



HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Housing, Environment, Transport and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Monday 21 January 2013 at 7.00 pm at 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Gavin Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Graham Neale (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Chris Brown
Councillor Michael Bukola
Councillor Lorraine Lauder MBE
Councillor Tim McNally
Councillor Martin Seaton

**OTHER MEMBERS
PRESENT:** Councillor Barrie Hargrove

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:** Deborah Collins, Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure
Ian Smith, Head of Sustainable Services
Des Waters, Head of Public Realm
Peter Roberts, Scrutiny Project Manager

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 There were no apologies.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

2.1 There were no additional items.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 Councillors Graham Neale, Lorraine Lauder and Martin Seaton made declarations of interest as council tenants.

4. CABINET MEMBER INTERVIEW - COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE, TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT & RECYCLING

- 4.1 Councillor Barrie Hargrove, Cabinet Member, Transport, Environment & Recycling, highlighted areas within his portfolio. He reminded the sub-committee of the cuts in central government grant that had resulted in cuts of £90 million and that further savings would be necessary over the next two years. Despite this, a survey had recorded public satisfaction of 93% with the borough's parks. £8 million had been invested in Burgess Park to widespread acclaim and Southwark parks had been awarded fourteen green flags. Councillor Hargrove also reported improvements in recycling rates and the successful introduction of food waste recycling and mixed dry recyclables. The council also intended to expand recycling on estates. Expenditure on street cleaning had to be reduced following the cuts in grant but standards and satisfaction were still good.
- 4.2 Councillor Hargrove updated the sub-committee on the development of a comprehensive cemetery strategy and of a tree strategy. In addition, the deficit on the markets budget had been reduced and progress was being made with cycling initiatives and flood prevention. Councillor Hargrove also reported on progress on the SELCHP heat programme which would provide cheap heat to five estates in the Rotherhithe area. It would also significantly reduce carbon and nitrous oxide emissions.
- 4.3 In response to questions, Councillor Hargrove stated that the council was clearly making enormous strides in terms of recycling and was now in the top third of league tables in terms of residual waste. The recycling rate had been increased from 20.49% in May 2010 to 33.44% in November 2012.
- 4.4 Members also asked for the cabinet member's view on the possibility of extending the number 63 bus route to terminate at Honor Oak Park Station. Councillor Hargrove reported the Mayor of London's policy that if a bus route was extended then another route needed to be shortened. Councillor Hargrove indicated that there was a possibility that the bus route could be extended one stop, to bring the termination point nearer the top of the hill. He had made clear to Transport for London the benefit of linking the bus route to the rail system. Members were also concerned at how the impact of the loss of the South London Line could be assessed. Councillor Hargrove stressed that he had strongly opposed the loss of the South London Line loop but hoped that there was still an opportunity to argue for trains from Bromley stopping at Peckham Rye on their way to Victoria.
- 4.5 In respect of street cleaning, a member asked whether some areas of the borough were cleaned to a better standard than others. Councillor Hargrove reported that he and the head of sustainable services had inspected Rye Lane and as a result the service dealing with collection of bulk waste had been extended with more frequent visits and enforcement action taken in respect of dumping. The lay-out of the public realm had also been altered. Councillor Hargrove also commented that the Peckham and Nunhead Community Council had allocated revenue funding from Cleaner Greener Safer towards street cleaning. Ian Smith, head of

sustainable services, explained that, in line with the previous National Indicator 195, three inspections of street cleaning were carried out during the year. These were undertaken in conjunction with colleagues from Lambeth and Lewisham in order to ensure continued impartiality in terms of the findings.

