

# THE BRIEFING

For members of the Public Sector Management Network  
Volume 11, Issue 2 June 2004

## Public Sector Management Network Progress to Date

Since I last wrote to you 3 months ago, we are now making steady progress on the development of the Public Sector Management Network.

Information is contained on this year's Top Team competition aimed at 'finding the best in the public sector and partnering organisations'. This again will feature as one of the main events for the new Network and encouraging a wide range of Public Sector organisations to participate, to share learning on examples of good practice.

Norman Broadbent International have committed their support to the development of the new network with the first phase of sponsorship and the hosting and re-design of the new Public Sector Management Network website. More on this exciting new development will be detailed in our next briefing. I would personally would like to thank Bradford MBC for their support in developing and hosting the LGMN website over the past number of years.

**Noorzaman Rashid**  
Chair of the Management Network

## TOP TEAM 2003 Middlesbrough MBC Executive Summary

### The Context

- Middlesbrough is a vibrant and culturally diverse community that faces challenges but has lots going for it. 2003 is Middlesbrough Council's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday and the town has experienced both rapid growth and industrial decline. Levels of deprivation can be amongst the highest in England, there are challenges to health and significant inequalities exist across some of our wards.
- The future's not gloomy. Middlesbrough has a "good" Council whose vision over the next few years is for a town where all our people are healthy, confident and responsible citizens. Our aim is to narrow the gap between the most deprived communities and the rest. No one should be disadvantaged because of where they live.
- Scrutiny is part of the political management arrangements that have replaced the "committee system". Changing 150 years of tradition doesn't happen overnight, but in a very short time we've used our strengths to build an excellent reputation for our work.
- Our contribution to the success of the political process has been recognised in our CPA, our Social Services Joint Review and research by Cardiff University. We've embraced the new power of health scrutiny and our approach

has been recognised by the Health Development Agency.

- The Scrutiny Team are “project managers” helping the OSB and Panels to develop and run the scrutiny work programme, aiming for high quality reviews that help non-executive Councillors to:
  - review policies and services
  - recommend future policies and service improvements
  - hold the Executive to account

### **Scrutiny@Middlesbrough – Key Issues**

- Managing the political process in partnership with the Executive - the way we do this has been recognised in the CPA and the Social Services Joint Review
- Engaging members in worthwhile roles – monitoring outcomes and showing that scrutiny can make a difference
- Effective evidence gathering and good quality reviews – helping members to talk to the right people and get the right answers to the right questions
- External scrutiny – challenging but building consensus

### **Scrutiny@Middlesbrough – Innovation and Creativity**

- An induction programme for members around the concepts of good scrutiny and case studies based on the work of individual Panels. The Scrutiny Team takes an active part, building the partnership with Members that is at the heart of our success.
- An “interactive” leaflet and protocol for the public to suggest scrutiny topics. We’ve also developed our website into a comprehensive resource.

- Community engagement event in Boots the Chemists jointly with the Primary Care Trust to inform the health scrutiny work programme and to build our relationship with the PCT. Focus groups for people with physical disabilities that directly influenced the Council’s Physical Disabilities Strategy.

- “Triggers” for consultation with the NHS about service changes that have been recognised by the IDeA and the Audit Commission as good practice.

- Electronic scrutiny monitoring system to track the implementation of Panel recommendations.

- Moving scrutiny away from the “select committee” style towards work teams getting out of the Town Hall. Our Panels don’t rely on traditional methods of receiving information.

### **Scrutiny@Middlesbrough - Outcomes and achievements**

- Giving scrutiny real independence within its partnership with the Executive. Recommendations from Scrutiny Panels are now “owned” by Executive members
- Raising the profile of the Local Strategic Partnership as the vehicle for “joining up” service delivery across agencies
- Beginning the process of “joining up” consultation around health so that the Council and the NHS share networks
- Building relationships, particularly with the NHS, and our approach to health scrutiny has been recognised by the Health Development Agency. We believe that we’re getting “external” scrutiny right.

