



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE Monday 21 May 2012 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Butt (Chair), Councillor R Moher (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Arnold, Beswick, Crane, Hirani, Jones, Long, J Moher and Powney

Also present: Councillors Al-Ebadi, Cheese, Chohan, S Choudhary, A Choudry, Harrison, Hashmi, Kansagra and Lorber

1. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

Councillor Lorber declared a personal interest in the item relating to the Libraries Transformation Project as a Trustee and Director of the Friends of Barham Library.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 April 2012 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

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 were present.

4. **Deputations - progress report on the Libraries Transformation Project**

Philip Bromberg representing the Save Our Libraries campaign referred to the report from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services which set out the current position on the Libraries Transformation Project. He referred to the acknowledgement in the report that there had been a reduction in usage since the closure of six libraries in 2011 and he did not think this situation was likely to improve. He challenged the view that active borrowers previously using one of the closed libraries had moved to one of the six remaining libraries. Mr Bromberg welcomed the decision of the recently appointed Leader of the Council to meet with Kensal Rise Library supporters and hoped that he would speak to the supporters of all the closed libraries.

Martin Redston speaking on behalf of Keep Willesden Green referred to the Willesden Green Library development project. He stated that plans appeared to have changed from the original proposals with the loss of the 150m of playground and less library floor space. He felt that the current proposed urban design would

not enhance the area and compared it to the former Willesden Library building at the frontage of the site, built in 1894 whose value was recognised by English Heritage. Mr Redston called on the Executive to stop and reflect as he felt that most of the community were not in favour of the development as currently proposed.

Sonia Nerdrum addressed the Executive in support of Cricklewood Library which she reminded the meeting was a gift from All Souls College, Oxford and which had been closed as part of the libraries transformation project. Cricklewood Library was a valuable community resource particularly to families who lived in cramped accommodation and it was not always possible to travel to Willesden Green Library. Ms Nerdrum stated that All Souls College would be open to new approaches from the Council and she hoped for a new relationship with the Administration.

Melvyn Hacker (Preston Library) encouraged the Chair, as the new Leader of the Council, to meet with library campaigners and hear their views. Statistics showed that Preston Library had been very busy and alternative facilities were some distance away, especially for those living in the South Kenton area. The former library building was due to be used for primary schooling and he urged the Executive to consider its use as a library after the school day.

Councillor Lorber (Sudbury Ward councillor, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) reported that library facilities were being provided by volunteers from the former Barham Library premises, benefiting children from across the community. Regarding the transformation project, he referred to the increase in the estimated cost of refurbishment of Kilburn Library from £117,000 to more than half a million pounds and questioned the extent to which, had this been known last year, it would have impacted on decision-making. He referred to mounting on-going costs which he considered must also be having an adverse effect on budget estimates. Councillor Lorber also raised the matter of the shortage of affordable accommodation for local groups and questioned why the previously donated Kilburn and Cricklewood Library buildings could not be made available. He urged the Executive to recognise the contribution of local people and to make good use of available assets. Councillor Kansagra (Leader of the Conservative Group) expressed a wish that the libraries issue be revisited in the light of the change in political leadership. He suggested that funds were earmarked in the budget for Ward Working projects which were not a priority and should be reallocated to libraries. He also stated that before libraries were closed replacement services should be in place.

Councillor Butt thanked speakers for their contributions.

Councillor Lorber declared an interest as a Director and Trustee of the Friends of Barham Library.

5. Progress report on the Libraries Transformation Project

Councillor Powney (Lead Member, Environment and Neighbourhoods) introduced the report on the progress on the libraries transformation project and responded to points put by members and members of the public earlier in the meeting. He reminded those present of the unprecedented financial difficulty that faced the Council and the decision to concentrate resources on fewer excellent libraries in good locations. The fall in book loans was anticipated and this was additionally the

case due to closures for refurbishment. The Willesden Green Library development was now a matter for the Planning Committee and he had been advised that the process for returning former library buildings to All Souls College, the reverter clause, had been triggered. Interim arrangements in place while Willesden Green Library was being redeveloped involved two premises within easy reach, on the High Road and with good access to public transport. On the increased cost of refurbishment of Kilburn Library, Councillor Powney stated that it had now been decided to carry out more extensive improvements in line with the Council's aim of providing excellent facilities. He drew attention to the progress being made under the Transformation Project as set out in the report and the current position on the disposal of former library buildings. Councillor Powney asked the Executive to note progress and the strategy.

The Chair, Councillor Butt (Leader of the Council) thanked everyone for their contributions.

RESOLVED:

that the progress of the Libraries Transformation Project and next steps be noted.

6. **Brent Carers Hub**

Councillor Hirani (Lead Member, Adults and Health) introduced the report from the Director of Adult Social Services which sought authority for the invitation of tenders for a carers services contract as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89. Following a departmental review of the Council's services for carers, Adult Social Care was proposing the development and procurement of a Carers Services Hub to provide a single point of contact for carers through the coordination and delivery of a wide range of services. Councillor Hirani stated that this was in line with best practice and drew attention to the pre-tender considerations and evaluation criteria. He also asked members to approve an extension to existing carers contracts due to the need to carry out more extensive consultation than previously anticipated.

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 5.1 of the report from the Director of Adult Social Services;
- (ii) that approval be given to the invitation of tenders and their evaluation in accordance with the approved evaluation criteria referred to in (i) above;
- (iii) that approval be given to a ten week extension to the existing carers contracts detailed at Appendix D of the report until the 15 February 2013 for the reasons set out in paragraph 5.3 of the report.

7. **Animals at events in Brent council parks and open spaces**

The Lead Member (Environment and Neighbourhoods) advised that the need for the Council to agree a policy regarding the use of performing animals at events in council owned parks and open spaces was highlighted when a request was received for tigers to perform within the borough and given increasing public

concern about the welfare of animals in circuses. He drew attention to the definition of wild animals as set out in legislation and also that the policy would prohibit live animals being given away as prizes. The Council had previously also endorsed the principles of the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

RESOLVED:

that approval be given to the adoption of a policy regarding use of animals at events across the Council's parks and open spaces which:

- (a) does not permit animals that come under the Schedule 'Kinds of Dangerous Wild Animals' in the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 (Modification) (No.2) Order 2007, to be allowed to be part of any event including circuses and funfairs on the Council's parks and open spaces;
- (b) does not permit the provision of live creatures as prizes at any event including circuses and funfairs on the Council's parks and open spaces;
- (c) does permit animals that do not come under the Schedule 'Kinds of Dangerous Wild Animals' in the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 (Modification) (No.2) Order 2007 to be part of an event including circuses and funfairs on the Council's parks and open spaces. (This would therefore allow for example dog shows, performing horses and falconry displays to take place).

8. **Air Quality Action Plan 2012-14**

The report from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services summarised the significant progress made since the Council's adoption of its first Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in 2005. Councillor Powney (Lead Member, Environment and Neighbourhoods) referred to long term, on-going concern over air pollution arising from waste processing uses at Neasden Goods Yard and adjoining areas and also the Willesden Junction area. The report recommended that the Council lobby central government over the licensing of waste sites. Councillor Powney regretted that the number of air quality monitoring stations had been reduced from six to three following funding cuts.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the significant progress made in improving air quality since the adoption of the Council's first Air Quality Action Plan in 2005 be noted;
- (ii) that approval be given to the proposed new Air Quality Action Plan 2012-2015 set out in Appendix 1 to the report from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services;
- (iii) that the continuing problems of air pollution associated with the Neasden Goods Yard site be noted and that the Council should lobby government over the relationship between the licensing of waste sites and the achievement of air quality improvements as set out in paragraph 3.2.7 of the Director's report.

9. **Disposal of 45a Milman Road**

Councillor Crane (Lead Member, Regeneration and Major Projects) introduced the report that sought approval to proceed with the disposal of the Council's long leasehold interest in the dilapidated and vacant residential housing revenue account dwelling at 45a Milman Road, NW6.

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:-

- (i) that approval be given to the disposal of the Council's long leasehold interest of the subject property on the open market for a capital receipt;
- (ii) that the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Major Projects (Property and Asset Management) be authorised to agree the terms of the disposal, and to agree and approve any offers received in conjunction with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services;
- (iii) that the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Major Projects (Property and Asset Management) agree the most appropriate disposal route, which may include disposal to a special purchaser by private treaty (providing the price finally agreed is at least equal to the best price achievable on the open market) and to instruct the legal department in the matter of the disposal.

10. **Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund: Themed Grant Round 2012 - 2015**

The report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement sought agreement to grant fund 12 projects led by voluntary organisations for two years and nine months, subject to performance, following assessment of the latest round of bids for grant funding against the criteria set by the Executive in January 2012. The Director stated that the proposals had been supported by the CVS Brent the voluntary sector umbrella organisation.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the summary of officer recommendations in Appendix 1 of the report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement, individual assessment reports set out in Appendix 2 and the Grant Criteria and Standard Conditions of Grant Aid set out in Appendix 3 be noted;
- (ii) that approval be given to the voluntary sector led projects and grant funding allocations set out in paragraph 4.9 of the report which will run between 1 July 2012 and 31 March 2015;
- (iii) that it be noted that all grant funding allocations are subject to the Council's Grant Conditions and that where a bid is agreed, the organisation will sign an

agreement with the Council, stating the purpose of the grant and expected outcomes before funding is released;

- (iv) that it be noted that in cases where an organisation either declines their grant during the funding period or the grant is withdrawn for performance reasons, that the decision to reallocate the fund is delegated to the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement.

11. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

12. Reference of item considered by Call in Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

None.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

M BUTT
Chair