



ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2004 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
Jim Lodge – Southwark Friends of the Earth
Stephanie Lodge – Southwark Friends of the Earth
Peter Meredith – Southwark Friends of the Earth

OFFICERS: Phil Davies – Head of Waste Management
Des Waters – Head of Street Scene & Public Protection
Peter Roberts – Scrutiny Team

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Lisa Rajan, William Rowe and Anne Yates.

NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMED URGENT

There were none.

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

In considering the Minutes, the Sub-Committee asked for updates at a future meeting on:

- whether Councillor Porter had taken up with Transport for London the issue of vandalism on buses; and
- the position in respect of rents charged by the Council to voluntary organisations.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 19 November and Wednesday 17 December 2003 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

1. WASTE STRATEGY – BRIEFING [see pages 1 – 12]

- 1.1 The Head of Waste Management updated the Sub-Committee on the four options currently being considered by the Council. The Sub-Committee indicated that any future reports should make clear the difference between the options. The Sub-Committee felt that it would be useful to hear the views of the voluntary sector on the Council's management of waste and partnership working with the voluntary and private sector.
- 1.2 Members felt that whichever procurement route was finally agreed, a local employment clause should be written into the contract. Members also stressed that any contract should not tie the Council into providing certain quantities of waste.
- 1.3 Representatives of Southwark Friends of the Earth emphasised that they would like to see the Council think innovatively about raising recycling rates on estates, for instance looking at the possibility of local composting. The Head of Waste Management indicated that Officers were monitoring the success of the London Recycling Consortium, which had recently signed a deal with Tower Hamlets.
- 1.4 In response to Members' questions, the Head of Waste Management confirmed that the Council was preparing a range of bids to the London Recycling Fund. The bids included a new re-use and recycling centre in the South of the borough and partnerships with Lewisham and Lambeth to support waste awareness and education. The Head of Waste management also reported that the current publicity campaign promoting recycling had been well received and that a new waste analysis exercise would be started in the Summer.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That representatives of voluntary and private organisations be invited to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee to give their views on partnership working with the Council in the area of waste management; and
 2. That a local employment clause be included in the final waste management contract.

2. PENALTIES & PROSECUTIONS [see pages 13 – 45]

- 2.1 The Head of Waste Management and the Head of Street Scene & Public Protection briefed the Sub-Committee on penalties and enforcement action taken in respect of enviro-crimes and the environment.
- 2.2 Members asked whether action taken in this area would link to the anti-social behaviour strategy. Officers confirmed that they met regularly with the Head of Community Safety, who was responsible for drafting the strategy, and the Police Liaison Team.
- 2.3 In response to Members' questions, Officers explained that enforcement depended on keeping the borough clean in the first instance, raising awareness about the environment and a zero tolerance approach to offences. The balance between education and enforcement could be different in different areas of the borough. In terms of education, the Council participated in the London Environment at Schools Programme and contributed at all key stages. The Street Improvement Team visited schools and 75% of schools took part in the paper-recycling scheme. Members of the Sub-Committee felt that it would be useful to look in detail in the next Municipal Year at how the Council undertook community education in respect of the environment.
- 2.4 Officers indicated that Southwark was in the process of drafting a Community Environment Plan. Members expressed the view that this should be reflected in the Community Strategy. Officers indicated that in the past the Strategy had not included targets relating to the quality of the environment. This was now partly addressed by issues of liveability. The Sub-Committee felt that Southwark Alliance should be taking this on board.
- 2.5 Members raised concerns in respect of difficulties in communication with food premises and also in the logistics of disposal arrangements in some localities. The Head of Waste Management indicated that, for instance along Rye Lane, there was often no appropriate place for refuse storage. Officers worked with businesses to determine the minimum standards that could be introduced.
- 2.6 The Sub-Committee asked whether Legal Services was able to manage the amount of work necessary for enforcement. Officers indicated that regular case conferences took place and that there was a good relationship between departments. The Sub-Committee felt that it would be helpful to have a short briefing from Legal Services at a future meeting.
- 2.7 The Sub-Committee asked Officers whether they felt that appropriate priorities were being applied in the area of penalties and enforcement. Officers reported that the Best Value Review of Regulatory Services in 20000 had given a clear message that more enforcement was required. There continued to be a high level of complaints that highlighted public areas of concern – including noisy neighbours, litter and dog-mess. Central Government had given local authorities more powers which again emphasised particular areas of concern.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That in the next Municipal Year the Sub-Committee look in detail at the extent and effectiveness of community education relating to the environment (including work in schools and more widely in the community);
 2. That the production of a Community Environment Plan be seen as an opportunity to feed issues around environment into the Community Strategy;
 3. That the Chair of Southwark Alliance be invited to outline the work done to date by the Alliance on a strategic level in respect of environmental issues;
 4. That the Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager be invited to a future meeting to brief the Sub-Committee on initiatives taken to help small and ethnic minority businesses bring their premises up to appropriate levels of food hygiene; and
 5. That Legal Services be invited to attend a meeting to brief the Sub-Committee on their work in respect of enforcement and prosecution action.

3. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP/SOUTHWARK ALLIANCE - SCOPING

- 3.1 Councillor Barrie Hargrove, the Chair, and Councillor Alfred Banya agreed to draft a project brief for consideration at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That a scrutiny project brief be considered at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee; and
 2. That Nathalie Hadjifotiou be invited to the meeting in April to brief the Sub-Committee on the work of Southwark Alliance.

4. WORK PROGRAMME [see page 46]

- RESOLVED:** That a project brief for scrutiny of the management of the street trading account be considered at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

5. FORWARD PLAN [see pages 47- 49]

- 6.1 The Sub-Committee noted the Forward Plan.

The meeting finished at 10.10 pm.

CHAIR:

DATE: