

**MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING**  
**Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2006 at 6.00 pm**

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

Councillors Bellia, Duffin, Fiegel, Gladbaum, Harrod, Moher and Sayers also attended the meeting.

**1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

None made.

**2. Petition – Tiverton Hall**

The Executive received a petition from local residents asking the Council to compulsorily purchase the premises known as The Tiverton Centre, Wrentham Avenue so that it could come back into the public domain as a community centre including a medical centre. The petition stated that since its sale eight years ago, the premises had remained derelict. The Mr Keutgen, addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners stating that residents felt that the premises had been sold without consultation, for less than market value and he described how the site had declined. It appeared to residents that the new owners' original project had not proved viable and that any plans to demolish the existing building should be resisted. Mr Keutgen felt that previous dialogue with the new owners had only limited success however the issue had been raised at recent meeting of the Kilburn Kensal Area Consultative Forum and a briefing note circulated at the meeting indicated a way forward whereby the residents and owners could work together towards a mutually satisfactory conclusion. An outline planning application had also been submitted since the start of the new year which also had positive indications.

Mr O'Hara, architect, representing the owners of the Tiverton Centre, also addressed the meeting. He outlined plans for the Centre at various stages since its purchase in December 1997 and reasons why they had not been progressed, including lack of support and also funding shortfalls. Mr O'Hara also indicated that communication between the new owners and residents had been limited. By 2004, plans were for a mixed use site including a medical centre and some affordable housing and this was being progressed with a planning application submitted in January 2006. He noted that the proposals were similar to suggestions for future use outlined in the petition. Mr O'Hara accepted that the premises had deteriorated but efforts had been made to remove graffiti and dumped rubbish.

Richard Saunders (Director of Environment and Culture) advised that the planning application submitted was still under consideration and he assured that full consultation would take place with residents. Councillor John reiterated that consultation should be full and rigorous given the extent of local interest. She also emphasised that no decision was being taken at this meeting neither was the Council pre-judging the matter. Councillor John thanked the petitioners and Mr O'Hara for attending the meeting.

### 3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December be approved as an accurate record.

### 4. **2004/2005 Joint Audit and Inspection Letter**

Simon Davis and Mike Robinson (PricewaterhouseCoopers) and Jacqueline Barry-Purssell (Audit Commission) were present at the meeting for this item. The report from the Chief Executive accompanied the Joint Audit and Inspection Letter for 2004/2005 issued by the Audit Commission and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). Mr Robinson (PwC) outlined the main points of the Letter which indicated that the Council was continuing to perform well. It was felt that the level of balances should be maintained as the Council was like to face a number of financial challenges in the future including loss of grant, pressures on school roles and also the pension fund. Mr Robinson stated the Executive could be assured by the unqualified opinion issued on the Council's 2004/05 accounts on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005 and thanked the local authority, in particular the Finance and Corporate Resources staff, for their work.

Simon Davis (PwC) added that Brent was making good progress, and following inspection, scored a three on direction of travel having been judged as improving well by the Audit Commission, consistently across service areas and in the key areas of education, housing, regeneration and social care. Areas such as human resources and community safety had been targeted and recommendations for action had emerged. Mr Davis also extended thanks to the Council and members and looked forward to continued improvement.

Councillor Jones (Lead Member, Environment, Planning and Culture) acknowledged that the parking account needed to be addressed and thanked the Auditors for their comments on the Council's progress in recycling. Councillor Beswick (Lead Member, Crime Prevention and Public Safety) welcomed the comments stating that the Council would not be complacent but continue to be robust in seeking to achieve maximum results. Councillor Coughlin (Lead Member, Finance and Corporate Resources) also extended gratitude to all involved in the work, particularly in the submission of the accounts which had been both timely and accurate. Councillor John referred to the productive relationship that had developed over a number of years between the Council and its auditors, again expressing thanks for the work they do.

RESOLVED:-

that the contents of the 2004/2005 Joint Audit letter be noted and a report responding to the main recommendations presented to a future meeting of the Executive.

## 5. **Brent's Community Strategy 2006 - 2010**

This report presented Brent's draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2010. The Strategy had been developed by the Brent Local Strategic Partnership, who approved the draft on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2005. This report provided background information and set out the legal, financial and diversity implications. It recommended that the Executive approve the Strategy and refer it for adoption by full Council.

Councillor John, as Chair of the Brent Local Strategic Partnership, confirmed that all the partner agencies had fully endorsed the strategy and looked forward to it making a real difference to the local community.

Phil Newby (Director, Policy and Regeneration) added that the new Strategy reflected the strengths of Brent partnerships including business and the voluntary sector. Councillor Fox (Lead Member, Adults and Community Care) welcomed the emphasis on social care, with inclusivity, tailored packages and an emphasis on choice. Councillor Jones welcomed the section on environmental services which, she felt, accurately reflected aspirations.

RESOLVED:-

that the draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2010 be agreed and referred to full Council for adoption on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2006.

## 6. **Wembley Regeneration and the Casino Panel Advisory Panel**

Councillor RS Patel in introducing this report gave an overview of the Government's recently established independent Casino Advisory Panel and set out the timetable for its work. He referred to the response already submitted to an initial invitation from the Casino Panel expressing Brent's interest in being considered as a location for a regional casino which would help to achieve aspirations for the Council's vision for a new Wembley.

Phil Newby (Director, Policy and Regeneration) outlined the reasons for the Government setting up the Casino Panel. The Council was able to put forward a strong regeneration case for a regional casino to help in the delivery of ambitions such as international scale conferencing, community facilities and improved transport arrangements. Studies would be conducted into both the economic and social impact and reported back in March 2005. Councillor John accepted that the scheme was controversial however would not wish the Council to miss out on a regeneration opportunity. Nonetheless she stressed that the Council would be keeping an open mind and would give due consideration to both the economic and social implications.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the timetable for the work of the Casino Advisory Panel be noted;

- (ii) that the response already made to the Casino Advisory Panel (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) expressing Brent's interest in being considered as a location for a regional casino only be endorsed
- (iii) that a further report be brought to the Executive in March setting out the findings of the Economic and Social Impact Assessments.

**7. Authority to award Contract for Occupational Health Services**

This report requested authority to award contracts as required by Contract Standing Order No 88. This report summarised the process undertaken in tendering this contract and, following the completion of the evaluation of the tenders, recommended to whom the contract should be awarded.

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

“Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority).”

RESOLVED:

that the contract for Occupational Health Services be awarded to National Britannia Limited for a three-year period commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006, with an option to extend the contract for a further two-year period subject to the General Purposes Committee also giving approval to the award.

**8. Collection Fund surplus/deficit for 2006/07**

As part of the Council Tax setting process for 2006/2007, the Council is required to estimate the amount of any surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. This must be done by the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2006 (or first working day thereafter), and the report asked members to approve the balance projected.

Councillor Coughlin (Lead Member, Finance and Corporate Resources) advised that approximately £13.052m of debts remained to be collected taking into account bad debt provision. There had been recent improvements in the collection of Council Tax and much of the debt outstanding was old and historical.

RESOLVED:-

that the calculation of the estimated Collection Fund balance as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 as a deficit of £1,500,000 be agreed.

**9. A Cultural Strategy for Brent 2006-2009**

This report provided Members with an overview of the Cultural Strategy for Brent (Appendix A to the report from the Director of Environment and

Culture). The Strategy outlined Brent's cultural assets, identified cultural priorities for the borough and identified a vision for Brent's cultural development based on the themes which have emerged from consultation: civic pride; safe, healthy, cohesive communities; building a cultural economy. The Cultural Strategy drew together priorities from all of the Brent Council cultural services such as sports, libraries and the arts as well as giving a future direction for culture from all providers in the borough, partners and stakeholders.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the findings of the Cultural Strategy be noted;
- (ii) that the key themes within the Strategy and their priorities as set out in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.7 of the report from the Director of Environment and Culture be agreed;
- (iii) that the Cultural Strategy for Brent be adopted.

#### 10. **The Local Implementation Plan**

Councillor Jones (Lead Member, Environment, Planning and Culture) introduced this report on the Local Implementation Plan (LIP), a statutory document that every London Borough has to prepare for submission to the Mayor of London in 2006. The Council's Transportation Service Unit last reported to Executive in August 2005, detailed how, via the LIP, the Borough planned to implement the relevant priorities, policies and proposals included within the Mayor's Transport Strategy. The LIP process was first reported to the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2005 Executive and officers were instructed to report back to the Executive with a recommended 'Final' LIP document following receipt of comments from TfL. A summary of these comments are highlighted in Appendix 1 of the report from the Director of Environment and Culture together with officers' responses.

The Transportation Unit had amended the LIP accordingly and the document now fully reflects the Mayor and TfL's comments and was ready to be submitted to the Greater London Authority for Final Approval. Brent's LIP was likely to be approved late Spring/early Summer 2006 and Lead Member, Councillor Jones, added that the document was considered to be comprehensive with every opportunity having been given for contributions.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the summary of Transport for London's feedback report on Brent's Draft LIP (Appendix 1) of the report be noted;
- (ii) that summary of Brent's Final LIP (Appendix 2) of the report be noted;
- (iii) that the content of the Final Local Implementation Plan (LIP) be agreed so that it can be submitted to the Full Council for approval in

late January, subject to minor amendments by the Director of Environment and Culture – should this be required;

- (iv) that the Director of Environment and Culture submit the Final LIP to the Mayor of London for final approval.

#### 11. **Ground Work Trust 'Western Extension' consultation proposal**

Initial discussions have taken place regarding the need for and desirability of a Groundwork Trust for the London Borough of Brent. The first step in taking this work forward involves a research exercise comprising a desktop feasibility study and stakeholder consultation. This report provided a summary of work undertaken to date and sought Council support to progress this initiative through a stakeholder consultation exercise. Councillor Jones pointed out that any further decisions would have financial implications.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Groundwork research and feasibility study attached as Appendix A to the report from the Director of Environment and Culture be noted;
- (ii) that the proposed stakeholder consultation exercise to be carried out in early 2006 be supported;
- (iii) that officers continue to work with Groundwork and bring a further report to outline the findings and any proposed future Trust development in Brent.

#### 12. **Draft Alterations to The London Plan: Housing Provision Target**

This report informed members of the Mayor of London's proposals to alter the London Plan's new housing target for Brent, from 13,500 additional homes between 1997 – 2017, to 12,700 for the period 2007 – 2017 and assessed the potential implications for the Borough's planning strategy. The report also outlined the 2004 London Housing Capacity Study from which the proposed new housing target has been derived. Councillor Jones expressed concern that the Council would not be able to deliver the target of 12,700 homes given existing and projected infrastructure constraints. Representations had been made by officers that the plans were contrary to the borough's land use strategy and planning policies. These representations could be considered later in the year if necessary at an Examination in Public with other London boroughs leading to formal objection if still unresolved.

The Director of Environment and Culture circulated revised recommendations at the meeting which clarified some legal concerns and which were accepted. The Director of Housing and Community Care commented on the borough's housing capacity, acknowledging that Brent had a high level of housing need. However he felt that the figures in the

London Plan were excessive particularly given the pressure on open space.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that this Executive considers that the Borough's proposed new housing target has not been satisfactorily substantiated;
- (ii) that the Council should formally object to the Draft Alterations to the London Plan, unless amendments are agreed with the GLA that are acceptable to the Council;
- (iii) that the Director of Environment and Culture be granted delegated authority to submit a detailed objection to the Mayor's Consultation on the Draft Alterations To The London Plan, in line with Officers comments in the report from the Director of Environment and Culture, if amendments outlined in the report are not made.

### 13. **Review of the Cemetery Service**

This report set out for members the main findings of an independent review of the cemetery service and the key recommendations for the future of the service. Councillor Jones (Lead Member, Environment and Culture) stated that the review had established that service provision was good overall and pressures identified had been addressed in the recommendations which she summarised. She referred to a wish for a crematorium to be built in the borough given the significant Hindu population in Brent. This would involve significant capital costs and planning considerations and consequently consideration was being given to improving facilities for the memorialisation of cremated remains. Other smaller capital projects were also being considered.

The Director of Environment and Culture added that the review had arisen from the performance management system and the report had identified improvements and potential for financial savings. The Chair welcomed the report, played tribute to the improvements made to the service provided and expressed a wish to be kept up to date on the progress of the staffing restructuring. Councillor RS Patel suggested that consultation on plans for memorialisation facilities include local Hindu organisations such as the Hindu Council, Brent Indian Association and the Federation of Patidars.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the findings of the review and recommendations be noted;
- (ii) that the action plan as set out in Appendix 1 to the report from the Director of Environment and Culture be approved.

#### 14. **Department of Health Partnership for Older People Project**

The report, introduced by Councillor Fox (Lead Member, Adults and Social Care) advised members that the Council, as lead organisation for the health and social care community in Brent, has been successful in its bid for funding from Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPP) grant. The intention of the proposed Brent POPP project was to extend the existing Care Co-ordination Service in order to develop services with a number of statutory and voluntary partners to promote whole system change between health and social care to improve outcomes for older people. The report sought members' approval to proceed with the project. A similar report was going to Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust (Brent tPCT) for final approval.

Martin Cheeseman (Director, Housing and Community Care) stated that the priorities were in line with the Council's strategy of moving from a two star to a three star authority for example by improving preventative work and the speed of reviews. In response to a question from Councillor Moher, Martin Cheeseman confirmed that neighbourhood centres could be involved in the project together with the voluntary sector partners.

#### RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Director of Housing and Community Care proceed with the arrangements to accept the POPP grant subject to Department of Health conditions;
- (ii) that the Director of Housing and Community Care agree appropriate arrangements for the establishment of a pooled budget with Brent tPCT using powers under section 31 of the Health Act 1999;
- (iii) that approval be given to enter into appropriate contract and monitoring arrangements with relevant partners in the POPP project in order to deliver the service;
- (iv) that the Director of Housing and Community Care negotiate with Brent tPCT on the management arrangements for the new service;
- (v) that the Director of Housing and Community Care report back before completion of the project with recommendations as to the continuation of the project.

#### 15. **Temporary Accommodation Update**

The report from the Director of Housing and Community Care sought members' approval to proposals to plans to reduce temporary accommodation usage by 50% by 2010, in line with Government targets; a change to the Locata banding scheme for households in temporary accommodation who accept a qualifying offer of private sector accommodation; changes to the policy for setting rent charges in some types of temporary accommodation, changes to the policy on the provision



of furniture storage for homeless households. The report also provided an update on trends in homelessness and current numbers in temporary accommodation.

Councillor Thomas (Lead Member, Housing and Customer Services) outlined accommodation trends which were common across London. He acknowledged that Brent was a borough in need with a high number of people on the housing waiting list and the amount of available temporary accommodation decreasing. Work was taking place with registered social landlords to increase the level of available settled accommodation. Councillor Thomas indicated that following discussions with colleagues around London he felt that there should be no change to the existing Locata banding scheme at this time but that the system should be kept under review. He moved an amendment to the recommendations at 2.3 in the report to this effect which was agreed.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that the plans to reduce temporary accommodation usage for homeless households by 50% by 2010, in line with Government targets, as detailed in paragraph 3.2.3 and Appendix A to the report, be approved;
- (ii) that the change to the conditions of giving an Empty Property Grant which will require landlords to cover the cost of any remaining disrepair and bring the dwelling up to Decent Homes Standard, as detailed in paragraph 3.2.12 of the report, be approved;
- (iii) that the proposals to achieve the Government Temporary Accommodation reduction targets by offering a wider range of homeless prevention measures and increasing access to settled accommodation in the private sector be noted, but that no change be made to the existing Locata banding scheme;
- (iv) that the changes to the policy for setting rent charges in some types of temporary accommodation, as detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the report, to be implemented from 01/04/06, be approved;
- (v) that the changes to the policy on the provision of furniture storage for homeless households, as detailed in paragraph 3.6 of the report be approved.
- (vi) that the update on trends in homelessness and current numbers in temporary accommodation be noted.

**16. Social Services Star Ratings and Annual Inspection Performance Reports 2004/2005**

The report before the Executive, introduced by Councillor Fox (Lead Member, Adults and Social Care) provides detail on the star ratings judgements for Social Services for 2004/05, and also the separate Annual Performance Assessments for Children's education and social care

services and Adult social care which contributed to the star ratings judgements. Councillor Fox drew attention to the adults services achievements and the areas for improvement outlined in the report. Councillor Lyon (Lead Member, Children and Families) was pleased with the improvement in the star rating position and referred to the strengths of Children's services and also the areas for improvement.

Councillor John endorsed the sentiments in relation to the improved performance which had contributed positively to the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment and asked the Directors to take back to staff the Executive's congratulations on the achievement, particularly as this was achieved during a period of departmental re-organisation.

RESOLVED;-

- (i) that the annual performance assessments for adults social care and children's education and social care services produced by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and Ofsted be noted;
- (ii) that the significant number of improvements observed in the performance assessment reports be noted;
- (iii) that the areas for further improvement as identified in the performance assessment reports be noted;
- (iv) that staff be congratulated on the outcome of the inspection and for their hard work in achieving the improved performance.

#### 17. **The Freeman Family Centre**

This report sought agreement for the Council to enter into a number of agreements with Barnardo's and the Freeman Trust with regard to the construction of a family centre on the vacant site at Longstone Avenue NW10 and its subsequent use. It also provided clarification of the terms of the Service Contract to be entered into by the Council with Barnardo's once the building works have been completed.

Councillor Lyon reminded members of the legacy from the Trust which had brought capital resources to the Roundwood area of the borough and outlined concerns expressed by the Freeman Trust regarding the operation of the contract and their reluctance to accept break clauses, preferring instead service reviews.

Councillor Sayers addressed the meeting speaking against the proposed change which he considered to be high risk. Councillor Lyon responded that the Council would use past experience to ensure that the contract proceeded as required and considered the risk management provision to be adequate. Councillor Thomas welcomed the report and the proactive service that would be provided to help families in the area, thereby reducing the number of children coming into care.

Given that this report had not been circulated five days before the meeting, the Chair certified the item as urgent as the project timescales were dependent on the award of a building contract in January 2006. Finance must be made available for the award of the building contract and provision of finance is dependant on the Council's agreement not to require the break clauses in the Service Contract previously agreed on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2005.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the previous decision be confirmed that the Council grants a 100 year lease of the centre to Barnardo's on completion of the development. The exact terms of such lease to be determined by the Head of Property and Asset Management in consultation with the Borough Solicitor and the Director of Finance;
- (ii) that it be agreed the Council enters into a 20-year Service Contract with Barnardo's once the works have been completed and the centre is ready to open subject to the revenue funding being available from 2007/8. The exact terms of this Service Contract to be determined by the Director of Children and Families on the advice of the Borough Solicitor and with the agreement of the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources but with a requirement for service reviews (as set out paragraph 3.7) rather than the break clause previously agreed by the Executive at its meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> February 2005,
- (iii) that it be agreed the Council enter into a tripartite Funding Agreement with the Freeman Trust and Barnardo's setting out the basis on which the Freeman Trust will provide funding for the centre and obligations of the Council and Barnardo's. The exact terms of the Funding Agreement to be determined by the Director of Children and Families on the advice of the Borough Solicitor and with the agreement of the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.

## 18. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED:-

that the press and public be now excluded from the meeting as the following reports are not for publication as they contain the following categories of exempt information as specified in Paragraphs 8 & 9 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, 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 for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services."

19. **Progress Report on Re-tendering Leisure Management of Vale Farm and Charteris Sports Centres**

This report provided members with an update as to the position regarding the retendering of the management of Vale Farm and Charteris Sports Centres. Councillor Jones outlined the reasons why it was proposed to extend the contract and the Director circulated a supplementary report with revised recommendations which was accepted.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the progress made to date in the retendering of the leisure management contract be noted;
- (ii) that the Director of Environment and Culture negotiate a short term extension of the current contract with Leisure Connection.

20. **Award of Construction Team Tender for Granville New Homes**

The report set out the consultation, procurement, design and construction strategy for the delivery of the project known as 'Granville New Homes' (GNH). It also explained the interview and selection process leading up to the recommendation to award the construction team contract for the design and build of the new homes.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the content of the report especially the timescales, allocation procedure and financial implications be noted;
- (ii) that the construction team contract be awarded as set out within the report from the Director of Housing and Community Care, subject to compliance with the requirements of Standing Order 107.
- (iii) that it be noted that this report effectively forms the third and last report for Granville New Homes major procurement under an EU two-stage restrictive tendering procedure.

21. **Land Adjoining 10 Sycamore Grove NW9 – Disposal to Ujima Housing Association**

This report sought the Executive's approval to dispose of a small site to Ujima Housing Association Limited (Ujima HA), for developing a five bedroom affordable housing unit on this site.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the disposal of the site freehold to Ujima HA upon the main terms set out in the detail part of the report be approved, subject to Ujima HA entering into a nomination agreement (as agreed by the Director of Housing pursuant to paragraph (ii) below) with the Council;

- (ii) that the Director of Housing and Community Care be authorised to agree the terms of the nomination agreement with Ujima HA on behalf of the Council.
- (iii) that the Head of Property and Asset Management be authorised to agree such other terms as are in the best interest of the Council.

**22. 1 Craven Park NW10 – Renewal of Lease**

The report sought the Executive's approval to agree the terms of the lease renewal set out in the Detail of this report, which will put onto a formal footing the continued occupation of 1 Craven Park NW10 by the Council's Youth Offending Team.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that it agreed to renew the lease of 1 Craven Park, which will put onto a formal footing, for the continued use of the property by the Council's Youth Offending Team on the heads of terms set out in the Detail section of the report;
- (ii) that the Head of Property and Asset Management be authorised to agree such other terms as are in the best interest of the Council.

**23. Proposed Lease of Advertising Hoarding Site at Neasden Recreation Ground, North Circular Road NW10**

The report sought Executive approval for the grant of a lease of an advertising hoarding site at Neasden Recreation Ground North Circular Road London NW10.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that it be agreed the Council grant a lease of the advertising site upon the main terms set out in the detail part of the report;
- (ii) that the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources in consultation with the Borough Solicitor be authorised to agree such other terms that are in the best interest of the Council.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm.

A JOHN  
Chair

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