COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SAFETY SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8 March 2011 at 6.30pm

WRITTEN MINUTES – PART A

Present: Councillor Gerry Ryan (Chair)
         Councillor Steve Hollands (Deputy Chair)
         And Councillors: Jason Cummings, Donald Speakman, Tony Harris, and
         Donna Gray

Cllr Steve O’Connell, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, was also in attendance.

A12/11 MINUTES (Agenda item 1)

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2011 be
          signed as a correct record.

A13/11 APOLOGIES (Agenda item 2)

Apologies were given by Councillors Tony Pearson and Alisa Flemming, and by
        Councillors Tony Harris and Bernadette Khan for lateness.

A14/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest declared at the meeting.

A15/11 URGENT BUSINESS (Agenda item 4)

There were none.

A16/11 EXEMPT ITEMS (Agenda item 5)

A17/11 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE
          SCRUTINY REVIEW OF TREES (Agenda Item 6)

The following officers were in attendance for this item:
- Ton Jeffrey - Executive Director of Community Services
- George Sarkodie, Head of Sports and Green Spaces (Community Services)
- Nigel Browning, Trees and Woodlands Manager (Community Services)

The item was introduced by the Executive Director of Community Services,
who expressed thanks for this useful review.

The Chair of the Review expressed concerns about the fact that
Recommendation 18 had not been implemented.

Officers explained that Ward Members could not be contacted when trees
had to be felled as a matter of urgency. They also pointed out that the draft protocol included a commitment to notify the Cabinet Members for Environment and Highways or the Cabinet Member for Culture and Sports - depending on the location of the tree to be felled - if the Trees and Woodlands Officer considered that tree removal was unavoidable.

However, it was agreed that Ward Members could be contacted a week in advance, when the decision whether or not to fell a specific tree was not a matter of urgency.

Officers were questioned regarding the funding available from the Mayor of London for tree planting. Members were advised that funding had been provided for trees in Broad Green, a ward specified by the consultants employed by the Mayor of London, and that planting should be completed by Friday 11 March.

Officers also stated that further funding might be made available by the Mayor of London for tree planting, with more flexible criteria as to the choice of location. Prompted by Members, officers undertook to bid for further funding for street trees in Croydon.

The officers were thanked for attending the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that

- Officers be asked to amend Appendix 2, "A protocol for the removal of council owned trees", to include a commitment to notify relevant Ward Members a week in advance of a proposed tree felling, when reasons for this action are not an emergency.

- Officers be asked to bid for further Mayor of London funding for street tree planting if and when this becomes available

A18/11 **DRAFT CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGY 2011-2014** (Agenda item 7)

The following officers were in attendance for this item:
- Tom Jeffrey - Executive Director of Community Services
- Tony Brooks - Director of Public Safety (Community Services)
- Andy Opie - Head of Community Safety and DAAT Partnerships Community Services)
- Supt Jo Oakley (representing the Borough Commander)

As an introduction to this agenda item, officers made a presentation on the Safer Croydon Partnership’s Strategic Assessment 2010-2011, which underpins the Partnership's crime reduction strategy.

The presentation included the following data:

- the partnership's key performance indicators
- hotspots for Total Notifiable Offences
- crime and ASB trends in the borough
- offender and victim profiles
- proposed strategic priorities
The presentation was followed by Members’ questions to the Cabinet Member and officers.

**ASB in the town centre**

The following two key points were made during the presentation:
- Males aged 13-17 represented 61% of all ASB offenders
- A key ASB hotspot is Fairfield Ward (the town centre), which experiences a peak of ASB around 3-4 pm, when children return home from school

In the light of these trends, officers were asked what was being done to address ASB perpetrated by school children travelling home in the afternoon.

Officers explained that this issue was being tackled in two ways:
- Work is being carried out on safer travel, and additional resources have been made available for this work
- School travel plans are being developed further, with safety considerations being added to original environmental priorities

Members were also advised that marshals were assigned to certain bus routes eg the No 60 line, to address any ASB occurring on those routes. In addition, high visibility patrols are assigned to specific points where ASB is likely to occur, and important transport hubs such as West Croydon bus station.

Members enquired whether steps might be taken to reduce the need for long school journeys, and thus the likelihood of ASB during such journeys. Some members called for the establishment of good local community schools, which might reduce the need to travel long distances and foster greater social cohesion. If such establishments were located nearer children's homes, they would also be able to walk to school rather than undertake long bus journeys.

School buses were also suggested as a way of addressing ASB perpetrated by school children.

As a substantial number of children go to school outside their own borough, Members enquired whether known offenders resided in Croydon or outside the borough. They were advised that most were from Croydon. In addition, they were informed that the known offenders going to a school outside Croydon were roughly similar to the numbers of known offenders coming into Croydon for their schooling.

It was noted that the more serious the offence committed was, the further away from home it was usually perpetrated.

**The Pathfinder Agreement in New Addington and Fieldway**

Members enquired what action was being taken to address ASB in the Fieldway and New Addington area, a hotspot for reports to Council as well as Police officers.

They were advised that this was being tackled through a "Pathfinder Agreement". This is a contract designed and agreed by the local residents
and service providers in that area. Residents are encouraged to engage as Street Representatives or "Resident Parthfinders", to act as a point of contact for local residents and organisations in the area, and to report issues and concerns to the correct organisations and monitor progress. One of the aims of Pathfinder Agreement is that the local residents themselves should take some responsibility for improving local safety. This is particularly important in Fieldway and New Addington, as the ASB in this area is usually committed by local residents.

The Chair of the sub-committee suggested that the 2011-2012 work programme should include an item on the lessons learnt from the pathfinder agreement in this area and Operation Refresh in the north of the borough.

**Street-based Services Review**

Members enquired whether reconfigured services would require officers to have generic or specialised duties. They were advised that the emphasis would be on driving up the level of officer skills to as high a level as possible. In addition, it had been noted that officers were spontaneously acquiring a wider range of skills and experience in the course of their daily work, as they customarily came across with both safety issues and environmental matters such as fly-tipping or graffiti.

Members enquired whether the Council was on track to bring in the new structure on 1 July 2011, and were assured that this was so.

**Consultation on the Draft Crime Reduction Strategy**

Members enquired about the feedback obtained from the recent "Talkyokie" consultation event on safety in Croydon. They were informed that it had been a successful event, which drew residents who would not usually attend a Council meeting. A key message emerging from this event was that local residents were happy living in Croydon and resented the bad press the borough had to contend with.

The Cabinet Member and officers were thanked for attending the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that:

- That Members should support the three key priorities of the draft Crime Reduction Strategy: reducing the overall crime rate in Croydon, increasing effective partnership working at neighbourhood level, and creating a greater sense of community confidence in public safety

- That the borough's crime reduction strategy should take into account
  - the impact of lengthy school journeys on levels of ASB
  - the impact of gangs on local crime levels and strategic priorities
  - the need to improve crime statistics recording

- That the sub-committee's suggested 2011-2012 work programme should include:
  - scrutiny of the implementation of the strategy's three strategic priorities
  - an examination of lessons learnt from the Fieldway and New Addington pathfinder agreement, and Operation Refresh in the
north of the borough
- Scrutiny of Issues relating to the statistically high percentage of black offenders in the borough

- that Scrutiny Members plan well in advance what specific questions officer reports should focus on

A19/11  SUB-COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 8)

Ilona Kytomaa, Members’ Services Manager, was in attendance for this item.

Members discussed what had worked well in Scrutiny during this municipal year, and what had not worked so well. Key points were as follows:

What has worked
- There has been a good mixture of committee work and task and finish working groups
- Task and finish working groups are felt to be particularly worthwhile – as Members have had opportunities to examine issues in-depth, to develop positive recommendations - They have enabled Members to speak with greater strength and knowledge, and consequently to get more respect; they also allow officers to be more creative good forensic evidence and more focused work
- Scrutiny comes into its own when scrutiny is creative, as a result of which it gets commitments from officers
- Two successful elements of this year’s new arrangements have been the budget scrutiny and the involvement of the wider community
- Members have endeavoured to draw conclusions on each service or issue scrutinised, as shown in the minutes of this year’s meetings
- Discussions have tended to have a less politicised slant than in other formal meetings
- Further development can help give quieter Members more confidence to participate – the Scrutiny team can help here

What hasn’t worked
- The same Members have tended to speak at each meeting – may need more Member development opportunities to encourage quieter Members to contribute to discussions
- Members of the public went away frustrated from the Stronger Communities Fund Call-In, as it did not lead to a positive outcome
- Some call-in meetings resembled Council meetings rather than Scrutiny meetings

It was suggested that ideas on approaches and techniques ought to be shared between the three committees to establish good practice from this year.
RESOLVED that:

- The following items be suggested for inclusion in the 5 July 2011 meeting of the sub-committee:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>BRIEF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology to be used by the South London Waste Partnership</td>
<td>To scrutinise the strategic site locations across the four boroughs within the partnership, and the waste absorption potential through the technologies specified in the contract</td>
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<td>Family Justice Centre - agenda item - visit</td>
<td>To review partnership working within the FJC and the impact of shrinking resources on the services provided by the Council and other agencies within the partnership</td>
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- The following topics be put forward for the remainder of the 2011-2012 work programme:

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<tr>
<td>Lessons learnt from pathfinder agreement and Operation Refresh</td>
<td>To examine what good practice has emerged from the Pathfinder Agreement in place in Fieldway and New Addington and Operation Refresh in the north of the borough, what has worked, and what has not worked so well</td>
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<td>In-depth scrutiny of implementation of the strategic priorities of the Crime Reduction Strategy (to be scheduled towards the end of the next municipal year)</td>
<td>Towards the end of the next municipal year: To examine how effective the Council and its partners have been at implementing the three strategic priorities of the Crime Reduction Strategy</td>
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<td>Issues relating to the statistically high percentage of black Croydon residents in the criminal justice system</td>
<td>To examine the reasons why statistically disproportionate numbers of black residents enter the criminal justice system, and identify ways of reversing this trend</td>
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<td>Council co-ordination with public utilities</td>
<td>To follow up the scrutiny of co-ordination with public utilities carried out at the xxxxx Sub-Committee meeting, and to invite British Gas to answer Members’ Questions on their work in the borough</td>
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PART B

None

The meeting ended at 8.50pm