

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: January 24 2007	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Motions	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Chief Executive (Acting Borough Solicitor)	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10, the member moving the motion may make a speech directed to the matter under discussion. (This may not exceed five minutes without the consent of the Mayor).

The seconder will then be asked by the Mayor to second the motion. (This may not exceed three minutes without the consent of the Mayor).

The meeting will then open up to debate on the issue and any amendments on the motion will be dealt with.

At the end of the debate the mover of the motion may exercise a right of reply. If an amendment is carried, the mover of the amendment shall hold the right of reply to any subsequent amendments and, if no further amendments are carried, at the conclusion of the debate on the substantive motion.

The Mayor will then ask members to vote on the motion (and any amendments).

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION

The constitution allocates responsibility for particular functions to council assembly, including approving the budget and policy framework, and to the executive as a whole, for developing and implementing the budget and policy framework and overseeing the running of council services on a day-to-day basis. Therefore any matters that are reserved to the executive (i.e. housing, social services, regeneration, environment, education etc) cannot be decided upon by council assembly without prior reference to the executive. While it would be in order for council assembly to discuss an issue, consideration of any of the following should be referred to the executive:

- To change or develop a new or existing policy
- To instruct officers to implement new procedures
- To allocate resources

NOTE: In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10 (5) & (6) (prioritisation and rotation by the political groups) the order in which motions appear in the agenda may not necessarily be the order in which they are considered at the meeting.

1. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD (seconded by Councillor John Friary)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Violent Crime Strategy

Council notes the research carried out by Victim Support London that states Southwark has the highest level of gun crime in London and the annual performance report of the Safer Southwark partnership which ranks Southwark second worst amongst comparable boroughs in London for violent crime.

Council notes the recent serious violent events in East Walworth and Camberwell Green and notes that these two Southwark wards are ranked in the worst five in London for such crime.

Council welcomes the delivery of neighbourhood policing teams and the work that the police, police community safety officers (PCSOs) and others do in tackling crime in Southwark.

Council notes the contribution of lawful and well-managed bars and clubs to the life and economy of Southwark.

Council notes the lack of a published violent crime strategy, despite the need for this being identified in the 2002-2005 and 2005-2008 crime and drugs strategies for Southwark.

Council believes it is time that this issue was taken seriously and therefore council assembly calls upon the Safer Southwark Partnership to make publishing this strategy a priority.

Council believes practical measures are needed to deal with violent crime in Southwark. Council assembly calls upon the executive member for community safety to develop an action plan to target crime hot spots areas in Southwark with extra council and police resources including better street lighting, more PCSOs, safer by design programmes for all decent homes works and improved and extended CCTV coverage.

Council assembly also calls for stricter control on nightclub, planning and licensing applications and firmer action on badly managed clubs and pubs. Council assembly supports residents who exercise their power to call for the review of licenses under the new licensing act, and welcomes their having the power to do so.

Council supports efforts to lobby government, the Metropolitan Police Authority and other local agencies to target resources in Southwark's crime hot spots.

Council calls for a report on these practical measures to be brought to the executive within three months.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure

Southwark council and the Safer Southwark Partnership (SSP) take very seriously the need to tackle violent crime and in particular gang and gun related crime. The SSP has put a number of activities in place that are beginning to make a real

difference and from April to November 2006, compared to the same period last year, we have seen a:

- 9% reduction in overall violent crime (from 8,712 to 7,907 crimes)
- 25% reduction in ABH (actual bodily harm) and GBH (grievous bodily harm)
- 15% reduction in personal robbery
- 19% reduction in knife crime (April to September 2006).

The council welcomes the Victim Support London report on the experience of gun crime in London. This reports highlights the valuable contribution of violent crime projects that are taking place in three boroughs including Southwark. The Victim Support Southwark project targets vulnerable young adults aged 19-30 years and has an outreach service working with Kings accident and emergency department.

Persuading young people that they should not take up gang and gun related activities forms the core of some targeted schools programmes including:

- The YOT gangs prevention programme
- Anti violence council about to be established in two secondary schools
- From Boyhood to Manhood have developed a programme in conjunction with the GLA "Calling the shots" which is also available for schools

The SSP produced a draft violent crime strategy in September 2005 which was presented to the partnership board. The board discussed the strategy and agreed that a more productive approach would be to establish a delivery action plan focusing on early identification, early prevention, medium term prevention with intensive support and enforcement. The action plan has been a core focus for the partnership and our consistent reductions in violent crime since the autumn of 2005, demonstrates our partnership success.

The Safer Southwark Partnership set up the partnership operations group in July 2005, with a focus on violent crime. Currently 18 agencies, including the voluntary sector meet every two weeks to direct operational resources from the council and its partner agencies to areas where they are most needed.

The council, over the last few years, has carried out a number of programmes to upgrade street lighting linked to fear of crime and residents' concerns. Within the council's current capital programme, a sum of money has been allocated for further upgrading of sub standard street lighting borough wide.

Currently we have 16 deployable cameras, which are deployed across the borough to deal with crime hot spots. These cameras are viewed and recorded at the CCTV control room. As part of the delegated powers for moving traffic violations, we are in the process of up grading the infrastructure to accommodate an additional 10 deployable cameras thus enhancing the resources. These will be used for moving traffic violations (which have a direct link to crime in relation to persistent offenders, and un-licensed vehicles) and also will be used for deployment to identified crime hot spots.

The council and the police take firm action against problematic clubs, pubs and off licensees, both in response to criminal incidents particularly involving guns and as a programme of planned action. Since the Licensing Act 2005 came into force in November 2005 there have been seven reviews of premises licensees with one further review currently scheduled. Four of the concluded reviews and the further scheduled review concern nightclub type premises. Strong actions have been taken to date including reduction of trading hours; removal of licensable activities from the

license; additional conditions attached to licenses; suspension of premises licenses; and two nightclubs have had their premises licenses revoked".

The council welcomes representations from the public where there are concerns about licensed premises, as these allow us to impose additional conditions as long as they meet the four licensing objectives:

- the prevention of crime and disorder
- public safety
- the prevention of public nuisance
- the protection of children from harm.

The council is also working proactively with the police and responsible licensed operators to improve security within and outside of venues and reduce the risk of gun and gang violence. To this end the police and the council recently held a joint event for late night licensed clubs and pubs at the Ministry of Sound on December 5 2006 which was attended by representatives of 35 licensed venues, comprising licensed operators, premises supervisors and security staff. The event supported a current joint initiative aimed at securing a common standard of good management practice across licensed venues, which continues.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

2. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR COUNCILLOR LEWIS ROBINSON (seconded by Councillor Tim McNally)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Sustainable Communities Bill & Post Offices

Council assembly notes:

The Sustainable Communities Private Members Bill proposed by Nick Hurd MP which received its first reading in Parliament on Wednesday December 13 2006.

Council assembly believes:

The Sustainable Communities Bill is a welcome step towards returning power to local communities, and ensuring that money be spent by government on services provided for the benefit of local communities is to be spent in the way local communities wish, rather than central government determines.

That the closure of community based services such as local post offices or counter services at police stations will have a detrimental effect on the wider community.

Council assembly requests the executive:

To support the Sustainable Communities Bill, and to urge the borough's MPs to demonstrate their support through the bill's forthcoming parliamentary stages (2nd Reading scheduled January 19 2007).

To affirm its commitment to the devolution of further powers to local communities by bringing forward proposals to strengthen the powers of Southwark's community councils.

To continue to play an active role in the renewal of local community service provision, such as the work to reopen disused shop units on the Kingswood Estate for community use.

Comments of the Interim Assistant Chief Executive

Understanding the full implications of the private members bill, including the potential cost implications, would require more detailed analysis of the proposals. However, the council and its partners are already in a strong position through the community strategy, which the council endorsed on December 6 2006, to support sustainable communities. The council has argued and will continue to argue for greater autonomy in the use of government funding.

Officers are working on proposals to strengthen the role of community councils.

The council will continue to support the renewal of neighbourhoods and the engagement of communities in that renewal.

3. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DANNY McCARTHY (Seconded By Councillor Ian Wingfield)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Posthumous Award of the Freedom of the Borough

That Southwark Council is mindful to recognise the bravery of the men of Southwark that were awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) for actions in 1st & 2nd World War, and that last year was the 60th anniversary of the ending of the 2nd World War and it has been 87 years since the ending of the 1st World War.

Members of the council believe it would be a fitting recognition if we as a council awarded posthumously the Freedom of the Borough to these brave men, of whom I understand there were 11 recipients, who gave up their most precious gift to us, their life so we could live in a democracy.

Council is therefore resolved to ask the officers to make arrangements for posthumous awards to be made and further asks that enquires be made to see if any of the families of these men are alive, who will then be able to accept the award of the Freedom of the Borough on the behalf of these brave men.

Comments of the Head of Democratic Services

This proposal for posthumous awards was first formally raised at the constitutional steering group (CSG) on October 30 2006 and officers began further research to report back to the next meeting of the steering group in February.

The Victoria Cross has been awarded since 1857. Officers will investigate how many Southwark residents have been awarded the VC in that time.

Under the constitution the constitutional steering group have the responsibility for recommending awards to council assembly. The CSG will need to consider the criteria contained in the Local Government Act 1972.

4. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL NOBLET (seconded by Councillor Mackie Sheik)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Legal Aid

Council assembly notes:

- the plans by the government, led by Harriet Harman MP, for changes to the funding regime for legal aid cases;
- that changes will involve a move towards national fixed fees on a 'type of law' basis with no additional London weighting;
- that the demands on legal aid have increased sharply since 1997 as a result of the increased number of offences on the statute book;
- that spending on civil legal aid has fallen in real terms by over 20% since 1997;
- that nine legal firms in Southwark have stopped undertaking legal aid cases in the past 12 months due to past changes in the funding regime and that this represents a fall of 43%.

Council assembly believes:

- that higher costs and longer case lengths in London will act as a disincentive to firms to undertake legal aid work under the new funding regime;
- that black and minority ethnic firms are worried that they may be forced into mergers, which interfere with their identity or that leading lawyers will no longer be able to head up firms, providing important role models for their communities;
- that fewer firms undertaking legal aid will have an adverse effect on the residents of Southwark who will find it more difficult to find a solicitor willing to take on their case;
- that the cost of providing services for people for whom English is not a first language is likely to be higher and consequently that fewer firms will be willing to take them on;
- that black and minority ethnic populations could suffer disproportionate cuts in their access to services as a result of these changes.

Council assembly resolves:

- to ask the executive to campaign to urge Harriet Harman MP to halt the move towards the fixed fee funding regime for legal aid cases;
- to ask the executive to make local groups who have an interest in these matters aware of the changes and the potential effect on them and to urge them also to have their say.

Comments of the Interim Assistant Chief Executive

Southwark Council and the Southwark Community Legal Services Partnership (CLSP) has been aware of the planned changes to the funding regime for legal aid cases since the government's publication of Legal Aid: A sustainable future in July 2006.

The council has facilitated local consultation with partners on the implications of the proposed changes for the delivery of legal aid services in Southwark. This has been informed by the views of national network organisations including Citizens Advice, Law Centres Federation, Advice Services Alliance, Advice UK and individual law firms.

The council and partner agencies have taken a number of actions to draw the government's attention to the potential negative impact on the supply of legal aid services in Southwark.

The council as a major funder of legal advice services submitted a response to the Legal Services Commission consultation expressing the following concerns:

- The proposed reforms will reduce the number of legal aid firms offering legal aid advice in Southwark;
- The proposal to implement a national fixed fee model fails to take account of higher costs in London and higher levels of need;
- The implementation of fixed fees is likely to act as a disincentive for complex cases involving the most vulnerable clients being taken on;
- An audit of advice needs in Southwark found that there are significant levels of unmet need for generalist and specialist legal advice;
- The viability of not for profit advice organisations may be threatened by the loss of legal aid contracts;
- The loss of legal aid suppliers and contracts is likely to increase the number of people in Southwark facing social exclusion.

In addition London Councils' Community Legal Services Forum, representing London local authorities, has written to Martin Seel, Director of London & South East Legal Services Commission to argue that the proposal to implement a national fixed fee funding model would be detrimental to the supply of legal aid in London.

At the Southwark CLSP on the October 10 2006, Pierce Glynn solicitors attended to explain the impact that the changes would have on the provision of legal aid services by private practitioners, and to invite advice providers to attend a meeting that had been arranged with Harriet Harman MP, from the Department for Constitutional Affairs. The meeting took place on the December 11 and was attended by Southwark solicitors firms, advice agencies and the council's CLS officer.

Those present put forward the case against national fixed fee funding, and asked that in the event the changes went ahead, that consideration be given to tempering the likely detrimental impact on Southwark (and London) by introducing a system of premiums linked to identifiable need, that would reduce the disincentive to take on the most complex cases.

Harriet Harman said she would reply to the representations made by the Southwark delegation after speaking to Vera Baird, the responsible minister. The reply is pending.

The council has advised local organisations of the changes through the CLSP distribution list and has also provided a briefing in the equalities e-bulletin.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

5. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR TAYO SITU (seconded by Councillor Aubyn Graham)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Southwark Race and Equality Council

Council assembly notes that the Southwark Race and Equality Council (SREC) earlier last year received extra funding from the council in order to support the recommendations of Lord Ouseley's report on equality and diversity issues in Southwark.

Council assembly further notes that SREC has suffered a number of leadership crises in recent months and years.

Council assembly further notes that the 3 year old PriceWatershouseCoopers recommendations for change to the SREC's structures and practices have not yet been implemented

Council assembly believes that for these reasons the need for a radical restructuring of SREC is clear.

Council assembly also notes the new national strategies for responding to race and equality issues and supports the principle of community led Race Equality Council with wide representation and influence.

To this end, council asks the executive member responsible for race equality to review council support for an effective strategic community led body for race equality in Southwark, that will engage with the community and works in partnership with the statutory agencies, business sector and concerned individuals; council assembly asks the executive member to present council assembly with proposals within four months.

Comments of the Interim Assistant Chief Executive

A recent audit has been undertaken of SREC and as a result the organisation has drafted a revised business plan which is to be presented to the SREC board at the end of January. Following consideration by the board there will then be negotiation and approval processes with the council and the Commission for Racial Equality. It would be at that point that it would be appropriate for the council to engage the organisation in any debate on changes to the business plan necessary to attract continued financial support by the council.

6. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER (seconded by Councillor Adele Morris)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Green Action Plan

Southwark council is committed to taking its environmental responsibilities seriously, in terms of reducing global impact, increasing sustainability and improving our local environment.

Council recognises that this can only be achieved through encouraging changes in behaviour and targeting actions that will reinforce good practice and reduce negative environmental impact.

Council notes the success of the greening Southwark council programme already in place, but believes that further action is now needed.

In order to make both Southwark council and Southwark itself cleaner and greener, council asks the executive, as far as possible within existing resources, to implement the following 50 point green action plan:

Make Southwark Council Greener

1. Increase the use of energy-saving light bulbs in council buildings.
2. Increase the amount of fleet vehicles using more environmentally friendly fuels in council-driven vehicles.
3. Consider the cost effectiveness, energy-saving prospects, and planning/conservation area implications of installing solar panels and/or wind turbines on the roof of Southwark town hall and other council-owned buildings.
4. Continue to encourage council staff to turn off unnecessary lights after working hours in council buildings.
5. Rationalise the paper communications that Southwark council produces and ensure all are printed on recycled paper and are recyclable themselves.
6. Provide coffee and tea making facilities that are more energy efficient in all council buildings.
7. Encourage council staff turn off their computer monitors when not in use and examine the possibility of installing software that facilitates this automatically.
8. Phase out the use of plastic crockery and cutlery in council buildings and use eco-friendly cleaning products.
9. Continue to work with environmental groups to undertake green audits of the council.
10. Provide more filtered tap water in council buildings and discontinue the use of water in plastic bottles for council meetings.
11. Make Southwark council's environmental code of construction practice available online.
12. Ensure that Southwark council continues to increase the provision of fair-trade goods in the council buildings.
13. Significantly increase the amount of waste that is recycled in council offices.
14. Encourage a reduction in the usage of lifts in council buildings by non-essential users.
15. Reduce the amount of unnecessary paperwork produced for council meetings and ensure both sides of the paper are always used in agendas and reports.
16. Facilitate the recycling of printer toner cartridges in council offices.
17. Ensure that all toilet rolls and hand towels used in council buildings and public toilets are made from recycled paper.
18. Promote local produce, GM-free and organic foods when providing food at council events and meetings.
19. Encourage council staff to reduce car use and choose more sustainable forms of transport through the promotion and implementation of the green travel action plan.
20. Turn two of the car parking spaces in the town hall car park (including the leader's space) into area where secure cycle parking facilities can be installed.

Make Southwark Greener

21. Review controlled parking zone parking permit charges with a view to examine the implications of differentiating on the basis of emissions, pollutants and environmental impact.
22. Pursue possibilities to enable the recycling of plastic bags, textiles, tetrapaks and food waste in the borough, including in doorstep collections.
23. Improve on Southwark's position as the fourth cleanest borough in London.
24. Encourage the reuse of rain water for domestic use through the Grey Water programme.
25. Consider the introduction of split recycling bins for streets and domestic use.
26. Continue to improve the quality of green spaces within Southwark and seek Green Flag status for all Southwark's parks.
27. Continue to educate, publicise and take a zero-tolerance approach to littering, fly-tipping, graffiti and other envirocrimes.
28. Increase the number of street bins that have integrated cigarette ashtrays and increase distribution of free Stubbi holders for cigarette butts.
29. Save water by providing 'Hippos' for every toilet in council offices and housing stock where installation is possible and desired by tenants.
30. Explore offering financial incentives to encourage Southwark householders to install renewable energy technologies on their properties.
31. Increase public facilities for battery recycling.
32. Introduce measures to review compliance with planning requirements relating to energy efficiency, including thermal performance, in new buildings.
33. Support local producers bid for tenders to provide catering services for the public sector.
34. Demand that all new buildings built and procured by the council have 'Excellent' eco homes standard ratings.
35. Increase tree planting to improve our environment, reduce summer heat and improve air quality.
36. Continue to police and remove dog fouling and continue to encourage responsible dog ownership through publicity schemes such as 'Do we have to rub your nose in it?'.
37. Maintain Southwark's smoke control area status.
38. Continue to promote and increase the usage of wormeries and compost bins.
39. Subject to the outcome of the current procurement exercise and to assessment of financial and other risks, form a multi-utility services company (MUSCo) to deliver sustainable utilities infrastructure in the Elephant and Castle regeneration.
40. Provide more residents with 'Stop Junk Mail' information to minimise paper waste.
41. Encourage local businesses to recycle, be energy efficient and become more environmentally aware.
42. Encourage more parents to use real nappies instead of disposable ones.
43. Remove all reported fly tips within 24 hours.
44. Remove all reported graffiti within 24 hours.
45. Increase the number of voluntary street leaders and junior street leaders.
46. Promote the sustainable transport benefits of the cross river tram and the SUSTRANS green bridge over the Thames.
47. Encourage schools to produce green travels plans, provide walking buses, offer cycle training and discourage parents from driving children to schools.
48. Improve the council's Home Energy Conservation Act energy efficiency score.
49. Demand high eco standards in all new or refurbished leisure centres and libraries
50. Continue to reduce the number of missed waste and recycling collections.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure

The council has a sustainability policy and a number of key policy commitments that cover many of the points in the green action plan. The council has just appointed a sustainability manager and coordinator within environment and housing to ensure that the recommendations from the climate change strategy are implemented. This includes a revitalisation / re-launch of a “champion scheme” that will address many of the working practice issues categorised in the plan. Behavioural changes are part of the strategy and go hand in hand with physical improvements to increasing efficiency. Aspects of the plan external to the council build on the recent and current cleaner, greener agenda and will be consolidating these existing priorities. The council, via its officer sustainability forum, will monitor achievement and seek to implement all the action points in the plan.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

7. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES (seconded by Councillor Michelle Holford)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Maudsley Clinic

Council assembly notes:

- that the government estimates that one in four people will suffer from some form of mental illness at some point in their lifetime;
- that the South London and Maudsley Trust is planning to close the emergency clinic at the Maudsley hospital which currently offers an ‘open all hours’ emergency service for people with mental health problems;
- that the Lambeth and Southwark Statutory Joint Health Committee has referred this decision to the Secretary of State for Health to make the final decision on the grounds that they did not believe that the closure was in the best interests of local health services and she has announced that she will do so in February;
- that the chief executive of the South London and Maudsley Trust has admitted that there will be an increased reliance on the voluntary sector as a result of this cut.

Council assembly believes:

- that the Maudsley clinic is a vital service which helps to save lives and should remain open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year;
- that the closure of the Maudsley clinic will have a detrimental impact on neighbouring emergency health services and especially on the accident and emergency department of Kings College hospital;
- that the proposed expansion of the community service will not be adequate replacement for the loss of the emergency provision.

Council assembly recognises the impact that the strategic health authority’s financial adjustments and “top-slice” of the Primary Care Trust budget increases has had on the South London and Maudsley health trust and calls for this policy to be reviewed.

Council assembly congratulates the many organisations which have campaigned to keep the Maudsley clinic open and the South London press for helping to organise the campaign and notes that support for the campaign has been cross party and included local MPs.

Council assembly therefore resolves to ask the Executive to support the campaign to keep the Maudsley emergency clinic open 24 hours per day and asks the leader to write to the Secretary of State for Health to urge her to make a decision in favour of keeping the clinic open.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Health and Community Services

The emergency clinic provides a specialist service aiming to offer 24-hour assessment and brief treatment/support for those presenting with acute mental health problems or those presenting as psychiatric emergencies and consultation both to those using the clinic and to professionals on assessment and treatment of psychiatric emergencies. It is also used as a place of safety for Section 136 (Mental Health Act 1983) clients of East Lambeth and Southwark. The clinic is located directly opposite King's College hospital accident and emergency department at the Maudsley hospital. It is staffed by psychiatric nurses, a psychiatrist and a psychiatric senior house officer and supervised by a part time consultant psychiatrist. It provides a specialist contained environment and aims to provide emergency mental health care 24/7 throughout the year. However prior to the relocation of some beds the emergency clinic often had to close to walk in emergency presentations.

An audit of use during October 2006 identified that an average of 7.4 people per day presented at the emergency clinic and 4.5 at King's A&E. The majority of those presenting at the emergency clinic were service users already known to community mental health services.

In preparation for the closure of the clinic, if this were to proceed, a number of alternative community measures have been put in place or are planned in order to develop a more preventative approach to address potential crisis in patients known to services and to strengthen crisis response in the community.

The plan by SLAM and its commissioners to close the emergency clinic was opposed by a number of individuals and organisations both because of their views about the value of the service itself and also their concerns about whether or not the alternative services described would be in place.

Scrutiny committee (sitting as a joint committee with Lambeth) considered this proposal as part of their statutory role in relation to significant changes in local health services. They opposed the proposed closure on a number of grounds such as:

- A whole system approach to mental health crisis services is needed across both boroughs with shortcomings in the existing system addressed and key parts of the system strengthened before any reconfiguration is progressed;
- Serious reservations about the capacity and appropriateness of A&E facilities to provide quality crisis care for people in mental distress;
- That a self-referral walk-in 24 hour specialist mental health facility should continue to be available locally in whatever form;
- That SLAM's consultation process, including the way in which consultation options were formulated and more pertinently continue to be formulated with little reference outside the commissioning PCTs, has been less than ideal.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

8. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR BOB SKELLY (seconded by Councillor Nick Vineall)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Post Offices

Council assembly regrets the loss of three post offices in North Southwark and Bermondsey, seven post offices in Dulwich and West Norwood and two post offices in Camberwell and Peckham between 1999 and 2006, representing almost one in three of the total services available.

Council assembly notes:

- that on the December 14 the government announced plans for post office 'restructuring' that they expect to lead to the closure of a further 2500 post office branches by 2009;
- that 4000 post office branches have been closed nationwide since the government came to power in 1997;
- that the government announced in March 2006 the phasing out of the post office card account (POCA) on which many pensioners relied to receive their state pension and on which thousands of branches depended to keep them in business;
- that closure of smaller post offices around the country has led to the closure of other local shops and businesses and the disintegration of local communities;
- that on the December 14, in the face of huge criticism of this decision, the government backed down and announced a replacement for POCA;
- that the government has directly or indirectly overseen the post office losing TV licences, vehicle excise duty and passport authentication work;
- the plans by Royal Mail to close the Herne Hill sorting office leading to delays in postal delivery times, the loss of local knowledge among postal delivery workers and inconvenience for local residents who have to pick up mail from a sorting office.

Council assembly further notes the social importance of post offices to the well being of both communities and individuals in Southwark.

Council assembly believes that the recently announced closure programme is unnecessary and asks the executive to seek to persuade the government to:

1. end the branch closure programme;
2. remove the Royal Mail restrictions on the post office to open up further business opportunities for the network;
3. stop removing government business from post offices;
4. carry out a review of which additional government functions could be carried out through post offices;
5. invest in the post office network.

Council assembly further believes that the interests of residents are best served by the retention of the Herne Hill sorting office.

Council assembly welcomes the decision of the government to withdraw its previous proposals to scrap completely the post office card account (POCA) but asks the

executive to call on ministers to ensure that any replacement POCA should be open freely to all pensioners and benefit recipients who wants one.

Council assembly asks the executive to call on the government to avoid putting pressure on current and future POCA users to switch to having benefits and pensions paid directly into bank accounts.

Council assembly asks the MPs for Southwark to lobby ministers to save the post office from gradual demolition and to protect this vital service for the people. Council assembly further asks the MPs to report back to this council on their actions and asks the overview and scrutiny committee to undertake a scrutiny investigation into the impact of the closure of the Herne Hill sorting office.

Council assembly further asks the executive to urge Royal Mail to reconsider plans to close the Herne Hill sorting office.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive and overview and scrutiny committee for consideration.

9. **MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID HUBBER** (seconded by Councillor Linda Manchester)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Borough and Bankside Community Council Chair

That Councillor Danny McCarthy be removed as the chair of Borough and Bankside community council with immediate effect and that the January meeting of the council assembly appoint a new chair.

Comments of the Acting Borough Solicitor

The appointment of the chairs of committees is a function of council assembly under paragraph 2.4(f) of the council assembly procedural rules. Their removal can therefore only be made by council assembly. Councillor Danny McCarthy having been appointed as chair of the Borough and Bankside community council by council assembly can removed if council assembly resolves to do so.

Note: If the motion is agreed, council assembly will be invited to appoint a new chair in accordance with council assembly procedure rules.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Member Motions	Town Hall Peckham Road London SE5 8UB	Constitutional Team 020 7525 7228

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Team Manager
Report Author	Lesley John, Constitutional Officer
Version	Final
Dated	12.1.06