

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 17.6.03	MEETING NAME Executive
Report title:		Motion Submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.9 – Abandoned Vehicles	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure (Borough Solicitor & Secretary)	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Executive consider the motion as set out in paragraph 2 below.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. At the Extraordinary Council Assembly meeting on 21st May 2003 a motion was submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.9 (1) by Councillor David Bradbury and seconded by Councillor Toby Eckersley. The motion was subsequently amended and referred to the Executive for consideration:-

That Council calls for a report from the Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure on the Council's current performance dealing with abandoned vehicles and what steps are planned to improve it, the report especially to look at the question of increasing court action against perpetrators, a matter only briefly touched on in the report that went to the Executive on 11th March 2003.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.9 (3), the above motion was referred to the Executive, which shall report upon the outcome of their deliberations upon the motion to the next meeting of Council Assembly.
4. The constitution allocates particular responsibility for functions to Council Assembly, for approving the budget and policy framework, and to the Executive, for developing and implementing the budget and policy framework and overseeing the running of Council services on a day-to-day basis.
5. Any key issues, policy or funding implications are included in the advice from the Director of Environment and Leisure.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure

6. The Director of Environment and Leisure submitted a report on the current performance of the Abandoned Vehicles service, and the plans to improve it to the Council Executive on 11th March. This showed a continuous

improvement in performance from an average of 18 days in 2000/01 to 16 days in 2001/02, 10 days in 2002/03 and a target performance level of an average of 6 days for 2003/04.

Essentially the report set out that this will be achieved by:

- i) Utilising the Environment Call Centre as the primary contact point for all reports with full integration to the back office using Environment and Leisure's new "Confirm" software.
- ii) The establishment of a new Nuisance Vehicle service jointly with the Housing department, with increased staffing resources.
- iii) Moving from re-active reporting to pro-active identification using all the front line inspection resources in Environment and Leisure and Housing.
- iv) A new contract for the removal and disposal.
- v) The Nuisance vehicle service will have a dedicated manager who is currently being recruited his/hers remit will be to pursue offenders through the courts.

Further information

- vi) Nuisance vehicle inspectors with generic skills are also presently being recruited. These inspectors will have the power to deal with abandonment on the public highway and housing estates. They will also be able to target and prosecute businesses operating illegally on the highway.
- vii) In September the Executive will receive a report that will highlight the performance of the service and the progress to-date.
- viii) It has also been expressed by the London Fire Brigade that there has been a healthy decline in the Non-Accidental & Abandoned Vehicle Fires in Southwark, which has been recognised as particularly significant given the rising trend in previous years. Southwark Council and the Fire Brigade are obviously keen to ensure the momentum is kept going with this reduction. So therefore the Director of Environment & Leisure is to meet with the Divisional Officer-Borough Commander Southwark Fire Brigade in the very near future, to determine actual percentage reductions, and to discuss the continuity and development of this focus.

Further Information Legal Aspect

- ix) Members should be aware that the current legislation in terms of prosecution is weak and that is why most Councils do not pursue offenders through the courts. However, from January 2004 new measures will be introduced that will significantly tighten the registration and licensing system. This will make it much easier to deter and detect motorist who fail to insure and or tax their vehicle. It will also be easier to trace the keepers of abandoned vehicles, as the last Registered keeper will retain responsibility for the vehicle.

- x) Once the new unit has been established we will undertake a series of high profile campaigns to raise the awareness of the problems with nuisance vehicles and the liability of prosecution of offenders.

REASONS FOR LATENESS AND URGENCY

7. It was not possible to circulate this report five clear days in advance of the meeting due to the need to clarify factual detail/officer consultations. Urgent consideration of this item is required so as not to delay consideration of the subject matter on abandoned vehicles.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Original Motions	Room 315 Town Hall, Peckham Road, London. SE5 8UB	Lesley John Constitutional Support Unit 020 7525 7228

APPENDIX A

Audit Trail

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Support Manager (Executive)		
Report Author	Lesley John, Constitutional Support Unit		
Version	Final		
Dated	10 th June 2003		
Key Decision?	Yes		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER			
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included	
Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure	Yes		
Executive Member	Yes		
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services	6 th June 2003		