### **Scrutiny@Middlesbrough - How we make a difference**

- Creating the building blocks that make Middlesbrough’s scrutiny process one of the best in the country.

- Challenged the negative perceptions that were around in the early days and created confidence in non-executive members that they have a real role and in the Executive that scrutiny can be a “critical friend”.
- Breaking down barriers, particularly in terms of external scrutiny.
- Bringing people together and focussing their work through the LSP.
- Developing our relationship with the corporate core, through the Assistant Chief Executive for Performance and Policy and the Corporate Management Team.
- Monitoring outcomes to make sure that recommendations are adding value.

## **THE SOUTHWARK CLEANING PROJECT TEAM**

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### **1. THE CHALLENGE**

In April 2002 Southwark’s streets and estates were a mess, a fact that was borne out in our resident’s satisfaction survey of 2002, which identified street cleaning as the third most important issue for residents (37%). This combined with low satisfaction with cleanliness and the fact that a clean environment came top (31%) of resident’s lists when asked which services need most improvement in their area meant that something needed to change.

### **2. DELIVERING CHANGE**

May 2002 saw a new administration being elected on the back of a pre-election manifesto that vowed to clean up the borough with making Southwark ‘Cleaner Greener & Safer

at the heart of the Council’s new strategic priorities.

### **2.1 What we did**

To deliver the change, the Strategic Directors of Environment & Leisure and Housing were tasked with providing a borough wide solution to the cleanliness problems that spanned all Council owned land and delivered top quartile performance. The only caveat was that the solution needed to be put in place quickly. The result was the creation of the principle of an Integrated Cleaning Contract to include Street Cleaning, Estate Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance.

Whilst the principle was sound the true cost of providing the service on this basis was unknown so a desk-top exercise was undertaken in October 2002, supported by field work, to assess the level of resources needed to clean the borough. This exercise demonstrated that additional resources were required resulting in the need for a 30% increase in revenue requirements. This was sought from Members and duly granted.

It was quickly realised that the desk-top exercise was effectively a ‘blueprint’ to clean Southwark and so, on 17 December 2002, Members decided that the quickest way to achieve a cleaner borough was for the service to be delivered by the Council itself.

### **2.2 Managing the Process**

To deliver such a cross cutting project in such a short space of time it was decided to manage the process through creating a structured two-tiered team involving both strategic managers and operational managers.

Strategic direction was the remit of the ‘Project Board’. Chaired by the two directors to send out a clear message that this was a new era and that demarcation and blinkered thinking was not on the agenda The Board met weekly with a highly structured agenda and ruthless chairing, to ensure that decisions were

made, and progress monitored. The first Project Board meeting established a detailed project plan. It listed over 110 specific items that needed consideration and resolution.

To ensure actions agreed by the Project Board were carried out, a subsidiary 'Project Team' was established. It consisted of nine individuals with the skills needed to make the vision of an 'Integrated Cleaning Contract' a reality. This Project Team met each Monday and Thursday for a maximum of 30 minutes. An alarm clock was set at each meeting to ensure it meetings kept to time and set the ethos of meeting deadlines.

The interaction between the Project Board and Project Team was the cornerstone of the success of the project. All involved had a clear, shared vision and an absolute commitment to achieving the goal. Both Senior Managers and Members alike actively encouraged thinking in innovative ways and the taking of risks, which created a strong 'Can do Culture'.

Lead Members were briefed weekly to ensure effective political input. In addition, to help win 'Hearts and Minds', regular written briefs were sent to all elected members providing not only updates but also outlining proposed deliver plans and key performance requirements of the new service.

### 2.3 Transferring and empowering the staff

The most important asset to making the vision a reality were the people who actually undertook the work so a total of 49 meetings were held with them to ensure that they knew what the aims and objectives of the new service were and to ensure they understood the transfer process. It was clear the desired change could only be delivered if the workforce shared the vision and commitment of the project board and team. These meetings meant that all transferring staff met the key members of both the Project Board and Project Team at least three times. Trade union representatives attended the majority of these

meetings with joint briefing notes being produced at key milestones in the project.

### 2.4 Investment

A key barrier to the project was multiple contractors with various terms and conditions. To overcome this Harmonisation was achieved from 1 August 2003 and not to the most favourable terms and conditions. Although Harmonisation was a significant investment it was also the case that new resources were needed in a variety of areas so the team had to purchase, receive and deploy 75 new vehicles, over 600 new sets of uniform, 45 new mowers and ancillary equipment and 100 barrows prior to the contract start date of April 1. Also, an additional 200 staff had to be recruited for the new organisation with 500 applications being processed during the three-month period.

### 2.5 Delivering the Service & Communication

We did not want to recreate a DSO from the CCT era so a new and distinctive brand for the new service was needed so that staff and residents knew the service was new and different. '*Southwark Cleaning – Cleaning Southwark*' was the result. The new brand appears on all vehicles and clothing ensuring that with 650 staff and 120 vehicles the service was extremely visible and are seen to be making a difference.

With such a visible presence staff needed to understand exactly what Southwark Cleaning was trying to achieve and as such a detailed training schedule was put in place from day one of the new service and is an ongoing programme. Alongside the education of the new staff we needed to inform our residents and the rest of the Council what we were doing. A marketing and communication plan was prepared identifying not only key target audiences but also tailoring the message to suit each audience. Examples of how we communicated include; video shows on major bus routes, leaflets to all properties and a spoof 'Call my Bluff' to all Council managers.

### 3. THE RESULT

Performance indicators demonstrate an increase in cleanliness from 71% of roads being of a high or acceptable standard to 86%. Letters of complaint have fallen by 35% since April and over 50 written compliments and thanks have been received.

As well as being delighted that the borough is getting cleaner residents are reassured by the sight of additional sweepers on the street. We are bringing back a sense of reassurance and a feeling that someone cares about the environment.

**Although there is still much to do,  
Southwark Cleaning is not just  
Cleaning Southwark but adding value for  
the whole community**

## CAPITA CONFERENCES

Capita Learning and Development are running two forthcoming seminars.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2004 in Central London there is a conference on **The Human Rights Act: Interpretation, Implementation and Compliance**. Chair and key note speaker for this event is Paul Zimmermann, Head of Domestic Human Rights Unit for the Department of Constitutional Affairs. He is supported by a number of Speakers who will cover the implications of the Act and provide case study information.

The second seminar is again in Central London on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2004 and is titled **Building Leadership Capacity in Local Government**. Chair and key note speaker for this event will be Martin Horton, Director of Services and the IDeA. Again Martin will be supported by a number of Speakers who will cover the implications of the National Strategy for Leadership Development and provide case study information.

**For more detailed information on both of these seminars then please visit the Capita website at [www.capita-ld.co.uk](http://www.capita-ld.co.uk)  
To make a booking please contact 0870 400 1020 quoting ref no. L6403 for the Human Rights conference and L0601 for the Leadership Conference.**

## TOP TEAM 2004

The Public Sector Management Network is pleased to announce the launch of Top Team 2004, which will be looking to showcase examples of excellent team working within public sector and related partnership organisations. The closing date for teams to submit their entries will be Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2004 with the shortlisted teams progressing to a final which will be held in London on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2004.

Again a cash prize of £2,000 will be paid to the winning team with all finalists featured on IDeA's KnowledgeNet site [www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge](http://www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge)

Leaflets producing all of the information of how to participate in this year's event are included with this edition of The Briefing. *For further information on how to register a team then please contact Warren Tonks on 07791 177831 or [warrentonks@hotmail.com](mailto:warrentonks@hotmail.com)*

### CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BRIEFING

**If you would like to forward any articles, diary dates or requests for information**, then please forward to Warren Tonks, Local Government Management Network, 20 Hazel Drive, Wythall, Birmingham B47 5RJ or [warrentonks@hotmail.com](mailto:warrentonks@hotmail.com)

You can also access the Networks website at [www.lgmn.org.uk](http://www.lgmn.org.uk)