

Item No. 75.2	Classification: Open	Date: 26.3.03	Meeting Name Council Assembly
Report title:		Deputation Request: Broken Rainbow Forum	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		ALL	
From:		Chief Executive (Borough Solicitor & Secretary)	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council Assembly decide whether or not to receive the deputation and should it agree to do so, at which meeting it should be received.

BACKGROUND

2. A request for a deputation has been received from the Broken Rainbow Forum.
3. The deputation letter states:-

“Broken Rainbow Forum is the pan-London Domestic Violence Forum working to meet the needs of lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people who experience domestic violence. We welcome the Government’s commitment to a ‘cultural change’ to halt domestic violence in the UK.

The announcement by the Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon. David Blunkett MP, that an extra £14 million will be spent over the next three years to combat domestic violence and that new tougher laws will be introduced to deal with people who perpetrate domestic violence is very welcome. However, Broken Rainbow Forum is concerned that in its announcement the Government confined its references to the experience of domestic violence perpetrated by men against women. Once again, the opportunity to highlight the domestic violence experienced of the LGBT community and include homophobic and same sex domestic violence is missed and the community remains excluded.

We recognise and welcome the support proposed by Council in recognising the work of the Broken Rainbow Forum. We further welcome the proposal by Southwark Council that, in its responses to the government’s consultation exercise, the Council will mention the homophobic and same sex domestic violence requires equal attention.”

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.7 (3) the request that a deputation be received stands referred to Council Assembly to decide:
 - whether the deputation should be received at this meeting or a future meeting; or
 - that the deputation be not received; or

- that the deputation be referred to the most appropriate committee/sub-committee

Council Procedure Rule 3.7 (9) sets out the procedures to be observed at Council Assembly meetings:-

Standing Order 24 (5) sets out the procedures to be observed at Council Assembly meetings:-

Composition of Deputations

The Deputation shall consist of no more than six persons, including its spokesperson.

Speech on Behalf of the Deputation

Only one member of the deputation shall be allowed to address the Council Assembly, her or his speech being limited to 5 minutes.

Questions

Members of the Council Assembly may ask questions of the deputation which shall be answered by their spokesperson or any member of the deputation nominated by her or him, for up to 5 minutes at the conclusion of the spokesperson's address.

Debate

At the conclusion of the questions, the deputation may remain (subject to any resolution excluding attendance of the public) but shall take no further part in the proceedings.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Chief Executive

5. Domestic violence is an issue of major local concern. Compared to other London boroughs, Southwark suffered:
 - the highest number of offences flagged by the police as domestic violence in London in 2001/2
 - a rate of domestic violence per 1000 population which ranks as the second highest in London in the current year.
6. An analysis of domestic violence victims conducted by Southwark police over a six month period (March to Sept 2002) included gender analysis which showed that 19% of victims were male, of these 5% were victims of male partners. The overwhelming proportion of domestic violence victims however were female victims of male partners.
7. It is well documented that domestic violence is highly underreported to the police and other agencies. This will also apply to same sex domestic violence,

if not more so. The true level of domestic violence is estimated to be at least four times higher than reported levels.

8. The Council fully supports the increased national government focus on domestic violence and welcomes the Government announcement of the publication of a public consultation paper on domestic violence in Spring 2003. This paper will aim to build on the proposals included in the recent Criminal Justice White Paper, 'Justice for All' and to generate a comprehensive response from the public, voluntary sector and others, to ensure the widest possible agreement on what needs to be done to prevent and deal with domestic violence and to bring perpetrators to justice.
9. It is expected that a draft Bill will be published later in the year. The Government's intention is that new legislation should ensure that we have effective, modern legislation.
10. The Council will be responding to the consultation and will encourage other groups and forums to respond as well. In responding to the consultation the Council need to consider the impact of domestic violence across all members of the local community.
11. Domestic violence is identified as a key area of work for the Safer Southwark Partnership through the hate crime strand of the Crime and Disorder Strategy. The key priority is to develop a borough wide strategy. The strategy will include a mapping of local need and whether or not services meet need and local standards (minimum standards). A key element of this work will be to agree a definition for domestic violence.
12. However, while the term domestic violence needs to be defined, the overriding concern needs to be about the quality of the response received by victims from service providers.
13. Key services locally for all victims of domestic violence are:
 - Police Community Safety Unit
 - Victim Support Southwark
 - Housing Community Safety Unit and
 - Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit
14. Of these Victim Support Southwark provides a dedicated service with a specific brief to work with victims of same sex domestic violence service. There are no other services at borough level specifically provided for same sex domestic violence, although there are at a London wide level.
15. The Council and the Safer Southwark Partnership hope to be able to derive maximum local advantage from the resources recently announced by the Home Secretary to tackle perpetrators and will seek to apply any resources that are made available across all areas of domestic violence.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Deputation Request File	Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB	Lesley John 020 7525 7228

APPENDIX A

Audit Trail

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Support Manager (Executive)	
Report Author	Lesley John, Constitutional Support Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	14.03.03	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Chief Executive	Yes	Yes
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	Yes	-
Executive Member		
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services	14.03.03	