

Housing, Environment, Transport and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Housing, Environment, Transport and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Monday 25 March 2013 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Gavin Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Graham Neale
Councillor Chris Brown
Councillor Michael Bukola
Councillor Lorraine Lauder MBE
Cris Claridge
David Monaghan

**OTHER MEMBERS
PRESENT:** Councillor Geoffrey Thornton (Reserve)
Councillor Richard Livingstone

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:** Shelley Burke – Head of Overview & Scrutiny
Norman Coombe – Head of Corporate Team
Debbie Gooch – Head of Litigation
Dave Lewis – Head of Maintenance and Compliance
David Markham – Head of Major Works
Ferenc Morath – Investment Manager
Gerri Scott – Strategic Director of Housing & Community Services
Jonathan Toy - Head of Community Safety & Enforcement
Fitzroy Williams – Scrutiny Project Asst

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim McNally and Martin Seaton.

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

2.1 There were no late items.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

- 3.1 Councillor Graham Neale, vice-chair made a disclosure of interest as a council tenant and a resident of Draper House.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the sub-committee held on 25 February 2013 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

5. CABINET MEMBER INTERVIEW: COUNCILLOR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE, COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 5.1 The cabinet member councillor Richard Livingstone updated the sub-committee on the fire that had taken place in the old Walworth Town Hall today and stated that he hoped to receive updates during the course of the meeting. Substantial damage to the roof and old council chamber had been reported and cumming archive may have been lost.
- 5.2 The sub-committee were also informed that the fire was still burning inside the building and the roof had collapsed. Some artefacts have been saved and as yet there was no idea of how the fire started.
- 5.3 The chair thanked the cabinet member for the update and started the interview by opening the meeting with questions for the cabinet member.
- 5.4 A member asked about Southwark Anti-social Behaviour Unit (SASBU) performance and anti-social behaviour on estates as well as what the future was for SASBU.
- 5.5 The Cabinet members reported that the overall number of Anti-social Behaviour cases (ASB) the council was dealing with has increased from 1474 in 2011/12 to 1884 in 2012/13, he also explained that cases were being dealt with effectively. There had also been an increase in injunctions and number of evictions for ASB.
- 5.6 He further reported that even though smaller resources were available they were used far more effectively and the outcomes were pleasing, work had been up-skilled and joined up e.g. Anti-social team working together with Housing and Police resulting in the closure of a number of drug dens.
- 5.7 A member asked how have the cuts impacted on performance over the last 3 years?

- 5.8 The cabinet member said there had been a increase in cases and better outcomes, improved partnership work between the police and council e.g. the work on Manor Estate, and the need to continue to get smarter about partnership working and think about the use of capital e.g. using CCTV effectively on the estate.
- 5.9 A member asked how the performance of the noise team and number of staff been affected and are they meeting their targets?
- 5.10 The cabinet member reported that Southwark offers a more substantial service than other boroughs. 95% of time scale for non-essential and 75% for essential (attending within an hour). The service consists of 16 staff and provide 135 working hours per week, the gap in service was presently 2% outside working hours.
- 5.11 The chair asked who collected the performance data?
- 5.12 The sub-committee were informed that noise reports to CSC and the team then produce reports which provides robust data they are backed up by the courts and tracked. The cabinet member explained that only 2% of calls come outside operating hours but agreed it will never hit 100%.
- 5.13 The chair asked why the team was only managing 75% in cases of essential attendance?
- 5.14 Members were informed it could be for all sorts of reason e.g. someone who didn't want to wait up in the early hours for a call out.
- 5.15 The cabinet member was asked what is essential and non-essential? He explained that low level noise e.g. construction would be non-essential, noisy party would be essential. Some builders start work earlier than they should and it is more effective for the noise team to go round during the day when the site management will be present to address questions.
- 5.16 The chair asked about domestic abuse and the issue regarding the scale of workload for the domestic abuse caseworkers. He had met during the scrutiny and had been informed that one extra caseworker could make a big difference to the quality of service they are able to provide. Was there any progress on that?
- 5.17 The sub-committee were informed that the strain on the team had been recognised and a bid had been submitted to MOPAC with the hope to get some additional resources. The cabinet member also confirmed that the domestic abuse support worker had been placed with the police since November 2012. The SOLACE worker basing themselves once a fortnight with the police.
- 5.18 A sub-committee member asked whether the council had received a formal response from Southwark police to the Sapphire report?
- 5.19 It was stated that no formal response had been received as yet, but the cabinet member reported to have met with the Borough Commander and local MPs and was concerned that they had not heard about it till the IPCC report came out. He undertook to share the letter from the Borough Commander and stated there were

2 encouraging signs: the method of compiling statistics had changed and the police no longer counted % clear up rate but overall successful conclusion of cases so the incentive is to clear up more and more cases.

- 5.20 Sapphire is now dealt with at a London wide basis rather than within local CID so there is more capacity for training and staff are moved around according to need. Local MPs were very critical of the police and told them they need to work at rebuilding confidence and looking at Harriet Harman's suggestion of getting in an independent person to review the cases.
- 5.21 A sub-committee member asked how does Southwark compare to other boroughs and are there any trends?
- 5.22 The problem was across the Metropolitan area, but especially at Walworth because of the individual who was trying to manage the statistics, this situation is now improving.
- 5.23 The Head of Community Safety emphasised the focus needs to be on the victims. These cases are very complex. The Safer Southwark Partnership (SSP) attention has concentrated on looking at the quality of support services.
- 5.24 The chair requested that the cabinet member give a big picture of statistics and trends for Southwark?
- 5.25 The cabinet member reported that the total notifiable offences were down around 5.8% in the last year. He was especially pleased with the drop in violent crime (25%) from 8,007 to 5,992 (2,015 fewer offences), but this is still one of the highest in London.
- 5.26 Domestic violence decreased by 25%, youth violence down 24%, violence with injury down 27%, violence without injury down 25% and serious youth violence is down 6%.
- 5.27 Personal robbery up 43%, knife crime increased by 8% and residential burglary is up 4%. Knife crime is still a massive concern in Southwark and has the worse statistics in London. The new Borough Commander talks about tackling the trinity of knife crime, youth crime and violent crimes in the borough. The partnerships are working well to tackle some of this e.g. voluntary organisations who are called in if a youth turns up at Kings College Hospital with injuries apparently from gang violence.
- 5.28 A sub-committee member asked what was the reaction to the Mayor's crime plan? And why are we not getting more officers to tackle violent crime given it is a mayoral priority.
- 5.29 Members were informed that the mayor had not taken onboard any of our points. It was also reported that the ward based Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) were disappearing and being replaced with sectorial teams. A good example of excellent work done in the ward by SNT was to tackle drug dealing based on concentrated work in one road. We will need to work with the Borough Commander

to see what can be replicated in the new structure.

- 5.30 The cabinet member expressed his disappointment that the mayor had not kept his promise on front counters. It was reported that officers were currently working to get some spare space in Seven Islands to provide for police when they vacate Rotherithe police station. Officers were also working with victim support to see what can be done with victim support contact centres to provide a more appropriate environment than a generic counter.
- 5.31 Members were also informed that although 1,200 more police officers were being brought into London, Southwark would only be receiving 2 officers.
- 5.32 A member asked what was happening with the community wardens?
- 5.33 It was reported that the community wardens service had been downsized since 2011 and were now down to three town centre teams, which were Camberwell, Peckham and Elephant & Castle, though they work beyond the town centres and in the estates nearby. There was also a response team that could be deployed according to need. The expectation is that the service intends to retain this structure, although there is an awareness of the next massive wave of cuts coming from the government. Assurances cannot be given beyond the current year.
- 5.34 The cabinet member reported that money had been put into the night time economy team which have done good work around Bankside and Borough High Street.
- 5.35 A member stated that people that she worked with did not understand the role of community wardens, she felt that their image does the service no favours. There is a need for more publicity about what they do and how to request their services.
- 5.36 The cabinet member agreed that he used to get very different messages even in his own ward about their value. They have refocused their efforts and believe they are more effective now they have concentrated e.g. they have been providing community assurances on the Aylesbury following the 2 murders on the estate.
- 5.37 A member requested a update on the alcohol saturation zones?
- 5.38 It was reported that Southwark currently had 3 special saturation or cumulative impact policies in place and these were Borough and Bankside, Camberwell and Peckham.
- 5.39 The saturation areas apply to the following categories of premises, Borough and Bankside – night-clubs, public houses & bars, restaurants & cafes, off-licences, supermarkets, grocers and convenience stores.
- 5.40 Camberwell and Peckham - night-clubs, public houses & bars, restaurants & cafes, off-licences, supermarkets, grocers and convenience stores.
- 5.41 The other three areas that area currently under ongoing monitoring are Elephant & Castle, Old Kent Road and Walworth Road and East Street. Other areas that have

previously been monitored but never progressed to saturation policies have included Shad Thames and Herne Hill.

