



ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT, COMMUNITIES AND CITIZENSHIP SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Environment, Transport, Communities and Citizenship Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Wednesday 7 March 2012 at 7.00 p.m. at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 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 Shelley Burke (Head of Overview & Scrutiny)
SUPPORT: Mick Lucas (Public Realm Asset Manager)
Fitzroy Williams (Scrutiny Project Assistant)

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors James Barber and Victoria Mills.

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

- 4.1 The minutes of the meetings held 1st February 2012 were approved as an accurate record after the following amendments:-

Page 3 – paragraph 6 – “Aherne” be corrected to read “Ahern”.

Page 4 – paragraph 3 - “Aherne” be corrected to read “Ahern”.

5. HIGHWAYS REVIEW

- 5.1 The chair opened the meeting by confirming that the sub-committee members had the following documents:-

- a. “Going the distance” Audit Commission study of value for money in road maintenance.
- b. Potholes review – interim report from the Department for Transport Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme.
- c. Comparative data Southwark and Lambeth.
- d. Information for the public – web pages from Gloucestershire County Council.

- 5.2 The chair informed members that the sub-committee had one more meeting this year and it was scheduled for 27.04.2012. Members agreed to look at the draft highways report and formulate the recommendations to the Cabinet member.

- 5.3 The sub-committee decided to formulate the recommendations around three (3) main areas which were as follows:-

1. Clear understanding of proposed work
2. Clear and easy to understand signs
3. Council plan – planned and reactive works.

- 5.4 Members heard from the Public Realm Asset Manager who drew their attention to the Lambeth and Southwark contract information and noted the difference in particular areas such as carriageway, footway, structures and gully repair and maintenance. It was also reported that Lewisham Council was currently undergoing restructuring and would not be in a position to provide similar information regarding highways.

- 5.5 The officer reported that FM Conway’s were the contractors for both Southwark and Lambeth, both boroughs had the same scale network, with similar sized roads and area.

- 5.6 The sub-committee discussed the need for a key performance indicator (KPI’s) around customer services and complaints.

- 5.7 It was also highlighted that information should be available on the website for the public. The committee agreed that the focus of the report should be on improvement in the quality of information to the public.

- 5.8 The chair with the agreement of the sub-committee stated that the draft report should contain the following areas for recommendations:-
1. Information provision to the public
 2. Contract management
 3. How the council may deal with planned and reactive work in the future.
- 5.9 The sub-committee discussed the inspection regime and joint working with regards to highway improvements, members were advised of the need to consider the highway code of practice but remember it is not set in stone.
- 5.10 Officers advised that intervention levels can be raised and that scrutiny can be involved in this decision or the IDM area via Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.11 The officer introduced the Audit Commission report and took questions from the sub-committee. The officer reported that footpaths in Lambeth were in poor condition and getting worse. It was further reported that there were more potholes in Lambeth and Lewisham than Southwark.
- 5.12 Members were interested in ways of improving customer satisfaction, this could be tackled by informing and allowing people to understand why these decisions are being taken would be useful. Information needs to be made available to councillors and the public that is comprehensible.
- 5.13 A link needs to be put in place so that the contractor provides a website for public information and interest. The recommendation is that Information be provided by the contractors to manage and process before capturing and relayed to the public. Financial penalties must be put in place if the contractor does not meet set targets.
- 5.14 The chair with the agreement of members stated that a good contractor would be required to share the same ethos as the council. Officers need to hold contractors to account.
- 5.15 Officers reported that they were open to members suggestions about key performance indicators (KPI's).
- 5.16 Members discussed call centres and felt that operator's first check should be to the website for information, this should provide stronger feedback from the call centre. The website should be maintained by officers but the contractor should be responsible for providing updated information regarding works and repairs.
- 5.17 The website needs to provide members of the public with information such as any proposed works, area and time scheduled for the required works.
- 5.18 It was also recommended that effective management is required on monitoring of all KPI's and that customer satisfaction views are taken onboard. The level of complaints needs to be monitored and checked to make sure that they are dealt with quickly and efficiently.

- 5.19 Members enquired about councillors being given scorecards to fill in regarding complaints so that this information could be collated and check the trends, this could then be feedback to the contractors for action. Members' inquiries should be processed within 48 hours.
- 5.20 The chair asked the officer if it would be possible to consider briefing ward members on works in their wards. The officer reported that a project database was presently being worked on by officers and this information could be passed to councillors making sure the information is understandable and easy to use.
- 5.21 Road side signage is presently not adequate and requires improvement. This should be taken up by the new contractor as a matter of urgency.
- 5.22 The sub-committee discussed the idea of having a map of Southwark with a colour code of red, amber and green to signify the level of works scheduled or required for other repair work. The officer informed members that the level and volume of data was massive.
- 5.23 Members agreed that information on roads via the website that have been repaired would be positive information for the public, it would also be useful to have a summary of the project which should be kept up to-date and a list of works such as potholes.
- 5.24 The officer undertook to provide the sub-committee with highways enquiries regarding work orders and including inspections that involved the council.
- 5.25 The sub-committee then watched a short video demonstrating the jet-patcher, which is a machine that is used to repair and maintain major roads and highways.
- 5.26 The officer explained that this was a very expensive technology and this would not be of much use to small and narrow streets.
- 5.27 It was also reported that the following schedule relates to the highway contract tender process:-
- PPQ goes out next week
 - Returned 07.06.2012
 - Closure 28.09.2012
 - Specification 08.06.2012

RESOLVED: - 1. That the sub-committee undertake to finalise and agree the Highways final report via e-mail.

2. That the sub-committee request an update on the following areas:-

- A. on recycling in the borough.
- B. general update of complaints on food waste.
- C. members were interested to know if there were anymore streets/roads that need help with recycling.

The meeting ended at 9.05 p.m.

CHAIR:

DATED: