

**Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**

**Report to the Cabinet**

**17<sup>th</sup> December, 2008**

**St George's Day Parade**  
**Recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board**

**1. Summary Statement**

1.1 On 16 October 2008 the Scrutiny Management Board considered a report and evidence into the St George's Day Parade and made the following recommendations.

- (1) that the Management Board notes that there is clear evidence of far-right political extremists infiltrating the 2008 St George's Day Parade in Sandwell, with no apparent observation or record of this by any of the stakeholders;
- (2) that the Cabinet and other stakeholders be recommended:-
  - (a) to examine the evidence of the events that took place, particularly in the context of the responsibility of all public bodies to promote good race relations and develop community cohesion in Sandwell;
  - (b) to give early consideration to how, and if, political extremism can be eliminated at any future St George's Day events in the Borough;
  - (c) to give consideration to developing the St George's Day celebrations into a static park event with the aim of providing a family-friendly event in a safe environment;
  - (d) that an analysis of the members of the public who attend future events is undertaken by stakeholders;
  - (e) that intelligence is gathered on any future events by all stakeholders in order that early de-briefings can identify issues and concerns;
  - (f) that no politicians be invited to speak at any future St George's Day events and that no political parties be able to display banners or promotional materials;

- (g) that West Midlands Police Officers undergo training to develop an awareness of the covert signs of any political extremism at future events.

1.3 Attached as an appendix to this report is a table setting out the recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board which fall under the responsibility of the Cabinet. The table also sets out the comments of the relevant Chief Officers on the recommendations.

1.4 The Cabinet is now requested to consider the recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board in the light of the comments made by the Chief Officer/s and determine either:

- (a) to take no action on the recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board;
- (b) to instruct the appropriate Chief Officer to implement the recommendation/recommendations; or
- (c) to request that a further report be submitted.

*Further details are attached for your information*

## 2. **Recommendation**

2.1 That consideration be given to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board held on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2008 in relation to the St George's Day Parade and the comments made by the Chief Officer and that a course of action be determined.

2.2 That subject to 2.1 above, the Head of Communities and Regulatory Services prepare an appropriate action plan with timescales to deliver the agreed actions.

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## **St George's Day Parade**

### **Recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board**

#### **3. Strategic Resource Implications**

The trilogy of Saint George's Day events cost a combined figure of £37K. If the budget remains at £37k then all recommendations made by the Scrutiny Management Board can be met from existing resources except in respect of increased stewarding whereby a risk assessment will be needed to analyse any additional resources that this may entail.

#### **4. Legal and Statutory Implications**

4.1 There will be no legal and statutory implications arising from this report which at this stage are recommendations of the Panel. Subsequent reports requiring a decision may have such implications. However, the scrutiny function is contained within:

- The Local Government Act 2000
- The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- The Health and Social Care Act 2001

#### **5. Implications for the Council's Corporate Priorities**

It is a key criterion that items identified for Scrutiny need to contribute to the Council's corporate priorities for change. This scrutiny pertained particularly to the council priority Safer, Cleaner, Active Communities in that SMB were particularly interested in how the St Georges Day celebrations contributes to the community cohesion agenda.

#### **6. Background Details**

6.1 The minute and report are attached as appendix 2 and 3.

#### **Source Documents**

Report and Minute of SMB – 16 October 2008

## St George's Day Parade

### Recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board

Recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board	Comments from appropriate Chief Officer	
	Proposed action to be undertaken in response to recommendations	Rationale for proposed action
That the Cabinet and other stakeholders be recommended to examine the evidence of the events that took place, particularly in the context of the responsibility of all public bodies to promote good race relations and develop community cohesion in Sandwell.	Evidence examined and noted.	Establish the scope of the problem to develop a suitable action plan.
That the Cabinet and other stakeholders be recommended to give early consideration to how, and if, political extremism can be eliminated at any future St George's Day events in the Borough	Stewarding/marshalling plans to be developed in conjunction with the Police and Security Company to manage extremist groups out of the Parade.	Remove undesirable elements from the Parade.
That the Cabinet and other stakeholders be recommended to give consideration to developing the St George's Day celebrations into a static park event with the aim of providing a family-friendly event in a safe environment	To be discussed with all stakeholders. This is likely to prove unacceptable to one group of stakeholders and will probably lead to an uncontrolled Parade taking place in an unsafe environment. The Police will also have a major input to this item.	

That the Cabinet and other stakeholders be recommended to undertake an analysis of the members of the public who attend future events is undertaken by stakeholders	Exit surveys to be instigated in Dartmouth Park at the end of the event, as per Historic Vehicle and Sandwell Shows.	Data established regarding attendees.
That the Cabinet and other stakeholders be recommended to ensure that intelligence is gathered on any future events by all stakeholders in order that early de-briefings can identify issues and concerns	Police have agreed to assist in the debrief procedure, providing a structure and clarity of purpose to the process,	Structured debriefings form the baseline action plan for future events.
That the Cabinet and other stakeholders be recommended to ensure that no politicians be invited to speak at any future St George's Day events and that no political parties be able to display banners or promotional materials	Politicians are not invited to speak at any Saint George's Day events and will not be asked to take any part in the future.	No future invitations to politicians under any circumstances.
That West Midlands Police Officers undergo training to develop an awareness of the covert signs of any political extremism at future events.	The "Rewind" Project is engaged in the planning procedure to raise awareness of <b>all</b> stakeholders involved in the planning process.	Raised awareness levels enable all stakeholders to respond appropriately to circumstances as they arise.

Discussions between Keith Heyes, John Satchwell and Tony Potter resulted in recommendation that the Parade should be allowed to proceed this year with the action points detailed above in place; the success or otherwise of the remedial action taken to be reviewed immediately after the event.