



ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT, COMMUNITIES AND CITIZENSHIP SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Environment, Transport, Communities and Citizenship Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Wednesday 1 February 2012 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01C - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Dan Garfield (Chair)
Councillor Geoffrey Thornton
Councillor Kevin Ahern
Councillor James Barber
Councillor Chris Brown
Councillor Victoria Mills

**OTHER MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:**

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 There were no apologies for absence

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

2.1 No urgent business was received

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2011 were approved as an accurate

record

5. CABINET MEMBER INTERVIEW - COUNCILLOR BARRIE HARGROVE - CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING

Interview with Councillor Barrie Hargrove, cabinet member for transport, environment and recycling

PREPARING FOR THE OLYMPICS

The chair referred to anticipated impact on London Bridge and asked about the planning arrangements. The cabinet member explained that at officer level, the head of community safety, Jonathan Toy, has the overall lead. A cross-organisational working group has been established, a testing exercise has been completed and its recommendations implemented. Operational, land management, congestion management issues are all being worked on. Councillor Barber asked what the cabinet member thought about the London Mayor's advice to people to go and have a drink before trying to get on trains? The cabinet member responded that Transport for London will be telling people not to come to London Bridge unless essential and that he was not sure about the way the mayor expresses this issue. London Bridge is already a very crowded station and the issue of managing the additional congestion should not be underestimated. Councillor Barber asked whether the council had thought of arranging other events to divert people, for example at the Marlborough playground. Councillor Hargrove pointed out that there would be the Live Nation screens at Potters Field. Other events would be very difficult to put on as there will be a scarcity of resources for safe stewarding, but he was happy to look at this suggestion with the emergency planning team.

Councillor Barber asked about plans for dressing the borough. The cabinet member said the council has some arrangements planned around Camberwell and Peckham and the GLA working on areas around the north of the borough. Final decisions would be made once the torch route has been decided

CEMETERIES

Councillor Mills introduced this theme by asking why what was a major issue last summer is taking a long time to resolve – though she was aware that short term arrangements are now being made and that perhaps feasibility work was delaying longer term decisions. Councillor Hargrove said that cemetery arrangements are an aspect of council service that has never received a lot of political consideration, so has not had the attention it might benefitted from. By focussing on it now, the service has managed to do 2 things: provide short term burial space; and carry out a detailed consultation exercise in order to create an evidence base going forward. He accepted that this had caused uncertainty over the recreation ground, but it was done with a view to developing a long term position

Councillor Mills commented that the quality of some of the work at both Camberwell Old and New Cemeteries has not been good from the point of view of both burial services and local residents. The overall effect is not as good as it could be. Councillor Hargrove agree that there is still a long way to go to get the cemeteries up to the right standard. He said that increased fees coming into the service are improving income which funds tasks such as pathway repairs

Councillor Barber asked about the long term - some authorities set aside 25% of fees for future improvements. How is Southwark planning ahead? Councillor Hargrove said he believes the burial service should pay for itself and not rely on other funding other than occasional capital for strategic works.

Councillor Barber suggested that looking ahead 50-100 years, the council might wish to aspire to the cemeteries being green flag open space. The cabinet member was happy to explore this suggestion for the report that would be coming forward.

Councillor Barber asked whether making cremation cheaper than burial would be a way of making the burial space last longer. Councillor Hargrove said he was not willing to use fees as a way of driving people's choices, but the department has raised burial fees are the same as the cost of cremation.

Councillor Barber said that he has visited other crematoria where there has been investment so burial parties can have a better experience – was this something that had been considered. The cabinet member said he was aware of that issue which had also been raised with the council by undertakers. He would be interested in working on that if there is sufficient capital funding available.

Councillor Aherne asked whether the cabinet member felt that improvements have been made to bereavement services since he took up his post? Councillor Hargrove said that he was pleased with some of the improvements that had been made. The urgency is now not as great as when he came into his post, but the service continues to need careful management.

The cabinet member also agreed to explore the potential for other technologies such as freeze drying, and to look at whether there is potential for cross-borough agreement on use of cemetery space.

CARBON REDUCTION

Councillor Thornton asked whether Southwark is well placed to grab the various opportunities for carbon reduction that are available this year and make serious impact? Councillor Hargrove said that the crucial backdrop to bear in mind was the under-investment in the council's housing stock, and the administration's key commitment was to delivering its pledge to make all council homes warm, safe and dry. However, the service had identified about 20 actions in the carbon reduction strategy and aimed to achieve a reduction of 26.6% in the operational estate.

On the carbon reduction programmes, Gill Davies, Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure, clarified that the Green Deal relies on the council borrowing or setting aside a

large amount of capital to create the fund. It is not an immediate opportunity unless councils have a large amount of capital or prudential borrowing available. We are part of the Renew programme, and the cabinet member has written to community councils inviting them to make renew applications under the Cleaner, Greener, Safer (CGS) scheme. Councillor Barber pointed out that the deadlines for CGS may have to be delayed to allow time for any Renew applications

Councillor Thornton asked the strategic director if it was her assessment that the council can take the risk to borrow the capital sums, since they would be paid back in reduced energy bills. Gill Davies responded that previous experience is of very low takeup in the pilot schemes - if that remains the case, the risk is high.

