

Meeting of the Executive
Monday 16th April 2007 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Lorber (Chair), Councillor Blackman (Vice Chair) and Councillors Allie, D Brown, V Brown, Castle, Colwill, O'Sullivan, Van Colle and Wharton.

Councillors Arnold, Dunwell, Hashmi, Malik, Mistry and Sneddon also attended the meeting.

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

Councillors Lorber and Wharton declared personal and prejudicial interests in the item relating to the tendering process for the provision of a multicultural day centre for older people as ward councillors who supported the Sudbury Neighbourhood Centre. Both would leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or voting thereon.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th March 2007 be approved as an accurate record.

3. 2005/06 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter

The report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources accompanied the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2005/06. The Letter was issued by the Audit Commission and drew on the work by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) as the Council's appointed auditors from the statutory audit.

Jackie Barry-Pursell (Audit Commission), Peter Flamank and Simon Davies (PricewaterhouseCoopers) were present at the meeting and in turn gave summaries of the key findings setting out areas for improvement and actions required to be taken. For 2006, the Council had retained its overall CPA rating of 3 stars and improving well. Jackie Barry-Pursell commended the Council's performance and direction of travel particularly in relation to performance management and partnerships. Areas for improvement included housing benefits, social care and waste management. It was noted that there had been a lot of activity in the area of human resources and she encouraged the Council to remain focussed. Peter Flamank reminded the Executive that the outcome of the audit had already been considered in detail by the Audit Committee and the General Purposes Committee and stated that the Council had done well in producing good quality information to tight deadlines. Audit issues for 2007 would include the impact of the NHS debt. On the use of resources, the Council had scored 3 out of a possible 4, which was good given that standards this year were harder to meet. The Council had also scored well on interaction with the community and relationships with partners. Jackie Barry-Pursell congratulated the Council on the assessment and looked forward to the continued joint working with auditors.

In questions, the auditors confirmed that the Council was in a good position to achieve a 4 score for data quality. Members also referred to central government rule changes that had adversely affected housing benefits scores and also sought views on the late notification of tPCT budget reductions. Peter Flamank noted that the Council had plans in place for system improvements and on the tPCT responded that any comments would not be on the relationship but on how the organisation operates within financial constraints and on levels of balances. The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources added that most of the debt seen to be due to the Council had now been paid.

The Chief Executive welcomed the positive report and thanked the Audit Commission and PwC for their support. Councillor Lorber recognised the importance of the CPA scorecard and its implications for resources. He assured that the Council would improve performance especially on housing benefits and waste management and would monitor to ensure that expectations are met. Regarding the tPCT, Councillor Lorber stated that the situation was very serious, had taken a great deal of officer time and, with the GLA precept, had led to the increase in the Council Tax. Additional charges were expected in the following year however the Council would continue the fight to defend public services. He thanked PwC, the Audit Commission and the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and his team expressing the wish to achieve a 4 star rating in the following year.

RESOLVED:-

that the contents of the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter be noted and that a report responding to the main recommendations be presented to a future meeting.

4. Children's Centre Capital Programme – Phase 2 Alternative Site Options and Phase 1 Update

The report from the Director of Children and Families sought further decisions in respect of the proposed Children's Centres in the Alperton area and at Wembley and Willesden Centres for Health and Care. The report reviewed the risks attached to the whole phase 2 capital programme. It confirmed that officers would seek reductions in the scope of the specification of new build and refurbishment projects so as to contain costs within the resources available from external funding (Sure Start grant).

The Lead Member, Councillor Wharton stated that there was a need to manage the programme carefully to avoid funds being clawed back and outlined the current position on individual sites. Discussion was also taking place with partners and Councillor Wharton was pleased that agreement had been reached with the tPCT regarding sites in Wembley and Willesden. The Executive agreed that every effort should be made to bring the caretaker's house in Lyon Park Avenue into use as quickly as possible.

RESOLVED:-

that in respect of the Alperton area, to:

- (i) note that further feasibility work will be undertaken on the siting of the Children's Centre in Alperton either at Alperton Community School, Lyon Park Infant and Junior Schools or at Douglas Avenue Resource Centre and that a further report would be submitted to the Executive in May with a firm recommendation for one of these sites;

that in respect of the PCT sites to:

- (ii) authorise the Director of Children and Families to approve the arrangements for the establishment of Children's Centres at Wembley and Willesden Centres for Health and Care as described in paragraph 3.5 and 3.6 of his report and to sign a renewable 3-year licence agreement with the PCT with nil rental costs;
- (iii) note and approve the work being undertaken with the PCT in respect of the potential future transfer of Harmony and Granville Plus Children's Centres (paragraphs 3.7-3.10 of the report from the Director of Children and Families refer);
- (iv) note the overall position of the capital programme in terms of both time and budget and endorse the actions being undertaken to secure and improve this position (paragraphs 3.11 – 3.10 refer).

5. Authority to tender contract for Speech and Language Therapy Services

This report concerned the provision of a Speech and Language Therapy ("SALT") service primarily to key stage 1, 2, 3 and 4 Brent pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs attending Brent maintained primary and secondary schools but also to other groups requiring a SALT service. The report from the Director of Children and Families requested approval to invite tenders for a Framework Contract in respect of SALT services as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89. It was noted that the Council had to take responsibility for this service as a part of the tPCT budget measures.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that approval be given to the pre-tender considerations and criteria to be used to evaluate tenders for a Framework Contract as set out in paragraph 3.11 of the report from the Director of Children and Families;
- (ii) that officers invite tenders for the provision of SALT services and evaluate them in accordance with the approved evaluation criteria referred to in paragraph (i) above.

6. **Proposed Community Primary and Nursery Schools Admission Arrangements for Sept 2008 – Update**

Having previously agreed proposed admissions arrangements for community schools for September 2008 in February of this year, subject to consultation, the Executive were advised of an objection from the Governing Body of Gladstone Park Primary School against increasing their admission number from 84 to 90. The Lead Member, Councillor Wharton, confirmed that the governing body were aware of the proposal and could submit an appeal if it so wished.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that agreement be given to an increase in the admissions number of Gladstone Park School from 84 to 90 to bring it line with other community schools in the borough and to assist in meeting the projected demand for school places. The admission number has been increased in the proposed admission arrangements for 2008;
- (ii) that the admission arrangements set out in Appendix B of the report from the Director of Children and Families be approved.

7. **Any other urgent business - Sponsor for the Wembley Academy**

The Chair certified this item as urgent as the sponsor arrangements needed to be in place to enable the project to be delivered on time for September 2010. Any delay beyond 16th April would threaten the delivery time for the project.

The Lead Member for Children and Families, Councillor Wharton, advised that the Sponsor for the Wembley Academy, Andrew Rosenfeld, had withdrawn his sponsorship of the Wembley Academy. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) had recommended the ARK (Absolute Return for Kids) Children's Charitable Trust to be the new Sponsor for the Academy in partnership with the Council. The Lead Member felt that ARK subscribed fully to the Expression of Interest approved by the Executive in January 2006 and were an ideal partner for the Council.

Councillor Blackman raised concerns regarding the late circulation of the final report and whether an early draft should have been more widely circulated. Members also questioned the extent of briefings on offer. Additionally, it was felt that the level of detail contained in the report on the proposed new sponsors was insufficient and that consideration should be deferred. Other members responded that briefing sessions could have been requested and any questions raised in advance for consideration.

Councillor Wharton agreed to the request for a full briefing on ARK and to delay purchase of the school site pending consideration by a special meeting of the Executive. The Chief Executive added that the report had been published in accordance with the urgency procedures and the appropriate members briefed, however, further sessions could now be arranged.

RESOLVED:-

that consideration of the report from the Director of Children and Families be deferred to a special meeting of this Executive.

8. **The Local Government White Paper: “Strong and Prosperous Communities” Briefing**

This report summarised the proposals for local government outlined in the White Paper “Strong and Prosperous Communities” and gave some initial analysis of potential implications for Brent. The Director of Policy and Regeneration outlined the main implications for neighbourhood governance, overview and scrutiny and the new performance assessment ‘Comprehensive Area Assessment’. Partnership working and community leadership would also be key and the Local Area Agreement would have increased importance. The Borough Solicitor added that a new Members’ Code of Conduct would also need to be adopted.

Councillor Lorber (Leader of the Council), commenting on the reference to local partnership working, referred to a report submitted to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee which set out the impact of tPCT savings proposals for children and families in Brent which he felt damaged health prevention work and undermined partnership working. Councillor Lorber stressed the need for a clear message to be sent to central government that it had a responsibility to ensure that partnership working was taken seriously by all parties.

RESOLVED:-

to note the initial proposals and local implications.

9. **The Council’s Efficiency Strategy**

The report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources proposed a revised efficiency strategy for the Council as part of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). It also asked the Executive to endorse the 2007/08 annual efficiency statement prior to submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Members expressed the view that a lot of the hard work carried out to improve efficiency had been undermined by the tPCT budget situation. The Director advised that when the original Gershon efficiency agenda was launched in 2004, savings made by public authorities were available to plough back into services. For the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review the intention appeared to be that a 3% target was an expectation for local authorities and government grant would be reduced accordingly. The Executive agreed that the 3% target may not be achievable year on year given earlier gains and noted that lobbying was currently taking place against the proposal. It was agreed that joint representations against the approach be made with briefings for the Borough’s three members of

parliament linking this to possible budget cuts and that the Executive's opposition be made clear.

The Executive agreed the Annual Efficiency Statement for 2007/08 and to its sign off by the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the revised efficiency strategy be agreed as part of the Council's overall Medium Term Financial Strategy (Appendix A to the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources);
- (ii) that the Annual Efficiency Statement for 2007/08 (Appendix B to the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources) be endorsed.

10. Authority to award contracts for IT Hardware (PCs and Laptops)

The report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources requested authority to award contracts for supply of IT hardware through an eAuction as required by Contract Standing Order 88. The report summarised the process being undertaken to procure these contracts through a mini competition, under an existing pre-tendered OGC Catalyst Framework, and recommended approval of the processes and mechanisms of the mini competition and award to successful eAuction bidders.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the process being undertaken for the procurement of IT hardware via the OGC Catalyst framework be noted;
- (ii) that approval be given to the evaluation process for the award of the IT hardware contracts as outlined in the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources;
- (iii) that subject to (v) below, approval be given to the award of the contract(s) for IT hardware (for all lots detailed with Brent volumes in Appendix 2 of the report) for an initial term of 18 months with two twelve month extensions to the successful suppliers determined in accordance with the evaluation process (referred to in paragraph (ii) above) following the eAuction;
- (iv) that the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources in consultation with the Borough Solicitor be authorised to formalise the contract award following the eAuction results;
- (v) that the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources be authorised to withdraw from the procurement process prior to the eAuction commencing if, following the quality evaluation, it is considered that the process will not meet the Council's requirements.

11. **Authority to award contract for cleaning of municipal buildings**

This report requested authority to award a contract as required by Contract Standing Order No 88. The report summarised the process undertaken in the tendering of the 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 the following category of exempt information as specified in Schedule 12 of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1972:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

RESOLVED:-

that the contract for Cleaning of Municipal Buildings be awarded to Connaught Environmental Ltd to take effect from 4th June 2007 for a period of 3 years with an option for the Council to extend the term of the contract for up to a further 2 years.

12. **1, Olympic Way, Wembley Middlesex HA9 0NP**

This report sought members' consent for the leasing of Suites 122 & 123 at 1 Olympic Way, for a term of 2 years for use by Brent In2 Work, which is part of the Council.

RESOLVED:-

That approval be given to the entry of a lease between landlord, Business Environment Wembley (No.1) Limited and the Council upon such other terms as are considered by the Head of Property and Asset Management as being in the Council's best interests.

13. **Supply and Demand and Temporary Accommodation**

The report from the Director of Housing and Community Care sought members' approval of the lettings targets for 2007/08, and provided an updated supply and demand analysis for housing, including lettings performance in 2006/07 and progress against Temporary Accommodation reduction targets. The report provided an update on progress in developing temporary to permanent housing schemes and sought approval to invite expressions of interest for the provision of management and maintenance services for the sub-regional TTP scheme as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89. This report also sought approval for such management and maintenance services and the provision of the units for the sub-regional TTP scheme to be procured as part of a collaborative procurement with other West London Authorities.

Members noted that the Council had a good record in preventative work regarding homelessness, however, it was put that solutions, in the form of

permanent housing, were required, for which central government assistance was needed.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the updated supply and demand analysis for housing, including lettings performance in 2006/07, given in Appendix A of the report from the Director of Housing and Community Care be noted;
- (ii) that approval be given to the lettings targets for 2007/08, as detailed in paragraph 3.7 and in Appendix E of the report;
- (iii) that the progress in developing temporary to permanent housing schemes, both at a borough level and sub-regionally, as detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the report be noted;
- (iv) that approval be given to officers inviting expressions of interest for the provision of management and maintenance services and the provision of units for the sub-regional TTP scheme;
- (v) that it be agreed that there are good financial and / or operational reasons to consider outstanding items in Standing Order 89 in a separate report to be brought by officers before Invitations to Tender are issued for the provision of management and maintenance services for the sub-regional TTP scheme;
- (vi) that it be agreed that there are good operational reasons for the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to not apply to the collaborative procurement process for the provision of management and maintenance services and the provision of the units for the sub-regional TTP scheme and that the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations will apply instead.

14. **Declaration of Interests**

Councillors Lorber and Wharton declared and prejudicial interests in the item relating to a Multi-Cultural Day Care Service for Older People as ward councillors and who supported the Sudbury Neighbourhood Centre. Councillor Lorber vacated the Chair and both members left the meeting, taking no part in the discussion.

15. **Chair**

RESOLVED:

that the Vice Chair, Councillor Blackman, chair the meeting for the next item concerning the Multi-Cultural Day Service for Older People.

16. Approval of the tendering process for a Multi-Cultural Day Care Service for Older People

Following the decision on 15th January 2007 to invite expressions of interest for the contract for day care services provided by Sudbury Neighbourhood Centre as part of a market testing exercise, at the end of the initial contract period, advertisements were placed in community care and local press on 1st February 2007. After evaluation of the expressions of interest received officers determined that there was more than one viable expression for this service and therefore the report was produced to set out the tendering process and evaluation criteria to be followed. This report requested approval of the process and evaluation criteria as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the expressions of interest stage that has already occurred as part of the market testing exercise will be taken as the first stage in a two-stage tender process under Brent's Standing Orders;
- (ii) that approval be given to the pre-tender considerations and the criteria to be used to evaluate tenders as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report from the Director of Housing and Community Care;
- (iii) that officers invite tenders and evaluate them in accordance with the approved evaluation criteria referred to in (ii) above.

17. Reference of Items called in for Scrutiny

The decisions taken by the 12th March 2007 Executive, relating to Carlyon Print and Town Centre Wardens were called in for scrutiny at the Forward Plan Select Committee on 27th March 2007. Extracts from the minutes of the Select Committee had been circulated. The Executive noted the Chair of the Select Committee's absence from tonight's meeting and the Director of Housing and Community Care summarised a supplementary report which responded to questions raised at the Select Committee in relation to Carlyon Print. The Executive noted the report and endorsed the previous decisions.

For the Town Centre Wardens' decision, the Lead Member for Crime Prevention and Public Safety, Councillor V Brown, advised the Executive that the matter had been further discussed at the Select Committee and no with no recommendation for change. Councillor V Brown proposed that the minutes of the Select Committee be noted and the earlier decision of the Executive endorsed.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the extract from the minutes of the Forward Plan Select Committee in relation to Carlyon Print and Town Centre Wardens be noted;

- (ii) that the supplementary report from the Director of Housing and Community Care be noted and that the decision of this Executive of 12th March 2007 of the in respect of Carlyon Print be endorsed;
- (iii) that the earlier decision in respect of the Town Centre Warden Service taken on 12th March 2007 be endorsed namely:
 - (a) that the responses to the consultation with the current Town Centre Warden Service employees and trade unions;
 - (b) that the arguments for and against the proposal to replace the Town Centre Warden Service with additional Police Community Support Officers be noted;
 - (c) that approval be given to officers' recommendations to proceed with the proposal to end Town Centre Warden provision and fund the equivalent number of PCSOs under an agreement with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), thus deploying an additional 16 PCSO posts.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm.

P LORBER
Chair