

## APPENDIX A

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| <b>Item No.</b>                    | <b>Classification:</b><br>Open | <b>Date:</b><br>14/6/04  | <b>Standards Committee</b> |
| <b>Report title:</b>               |                                | <b>Southwark Alliance: Local Strategic Partnership Background Briefing</b> |                            |
| <b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b> |                                | All  |                            |
| <b>From:</b>                       |                                | Chief Executive (Head of Social Inclusion)                                 |                            |

### RECOMMENDATION

1. That Standards Committee notes the contents of this report and considers the report of the Borough Solicitor proposing amendments to the Constitution in relation to the Southwark Alliance.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Southwark Alliance is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the borough. It was established in November 2001. LSPs are a requirement for those parts of the country that have been designated as one of the 88 most deprived boroughs, and is a condition of receiving the government's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. Southwark is one such borough.

### Role and composition of LSPs

3. The government issued guidance in March 2001 setting out what an LSP is and how it should function. This stated:

*LSPs are a single body that:*

- *Brings together at local level the different parts of the public sector as well as the private, business, community and voluntary sectors, so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together*
- *Is a non-statutory, non-executive organisation*
- *Operates at a level that enables strategic decisions to be taken and close enough to individual neighbourhoods to allow actions to be determined at community level.*
- *Should be aligned with local authority boundaries.*

*LSPs are expected to carry out the following functions:*

- *Prepare and implement a community strategy for the area, identify and deliver the most important things that need to be done, keep track of progress and keep it up to date*

- *Bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives to provide a forum through which mainstream public service providers (local authorities, the police, health services, central government agencies and so on) work effectively together to meet local needs and priorities*
- *Work with local authorities that are delivering Public Service Agreements to help devise and then meet suitable targets*
- *Develop and deliver a local neighbourhood renewal strategy to secure more jobs, better education, improved health, reduced crime, and better housing, closing the gap between deprived neighbourhoods and contributing to the national targets to tackle deprivation.*

*For LSPs to rise to the challenge these tasks present, they will need to:*

- *Develop a variety of means to work with and consult local people, including faith, black and minority ethnic communities*
- *Build common purpose and shared commitment*
- *Develop and publicise common aims and priorities*
- *Value the contribution of all partners, avoiding domination by any particular members or organisations*
- *Share local information and good practice*
- *Identify, encourage and support effective local initiatives*
- *Develop a common performance management system*
- *Provide a forum for debate, discussion and common decision-making.*

*The membership and size of LSPs should reflect its aims and the issues with which it is dealing. This will vary from place to place and membership should be determined locally. To ensure they can tackle their core tasks successfully, each LSP's core membership should include:*

- *Public sector organisations which serve the partnership area*
- *Community organisations and local people*
- *Voluntary organisations*
- *Businesses*

*Individual partners will remain responsible and accountable for decisions on their services.*

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Southwark Alliance membership**

4. Southwark Alliance was set up in November 2001 as the borough's Local Strategic Partnership. Its membership was agreed through two Stakeholder events held in

February and July that year. The Standing Orders set out the membership and operating arrangements.

5. Southwark Alliance membership is reviewed every two years, and was last reviewed in October 2003, when the membership was amended. The next review is 2005. For statutory bodies, the Alliance sought to ensure its members were those with Executive decision-making and senior service delivery responsibilities.
6. The Council has two places on Southwark Alliance specifically reserved for the Leader and Chief Executive. The third place for 'other councillor' is currently nominated by the Executive. This is the same arrangement as for all other thematic partnerships. The relevant Executive member is normally nominated to the partnership most closely associated with their portfolio, so as to enhance synergy between the policies of the partnership and those of the Council.
7. The reference from Council Assembly proposes that in respect of Southwark Alliance this arrangements is changed, to make the 'other councillor' place a matter for Council Assembly.

### **Southwark Alliance governance and decision-making**

8. The Alliance Standing Orders set out the Southwark Alliance decision-making arrangements:

*The Southwark Alliance recognises that it comprises agencies with their own separate accountabilities and decision-making processes. Therefore Southwark Alliance decisions are not binding on agencies or organisations. Notwithstanding this, the individual members of Southwark Alliance are committed to aligning as far as possible the aims, priorities and performance management arrangements of their organisations with those of the Southwark Alliance.*

*To be effective and action-orientated, the Southwark Alliance recognises that it may from time to time need to take formal decisions which it would expect its constituent members to take into account as significant recommendations to their own decision-making bodies.*

9. LSPs as a body are not directly accountable to their local authority but directly to central government. However, as set out in the Southwark Alliance Standing Orders, where decisions or recommendations are made by Southwark Alliance that are specific to a particular body, such as the Council, it is for that body to decide whether or not to take account of such recommendations.
10. The **attached** schedule sets out how that relationship operates in regard to the major elements of the Southwark Alliance functions, under the current Constitutional arrangements for the Council. Any decisions with major policy implications for the Council come to the Council's Executive, and where part of the policy framework, also to Council Assembly, prior to final ratification by Southwark Alliance. This gives the opportunity for the Council's Scrutiny processes to operate where Members consider this would be useful.

### **Servicing Southwark Alliance**

11. It is usual, but not mandatory, for local authorities to be the lead body to support and service LSPs. In many cases, as with Southwark, this also links to the

servicing and support provided to the wider 'family of partnerships' that come within the Southwark Alliance umbrella.

12. The majority of major partnerships in the borough are supported and serviced through Council core budgets (in some cases jointly with another statutory agency). The exception is Southwark Alliance, where all the main costs of managing and supporting Southwark Alliance as a constituted 'body' are contained within the special Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) allocation from central government.
13. Under the conditions of grant, where LSPs wish to charge some or all of their LSP administrative costs to NRF, they are required to seek the agreement of the Government Office for London. Southwark Alliance has an agreement to charge administrative, servicing and infrastructure support costs to the total of £800k for 2004/5. Set against this external contribution, the direct costs to the Council for servicing Southwark Alliance are minimal, comprising the office space for 4 staff. A recharge to NRF is made for postage, telephones and stationary. As a 'de minimus' issue, this is not a matter that would usually be reserved for Council Assembly.

#### **Neighbourhood Renewal Fund**

14. The government provides Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) to Southwark Alliance to assist it to deliver quality of life targets alongside the mainstream contribution of public sector agencies. (£10 million in 2004/5). The Council is the Accountable Body for NRF and is required to ensure it is spent with the agreement of the LSP. Reports on Annual Spend are required by central government.
15. The overall amount of NRF, and the Southwark Alliance Commissioning and Financial Strategy are currently reported to Council Assembly as part of the Annual Budget report. Under the Council's current financial regulations, details of spend of central government funds reserved for earmarked purposes and particular partnerships are matters reserved for Chief Officers.
16. Under the Council's current Constitutional arrangements, both the Council's Executive and Scrutiny can call for information reports on the use of the NRF, and the amount used to directly support Council-led interventions.

#### **REASONS FOR URGENCY**

17. Council Assembly has requested that Standards Committee report back to them on the proposed amendment to the Constitution on the Southwark Alliance at the next Council Assembly meeting in July.

#### **REASONS FOR LATENESS**

18. The late submission of this report is due to the need for Officers to consider the implications of the amendment that was moved at Council Assembly on 26 May 2004.

#### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

|                          |                |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Background Papers</b> | <b>Held At</b> | <b>Contact</b> |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Local Strategic Partnerships<br>Government Guidance – Issued<br>on March 27, 2001 by the DETR | Social Inclusion, Town<br>Hall, West House | Nathalie<br>Hadjifotiou<br>020 7525 7914 |
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## APPENDIX A

Table on Southwark Alliance: Relationship to Southwark Council

### Audit Trail

|   |   |                          |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Lead Officer</b>   | <i>Nathalie Hadjifotiou, Head of Social Inclusion</i> |                          |
| <b>Report Author</b>  | <i>Nathalie Hadjifotiou</i>                           |                          |
| <b>Version</b>  | <i>Final</i>  |                          |
| <b>Dated</b>  | <i>8/6/04</i>   |                          |
| <b>Key Decision?</b>  | <i>Yes/No</i>   |                          |
| <b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b> |   |                          |
| <b>Officer Title</b>  | <b>Comments Sought</b>                                | <b>Comments included</b> |
| Borough Solicitor & Secretary   | Yes   | Yes                      |
| Chief Finance Officer   | No  | No                       |
| <i>List other Officers here</i>   |   |                          |
| <b>Executive Member</b>   | No  | No                       |
| <b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services</b>          |   |                          |