



ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE held on 25 JULY 2005 at 7:00PM at the Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Councillor Barrie Hargrove (Chair)
Councillors David Bradbury, Lisa Rajan, Dominic Thorncroft

OFFICERS: Richard Abraham – Head of Research, Information and Customer Feedback
Glen Egan – Assistant Borough Solicitor
Will Gardiner – Programme Manager, Integrated Waste Solutions
Carina Kane – Scrutiny Project Manager
David Peckham – Research and Consultation Manager
Jonathon Toy – Head of Community Safety

OTHERS: Stephanie and Jim Lodge, Southwark Friends of the Earth

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Gavin O'Brien and Mark Glover.

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 22 June 2005 be agreed as a correct record of proceedings and signed by the Chair.

1 RESOURCE PROGRAMME [Pages 43- 102]

- 1.1 The Programme Manager presented the report about the communications, consultation and research plan for the Resource Programme to the sub-committee. The report provided information about timeframes for the consultation and communication, the key phases, messages and objectives for the project, target audiences and costs. In addition, the Programme Manager also informed the sub-committee that a co-ordinator was to be engaged by August 2005 for the stakeholder engagement work. Appendixes 2 to 4 of the report were tabled at the meeting.
- 1.2 Members queried whether other councils would also be consulted. Officers advised that all neighbouring councils were consulted as part of the business case work. The council was also in contact with Lewisham Council in relation to the proposed acquisition of the gasworks site on Old Kent Road for the waste management facility. Officers also informed the sub-committee that the facility had been sized to allow for Southwark's growth and until this was reached (year 2020) there would be some spare capacity that could be used by other boroughs.
- 1.3 Members asked how the council would respond to any opposition from residents situated near the proposed site on Old Kent Road. The Programme Manager said some opposition was expected but it was important to balance the wider needs of Southwark with local objections. There were government targets that needed to be met and it would cost the council more in penalties imposed by the government if nothing was done. He also said that consultation had already taken place on situating the site in Southwark and the planning designation. A key part of the communications strategy would be to raise awareness of what was planned and to make it clear that the proposed waste management site would use innovative modern treatments rather than an incineration plant.
- 1.4 A member also asked whether it was realistic to try to capture the views of visitors and tourists [paragraph 14(c) of the report]. The Programme Manager said the project was aiming to capture everyone; there was a high influx of transient people who also generated waste, but the communication/communication would be on a different level compared to those directly involved.
- 1.5 The Programme Manager also confirmed that there would be some cost of the project to council taxpayers. He undertook provide the sub-committee with an estimate of the council tax increase per resident, and the effect on council tax if other councils also used the facility. It was noted that the council tax information could also be used when communicating the project to the public.
- 1.6 The Programme Manager was asked to comment on avoiding the project being caught up in the politics in the lead-up to the election. Officers said that no consultation was planned in early January to April 2006 and this should avoid this becoming an issue.

- 1.7 Stephanie Lodge said that her recycling had not been collected the previous week. The Programme Manager undertook to raise this with the Head of Waste Management.

RESOLVED:

1. That officers provide the sub-committee with the cost per council tax payer of the Resource Programme and how this figure would be affected if other councils used the waste management facility;
2. That the sub-committee receive a copy of the Resource Programme communications plan dated November 2004.

2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND VIOLENT CRIME

Violent crime [pages 1-23]

- 2.1 The Head of Community Safety gave the sub-committee a presentation about violent crime in Southwark. The presentation outlined the trends with various categories of violent crime, the hotspots, gangs within Southwark, and explained what the council was doing to tackle violent crime. Overall there was an increase in violent crime (although Southwark had a lower increase than the London-average), with increases in the categories of violence against the person, ABH and robbery, and reductions in the incidence of common assault and sexual offences.
- 2.2 Members then directed questions at officers. The Head of Community Safety explained that the priorities for the Safer Southwark Partnership were set out in the Crime and Drugs Strategy 2005-08 and had been developed following a detailed audit of data and consultation. Violent crime had been identified as a key issue. Some of the targets were set by the government; the Public Service Agreement was to reduce levels of crime by 20%. Reducing violent crime was not purely a police enforcement issue; there was still work that the council could do e.g. around prevention and managing hotspots.
- 2.3 A councillor commented that gangs appeared to be territorial and asked whether the council was monitoring migration to other areas. The Head of Community Safety confirmed that it was. The Community Intelligence Group met bi-weekly, and members were welcome to attend these meetings.
- 2.4 In response to a question about prevention work for ABH and robbery, officers explained that there was work in policing these although more work could be done. Prolific offenders had been identified in some areas, which had led to arrests in some cases.
- 2.5 Members queried how accurate the domestic violence data was and asked whether data was collected about children. Officers said that in over 80 percent of cases, children witnessed domestic violence. Domestic violence was hugely under-reported. The national figure was that it took 35 instances of domestic violence before it was reported, the council however took steps to intervene when it aware of three instances.
- 2.6 Apart from isolated incidents at one mosque, officers reported that there had been no significant increase in violent crime since the London bombings on 7 July 2005. There seemed to be a lot of community cohesion, and a group of community leaders met weekly to report and manage any concerns.

