



ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2003 at 7.00 PM at the Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Councillor Barrie Hargrove (Chair)
Councillors Alfred Banya and Alison Moise

ALSO PRESENT: Dr Richard Anderson, Southwark Environment Forum (Non-voting Co-opted Member)
Christine Skidmore, Domestic Violence Worker, Bede House
Southwark Friends of the Earth - representatives

OFFICERS: Taiwo Dayo-Payne – Community Safety
Adrian Rabot – Head of Community Safety
Maggie Sullivan – Corporate Strategy
Peter Roberts – Scrutiny Team

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Gavin O'Brien, Lisa Rajan and William Rowe.

NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMED URGENT

The Chair agreed to receive a deputation from Southwark Friends of the Earth in respect of the Waste Management Strategy.

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

RECORDING OF MEMBERS' VOTES

Council Procedure Rule 1.17(5) allows a Member to record her/his vote in respect of any motions and amendments. Such requests are detailed in the following Minutes. Should a Member's vote be recorded in respect of an amendment, a copy of the amendment may be found in the Minute file and is available for public inspection.

The Sub-Committee considered the items set out on the agenda, a copy of which has been

incorporated in the Minute File. Each of the following paragraphs relates to the item bearing the same number on the agenda.

MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2003 be deferred to a future meeting.

1. COMMUNITY COUNCILS PROJECT BRIEF

1.1 The Corporate Strategy Officer explained the timetable for the six months' review of the operation of Community Councils. INLOGOV had been appointed to undertake initial research, the findings of which would be presented to the Sub-Committee as the starting point for its work. INLOGOV had met with Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Community Councils, the Leader and Deputy Leader, community representatives and Officers. The result of these meetings would be included in their report together with good practice from other authorities.

1.2 In response to Members' questions, the Corporate Strategy Officer clarified that representatives from each of the five Community Councils had been invited to a meeting and indicated that she would circulate to the Sub-Committee a list of attendees. Members considered whether a wide invitation should be made to the Sub-Committee's next meeting. It was agreed that it would be more useful to receive the report and then decide who the Sub-Committee wished to invite to give evidence as part of its scrutiny work.

1.3 Members of the Sub-Committee also sought clarification as to the differing roles of Environment & Community Support and Finance & Economic Development Scrutiny Sub-Committee in the review process. The Corporate Strategy Officer indicated that one important part of the Sub-Committee's role was to look at how well the Community Councils engaged with and helped support communities under present arrangements. She would seek clarification on the different roles of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees involved and report back to the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That INLOGOV present the findings of its initial research to the Sub-Committee meeting on 19 November 2003; and
2. That following this presentation, the Sub-Committee agree witnesses to be invited to give evidence to its meeting in December.

2. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (see pages 1 – 48)

2.1 The Head of Community Safety briefed the Sub-Committee on Domestic Violence in Southwark. There had been a 20% reduction in the number of incidents (repeat victimisation) over the past year. Repeat victimisation was an important issue and could lead to the possibility escalation into more serious assaults.

2.2 The Head of Community Safety and the Community Safety representative highlighted particular areas:

- there had been a good response to the “hate hurts” campaign, funded by SRB6, but this needed to be built into further communications campaigns (a poster campaign was starting in the middle of November, followed by a leaflet drop publicising the key agencies to all residents);
- a new risk assessment process was being piloted by the police, with Officers receiving training on its use;
- support for victims was key but in addition it was essential to tackle perpetrators (Officers were observing the work of a domestic violence intervention project in Hammersmith);
- the work of the Domestic Violence Forum was now being supported;
- the Hate Crime Sub-Group had been without a Chair for some time and Officers were aiming to address this and to engage the Primary Care Trust in its activities;
- Bede House and Southwark Women’s Aid were both doing good work in the area of domestic violence;
- development of a one-stop site, similar to an initiative in Croydon and feeding into the various agencies, was being considered but this would require additional funding.

2.3 In response to Members’ questions, the Head of Community Safety explained that there was now a positive arrest policy in respect of domestic violence and that perpetrators were removed from the scene of the offence. This approach was supported by the new risk assessment process, which was monitored by supervisors and detective inspectors. The Head of Community Safety offered to circulate the new risk assessment form to the Sub-Committee. The Domestic Violence Worker at Bede House emphasised that it was also important for the police to keep in contact with victims, especially where perpetrators were being taken to court. The Head of Community Safety indicated that, in recognition of this, a victim contact desk was being set up.

2.4 In respect of the Hammersmith Project, it was noted that a lot of referrals came direct from the courts service as a condition of sentence. Members asked for any statistics that were available in respect of Southwark courts. Officers added that self-referrers were also to be encouraged, particularly at the stage where they had just begun to abuse their partners.

2.5 Officers indicated that small community groups were often key in the area of domestic violence, for instance in reaching particular communities. It had also been acknowledged that translation and interpretation could be key and workers were being trained in hate crime awareness.

2.6 It was noted that Community Safety was in the process of reviewing progress on the London Strategy minimum standards within the Council but that minimum standards needed to be extended to the voluntary and community sectors.

2.7 Members were concerned that the Health Service had not been sufficiently involved in the work of the Hate Crime Sub-Group. Officers confirmed that they were now more engaged in the partnership and had an important role to play. Members were also concerned that domestic violence was only one issue under the umbrella of hate crime and the Sub-Group and that this could lessen its profile.

- 2.8 Members were also concerned about the availability and reliability of data in respect of domestic violence. The Head of Community Safety responded that it was essential to develop better data collection by the police and across the Council and the voluntary sector.
- 2.9 Members highlighted the Council's response to the Government's Safety and Justice paper and were concerned that no response had been included from Social Services. Officers indicated that a separate response might have been forwarded by the Children & Young Persons' Partnership Board. Members also asked what level of funding Southwark was to receive from the Government's funds for domestic violence. Officers indicated that this funding was prescribed by the Government Office for London rather than being part of a bidding process.
- 2.10 A Member commented that the Best Value Review on Community Strategy had identified that there was no strategy on anti-social behaviour. The Head of Community Safety indicated that it was unlikely that a strategy would be launched until early next year but offered to circulate to the Sub-Committee details of a presentation on the national anti-social behaviour action plan. Members felt that this should be acknowledged when considering the Sub-Committee's work programme later in the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Health & Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee be advised of the Sub-Committee's support for the proposal for a representative of the Primary Care Trust to chair the Hate Crime Sub-Group and asked to encourage the full involvement of the Trust;
2. That the Strategic Director of Social Services be asked to clarify whether any response had been made to consultation on the Safety and Justice paper and encouraged to participate fully in any future consultation;
3. That the Head of Community Safety be asked to circulate to members of the Sub-Committee details of the Croydon one-stop site and further details of how this could be introduced in Southwark; and
4. That the Head of Community Safety be asked to report back to the Sub-Committee in three months on how the Hate Crime Sub-Group has been organised to respond to the increased profile of domestic violence issues and the Domestic Violence Support Worker be asked to comment on her work in this context.

3. WASTE DISPOSAL (see pages 48 – 51)

- 3.1 Consideration of the draft report to the Executive was deferred until the January meeting of the Sub-Committee when it was hoped that the results of the consultation exercise would be available.

3.2 The Sub-Committee received a deputation from Southwark Friends of the Earth in respect of the Waste Management Strategy. The written comments submitted by Southwark Friends of the Earth are appended to these Minutes.

3.3 Representatives of Southwark Friends of the Earth raised the following:

- the Council was urged to be as bold as possible in response to the long-term problem of waste;
- money was to be saved through waste minimisation;
- the growth of waste was critical in London and core to dealing with the problem;
- the Council should introduce the best practice option and any remaining waste should be dealt with by the next best practice option; and
- the Council should address the problem of waste produced by street markets.

3.4 Members welcomed the comments made by Southwark Friends of the Earth and invited them to attend the January meeting of the Sub-Committee. In considering the comments, Members felt that where possible they should propose best practice in general rather than putting forward particular commercial operators.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee consider waste management at its meeting on 21 January 2004.

4. 2003/2004 WORK PROGRAMME (see page 52)

4.1 The Sub-Committee considered its draft work programme for 2003/2004, bearing in mind the requirements of the Community Councils review and the timetable for agreement of an anti-social behaviour strategy.

RESOLVED: That the draft work programme for the remainder of 2003/2004 be amended as follows:

Wednesday 19 November 2003

- Community Councils (INLOGOV presentation)
- Draft questions for Executive Members

Wednesday 17 December 2003

- Councillor R Porter: Community Support & Safety
- Councillor R Thomas: Environment & Transport
- Community Councils
- Penalties & Prosecutions (scoping)

Wednesday 21 January 2004

- Waste Management
- Penalties & Prosecutions
- Local Strategic Partnership/Southwark Alliance (scoping)

Wednesday 25 February 2004

- Local Strategic Partnership/Southwark Alliance

Wednesday 24 March 2004
– Anti-social Behaviour Strategy

5. **PENALTIES AND PROSECUTIONS - SCOPING** (see page 53)

5.1 This item was deferred until the December meeting of the Sub-Committee.

6. **FORWARD PLAN**

6.1 Noted.

The meeting finished at 9.50 pm.

CHAIR:

DATE: