

Item No:	Classification: OPEN	Date: 4 November 2003	Meeting Name: EXECUTIVE
Report Title:		Call-In: Funding for Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations (SGTO)	
Ward(s) or Group affected:		All Wards	
From:		Overview & Scrutiny Committee	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Executive re-considers its decision of 7 October 2003, that it will not be minded to agree any further funding for Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations until substantial progress can be made on agreeing the draft Vision for the Best Value Review of Tenant and Resident Involvement and the Tenant Fund, and replace it with the following:
 - i) That it notes SGTO's commitment to progressing the draft vision of the Best Value Review of Tenant and Resident Involvement and the Tenant Fund;
 - ii) That it notes the Executive Member for Housing's commitment that section 2 of the original decision of 7 October 2003 did not imply any criticism of SGTO; and
 - iii) That all parties involved with the Best Value Reviews are urged to work on agreeing a draft vision for the Best Value Review of Tenant and Resident Involvement and the Tenant Fund.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. On 7 October 2003 the Executive considered a report from the Strategic Director of Housing seeking further funding up to £6,000, from the Tenant Fund, to SGTO, subject to monthly expenditure reports being submitted to the Strategic Director of Housing and a more detailed breakdown of the estimated costs of postage. The Executive agreed the interim funding and, in addition, that it would not be minded to agree any further funding for Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations until substantial progress can be made on agreeing the draft Vision for the Best Value Review of Tenant and Resident Involvement and the Tenant Fund
3. On 13 October 2003 the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Kim Humphreys, and three members of the Committee (Councillors Dora Dixon-Fyle, John Friary and Andy Simmons) requested a call-in of this decision.
4. The reasons given for the call-in were as follows:

"That decision 2 as worded is vague, i.e. what does "substantial" mean? That it is not in line with what was agreed with Tenants Council and TMC".

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the call-in request at their meeting on 22 October 2003. Members who had requested the call-in expressed concern that the original decision seemed to place the responsibility for progress solely with SGTO. This was unreasonable as it was the responsibility of all sides to make progress. Funding should not be linked to any progress being made. Members also commented that the word, "substantial", in the decision was subjective and again inappropriate.

6. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee received a deputation from SGTO. Representatives of SGTO confirmed that the present wording of the Executive resolution was unacceptable to tenants. They stressed that SGTO had striven to move the Best Value Review forward but that this was not their sole responsibility. They also emphasised that the issue of funding should not be directly linked to progress being made and questioned whether this was in accord with the decisions taken on funding applications by the Tenant Fund Management Committee, Tenants Council and the Executive. SGTO informed the Committee that they had arranged three meetings to take place in the borough as a way of ensuring that tenants were fully engaged in working towards the Reviews.

7. The Executive Member for Housing addressed the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. She indicated that the Executive decision had not intended to accuse SGTO of blocking progress. She felt that there had been some misunderstanding as to action to be taken following her attending the Tenants Council but stated that she welcomed the three meetings arranged by SGTO. She would ensure Officers gave full support in order to facilitate those meetings. In closing, she stressed that there had been no intention of placing on SGTO the entire onus of achieving progress. The intention had been to encourage movement towards an agreed vision and the process of reaching it and to relieve uncertainty for tenants.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Executive 7 October 2003 – Agenda and Minutes	Town Hall, Peckham Road, London. SE5 8UB	Ian Millichap Constitutional Support 020 7525 7225
Overview & Scrutiny 22 October 2003 – Agenda and Minutes		Lucas Lundgren Scrutiny Team 020 7525 7224

APPENDIX A

Audit Trail

Lead Officer	Shelley Burke, Head of Overview & Scrutiny	
Report Author	Peter Roberts, Scrutiny Team	
Version	Final	
Dated	23 October 2003	
Key Decision?		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Chief Officer	Yes	None
Executive Member	No	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services	23 October 2003	