



## **ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of the meeting of the ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE held on 22 JUNE 2005 at 7:00PM at the Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

---

**PRESENT:** Councillor Barrie Hargrove (Chair)  
Councillors David Bradbury, Mark Glover, Gavin O'Brien.

**OFFICERS:** Sean Connolly – Head of Performance and Quality  
Glen Egan – Assistant Borough Solicitor  
Carina Kane – Scrutiny Project Manager  
Sarah Naylor – Assistant Chief Executive (Performance & Strategy)  
Claire Webb – Senior Corporate Policy Officer

**OTHERS:** Councillor Columba Blango, Executive Member for Equalities, Culture and Sport  
Stephanie and Jim Lodge, Southwark Friends of the Earth

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Eliza Mann and Lisa Rajan. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Dominic Thorncroft and Gavin O'Brien.

### **CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS**

The Members listed as being present were confirmed as the Voting Members.

### **NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS AS URGENT**

None.

### **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

None.

### **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 to an amendment, a copy of the amendment may be found in the Minute File and was 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 Environment and Community Support Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 11 May 2005 be agreed as a correct record of proceedings and signed by the Chair.

### **1 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP [Pages 1-3]**

1.1 Members noted the terms of reference and membership.

### **2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

2.1 The Assistant Chief Executive (Performance and Strategy) gave an overview of the council's performance management regime to the sub-committee, highlighting the role of the corporate plan and the national and local key performance indicators. She gave details of the end of year performance report that had been presented to Executive the previous evening; for example that performance highs included levels of recycling, bin collections and street cleanliness; and community safety had also improved although there had been an increase in violent crime. The Assistant CE clarified that the figures were quoted differed from those in the end of year performance report as the figures included the latest outrun to May 2005.

2.2 The Assistant CE elaborated further on the crime figures. Key points included that the increase in violent crime was a national problem; the Home Office had set a target of 30 percent reduction in three years; and the performance indicators for crime had been substantially revised for the 2005/06 financial year in order to improve consistency with the figures from the Police and the Audit Commission.

2.3 The Chair raised two concerns with scrutiny's involvement with performance monitoring. First, as had been illustrated, the figures presented to scrutiny were out-of-date. Second, scrutiny comments on performance did not appear to have any impact.

2.4 In response to the issue about timing, the Assistant CE said she understood the frustration, adding that the council only recently had the facility to report to Executive within a month of receiving the performance figures. She suggested that the sub-committee could have more impact if it identified particular areas/measures to focus on within the corporate basket of indicators e.g. violent crime. She made the point also that indicators were getting more difficult to manage in terms of their number and variety, and that comparisons between years may be more difficult because of definition changes between years.

2.5 There was discussion about how information about particular measures could be presented. Councillor Glover was keen to see a plotted trend analysis over time versus resource allocation to see where money was being spent and whether it was having any impact; and if the information could be presented over a 14-month period. The Chair noted that additional information could always be asked for at the time of consideration.

**RESOLVED:** That a list of all the performance indicators relevant to the remit of the sub-committee would be included in the July 2005 sub-committee meeting agenda;

That an information pack on violent crime would be prepared for the July 2005 sub-committee meeting i.e. an overview on what violent crime is, trends, key performance indicators, and initiatives being undertaken in this area.

### **3 WASTE MANAGEMENT PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE (PFI)**

- 3.1 The Head of Performance and Quality explained where things were currently at with the waste management PFI; i.e. the council had identified a potential site at Old Kent Road, and had been allocated approximately £35m funding from the government. The next key milestones were in developing a detailed consultation policy for consideration at the July scrutiny meeting, and considering the initial Expressions of Interest in September (some of this information would be confidential and need to be considered in closed session).
- 3.2 The Chair commented that at bidders day there had been discussion of the possible inclusion of an incinerator plant. The Head of Performance and Quality said that what was being discussed was not technically an incinerator; it was a 'Mechanical Biological Treatment' process which could create energy from heat that could be sold to recuperate costs. The key point was that they were intending for the plant to be a modern facility which would meet all UK and European Union directives.
- 3.3 The Chair also said he had been contacted by the Bonamy and Bramcote TRA about the consultation on the proposal, and had considered holding the next scrutiny meeting in the TRA hall so that the residents could be kept informed. The Head of Performance and Quality advised against a 'scattergun' communication and consultation approach, emphasising that the council was putting together a strategy to ensure that everyone would be involved and informed. The Chair instead decided that he would write to the Chair of the TRA to invite them to the July scrutiny meeting which would consider the consultation and communications strategy was being discussed.
- 3.4 Stephanie Lodge raised concerns about PFIs, using the example of St Mary's Hospital which exceeded its budget and expected time. The Head of Performance and Quality explained that PFIs had a bad reputation in some instances, but as with any project there were risks involved. In future the council would not be able to afford to transport waste to another area because of the government's policy on landfill tax, and extensive research had determined that the PFI approach was the only option. Councillor Glover also quoted figures demonstrating that more PFIs and PPPs were delivered on-time and to budget compared with public-funded projects.
- 3.5 The Chair asked whether there was the possibility that the project would not go ahead. The Head of Performance and Quality said the council had agreed it in principle but there were still obstacles to overcome e.g. obtaining planning permission. However a risk-management strategy was in place.

**RESOLVED:** That the sub-committee would look at the next stages in the Waste Management project at its July and September 2005 meetings.

### **4 COMMUNITY STRATEGY REVIEW [Pages 4-11]**

- 4.1 The Senior Corporate Policy Officer introduced the item, noting that the discussion papers were not pre-empting the priorities. A draft Community Strategy would be produced as a result of the current consultation.

- 4.2 The approach taken by the sub-committee to the item was to consider the challenges highlighted in the handout from the Senior Corporate Policy Officer about the topics of 'active and responsible citizens', 'a safe place' and 'a cleaner, greener borough'.
- 4.3 Members generally agreed with all of the challenges identified, i.e.
- Widen the opportunities and support to citizens of all ages and backgrounds to volunteer and come together for self-help activities
  - Improve the arrangements for citizens to get their voice heard and influence how public agencies operate.
  - Build consensus and cohesion across communities and neighbourhoods to respect each other and have some shared agreement on acceptable/unacceptable behaviours
  - The changes in public safety issues because of:
    - changing economic and social conditions in Southwark, link between some types of crime and deprivation
    - changing social attitudes to law and order, the balance of individual and community rights, attitudes to personal and environmental safety
    - policy changes affecting management and accountability of prevent and enforcement agencies
    - patterns of community cohesion and social polarisation
  - That the future of the borough could be affected by:
    - increased world concern about sustainability - climate change, oil reserves, more directives affecting daily life, more emphasis on promoting 'green' behaviours
    - more people and economic growth, could mean more waste, more transport and increased noise and air pollution
    - economic and housing growth, increased demand for land and open spaces, opportunity to redesign for sustainability and liveability
    - confidence of residents and businesses in how 'liveable' Southwark's environment becomes.
- 4.4 In addition the following comments were made:
- The importance of individual citizens being responsible and active, achieved through a mix of rewards and sanctions and supporting/educating
  - Ensuring that all voices are heard, not just those who speak the loudest
  - The role of elected councillors versus community representatives, and a balance between what people are elected representatives for and how much and where consultation is best directed
  - The need to be positive about how individuals engage with each other. Community cohesion and consensus are important in relation to community safety, particularly anti-social behaviour
  - The need to focus on environmental issues that effect Southwark, and the outcome of individual actions e.g. the water table and the effect of people paving gardens, waste and recycling, use of resources and transport choices
  - That the council needed to be hard-hitting about the impacts and communicate to people what they can and should do. However, corporate responsibility is also important.

## **5 PECKHAM PULSE**

- 5.1 The Executive Member for Equalities, Culture and Sport, Councillor Blango, thanked the sub-committee for inviting him to the meeting to discuss the situation with the Peckham Pulse swimming pool. The Executive Member said that the pool closure was an unfortunate situation caused by burst water pipes and was not related to the management or administration of the leisure centre. The actual reason for the burst pipes was not known, nor was the repair time. However the pool was the main attraction for the Peckham Pulse Leisure Centre, and Councillor Blango expressed his sorrow for the loss.
- 5.2 A question was asked about whether the council would look at taking legal action against those who constructed the building site. The Executive Member said that engineers were on site, but until the assessments were completed they would not know if Southwark would be prepared to take legal action. There would also need to be consideration of the costs of taking legal action against the costs of repair.
- 5.3 The Executive Member was asked what he was doing politically to address the situation. He replied that it was a complex issue, and he was reluctant to give an expected time for the pool to reopen in case it took longer. Once the assessments were received he would have a better idea.
- 5.4 Questions were asked about the information being given to the groups using the pool. The Executive Member said that users had been informed of other pools and the council had been looking at options to ensure alternatives were convenient and easy for people to access. The Executive Member did not know how many groups were affected, and said that if the sub-committee could inform him of any other groups they knew of he would arrange for officers to contact them to discuss alternative arrangements.
- 5.5 In response to a comment that people did not believe there was enough information about the situation with the pool, the Executive Member said this was not a fair statement. Information had been in newspapers and officers were contacting user groups. The Executive Member also dispelled any possible notion that the pool was being kept out of use to save money, commenting that the leisure centre was losing money as a result of the pool closure.
- 5.6 In conclusion, the Chair thanked the Executive Member for his attendance, and stressed the importance of ensuring that people were informed of the expected length of the pool closure as soon as the information became available.

**RESOLVED:** That the Executive Member for Equalities, Culture and Sport would write to the Chair of the sub-committee with details of the user groups affected by the closure of the Peckham Pulse swimming pool and actions being taken to provide them with alternative arrangements.

## **6 WORK PROGRAMME [Pages 12-18]**

- 6.1 The Chair explained each of his suggestions for the work programme in turn [agenda pages 12 and 13]. The sub-committee were happy to go ahead with these. The additional comments during the discussions are given below.
- 6.2 **Peckham Pulse:** The scrutiny would focus on concerns about the indefinite closure of the swimming pool. Members wanted to get the views of both user groups and individuals affected by the closure. To obtain individual views, members suggested a question be included in the next MORI survey about the standards and public accessibility of leisure facilities in Southwark.

- 6.3 In terms of obtaining the views of user groups, members wanted a survey to be carried out looking at issues such as the extent to which Fusion and the council have alerted people to alternative possibilities, how they are being inconvenienced by the closure, and whether appropriate arrangements are in place for ensuring that elderly and disabled groups can access/use of alternative leisure centres/pools. The scrutiny project manager said that she would discuss the suggestions with the council's research unit.
- 6.4 **Energy conservation:** This scrutiny would focus on what the council was doing to encourage energy conservation and how this was considered as part of the procurement process. It was suggested that London Remade should be involved in the scrutiny.
- 6.5 **Surrey Docks Watersports Centre:** An item on the Surrey Docks Watersports Centre was added to the work programme. Cllr O'Brien explained that no money had been invested for some time but funding had now become available and suggested that the focus of the scrutiny was how investment could be maximised for the benefits of schools in the area and whether the pricing structure would make it accessible. Members were keen for the scrutiny to include a site visit to the watersports centre and to invite representatives from the Splash Dolphins and Tideway Sailability user groups as well as the Executive Member, Head of Fusion, education officers and the Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure.
- 6.6 **Congestion charging:** The Chair also advised the sub-committee that OSC had discussed added an item to its work programme on the impact of congestion charging and the effect of the proposed new charging zone. Members were sceptical about the value of scrutinising this, but it was agreed that the Chair would write to the Director to ask how officers were preparing for this.
- 6.7 **Regular meeting information:** Members asked to be updated with regular information on the individual executive member decisions relevant to the sub-committee remit. Members also requested that budget reports for the Environment & Leisure Department be included regularly in its agenda.

**RESOLVED:** That the July meeting agenda would include draft project briefs the proposed scrutiny reviews of the Surrey Docks Watersports Centre and energy conservation.

The meeting closed at 9:35pm.

**CHAIR:**

**DATE:**