



ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH 2004 at 7.00 PM at the Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Councillor Gavin O'Brien (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Alfred Banya, Lisa Rajan and Robert Smeath

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: Tim England - Environmental Health & Trading Standards
Manager
Rachel Prosser – Legal Services
Peter Roberts – Scrutiny Team

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Barrie Hargrove and Anne Yates and, for lateness, from Councillor Lisa Rajan.

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

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 February 2004 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

1. WASTE MANAGEMENT

1.1 The Sub-Committee noted that the three external witnesses had been unable to attend the meeting. The Sub-Committee agreed to invite them to the April meeting to give a brief presentation.

1.2 Dr Richard Anderson stressed the importance of partnership working between the Council and voluntary organisations and that this could enable new funding to be accessed. He expressed the view that partnership and successful partnership schemes needed to be awarded a higher profile in the borough. Speaking as a representative of the Community Recycling in Southwark Project (CRISP), Dr Anderson reported the success of the home composting and fones4safety schemes. It was hoped that the latter scheme would be expanded London-wide and eventually nation-wide.

RESOLVED:

1. That the representatives from CRISP, the Green Lanes Network and the Shaftesbury Resources Society be invited to the April meeting of the Sub-Committee; and
2. That the Sub-Committee draft its recommendations to the Executive, in respect of waste management, at its April meeting.

2. PENALTIES & PROSECUTIONS

2.1 The Legal Services representative outlined the range of prosecutions undertaken by the Legal team and gave details of the number of Officers now working in the Team. She indicated that the Team had been stretched by the volume of work in the previous year but that now its establishment had been geared up to meet this and that case management was being stream-lined. She explained that the Council rarely recovered full costs from an offender following a successful prosecution.

2.2 The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager briefed the Sub-Committee on the legal requirements of businesses selling food and risk assessed inspection regime of premises undertaken by the Council. The Manager emphasised that businesses would be closed down if there were imminent risk to human health. All complaints made against businesses were investigated.

- 2.3 The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager stressed that Southwark had a history of working positively with businesses, especially BME businesses, to bring them up to compliance and reduce risks to customers. The small number of prosecutions reflected the success of this approach, which was in line with the enforcement concordat and their enforcement policy. He commented that communication in appropriate languages was a problem; for instance in the lack of provision of food hygiene training courses in community languages and resource issues with obtaining suitably translated material. The high turnover of small businesses and their staff was also an issue.
- 2.4 The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager reported that currently there were a number of issues that were being dealt with in respect of BME businesses, such as the illegal importing of meat, dairy and fish products, repackaging of goods from bulk and other issues such as labelling, composition and illegal food additives. Work continued to deal with the problems but there were practical enforcement difficulties. The Manager also commented on problems of waste storage in Rye Lane and stressed that staff worked with Southwark's trade waste team to ensure compliance.
- 2.5 Members of the Sub-Committee felt that as much as possible should be done to promote the work of the Council in this area and to engage businesses and consumers. It was suggested that awards could be introduced for businesses operating particularly effectively. The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager commented that community out-reach was important and that one approach would be to encourage bigger businesses to share their experience and best practice. Regulatory issues needed to be considered in the round, and while food safety issues were the most visible ones, other issues such as pricing and correct weight and measure were also important. Currently, resources had to be used to deliver the expectations placed on local authorities by external agencies, such as the Health & Safety Executive, Food Standards Agency and the Department of Trade & Industry.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the legal and health & trading standards presentations be noted; and
 2. That the next meeting of the Sub-Committee consider any recommendations to be made to Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

3. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP/SOUTHWARK ALLIANCE – SCOPING
[see pages 1 – 9]

- 3.1 Councillor Alfred Banya introduced the draft scrutiny brief. Dr Richard Anderson commented that the Community Strategy did not include all partners working in Southwark in relation to the Strategy's objectives.
- 3.2 Members of the Sub-Committee agreed that, in order to effectively scope a scrutiny, Officers should be invited to the next meeting to give an overview of the objectives relating to Making Southwark Cleaner and Greener and Cutting Crime and the Fear of Crime.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That, in respect of Making Southwark Cleaner and Greener and Cutting Crime and the Fear of Crime, a briefing be made to the next meeting outlining current success against the objectives set out in the Community Strategy and future priorities over the short and medium term;
 2. That the briefing clearly set out partnerships with community and voluntary organisations; and
 3. That the briefing identify opportunities for the Sub-Committee to influence changes in the Community Strategy.

4. **WORK PROGRAMME** [see page 10]

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

5. **FORWARD PLAN** [see pages 11 - 13]

5.1 The Sub-Committee noted items on the Forward Plan April – July 2004.

RESOLVED: That Officers be invited to brief the Sub-Committee on the Review of the Integrated Cleansing Contract before it is considered by the Executive.

The meeting finished at 10.10 pm.

CHAIR:

DATE: