

Item No. 4.	Classification: Open	Date: October 19 2005	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Deputation requests	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Chief Executive (Borough Solicitor)	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That council assembly consider whether or not to hear a deputation from Southwark Credit Union.
2. That council assembly consider whether or not to hear the deputation from residents of Wells Way, Southampton Way and Coleman Road Triangle Brunswick Park Ward.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. When considering whether to hear each deputation request, council assembly can decide to
 - Receive the deputation at this meeting or a future meeting; *or*
 - That the deputation not be received; *or*
 - Refer the deputation to the most appropriate committee/sub-committee.
4. 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 5 minutes. After this time members may ask questions of the deputation for up to 5 minutes. At the conclusion of the questions, the deputation will be shown to the public gallery where they may listen to the remainder of the open section of the meeting.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Deputation request from Southwark Credit Union

5. Southwark Credit Union deputation letter states:-

Southwark Credit Union is a not-for-profit financial co-operative that was originally set up by council employees in 1982. Over 20 years later, Southwark Credit Union has grown to a £4.2 million business that can provide affordable financial services to everyone living or working in Southwark.

Southwark Credit Union is the 13th largest credit union in Britain and is regarded nationally as a successful credit union working hard to achieve financial inclusion. We would like to share with Councillors our vision and achievements in addressing the issues faced by Southwark residents.

Deputation request from residents of the Wells Way, Southampton Way and Coleman Road Triangle

6. The Wells Way, Southampton Way and Coleman Road Triangle deputation letter states:-

'We recently applied to our community council for some environmental improvements, but it was their view that the need for environmental improvement in this area was extensive and would require greater resources than those available to the community council. It was therefore recommended that we approach the council assembly, with the full support of our local ward councillors and the community council.

The Wells Way, Southampton Way and Coleman Road Triangle comprises an area of mixed housing, schools, Southwark College, community facilities and shops. It immediately abuts the Peckham Partnership area, where all the environmental improvements in pavements, street furnishing etc come to an abrupt end. It also joins onto the Elmington Estate where there is further regeneration on-going.

It is a neglected area. We did achieve a traffic management scheme after much agitation from the local residents and the support of our local councillors, about 8 years ago. This has made an enormous difference to the safety of residents, particularly children, living in the area, although the quality of the gate across Coleman Road is not good. (The gate has been damaged, the gaps are too large so that motorbikes can drive through at speed and the padlock is repeatedly removed by someone who obviously has a key). We would like the replacement of this gate to be part of the environmental improvement package.

After traffic, the shopping area is probably the issue of most concern. In recent years, some local traders have tried to improve their frontage and their service, but the range of shops and the physical condition of the shops gives the impression of a very run down area. There are at least two buildings (one on the corner of Bonsor Street and Southampton Way, the other opposite in Southampton Way) that have been completely derelict for over thirty years. Street lighting and street furnishings, such as plants, seats are non-existent. Such a presentation has repercussions on other things such as cleanliness, rubbish, and safety. We cast our eyes at the improvements that have been made to the shopping area in Bellenden Road and ask that a similar improvement could be made here.

Potentially this shopping area could serve a large residential population considerably wider than our few streets. We are all some way from the major shopping areas of Camberwell Green, Walworth Road, Rye Lane and the Old Kent Road. Good local shopping facilities would be a great benefit.

Other concerns include the state of pavements, street lighting, dog fouling (though this has improved) and the care of trees and introduction of other plants.

There are many residents who have lived in this area for a very long time, and have seen no investment from the council over all these years despite paying their local taxes. There are also many new residents who want to invest in the

area. We enjoy living here and there is a good sense of community. We think it is time that we had some backing and support from our local council.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Comments from the assistant chief executive (performance & strategy) on Southwark Credit Union deputation

7. Southwark Credit Union (SCU) started many years ago as a service for council employees. Subsequently it was mutually agreed that the organisation should widen its sphere of operation, and become a stand-alone organisation serving all the residents of the borough. Some Southwark employees continue to be members and deductions for savings and loans is facilitated through payroll. Currently some £130,000 per month of staff salaries are paid into the credit union.
8. The council supports the organisation in a number of ways.
 - They are a member of the Southwark Community Legal Services Partnership, to provide strategic advice on financial exclusion and issues of debt facing Southwark residents.
 - They are a Southwark representative with the council on the South London Financial Exclusion Strategy Steering Group which is developing a plan for sub-regional services.
 - They receive £30,000 funding from the council as part of the anti-poverty programme to undertake a range of activities that promotes financial literacy involving schools, voluntary sector, the Southwark Works initiative and Sure Starts.
 - The Southwark Works initiative (funded by NRF) has enabled SCU to fund a dedicated outreach worker to link directly with the employment agencies, to help focus in ways to ease the financial transition from benefits to work.
 - They work closely with the Rightfully Yours Team in revenue and benefits and are exploring with them a potential role in facilitating the new local housing allowance system and are linked in to the housing department annual tenants conference.
 - They are contributors to the annual revenue and benefits stakeholder conference.
 - They are working closely with the various area-based programmes particularly in Camberwell, Peckham and Aylesbury.
9. The council is aware that SCU would like to do more to re-establish their contacts with Southwark Council employees. In order to support this, the council has recently attached information about the Southwark Credit Union to all staff payslips. However, more can be done to promote the work of SCU and to that end, the council will invite SCU to host a number of sessions with staff, so that awareness of the service can be raised, and staff can have an opportunity to learn more about the organisation and the potential benefits of

signing up to it. The council is happy to hear from SCU on any further proposals they have for promotion of their service to council staff.

10. In relation to provision of information on the SCU by members, officer will ensure that information is made available for members via the members services team, is available at community councils and that it is made available at public access points across the council.

Comments from the strategic director of regeneration and the strategic director or environment and leisure - Wells Way, Southampton Way and Coleman Road Triangle deputation

11. To follow.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Team Manager
Report Author	Lesley John, Constitutional Officer
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