- 4.6 Members were concerned at what the council could do to address the problem of dog-fouling in the borough. Councillor Hargrove reported that there were 486 dog waste bins in the borough and a twenty-four hour response to reports of dog fouling. All street cleaners had tools to deal with dog waste and were instructed to do so by management. Councillor Hargrove stated that the number of reports of dog fouling had peaked at 3732 in 2010 and that the figure for 2011 was 1642. He explained that the issuing of penalty notices had to be based on evidence. The head of sustainable services added that if a hot spot was identified then reminder letters would be sent to all properties on the road. The reducing number of reports perhaps reflected a cultural shift in behaviour. In response to further questions, Councillor Hargrove explained that the department also worked closely with community wardens. Some members of the sub-committee were concerned about dog-fouling in parks and wondered about the value of creating dog only areas, for instance in Burgess Park. Des Waters, head of public realm, pointed out the difficulties in introducing these in Burgess Park as it had a large open perimeter. Councillor Hargrove emphasised that introducing such areas would also require consultation with the community and friends of the park.
- 4.7 Members asked what action the council could take in respect of fly tipping on private land. Councillor Hargrove explained that the wording of the relevant legislation required the council to demonstrate adverse effect of fly tipping. It was however possible to take steps where the fly tipping affected the amenity of the area. Councillor Hargrove stressed that officers took this issue very seriously and had taken action on Peckham Road where rear gardens had been used for storage and in November 2012 had acted in response to allegations of illegal dumping in the Russia Dock Woodland area. A member raised a particular issue on Keetons Estate, Jamaica Road, of over-flowing bins and fly tipping. The head of sustainable services responded that there was a particular problem on this estate where there was not the storage capacity for refuse bins. Meetings had been held with residents to find a solution to this issue and a plan had been agreed. Another member referred to East Street and Trafalgar Road and asked whether there were regulations to control the space left between paladin bins and buildings. Councillor Hargrove asked to be supplied with more details so that this could be properly explored.
- 4.8 In response to members' questions, Councillor Hargrove gave details of the number of proposed cycle cut-throughs, contra-flows and complimentary measures. He indicated that he could look again at Newcomen Street. He spoke about how works to improve walking and cycling along Greendale were progressing and that a bid has been submitted to extend these to Ruskin Park, which could join up with a planned cycle route through Lambeth to the River Thames. Councillor Hargrove reported that he met regularly with the Southwark Cyclists' group, and that these meetings included joint ones with other stakeholders such as Transport for London and the police. Councillor Hargrove also clarified the situation in respect of the plane trees on Rotherhithe New Road,

which would be lost due to alternative measures not being feasible. He added that the council was actively looking at alternative nearby sites and discussing with the local community options for the planting of new trees.

5. SUB-LETTING OF COUNCIL PROPERTIES

- 5.1 This item was deferred as there was not a council officer available to present it. The chair expressed his disappointment at this and stressed that it delayed the work programme of the sub-committee. He would take this issue up with officers the following day.

6. SCRUTINY OF TENANTS HALLS - DRAFT REPORT

- 6.1 Some members had not received a copy of the draft report until that morning and the sub-committee agreed to discuss any initial views and consider a revised draft more fully at its next meeting.

- 6.2 The sub-committee agreed that the following recommendations were in need of revision:

Recommendation 5

- 6.3 Some members took the view that bars should not be available at any T&RA hall and other members felt that decisions about this should be made on individual merit. Some members felt that it would be useful to have sight of the regulations in respect of the two bars currently in operation. It was also suggested that there could be equality issues, for instance relating to religion. In view of the difference of opinion amongst it was proposed that this recommendation be deleted.

Recommendation 6

- 6.4 The chair explained that a tenancy at will agreement was not possible in respect of an organisation and that the recommendation needed to be amended to take account of this.

Recommendation 7

- 6.5 Members of the sub-committee agreed to the principle of halls with greater revenue potential demanding higher rent but were of the view that the detail of this required further thought and officer advice. Account should also be taken of the size of T&RAs and of whether T&RAs were newly formed.

Recommendation 9

- 6.6 A member suggested an addition to the recommendation with a view to new residents automatically receiving information about their local T&RA.

Recommendation 13

- 6.7 Members emphasised that the whistle blowing process needed to be very clear and to specify the role of officers and to include a role for councillors.

Recommendation 14

- 6.8 It was agreed that this recommendation be amended to specify a maximum number of key-holders.

Recommendation 15

- 6.9 Members suggested that a threshold for single signature be recommended, above which multiple signatures would be required.

Possible Examples of Fraud

- 6.10 The chair reported that he was awaiting advice on the best way to reflect the examples of fraud that the sub-committee had considered in evidence.

7. MINUTES

- 7.1 The minutes were deferred to the next meeting for consideration.

Meeting ended at 9.10 pm