RECYCLING

Councillor Aherne asked the cabinet member how the service for dry recyclables was performing. Other members commented that there are some properties with small or no front gardens are looking very cluttered, and some people have not yet received blue bins and have been told they have run out. The cabinet member responded that the scheme had been rolled out to 44,000 properties and the service is now working with advisors on how some areas need adjustments. His understanding was that blue boxes and brown caddies are available. The service was happy to send advisers out to properties with specific difficulties – he had had good feedback that resolutions are almost always found.

Other members asked whether there was scope for more flexibility in the service – for example could there be smaller green bins, was there room for creative thinking about properties where the crew will not go up front steps to fetch the bins?

Councillor Hargrove said he was happy to do anything within his power to make it easier for people to recycle – he would like to know about specific difficulties customers are having. Ian Smith, Head of Sustainable Services, added that there is a stock of smaller green bins. Councillor should ask residents to ring the call centre and request a change of bin. He would be happy to take up any problems.

Councillor Brown asked what we are doing as a council to educate people – was there any basis for a carrot and stick approach? The cabinet member responded that he is keener on education than on fines. Some people do not understand the different refuse streams and have not worked out how to manage their household recycling. He had heard from officers who visited households where there is evidence that people genuinely do not know what to do – there was also an equalities aspect for people who are less educated

Councillor Thornton asked whether the cabinet member regrets the “one size fits all” mix of bins? The cabinet member said he did not regret it – the council must enable recycling and this sometimes means we have to sacrifice the aesthetics to enable the urban environment to function properly. He did regret that the call centre had been overwhelmed and this let down the rollout and gave some people a poor experience of the recycling scheme. Councillor Thornton asked whether there was a spike in costs from people requesting replacement bins. Ian Smith explained that the additional costs are not borne by the council. Veolia manage replacements, swaps and additional requests

Councillor Mills asked for progress on opportunities for reuse of unwanted goods.

Councillor Hargrove said that the new waste centre is open now and very successful.

People can take items there. There is a move in London to create more facilities for people to be able to send clothes for textile reuse. He was not sure if this is right for Southwark as our charities generate some income from clothes collections. He had also just heard about a Veolia initiative in Haringey for recycling mattresses. The CRISP scheme is still working on recycling computers. He agreed that it is an area where the council needs to keep pushing

Councillor Barber suggested that the council look at Windsor, where there is an incentive scheme in place – recycling is weighed and credits awarded for disouted use of leisure centres. The cabinet member said that he was interested in looking at all these areas for encouraging recycling.

CYCLING

Councillor Barber asked whether the Elephant & Castle Supplementary Planning Document presents an opportunity to segregate cycling in TfL roads eg New Kent Road, Blackfriars Rd? Was this something the cabinet was minded to consider? Councillor Hargrove said he was happy to discuss with the transport planners in the regeneration service and consider this.

Councillor Brown asked how the council is working on the objective of reducing the number of children being driven to school. The cabinet member responded that school travel plans one obvious way; physical measures such as a Controlled Parking Zone around a school might be necessary in certain cases. The council also needs to improve the public realm to make walking more pleasant. He undertook to respond further to the committee with a more measurable answer

Members discussed how effective new road schemes are evaluated. Does the council ever revisit if a scheme does not achieve the outcomes that had been wanted? Councillor Barber asked whether the council is using the accredited Institute of Highway Transportation Engineers approved method of evaluating schemes and agreed to send details to the cabinet member

Councillor Barber asked for a progress report on Sustrans Connect 2. Councillor Hargrove said the council was ready to agree heads of terms with Railtrack but there is a hold up around access to the site - a problem with a yard controlled by Network Rail. There was a risk of losing the funding and the Connect 2 group was asking the council leader and Simon Hughes MP to lobby the chair of Network Rail. that area

Councillor Hargrove also agreed to explore the potential for use of average speed cameras to be considered on Walworth Rd – subject to funding and the accompanying enforcement regime.

6. HIGHWAYS

The committee discussed ideas for their report on highways:

Investment in the website
Better communication strategy
Improved contract management

CHAIR:

DATED:

[EXEC ONLY]

DEADLINE FOR NOTIFICATION OF CALL-IN UNDER SECTION 18 OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES IS MIDNIGHT, [DATE].

THE ABOVE DECISIONS WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTABLE UNTIL AFTER THAT DATE. SHOULD A DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE BE CALLED-IN FOR SCRUTINY, THEN THE RELEVANT DECISION WILL BE HELD IN ABEYANCE PENDING THE OUTCOME OF SCRUTINY CONSIDERATION.