5.42 Cumulative impact is considered in terms of the partnership analysis of :-

- Alcohol related violence against the person (VAP)
- Alcohol related crime and disorder call to the police (CAD)
- Alcohol related ambulance pick-ups (LAS)

5.43 The partnership analysis for 2012 has just been published but has not yet been reported to the council's licensing committee. It is due to go to the next meeting likely to be scheduled for June 2013. Until then the analysis is not public. The 2012 analysis reports the following position in the saturation areas.

5.44 Borough and Bankside

- Evening/ night-time alcohol related VAP (between 1800 and 0559) fell in 2012 to its lowest level across the last six years. There were 105 alcohol related offences in this time period, down from 144 in 2011. Alcohol related VAP accounted for 51% of total VAP in this time period.
- Daytime alcohol related VAP (between 0600 and 1759) rose in 2012 by 9 offences (35 to 44) bringing the figure to a corresponding level to 2010. Alcohol related VAP in the time period accounted for 27.3% of total VAP
- Alcohol related CAD fell for the second year running (2010 – 1040 offences; 2011 – 689 offences; 2012 – 615 offences).
- Conversely alcohol related LAS rose by 21.5% from 2011 equating to an additional 95 calls (this may be partly attributable to improving recording).

5.45 Camberwell

- Evening/ night-time alcohol related VAP (between 1800 and 0559) reduced for the fourth consecutive year (though by only 1 offence in 2012 from 2011). There were 55 alcohol related offences in this time period equating to 41.4% of total VAP.
- Daytime alcohol related VAP (between 0600 and 1759) fell for the third consecutive year (co-incidentally though again only by 1 offence from 2011). There were 22 alcohol related offences in this time period equating to 51.2% of total VAP.
- Alcohol related CAD fell to its lowest level across the six years of the monitor, with a 17.3% decrease from 2011. There were 525 offences in 2012 in this area.
- Alcohol related LAS fell by 26.8% in 2012 from 2011 with a reduction of 70 calls.

5.46 Peckham

- Evening/ night-time alcohol related VAP (between 1800 and 0559) fell in 2012 to its lowest level across the last six years. There were 83 alcohol related offences in this time period, down from 107 in 2011. Alcohol related VAP accounted for 40.7% of total VAP in this time period.
- Daytime alcohol related VAP (between 0600 and 1759) fell in 2012 to its lowest level across the last six years. There were 58 alcohol related offences in this time period, down from 60 in 2011. Alcohol related VAP in this time period accounted

for 18.5% of total VAP.

- Alcohol related CAD fell for the third consecutive year and now stands at the lowest level across the six years of the monitor. There were 719 alcohol related offences in this time period, down from 816 in 2011.
- Conversely alcohol related LAS rose by over a third from 2011 to 66 calls (this may be partly attributable to improving recording).

5.47 The sub-committee were informed that within the areas under current monitor there are some increases in crime figures in both the Elephant & Castle and Old Kent Road areas which the committee will look at in June 2012.

5.48 A member asked how is street drinking on rough sleeping impacted by the policy?

5.49 The sub-committee were informed that street drinking and off licenses were the origin of the saturation zones, there were fewer cases of street drinking in Camberwell Green, but there had been an increase in cases in Peckham Square along with prostitution and other issues.

5.50 The chair requested an update on protection of minors – alcohol and tobacco?

5.51 It was reported that police cadets were used for the purpose of test purchases which continued to be carried out covering the number of incidents :-

- Alcohol - 105
- Tobacco - 55
- Knives - 10
- Fireworks - 6

It was confirmed that about 32% of premises fail.

5.52 A member requested a update on CCTV installation?

5.53 It was reported that all street cameras were fully digital now and send pictures to the control rooms at Southwark police station. The current programme is to upgrade all cameras on estates to a similar quality.

5.54 The key problem with cameras on estates is they were put in on a bespoke basis and were monitored in different ways or just recorded and not monitored. All will now send pictures to the control room so they can be monitored live. A schedule is in place for all systems to be replaced we also have 32 redeployable cameras and we are making use of 7 of them on the Aylesbury at the present time.

5.55 It was noted that the SASBU's assessment was used as the criteria for replacement cameras in a number of estates located throughout the borough and this information will be circulated to members.

5.56 The chair thanked councillor Livingstone for attending the meeting and for providing the information requested.

The chair suggested a 10 minutes break in the meeting at 8.15 p.m. to recommence at 8.25 p.m.

6. REPAIRS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE CONTRACTS - UPDATE

- 6.1 The Strategic Director of Housing & Community Services and the Head of Maintenance and Compliance introduced the item and informed members that the report describes all the work streams involved in the major project of moving the contract in-house and reported that transition generally was going very well. It was also reported that all customer contracts were being moved from the Cotton Centre to Queens Road.
- 6.2 Members were informed that some apprentices had been appointed and we would have to wait and see the impact this would have but generally it was going very well.
- 6.3 The chair opened this item of business for members questions.
- 6.4 A member asked where will the One Stop Shop (OSS) staff be located following the fire?
- 6.5 The officer informed members that staff from Walworth will work from the 2 other OSS in the first instance as part of the business continuity plan, officers will be seeking other premises as soon as possible. Communication and information to residents is core to the business continuity plan.
- 6.6 The chair asked what sort of improvement would the service user see?
- 6.7 It was reported that the services was now speedier. Staff can flick to different parts of the system more quickly and this would help manage call waiting times.
- 6.8 Members were informed that there had been a lot of investment in IT hardware, there was now more capacity and backup being designed into Queens Road infrastructure which provides great improvement.
- 6.9 The Head of Maintenance and Compliance introduced the updated paper on repairs service and reported that Mears had performed well so far and were building on it. Good feedback had been received back from residents. The Mears improvement had raised expectations around the rate and pace of the repairs service and Mears would be recommended to the Cabinet for the long term contract.
- 6.10 Members were also informed that Southwark Building Service (SBS) had its own improvement agenda. A change team had been working with SBS since November to achieve the same level of service improvement. The workforce has been downsized by a third and key staff recruited, new IT is in place and performance is improving.
- 6.11 A member asked how the service intends to close the performance gap between

Mears and SBS?

- 6.12 Both were working to the improvement plan and was showing signs of improvement. The relationship with Mears was making a big difference, knowledge sharing and the new contract brought new ideas and energy. Mears brought in their own computer system the IT.
- 6.13 The sub-committee asked what sort of attitude were Mears bringing?
- 6.14 The officer responded that there has been a willingness to work with the council to provide the service required, they have come to the table as true partners, the council had set the tone from the very beginning with Mears contributing positively and working with us to get the best for residents. We also need to be commercially aware to get the best from them so our customer service objectives are met.
- 6.15 The chair asked how was the contract regime working so they are not incentivised to carry out work repeatedly?
- 6.16 The sub-committee were informed that the council's approach to strong clienting was now well embedded. In contrast, Morrison had sub-contracted to the point where recovering their costs became more important than the customer focus.
- 6.17 Mears only sub-contracted at a peak in 21% of jobs, resident satisfaction was delivered by asking the resident and not via the contractor's data. The council have learned from these experiences, and what the resident say is more important than the contractor.
- 6.18 The sub-committee were informed that Mears were expected to meet the final 3 promises which were to provide external independent validation of performance data, customer satisfaction greatly improved and exceeding target levels and consistent reaching upper quartile levels by the end of year. An independent auditor will be used to measure delivery on the 16 points.
- 6.19 A co-opted member asked is SBS also expected to learn lessons and show performance improvement above Morrison's?
- 6.20 The officer reported that yes they were improving but not as quickly as Mears. Work was ongoing about how to improve their performance.

7. DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES - FURTHER WORK FOLLOWING SCRUTINY REPORT

- 7.1 The cabinet member reported that he had written to the home office, the 3 local MPs his equivalent in Lambeth and was lobbying for domestic violence court. He undertook to provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with a updated report.
- 7.2 It was reported that member training would be discussed in April and group whips would work out what training could be provided for members. Officers would be provided with a 3 day course which members could attend if they so wished.

7.3 The sub-committee were informed that 42 tenants and leaseholders had been referred to perpetrators course by the end of December. This information would be sent through to members via a report.

8. PROJECT MANAGEMENT OF DRAPER HOUSE WORKS PRIOR TO SUSPENSION OF CONTRACT WITH BREYER

The chair moved to closed session at 8.55 p.m.

Members of the sub-committee asked questions of the Strategic Director of Housing and Community Services and the legal advisor from Sharpe Pritchard with regards to formulating recommendations for the report to the cabinet.

The meeting ended at 9.45 p.m.

CHAIR:

DATED: