

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE
Monday 23rd June 2003 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor John (Chair), Councillor Coughlin (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beswick, Fox, Lyon, Jones, Kagan, R S Patel and Thomas.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor D Long.

Councillors R Blackman, Fiegel, Freeson, Harrod, Moher, Moloney and Van Colle also attended the meeting.

1. Paul Daisley MP

Councillor John, with great sadness, announced the death of Paul Daisley, former Leader of the Council and Member of Parliament for Brent East Constituency. Full tributes would be made at the July Council meeting. A minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Coughlin declared a personal interest in the item concerning the lease extension for Heritage Day Nursery and stated that he would not take part in the discussion or voting thereon.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 28th May 2003

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th May 2003 be received and approved as a correct record.

4. Scrutiny Committee Task Group on Registered Social Landlords and Housing Management

This report summarised the work of the Scrutiny Task Group on Registered Social Landlords and set out recommendations based on the findings of the Group. A fuller report on the discussions, setting out the background, examples of good practice and an action plan had been produced as a separate document. The report aimed to: provide an overview of the work of the Task Group and identify key outcomes and recommendations; summarise gaps and issues identified by the Task Group that require further work or specific action by the Council and/or RSLs; identify how recommendations and further actions will be linked to key objectives of the Housing and Corporate Strategies.

Councillor Thomas referred to the presentation on this item made to the Scrutiny Committee, which was an example of the positive role scrutiny can play. Work had already started on some of the suggestions, for example providing ward councillors with information on the RSLs in their areas. He thanked officers for their contribution to the work and the Task Group for its findings.

Councillor Harrod, Chair of the Task Group, drew members' attention to the recommendation to establish a Liaison Forum hoping for the Executive's input. He also referred to the borough wide conference to be held on 28 June at the College of North West London designed to ensure good working relations between RSL tenants landlords and the Council.

The Executive thanked all Council officers involved, RSL officers, landlords and all members of the Task Group.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) to endorse the Housing Service working with RSLs to develop a local performance monitoring framework, using the existing Housing Corporation monitoring information and adapting or adding to it as appropriate while ensuring that there is no duplication of effort;
- (ii) to agree to the Housing Service providing regular monitoring information as well as briefings on key developments or activities in the RSL sector;
- (iii) to agree to the Housing Service, in co-operation with RSLs, developing a set of good practice management standards;
- (iv) to agree to the Housing Service and RSLs developing a Brent-wide tenant involvement strategy, building on the outcomes from the first Brent social housing tenants conference;
- (v) to endorse the Housing Service reviewing and monitoring nomination arrangements in conjunction with the Brent Housing Group and in particular the operation of Locata and its impact on key areas such as void management, mobility, the transfer needs of RSL tenants and the housing needs of vulnerable and black and minority ethnic groups;
- (vi) to agree to the Housing Service providing all Councillors with details of RSL activities in their wards, including details of stock ownership;
- (vii) to agree Housing and RSLs working together to develop arrangements to assess the long term impact of development proposals in terms of health, education and sustainable/community development and to take account of the shorter term impact of development proposals in terms of liaison between the RSLs, Planning Service and the provision and maintenance of open space;
- (viii) to endorse the Housing Service and RSLs working together to develop guidance on best practice in the management of street properties and temporary accommodation;
- (ix) to agree the Council and RSLs seeking to integrate current activity around crime and community safety and identifying and assimilating best practice;
- (x) to agree to the Council and RSLs working together to develop a strategic approach to employment and training initiatives;

- (xi) to note that the Brent Housing Group and its sub groups will act as the main vehicle for sharing good practice;
- (xii) to note that the Housing Service will work with RSLs to ensure that they are fully engaged with the development of the Housing Diversity Strategy;
- (xiii) to note that the Housing Theme Group will be responsible for ensuring that relevant issues are brought to the attention of the Local Strategic Partnership;
- (xiv) to agree to the Housing Service providing all members with a summary briefing on housing options to assist when dealing with enquiries from residents;
- (xv) to agree to further work being undertaken to identify issues and options in the management of high density housing and the management of temporary accommodation;
- (xvi) to note that the Housing Service and RSLs will, in line with the development of the Diversity Strategy, undertake further work on equalities issues, including nominations for black and minority ethnic residents, allocations to black and minority ethnic RSLs and service delivery by all providers;
- (xvii) that thanks be extended to all members of the Steering Group and to officers for their input.

5. **Choice Based Lettings – ‘the Future of Letting Social Housing’**

Following the success of the Locata pilot, this report sought approval for the London Borough of Brent to adopt the Choice Based Lettings system of allocation as the sole means of housing allocation for the Borough. Councillor Thomas advised that a request for extra funding had not been approved by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. A seminar would be held in early autumn to present the scheme to members of parliament. He proposed that a further report be submitted in six month's time on the participants' satisfaction levels.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that Choice Based Lettings system (Locata) to be adopted as sole means of housing allocations in the Borough;
- (ii) that the analysis of lettings of the Choice Based Lettings system and its continued monitoring be noted;
- (iii) that officers continue to work with issues as they relate to vulnerable households as set out in 7.6 to 7.7;
- (iv) that it be noted that the pilot scheme ran from 21st June 2002 for one-bedroom properties. Also, since 6th December 2002 for all other bedroom sizes and that this is still a relatively short time for such a fundamentally new concept within housing policy;

- (v) that there be a further report in six months time on participants levels of satisfaction with the service.

6. **Grants to Voluntary Organisations**

Councillor Fox (Lead Member) explained that although some organisations had move to be funded by central Government, some were still mainstream funded and needed their grants to be approved by Executive. There would also be a review of transport grants during 2003/4.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that it be noted that officers have awarded the grants to the voluntary groups detailed in the report and approval be given to the continuation of those grants for the 2003/04 year;
- (ii) that it be noted that there will be a review of all remaining transport grants from Social Services to voluntary organisations by the Director of Social Services.

7. **Service Plan for Food Safety Enforcement 2003/4**

The Lead Member, Councillor Jones, advised that the Food Standards Agency require that each local authority publish annually, a service delivery plan specifying the arrangements that they have put in place for the enforcement of food safety, food standards and feeding stuffs standards. She added that the Council generally had a good record of meeting the targets.

RESOLVED:-

that the service plan be agreed and approved as the authority's plan for food law enforcement through 2003/4.

8. **Highway Maintenance Major Works Programme - 2003/2004**

This report from the Director of Environmental Services made recommendations to Members detailing a programme for the major footway upgrade projects, road surfacing schemes, hard paving of grass verges, renewal of marginal highway land, new street signage and gulley maintenance. Councillor Jones advised that priorities had been set following inspections, receipt of comments and complaints. This was rolling programme of improvements. A sum of £1.5m had been allocated in the Capital Programme for 2003/04. Councillor Coughlin added that the maintenance of roads and highways was a priority for the Council especially Wembley and the surrounding area in view of the national stadium development, and this was the first tranche of development.

RESOLVED:-

that approval be given to utilise the split of £1.5m as follows:

	% of budget	amount of budget
• Major footway upgrade	56	£845k
• Major carriageway resurfacing	23	£350k
• Hard paving of grass verges	5	£80k
• Renewal of marginal highway land	4	£60k
• New street signs	3.5	£50k
• Upgrading approaches to pedestrian crossings	3.5	£50k
• Gulley	3	£40k
• Implementing dropped kerbs in shopping areas	2	£25k

9. **Budget Processes for 2004/2005**

Councillor Coughlin, in introducing this report, referred to changes to the legislation currently being considered by Parliament, which would have implications for the way that the Council will need to consider budget and Council Tax setting procedures for 2004/5 and beyond. Stephen Hughes (Director of Finance) outlined the provisions of the Prudential Code which would abolish credit controls and allow local authorities meeting the relevant criteria to determine their own borrowing limits. Additionally, there were proposals for the Chief Financial Officer to provide the Council with a report on the robustness of budget calculations at the time of budget setting. Consequently, the Director of Finance would need to have final versions of all budget motions three days before the Council meeting so that a written statement could be produced.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the report be noted and in particular the implications of changed legislation on budget processes set out in 6.4 and 7.3 of the report;
- (ii) that the threats to the implementation of the Prudential Capital control system set out in 6.6 to 6.8 of the report be noted;
- (iii) that Brent proceeds to prepare budgets on the assumption that the prudential regime is implemented, but also prepares to allocate resources as in the past in the event that the new regime is not implemented in 2004/5 or is implemented with a "National Limit" imposed.
- (iv) that likely requirement to provide a written statement on adequacy of balances and robustness of budget calculations for each motion to

Council at the Council Tax setting meeting and the implications for existing custom and practice be noted.

10. **Authority to invite Tenders for Banking Services Contract and Credit Card Services Contract**

This report concerned the future provision of the Council's Banking Services and Credit Card Services and requested approval to invite tenders in respect of the proposed Banking Service and Credit Card Services contract to start 1 April 2004, as required by Contract Standing orders 88 and 89.

The Executive also had before them an appendix to the report which was not for publication as it contained exempt information as specified in the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, namely:-

The amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the authority under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the pre-tender considerations and the criteria to be used to shortlist and evaluate the Banking Service and Credit Card Services Contract commencing 1 April 2004 as set out in para 6.12 of the report;
- (ii) that approval be given to officers inviting tenders and evaluating them in accordance with the approved criteria referred to above;
- (iii) that delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance to negotiate terms of the contracts provided that any negotiations are in compliance with European (EU) Procurement Regulations and are conducted in consultation with the Borough Solicitor.

11. **Authority to invite Tenders for an Access Consultancy Contract**

This report concerned the proposed award of a three to five year contract for Access Consultancy and seeks the approval of the Executive to invite tenders for the contract in accordance with Standing Orders 89 and 90.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the pre-tender considerations and the criteria to be used to evaluate tenders as set out in paragraph 6.4 of the report;
- (ii) that approval be given to officers inviting tenders and evaluating them in accordance with the approved evaluation criteria referred to in (i) above.

12. Sure Start Roundwood: Architectural Services

This report sought the Executive's approval to the continued use of the architectural practice of Llowarch & Llowarch on the Sure Start Roundwood project.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the manner in which the architectural practice of Llowarch & Llowarch was appointed as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the report from the Director of Corporate Services be noted;
- (ii) that subject to the Manager, Corporate Property ensuring Llowarch & Llowarch meets the Council's minimum requirements in terms of financial standing, technical capacity and technical expertise and negotiating suitable terms with them, there are good financial and/or operational reasons for the continued use of Llowarch & Llowarch on this project for the reasons noted in the Detail to this report.

**13. Brent Council's quarterly Performance Digest
Quarter 4 January to March 2003**

Phil Newby (Director of Regeneration) introduced the quarterly Performance Digest for the period January to March 2003. The Digest set out the data on the Council's performance against the statutory best value performance indicators, together with service based locally developed indicators. Councillor John stated that the Executive would be looking at the top 25 indicators as vital signs and taking performance monitoring seriously in line with central government's expectations.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the quarterly digest continues to report consecutive current year performance against targets be noted;
- (ii) that the summary table attached to this report, providing a clear and concise indication of where performance has improved or fallen against the previous quarter, be noted;
- (iii) that is be noted that the data reported unless stated is for this quarter only and is not cumulative.

14. The Best Value Performance Plan 2003/04

Each year, the Council is required to publish its Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) in accordance with government guidance and by the end of June. The first draft of the 2003/04 plan was attached as an appendix to the report for consideration and agreement and also by the Council. Simon White (Policy and Projects Officer) outlined the new requirements for production of the plan following receipt of government guidance.

RESOLVED:-

that the format and content of the draft Best Value Performance Plan 2003/04 as presented at Appendix I to the report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration be approved and presented to full Council for agreement.

(Council)

15. Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre Budget, 2003/4

This report provided details of a shortfall in the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre (WHEEC) budget, and updated Members on the latest position regarding the operational partnership with the London Borough of Barnet. Councillor Lyon outlined some of the recent difficulties that had impacted on the management of the Centre and that it was hoped that a bid for funding under the New Opportunities Fund would be successful. It was proposed that the Centre's budget would transfer from Roe Green Junior School to the Life Long Learning Division from April 2004 and that there be no further action between Brent and Barnet regarding any outstanding liabilities. Councillor Lyon asked officers to continue to look for future options to allow the Council to continue its support for the Centre.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that it be noted that £13,500 will be found from the EAL budget allocation in 2003/4 as additional funding for the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre (WHEEC), to enable the continued operation of its services and activities in the current year;
- (ii) that it be noted that growth of £40, 000 in the WHEEC base budget will be required in the financial year 2004/5 in order to ensure its continued viability in future years; and therefore agree to review the budget for WHEEC as part of the budget setting process for 2004/5;
- (iii) that the budget and line management of WHEEC be transferred from Roe Green Junior School directly into the Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services division of Education, Arts and Libraries from April 1st 2004;
- (iv) that the items of equipment identified as belonging to the London Borough of Barnet be returned to it, but that no action is taken to pursue any contributions or liabilities in respect of the end of a jointly run WHEEC;
- (v) that the second phase application for the development of PE, sports and outdoor education facilities be submitted to the New Opportunities Fund as part of Brent's portfolio bid, in order to repair and re-furbish the existing buildings to basic standards;

16. Gordon Brown Outdoor Education Centre

This report updated members on progress of negotiations with Hampshire County Council regarding the possible transfer of the Gordon Brown Outdoor Education Centre (the Centre), and asked for a decision on whether to implement the transfer or whether to retain the Centre in Brent ownership. Councillor Lyon advised that following negotiations was considered that the option to transfer the Centre to Hampshire CC did not represent value for money for Brent. He proposed a motion which recommended that the Council not proceed with the transfer but to develop a single authority bid for New Opportunities Funding.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that while noting that very worthwhile discussions have taken place with Hampshire County Council, it be concluded that the option of transfer to Hampshire on the terms set out in the report does not represent value for money for Brent;
- (ii) that approval be given to retain the Centre and to submit a second stage bid to the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) for the sum of £200,000 to be used for urgent repairs and improvements to the centre;
- (iii) that the Council submit a stage 2 application for a grant from the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) of £200,000 should a single authority bid be acceptable to NOF.

17. Library Service Fees & Charges 2003-4

This report set out officers' proposals for the schedule of Library Service fees and charges for the financial year 2003/4. The proposed introduction of the new charges was timed to coincide with an increase in library opening hours.

RESOLVED:-

that the proposed schedule of charges set out in Appendix 1 to the report from the Director of Education, Arts and Libraries be agreed.

18. Evaluation of EDP2 (2002-3)

The first Education Development Plan (EDP1) for Brent, which set out priorities for education, ran for the period 1999-2002. EDP2 has a new set of priorities, and runs from 2002-7. Remaining tasks from EDP1 have been incorporated into EDP2. Councillor Lyon advised that the Plan would be referred to the Life Long Learning Scrutiny Panel for consideration.

RESOLVED:-

that members note the progress made with EDP2, endorse the actions being taken and refer the report to the Lifelong Learning panel.

(LLL Panel)

19. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:-

that the press and public be now excluded from the meeting as the following items are exempt from the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, namely:-

The amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the authority under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services.

Any terms proposed or to be proposed, by or to the Authority in the course of negotiations for a contract or for the acquisition or disposal of property or supply of goods or services.

20. Wembley Park Stadium Access Corridor

The report outlined the construction work progress to date of the Wembley Park Estate Access Corridor (EAC) project and the position regarding funding requirements from the Council's capital programme necessary to complete the scheme.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the content of this be noted and it be agreed to continue the project notwithstanding the risks to the Council associated with the funding of the Estate Access Corridor and Stadium Access Corridor Phase 1 detailed in the report.
- (ii) that the three options detailed in the report be noted and it be agreed that the West Footbridge is not included in the Mowlem contract but that the land for it is acquired and held for future opportunities to construct it when funds are available in accordance with option 7.2.5 detailed in the report.

21. Lease Extension, Heritage Family Centre, Pitfield Way, St Raphaels

This report sought the Executive's approval for the extension of the term of the lease at a revised rent. The Borough Solicitor outlined concerns surrounding the granting a long lease to a community organisation, noting that without the grant of a lease, the organisation would not be able to access funding. Consequently, officers would need to be satisfied these concerns and further checks would be made.

RESOLVED:-

that, noting the advice of the Borough Solicitor, and subject to the consent of the Deputy Prime Minister and proof of funding from the New Opportunities fund and confirmation as to the length of term they will require to provide grant (provided it is not more than 20 years), approval be given to an extension of the existing lease of 161 Pitfield Way to Heritage Family Centre at a revised rent of £9,000 per annum subject to review.

22. St Martin's Church Hall, Kensal Rise Compensation for purchase

This report informed the Executive of the long standing negotiations and 'in principle' agreement reached in March 2003 for the purchase of the church hall of St. Martin, Kensal Rise for expansion of the neighbouring Princess Frederica CE (JM&I) Primary School and sought Executive approval for payment of the agreed compensation. Marcus Perry (Corporate Property Manager) outlined the background to the case.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that it be noted that the long standing negotiations with the London Diocesan Fund for the church hall of St Martin are concluded;
- (ii) that approval be given to the agreed terms in full and final settlement for the purchase by agreement of this property upon the basis of the compensation payable under the provisions of Rule 5 of Section 5 of the Land Compensation Act 1961, relating to the cost of equivalent reinstatement of a modern substitute building, in the sum specified in the report together with all professional fees and disbursements as stated, plus VAT.
- (iii) that the Manager, Corporate Property Services be authorised to complete the purchase on these terms.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm.

A John
Chair

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