meeting.

24 DISABILITIES – REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS ON MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS (see agenda pages 411 – 487)

24.1 The Head of Social Inclusion presented the briefing paper. It was noted that the Director of Social Services had led the Best Value Review of Disabilities, and there were two main areas identified from the review. Firstly, with regards to the specific targeted services to people with disabilities, and secondly, it was identified that the Council had done little with regards to broader citizenship for people with disabilities. There had been some time before the final review was to be presented to the Executive, as the Council had since reorganised the way in which it dealt with disabilities. There had been attempts to recognise a corporate emphasis on services to people with disabilities.

24.2 As an outcome of the Best Value Review, the Council is looking to put in place an external challenge panel (agenda page 433 refers to the panel). The arrangements of which were still to be finalised.

24.3 Previously at Southwark, there had been a low key, ad hoc and minimalist approach to providing better services to the disabled, for example large print documents, ramps for wheelchair access. However, the desire was to take a similar approach to disabilities as had been done for the Race Equalities Scheme. A general framework had been drawn up and this was to be put out for consultation, then an action plan would be built upon and impact assessments carried out. An audit on disabilities access at all Council properties would be carried out, and there was a need to prioritise those properties most used.

24.4 With regards to communication, it was noted that there was a need to develop an automatic way of letting people know that they could obtain large print documents or audio recordings. The proposed mystery shopping exercise would provide a quick assessment of one of the front office location's provision of services to people with disabilities, and would provide lessons and views on what would need to be done at other front desk offices. There was a need for the mystery shopping exercise to be built into longer-term planning in a phased way and to increase and improve information and communication on how people with disabilities could access services.

24.5 It was noted that requirements of the Disabilities Discrimination Act (DDA) were being built into new and renovation works being carried out at Council offices. Members stressed that DDA compliance needed to be driven from senior management level, and there was a need to consider beyond building works and large print etc, to communications, eg signage and staff training. Officers noted that the beginnings of a more proactive approach were being taken and that was why an external challenge panel was to be set up to provide a constant external lever on the Council.

- 24.6 Members noted that road crossings needed to be more disability friendly and DDA compliant.
- 24.7 The Head of Social Inclusion commented that the corporate approach to DDA and employment issues would be included in the draft action plan, and when available this would be circulated to the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for consultation. The Corporate Action Plan could include an ongoing role for the Scrutiny Sub-Committee in terms of monitoring the role of mystery shopping exercises.
- 24.8 A representative from Southwark Family and Children's Alliance asked if children with disabilities would be represented on the External Challenge Panel. Officers noted that the Panel membership had not been fixed yet, and to contact Jules O'Mahoney, Head of Social Policy, if there was a need to include further groups.
- 24.9 A representative from Southwark Disabilities Forum commented that there should be a dedicated officer allocated to working on disabilities issues. Previously, all Council departments had looked to Social Services to lead on disabilities issues, whereas all departments needed to take on board these issues.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That the Sub-Committee receive a report back from the first mystery shopping exercise into access to services by people with disabilities.
- 2 That the Sub-Committee have input into the Disabilities Action Plan before it was circulated for formal consultation, the draft would be made available by the end of March / beginning of April 2003.
- 3 That Officers investigate whether the Executive had taken a decision on the Environment and Transport Scrutiny recommendations regarding road crossings to be DDA compliant.
- 4 That it be confirmed whether neighbourhood housing offices were to be included within the disability access audit.

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

CHAIR:

DATE: