

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING
Tuesday, 18th March 2008 at 7.00 pm

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clues.

Councillors Beswick, Detre and Mistry also attended the meeting.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

The following declarations of personal interest were made:

- Councillor Blackman – in the report detailing the Civic Centre proposals, as having been in receipt of a gift from Quintain over £25 in value;
- Councillor Colwill – in the report detailing the Civic Centre proposals, as having been in receipt of a gift from Quintain over £25 in value;
- Councillor O'Sullivan - in the report proposing the housing management arrangements for the South Kilburn temporary accommodation scheme, as a board member of Brent Housing Partnership.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th February 2008 be approved as an accurate record.

3. Order of Business

RESOLVED:

that the order of business be changed to take early in the meeting those items for which members of the public and non- Executive members were present.

4. 2006/07 Joint Audit and Inspection Letter

Simon Davies (PricewaterhouseCoopers - PwC) and Jackie Barry-Pursell (Audit Commission) introduced the report, which provided a summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council and which drew on the work of PwC as the Council's appointed auditors from the statutory audit. Jackie Barry-Pursell highlighted the positive nature of the Direction of Travel report and commended council officers for their teamwork. Simon Davies advised that the final accounts had been approved to a high standard and in accordance with the statutory timetable, and with a strong outcome in the value for money review. Jackie Barry-Pursell confirmed, in response to questions, that the adult social care CPA performance overall assessment rating was three stars.

Councillor Lorber, (Chair, Lead Member, Corporate Strategy and Policy Co-ordination) thanked Jackie Barry-Pursell and Simon Davies for their hard work and also expressed appreciation for the contribution made by council officers.

He noted the positive outcome of the audit and stated that the council would continue to strive for excellence.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) that the quarterly Performance and Finance Monitoring report be taken at a later stage in this meeting.

5. (i) Petition – Save Our Park

Joy Rickman (Chair, Woodcock Park Project) presented a petition on behalf of residents and asked the Executive to support the Woodcock Park Project's efforts to secure funding and restore the park. She stressed that the current condition of the park encouraged anti-social behaviour which prevented families from accessing the park's facilities. Ms Rickman outlined the need for more trees and shrubs, play equipment, additional lighting and, at minimum, a partial allocation of a warden's patrol time. She also urged the Executive to consider approving urgent repair of the park's tennis courts and drew members' attention to the fact that four of the six tennis nets were missing.

Councillor Lorber (Chair, Lead Member, Corporate Strategy and Policy Co-ordination), thanked Ms Rickman for her contribution. He noted that a report dealing with this issue would be presented at a later stage in the meeting and members agreed that discussion would be taken then.

(ii) Petition – Save Our Playground

Councillor Beswick (Ward Councillor) presented a petition on behalf of Harlesden residents and asked the Executive to consider additional funding in order to restore the Bramshill Road Ball Court area. He acknowledged health and safety concerns raised by council officers but urged the Executive to secure external funding for to fully restore this area to appropriate health and safety standards.

Councillor Lorber (Chair, Lead Member, Corporate Strategy and Policy Co-ordination), thanked Councillor Beswick for his contribution. He noted that a report dealing with this issue would be presented at a later stage in the meeting and members agreed that discussion would be taken then.

(iii) Petition – 'Not Another Drop' campaign

The Executive noted that this petition had been received. It was noted that a report dealing with this issue would be presented at a later stage in the meeting and it was agreed that any discussion would be taken then.

6. Petition – Woodcock Park

The report before the Executive was presented in response to the above petition, 'Save Our Park'. Members considered the contribution made by Joy Rickman (Chair, Woodcock Park Project) on this issue and expressed support for the aims of the Woodcock Park Project. Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member, Environment, Planning and Culture) stressed that the aims of the Woodcock Park Project were in accordance with the aims of the council, and

that council funding for this development would be made available within the framework of the council's next five year plan. Members discussed the importance of securing external funding for improvements to the park at the earliest opportunity and put forward agreement that support be provided to local residents to apply for lottery funding for this project. Shaun Faulkner (Head of Parks Service) advised that officers would continue to work closely with residents. Councillor Lorber (Chair, Lead Member, Corporate Strategy and Policy Co-ordination), enquired as to whose responsibility it was to keep the brook clean and well-dredged, and the Head of Parks Service advised that the property was shared with the borough of Harrow, whilst it was the responsibility of the Environment agency and of British Waterways to maintain the dredging of the system. Members also agreed that funding be allocated to replacing the missing tennis nets on the tennis courts.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the report be noted;
- (ii) that agreement be given to fund replacement tennis nets and their installation at the tennis courts in Woodcock Park.

7. Petition – Bramshill Road, small local park

The report before the Executive was presented in response to the above petition, 'Save Our Playground'. Members considered the contribution made by Councillor Beswick (Ward Councillor) on this issue and Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member, Environment, Planning and Culture) acknowledged residents' concerns whilst noting that the park open space and the children's playground would remain open and would not be affected by the removal of the Ball Court Area. He reiterated that health and safety concerns had necessitated the closure of the Ball Court Area and advised that that officers would support efforts to secure external funding to help fund the replacement of the facility.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted.

8. Environment and Culture Capital Spend 2008/09: Highways Major Works Programme 2008/09

Councillor D Brown (Lead Member, Highways and Transportation) introduced this report which made recommendations to members which detailed the prioritised scheme for major footway upgrade projects, carriageway resurfacing schemes, improvements to grass verge areas and accessibility, renewal of marginal highway land, new street signage, gully maintenance, the maintenance of road channels and footway boundaries to facilitate street cleaning, and highway improvements in the Park Royal area. Members noted the findings of the independent survey and expressed support for the substantial programme of improvement detailed in the report.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that it be agreed that the main highways capital programme of £3,500k be utilised as follows:

	% budget	amount (£)
▪ Major footway upgrade	34.3	1,200k
▪ Major carriageway resurfacing of non-principal unclassified (borough road) network (BVPI 224b)	32.3	1,130k
▪ Major carriageway resurfacing of non-principal classified (B & C road) network (BVPI 224a)	12.8	450k
▪ Improvement to grass verges and accessibility	2.9	100k
▪ Renewal of marginal highway land	2.9	100k
▪ New street signs	4.8	170k
▪ Gulley replacement/maintenance	2.9	100k
▪ Concrete roads	2.9	100k
▪ Maintenance of road channels and footway boundaries to facilitate street cleaning	2.2	80k
▪ Highway improvements in Park Royal (match funding to be provided by PRP)	2.0	70k

- (ii) that the use of the capital budget allocation of £70k to match fund highway improvements in the Park Royal area be approved;
- (iii) that the schemes and reserve schemes, as listed in Appendices 1 – 4, be approved.

9. Authority to award contract for Cook on Route meals

The Director of Housing and Community Care, Martin Cheeseman, advised that the report before members requested the authority to award a contract for the provision of a cook on route meals service, as required by Contract Standing Order No. 88. The 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 the following category of exempt information as specified in paragraphs 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1972, namely:

- Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual;
- Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority...and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the discontinuation of the current tender process be approved due to the fact that only one tender for the cook on route meals services

was received, which was a qualified tender not in accordance with the tender instructions;

- (ii) that an exemption from the tendering requirements of Contract Standing Orders be approved for the good operational reasons described in paragraph 5.2 of the report;
- (iii) that authority be delegated to the Director of Housing and Community Care to make the final decision to award a contract for the provision of a cook on route meals service to apetito Ltd following conclusion of negotiations on outstanding issues;
- (iv) that apetito's Option A tender is confirmed as being used as the basis for the contract award referred to in paragraph 2.3 which requires the contractor to provide the service without the use of the Council's drivers.

10. Renewal of S31 (now Section 75) Agreement – Brent Mental Health Service – two year extension

The Director of Housing and Community Care, Martin Cheeseman, introduced the report, which recommended a further two year extension to the current partnership arrangement between the Council and Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (formerly Central and North West London Mental Health NHS Trust) (CNWL), which expired on 31st March 2008, with a view to reviewing the options for further integration using flexibilities provided by Section 75 National Health Services Act 2006 (formerly Section 31 Health Act 1999). The report also sought Executive agreement to consider further options to use S75 flexibilities for older people's mental health services with both groups to report back by March 2010. The Executive previously agreed to a one year extension of the current Section 31 Partnership Agreement in March 2007.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that a 2 year extension of the partnership arrangement with CNWL until 31st March 2010 be agreed, with the Director of Housing and Community Care to report back earlier if agreement is reached with regard to matters contained in paragraph 2.2;
- (ii) that the commitment to a fundamental review of the partnership arrangements with CNWL be re-affirmed with a view to developing further integration through Section 75 flexibilities;
- (iii) that it be agreed that the Director of Housing & Community Care continue to consider options for use of S75 flexibilities for older people with mental health needs and that he report back to the Executive by March 2010.

12. Voluntary Sector Funding – allocation through Main Programme Grant

The Director of Housing and Community Care, Martin Cheeseman, introduced the report, which made recommendations regarding the allocation of the Main Programme Grant (MPG) to local voluntary organisations for 2008/09.

Councillor Blackman (Deputy Leader, Lead Member, Finance and Resources) enquired as to whether an open and communicative approach had been pursued regarding the provision of advice to voluntary organisations on the proposals. The Director confirmed that the organisations affected by the proposals had received clear communication regarding the proposed changes; furthermore, if agreement were secured, a press release would be issued in addition to written confirmation being provided to individual organisations.

Councillor Lorber (Chair, Lead Member, Corporate Strategy and Policy Co-ordination), noted that this report was closely linked to one of the Council's four key themes, namely services for young people, and expressed appreciation for the work of the members of the task group who had made a number of recommendations which had contributed to the report.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that Main Programme Grant Funding (MPG) be discontinued for organisations listed at Appendix 1, and that three months' notice of withdrawal of funding be effective from the date of this Executive meeting;
- (ii) that it be agreed that agencies be transferred from Main Programme Grant Funding to Edward Harvist Trust funding either in full or in part as detailed in Appendix 2;
- (iii) that, subject to Full Council approving any amendments to the Constitution in relation to the powers of officers to award grants, the Edward Harvist Trust criteria be revised so that the ceiling for funding is raised to £7,000 per scheme, and further revised so that agencies can be funded in subsequent years;
- (iv) that it be agreed that agencies not having MPG funding withdrawn or transferred to Edward Harvist Trust have their funding renewed at the same rate as in 2007/08 with no inflationary uplift, and that they were not required to submit formal funding applications, but would be required to sign funding agreements that clearly set out the activities and outcomes to be delivered. Details of relevant organisations are set out at Appendix 3;
- (v) that it be agreed that a themed approach to funding be adopted for future years, and that it be agreed that each theme shall run for three years with funding agreed for this period subject to satisfactory performance and delivery. Themes to be identified by the Executive in advance of the annual MPG funding round;
- (vi) that applications for MPG funding totalling up to £123,877 be invited for 2008/09, to be available only to agencies not currently in receipt of MPG funding;
- (vii) that it be agreed that the funding described at (vi) [above] be used for projects delivering priorities set out in the Corporate Strategy relating to young people, at a maximum of a full year equivalent of £25,000 per funded project.

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

The Director of Housing and Community Care, Martin Cheeseman, introduced this report, which sought members' approval of the lettings projections for 2008/09, and which provided members with an updated supply and demand analysis for housing, including lettings performance in 2007/08 and progress made against Temporary Accommodation reduction targets.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the updated supply and demand analysis for housing, including lettings performance in 2007/08, as given in Appendix A, be noted;
- (ii) that the lettings projections for 2008/09, as detailed in paragraph 3.8 and in Appendix E, be approved;
- (iii) that the implementation of the Emerging Households Scheme as a pilot scheme, as detailed in paragraphs 3.8.8 to 3.8.10 of this report, be approved;
- (iv) that the lettings plan for the first phase of the Quintain development (W01 scheme – Wembley Regeneration Scheme) which is due to complete in August 2008, as detailed in paragraph 3.9, be approved. Also, that authority be delegated to the Director of Housing and Community Care to make revisions to the proposed lettings approach for the W01 scheme in respect of initial lettings and re-lets, following a review of the lettings approach being undertaken.

14. **Housing Management Arrangements for South Kilburn Temporary Accommodation Scheme**

The report concerned the management of voids created due to the South Kilburn regeneration scheme and proposed that the voids be used as temporary accommodation for homeless households on a short-term basis. The Director of Housing and Community Care, Martin Cheeseman, advised that the report also requested approval to enter into a formal agreement with Brent Housing Partnership Limited in respect of the provision of housing management services for the South Kilburn Temporary Accommodation Scheme for an initial one year period and then to procure a longer term contract for the provision of housing management services for both the South Kilburn Scheme and the Brent Direct Leasing Scheme.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that it be agreed that, on the basis of the reasons set out in the report, there are good financial and operational reasons for the proposed agreement with Brent Housing Partnership Limited ("BHP") to be exempt from the requirements of the Council's Contract Standing Orders as set out in paragraphs 3.1.3 – 3.1.5, 4.2 and 5.4 – 5.5;
- (ii) that the delegation of certain additional housing management functions to BHP, namely the management of the South Kilburn voids as temporary accommodation, be agreed;

- (iii) that the Director of Housing and Community Care be authorised to apply for Secretary of State consent under section 27 of the Housing Act 1985 in respect of the transfer of those housing management functions to be carried out by BHP and that it be noted that such transfer of functions would be subject to obtaining the necessary approval;
- (iv) that the Director of Housing and Community Care be authorised to enter into a formal arrangement with BHP in respect of the delegated functions;
- (v) that the Director of Housing and Community Care be authorised to apply to the Secretary of State for a direction under section 74(3)(d) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to hold the South Kilburn void properties outside the Housing Revenue Account.

(Councillor O'Sullivan expressed a personal interest in this item, being a board member of the Brent Housing Partnership).

15. **A New Civic Centre for Brent – detailed proposals**

Councillor Lorber, (Chair, Lead Member, Corporate Strategy and Policy Co-ordination) introduced the report, which detailed a clear case for the procurement of a new Civic Centre for Brent. It built on previous reports considered by the Executive and gave options for procurement in the Wembley area as well as outlining the cost neutral nature of the exercise. The report showed how the new vision for Brent could be delivered, through a building that would provide exceptional levels of public access to a wide range of public services and the potential for efficiency savings in the future was demonstrated. Members heard that the building would be fit for the 21st century and an asset for the residents of Brent for decades to come. Councillor D Brown (Lead Member, Highways and Transportation) expressed support for the aims and sentiments contained in the proposals and put forward the view that these sentiments were pivotal to the manner in which this Administration wished to work with residents. He noted that an embrace of new ways of working and fewer locations for council staff would support the council's sustainability agenda as well as boost community pride. Councillor Allie (Lead Member, Housing and Customer Services) also expressed support for the vision of this project and articulated his hope that an efficient marketing campaign would effectively disseminate clear information to residents at all stages of the project.

The Chief Executive, Gareth Daniel, highlighted that this would be a landmark decision for Brent council: it was a powerful opportunity to transform service delivery and boost service improvement at no additional cost to the taxpayer. Whilst encouraging progress had been made on identifying a site for the new building, the decision before members today, if agreed, would enable the initial stage of this vital project to move forward in conjunction with the work of the project consultants.

Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member, Environment, Planning and Culture) acknowledged the business case for a new Civic Centre as well as his support for the nature of the new building, although he expressed hope that further consideration would be given to the issue of sufficient car parking space for the new building. Councillor Lorber noted that issues related to the design

and operation of the new building would be subject to detailed planning and discussion at a later stage, although he noted that such planning issues would be carefully considered in conjunction with the sustainability agenda.

Councillor Blackman (Deputy Leader, Lead Member, Resources) also referred to design and operation issues including member accommodation at the new building, and expressed appreciation for the work of officers on the Civic Centre project, including the detailed proposals presented in the report.

The Executive also had before them two appendices to the report which were not for publication as they contained the following categories of exempt information as specified the Schedule of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1985, namely:

'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the Authority). Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the requisition or disposal or property or the supply of goods or services.'

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the procurement and delivery of a new Civic Centre for Brent in the Wembley Regeneration Area be agreed;
- (ii) that the options available for procuring a new Civic Centre as described in section 9 below, be noted;
- (iii) that the site purchase option be approved and that it be agreed that officers continue negotiations with landowners for a site. If negotiations are successful, it was agreed that a report be brought to Executive to approve the purchase of a specific site;
- (iv) that, if a site purchase is successful, it be noted that three options are to be considered to procure the building of the new Civic Centre, these being:
 - Self-build, or
 - Developer-led, or
 - Partnering.

The options were described in paragraphs 10.0 of the report. It was also agreed that a further report would be brought to the Executive to recommend one of the options and to request approval to go out to tender in due course.

- (v) that it be agreed that the site boundary for the new Civic Centre will be the North West District as defined in the council's Wembley Masterplan in the first instance and, if necessary, extended to the National Stadium Policy Area;
- (vi) that the Strategic Brief be approved as a basis for the procurement of the new Civic Centre;
- (vii) that approval be given to officers to establish a project team, including external advisers, with the capacity to deliver the new Civic Centre on time and to budget. The external advisers currently engaged by the

council in connection with the new Civic Centre project to continue to advise on this stage of the project. It was agreed that the position would be reviewed when the options for the management of the project were further refined.

- (viii) that officers be instructed to procure any necessary additional advisers in accordance with the council's Contract Standing Orders and to the extent it applies the European Union's public contracts procurement directive. The funding for the project team and external advisors will be contained within the resources envelope for the new Civic Centre project;
- (ix) that it be noted that the new Civic Centre will both facilitate and be dependent upon new ways of working being adopted throughout the council.

16. Performance and Finance Review – Quarter 3 (Oct 2007 - Dec 2007)

The Director of Policy and Regeneration, Phil Newby, introduced this report which summarised Brent Council's spending, activity and performance in the third quarter of the 2007-08 financial year and highlighted key issues and solutions. The report took a corporate overview of financial and service performance set out in terms of the main budgets and provided a general overview and analysis of high risk areas. The report was accompanied by appendices which provided budget, activity and performance data for each service area, ring fenced budgets and the capital programme. Vital signs trend data and graphs and the overall budget summary were also provided. The Director stressed that the report was a very positive reflection on the council's financial performance, and that whilst there remained a need to be vigilant in order to keep spending within budget and to tackle any issues of underperformance, overall performance continued to be robust. The Director of Finance and Resources, Duncan McLeod, confirmed that the 2007/08 revenue outturn remained achievable. Councillor Lorber (Chair, Lead Member, Corporate Strategy and Policy Co-ordination) emphasised the need for both officers and lead members to drive programmes of improvement forward.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the council's spending, activity and performance in quarter three be noted;
- (ii) that it be required that all directors ensure that spending is kept within budget, underperformance is tackled and measures are taken, in consultation with relevant portfolio holders, to achieve this.

17. Petition to Protect the 'Not Another Drop' March

The report before the Executive was presented in response to the above petition, in relation to the 'Not Another Drop' campaign. Councillor Matthews (Lead Member, Crime Prevention and Community Safety) introduced the report, which advised members of a petition received from residents regarding the future funding of the 'Not Another Drop' peace march and advised members of actions that had already been taken by officers in order to address this issue. Councillor Matthews emphasised that the council's commitment to supporting the peace march had remained consistent, that the

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership had, earlier today, formally agreed the priorities and funding allocations for 2008/09 which included funding for the 'Not Another Drop' campaign.

Councillor Lorber (Chair, Lead Member, Corporate Strategy and Policy Co-ordination) reiterated that anti-gun and anti-knife crime efforts would continue to be maintained by the council as well as broader support for all residents in their efforts to reduce such crime.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the petition and the concerns raised be noted;
- (ii) that it be noted that it had always been the intention of the council to prioritise gun and knife crime and the 'Not Another Drop' programme, including the peace march;
- (iii) that the actions already taken by officers to secure funding for the 'Not Another Drop' peace march in 2008 be endorsed;
- (iv) that the lead petitioner be informed accordingly.

18. South Kilburn New Deal for Communities Delivery Plan 2008-2011

The Director of Policy and Regeneration, Phil Newby, introduced the report which outlined that the South Kilburn New Deal for Communities (NDC) had established its priorities for the last three years of the ten year programme in the attached Delivery Plan, committing an anticipated £14.3million of NDC funding. It reflected a significantly reduced NDC funding stream, the need to ensure sustainability of the programme's key achievements beyond the end of NDC funding and addressed a number of key outcomes which were not currently being met.

Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member, Environment, Planning and Culture) sought clarification of the changes to staffing arrangements at the NDC and the Director advised that the new director of the NDC would begin their duties at the start of the new financial year in April 2008, while Mike Wilson would commence his role the NDC's Chief Executive. Members asked that thanks be recorded for Joan Toovey's work as interim Chief Executive.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Delivery Plan be approved;
- (ii) that the need for effective partnership working to deliver change against outcomes not currently being achieved and to ensure a sustainable legacy for the programme be noted.

19. Authority to award a contract under a framework for shared recruitment services

Councillor Blackman (Deputy Leader, Lead Member, Resources) introduced the report, which requested authority to award a contract as required by Contract Standing Order No 88. The report outlined officers' wish to procure recruitment services by means of a framework agreement established by the

London Borough of Sutton. Councillor Blackman outlined the improvements in the recruitment process which would result from the new agreement and highlighted the positive financial implications arising from the proposals. Councillor Allie (Lead Member, Housing and Customer Services) stressed the importance of ensuring that services provided by external organisations continued to reflect the cultural diversity of the borough whilst also maintaining principles of equality throughout any recruitment process. Members concurred with this view.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that officers be approved to enter into a contract for Recruitment Advertising with Barkers Group Ltd under the London Borough of Sutton's Shared Recruitment Services Framework;
- (ii) that officers' intention to enter into access agreements enabling call-offs for Assessment and Testing and Executive Search under the London Borough of Sutton's Shared Recruitment Services Framework be noted.

20. Reference of items called in by the Forward Plan Select Committee

None.

21. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

22. Exclusion of Press and Public

Members considered the nature of the exempt information and, in all the circumstances, members considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED:-

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the next items as they contained the following categories of exempt information specified in Paragraph 3 Schedule 12A 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) and;

as specified in the Schedule of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the Authority). Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the requisition or disposal or property or the supply of goods or services.

23. **Willesden Sports Centre PFI Update on change of control**

This report provided members with an update on the proposed change of control for the Willesden Sports Centre PFI contract. It outlined the changes to the proposal that had taken place since the Executive report in November 2007 and reminded members of the benefits that could be achieved by agreeing to the change. The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, Duncan McLeod, in response to members' queries, advised that thorough checks had been conducted by the council's financial advisors and by the pension fund managers, with no concerns outstanding.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the changes since November 2007 on the proposed change of control on the Willesden Sports Centre contract be noted;
- (ii) that the requested change of control on the Willesden Sports Centre PFI contract as outlined within the report be agreed.

24. **Brent House, High Road, Wembley – Acquisition of Freehold**

Circulated in advance of the meeting, but not included on the Forward Plan of key decisions, was a report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources which recommended that the freehold interest in Brent House be acquired by the council.

The Chair certified the report as urgent for the following reason:

The owners of Brent House are marketing this property, which is already predominantly occupied by the Council on a leasehold basis. An opportunity has recently arisen to purchase the freehold of Brent House which will secure the Council's medium term future in this building and also has a positive overall financial effect. The owners require an early completion of the purchase and as we are effectively in competition with other interested parties it is not possible to adhere to the usual reporting timetable as it is likely that any delay would mean that the property would be sold to another party. The acquisition of this building provides a strategic opportunity to develop the Council's overall accommodation strategy. There is also a strong financial case that supports the acquisition.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, Duncan McLeod, outlined the robust strategic and financial reasons for this acquisition as well as the positive implications for the council's accommodation status. Members referred to the report and sought further information in relation to funding for the purchase, and the Director confirmed that the current financial climate provided an opportune time to enter into this financial arrangement.

RESOLVED:-

that it be resolved that the freehold interest in Brent House, Wembley High Road be acquired at the agreed price and on such other terms as the Head of Property and Asset Management considers to be in the council's best interests and also subject to him being satisfied that the enquiries referred to in the report and any other enquiries he considers to be appropriate, do not reveal

any matter of such an adverse nature that it would not be in the council's best interests to proceed with the acquisition.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm.

P LORBER
Chair