- 2.7 Members noted that alcohol was not identified as a big problem in Southwark and asked how this compared to neighbouring boroughs. Officers informed that Lambeth was similar to Southwark and Croydon was at about 25 percent higher. There was an increase in alcohol-related problems around fast-food establishments.
- 2.8 The Head of Community Safety also reported that the primary cost of violent crime was from health care. Each incidence of murder cost £1.1million.
- 2.9 The Chair thanked the Head of Community Safety for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the scrutiny project manager liaise with the Communications Department about putting out a press release stating that the sub-committee is concerned about the increase in violent crime;
2. That a copy of the violent crime presentation be circulated to members of the sub-committee.

Performance indicators [pages 24-28]

- 2.10 Members considered a list of the departmental performance indicators relevant to their sub-committee remit. A number of performance indicators were identified as being of specific interest to the sub-committee, i.e.
- BV 127 – explanation of the figures for robberies
 - BV176/BV225 – target for domestic violence places refuge not provided or supported seemed low, how does this compare with other boroughs?
 - LE12 – information about noise complaints
 - BV166 – provision of the checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health/trading standards
 - LW11 – why was the cleanliness Index Housing Estates indicator deleted?
 - LW21 – what is ‘fixed penalty notices’ referring to?
 - LP02 – explanation about the figures for time taken to remove an abandoned vehicle
 - LP10 – further discussion about the CCTV e.g. what it involves, the effectiveness, plans for investment
 - LL01 – further information about visits to leisure centres
 - BV223 and 187a – explanation about the situation with principal roads and footways
 - LH20/BV98 – information about street lights not working as planned
 - BV99 – explanation of change to the indicator about road accidents for 2005/06 from previous years
 - Whether there were any indicators in regard to the performance of community wardens.

RESOLVED:

That officers attend the September sub-committee meeting to further discuss those performance indicators identified by the sub-committee above [refer to paragraph 2.10]

3 WORK PROGRAMME [pages 29-42]

- 3.1 The Chair referred the members to the response received from the Executive Member for Equalities, Culture and Sport about the swimming pool at the Peckham Pulse Leisure Centre. This had been requested at the June 2005 sub-committee meeting. The Chair said that he had met with officers and had been provided with further information on the closure. He reported that the closure appeared to have been caused because the water pipes for the pool were not compacted properly when the site was built and had sunk. The council regularly surveyed the leisure centres to identify any potential problems but a problem of this nature would not have been found through this process. A public meeting was scheduled for 4 August to explain the situation with Peckham Pulse to any interested person.
- 3.2 In addition, the Chair reported that information had been sought from officers about the number of swim visits to the Peckham Pulse, Camberwell and Dulwich leisure centres to determine whether those who had been displaced from Peckham were attending nearby leisure centres. Comparisons from the periods from 24/03/04 to 18/07/04 and the same period in 2005 indicated that there was a net loss of just over 30,000 swim visits across the three pools in the period the Pulse pool had been closed. This could be a result of the centres reaching their capacity.
- 3.3 The Chair also updated the sub-committee about the Surrey Docks Watersports Centre (SWDC). He had discussed this with officers, and had been informed that the leisure centres were all suffering from years of under-investment. The council was working with Fusion to identify means to secure funds without the council being liable as guarantor. If the lack of investment was not addressed the council might have to close some leisure centres. The SDWC was not currently financially viable, and it had been proposed that the watersports centre would include a health and fitness area in order to cross-subsidise the watersports.
- 3.4 Members also discussed the approach to the scrutiny of Southwark's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (SASBU). Brimington Estate would be invited to share their experiences. This scrutiny was scheduled to begin in November 2005.
- 3.5 Following member discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

1. That the sub-committee seek an update from officers about whether all the schools that had been displaced from the Peckham Pulse swimming pool had now found alternative options;
2. That officers and the Executive Member for Equalities, Culture and Sport be invited to attend the September 2005 sub-committee meeting to discuss investment in Southwark's leisure centres and long-term proposals for their future.

The meeting closed at 9:35pm.

CHAIR:

DATE: