

Item No. 4.	Classification: Open	Date: February 21 2007	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Deputation requests	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Chief Executive (Borough Solicitor)	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That council assembly consider whether or not to hear a deputation from Southwark Parents/Carers Council concerning Southwark's special educational needs (SEN) funding policy.
2. That council assembly consider whether or not to hear a deputation from the Friends of Camberwell Leisure Centre.
3. That council assembly consider whether or not to hear a deputation from a SE5 Forum for Camberwell.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. When considering whether to hear the 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.
5. 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 Parents/Carers Council

6. The deputation request from Southwark Parents/Carers Council states:

"These are the issues that the Parent/Carers Council are concerned with and which are not fully addressed in Southwark's proposed SEN policy. We would welcome the opportunity to bring this to the attention of the whole assembly.

- At the present time children with statements also attract an amount of £1,463 School Action Plus (SA+) money additional to the amount funded by the

statement. What was not clear in the proposed policy was that children with statements would lose this additional SA+ funding.

- Previous good practice was to audit the educational provision for children on SA+. Currently there is no monitoring in place for these children.
- Money for SEN children should be specified for that use and not be funded by proxy indicators i.e. areas of deprivation and free school meals. The proposed funding formula will impact on whole school finance as schools have a responsibility of provision as set out in children's statements and so will have to use money from different sources to ensure the needs are met.
- If there is a commitment to an auditing team i.e. one full time educational psychologist visiting schools and monitoring use of the money this should be no more of a cost pressure as it would be if the current proposed monitoring forum were put in place. This would give schools good practice guidelines in the use of individual education plans (which are currently not mandatory) for such children and would provide a demonstrable indicator for parents seeing how their children are progressing and be an audit tool for the local authority.
- It would appear that in the proposed policy it is not in a schools interest to encourage or support parents to apply for a statement. If a child is awarded a statement legally the school has to provide the SEN provision stated. This would have to come out of existing money thus the school would lose.
- Parent/carers fear that pressure on schools to improve their SATS results and move up education league tables will force schools to use money allocated for SEN to increase levels of attainment over the whole school.
- There were many issues around training. Parents had real concerns about staff in schools lacking the skills and knowledge to support their children. This is a whole school issue and needs to be addressed.
- Parents should be informed of the extent of any influence/power that the local education authority has over schools. i.e. a training policy."

Deputation request from the Friends of Camberwell Leisure Centre

7. The deputation request from the Friends of Camberwell Leisure Centre states:

"The Friends of Camberwell Leisure Centre were shocked to learn that the council is considering not continuing with its plans for the redevelopment of the Camberwell leisure centre with Fusion, given that four years of intensive negotiations were nearing their close and that clear indications were made to us, at a meeting of March 23 2006, that the process between the council and Fusion was highly collaborative, making good progress and was near to being finalised and the project started.

"Nevertheless, we retain our faith that the council will honour its commitment to redevelop of Camberwell leisure centre, and that the hard work and high expense of preparing the development plan is not wasted, but put to immediate use.

"We should like to underscore the significance of the centre to Camberwell (people see it as a potential community centre) and to stress that it is too valuable locally purely to be judged as one amongst a number of leisure centres in Southwark.

“Camberwell is one of the most disadvantaged locations in the UK. It experiences high levels of deprivation in relation to income, health, crime and opportunity. The centre is the one public building of note in the area and the sole major community facility in the SE5 district.

“You will be aware that the centre houses the Camberwell gymnastics club, which has fantastic success at a national level. You will also be aware of the huge work of Camberwell arts that functions from the centre and the work of Creative Routes, which manages projects that play a significant role in the recovery of people experiencing severe mental illness and are the most vulnerable people in society. Some 2000 people attended their BonkersFest! Festival in June 2006 - one of the aims of which is to tackle stigma and discrimination, and the Arts Council has asked Creative Routes to apply to them for funding BonkersFest! '07.

“The centre is, therefore, already a hub for hugely important community activities and through redevelopment it has the potential to build on this as well as providing vital access to attractive health and leisure facilities to the potential customer base in excess of 40,000 that live in its catchment area. This is particularly relevant with the approach of the Olympics and the link between poverty and poor life expectancy.

“We strongly believe that Camberwell should be made a priority among the borough’s leisure development projects. Camberwell leisure centre is crumbling before our eyes. It has now been closed for over a week due to damage incurred during the high winds. The people of Camberwell deserve better than this and this building belongs to them. Is a legacy of broken promises and crumbling hope and potential really all we are prepared to leave the next generation? And what does that then say about us?

“Regenerating Camberwell leisure centre would represent a flagship scheme with which to launch investment in Southwark’s leisure centres as well as kick-starting much-needed regeneration in the heart of Camberwell.”

Deputation request from SE5 Forum for Camberwell

8. The deputation request from the SE5 Forum for Camberwell states:

“We wish to urge the council to ensure that:

- the refurbishment of Camberwell Leisure Centre is given the highest priority.
- all possible options leading to successful redevelopment are explored.
- the council undertakes thorough consultation with local residents and organizations in Camberwell before selecting the final option.”

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Comments of the Strategic Director of Children’s Services – Deputation on the Southwark’s SEN funding policy

9. To follow.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Environment & Housing – Deputation on Camberwell leisure centre

10. To follow.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Deputation Request File	Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB	Cameron MacLean 020 7525 7236

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Team Manager
Report Author	Lesley John, Constitutional Officer
Version	Final
Dated	16/02/2007