



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE Monday 24 March 2014 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Butt (Chair), Councillor R Moher (Vice-Chair) and Councillors A Choudry, Crane, Hirani, Mashari, J Moher and Pavey

Also present: Councillors Chohan, Hashmi, Hunter, John and Kabir

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Denselow and McLennan

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

None made.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 February 2014 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Matters arising**

None.

4. **Report on the progress of the administration of the Green Charter**

The adopted Green Charter (2012) policy set out the council's wide-ranging areas of influence under the sustainability programme, the council's contribution to increasing the sustainability performance of the organisation and detailed the support the Council would provide to encourage those who live, work or study in the Borough to contribute to this agenda.

Councillor Mashari (Lead Member, Environment and Neighbourhoods) drew attention to progress made against objectives since the last report in 2013 in particular residents recycling 43% of their waste placing the borough among the top performers in London. She was also pleased to report on the continued success of the Welsh Harp Centre in promoting sustainability with children and that Fair Trade status had been retained.

RESOLVED:

that the contents of the Green Charter monitoring report attached as Appendix A to the report from the Strategic Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods and that the achievements listed in section 3.5 of the report be noted.

5. **Brent Local Plan – Development Management Policies**

Councillor Crane (Lead Member, Regeneration and Major Projects) presented the draft Development Management Policies document, a proposed set of Minor Alterations to the Core Strategy and proposed changes to the Proposals Map of Brent's Local Plan. Councillor Crane advised that the plan had been endorsed by the Planning Committee on 19 February 2014 and drew attention to the main changes which related to town centres and policies to prevent the over-concentration of betting, shops pawn brokers and money lenders. Additionally, there were policies to support health and well-being, to restrict fast food outlets and Shisha cafes and also to support Meanwhile, bringing properties back into use.

Councillor Hirani (Lead Member, Adults and Health) welcomed the public health aspects of the report including the wider areas which would promote positive health outcomes which were now the council's responsibility. Councillor J Moher (Lead Member, Highways and Transportation) added that the report demonstrated the extent of problems faced by the council and Councillor Mashari welcomed the policies designed to address poor diet and gambling particularly associated with poverty. She felt the council should take action to proactively promote healthy fast foods.

Councillor Crane recommended that the Executive agree the documents for public consultation starting on 26 May 2014.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that agreement be given to the draft Development Management Policies document, and the proposed alterations to the Core Strategy, for public consultation starting on 26 May 2014 for six weeks;
- (ii) that the Strategic Director, Regeneration and Growth be authorised to make further editorial changes to the document prior to finally issuing it for public consultation;
- (iii) that agreement be given to the revised timetable for the preparation and review of Brent's Local Plan as set out in paragraph 3.25 of the Director's report.

6. **School Expansion Programme – revised School Expansion Strategy**

The report from the Acting Director of Children and Families and Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth reminded the Executive of the council's statutory duty to ensure it could offer a school place to every child that applied for one. The draft revised School Expansion Strategy for 2014-2018 that had been prepared for consultation identified the projected shortfall of primary, secondary and SEN places over the coming years and outlined key principles that could be used to address the shortfall as part of a coherent education strategy for Brent. Councillor Pavey (Lead Member, Children and Families) stated that the policy was designed to encourage schools to work with the council and to compromise over expansions. He hoped they would contribute to the report and encouraged the community to engage. Councillor Pavey pointed to proposals for a local authority schools board, a

commitment to have more schools open for public use and to work with the community. However, he also acknowledged that the fundamental position remained unchanged – the borough faced a shortage of available land and was underfunded.

Councillor Crane (Lead Member, Regeneration and Major Projects) welcomed the report and set out the context including a rising population, shortage of land, small school sites and traffic congestion. Councillor Crane outlined the council's responsibilities to provide school places but acknowledged that schools were autonomous. He referred to the principles in the strategy which included the promotion of federations between primary schools and not seeking to develop more all-through schools. He also stated that the decision making on expansions needed to be more robust.

Councillor J Moher (Lead Member, Highways and Transportation) referred to the need for officers to have a close working relationship with schools and to be aware of local developments. The strategy needed to be active and not passive. Councillor Choudry (Lead Member, Crime Prevention and Public Safety) referred to the need to engage with the Black Minority Ethnic community, and together with Councillor Pavey, felt that school governors needed to be more representative of the community.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that approval be given to the draft School Expansion Strategy 2014-2018 for consultation purposes in line with the consultation plan set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report from the Director of Regeneration and Growth;
- (ii) that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Director of Legal and Procurement and the Lead Member for Regeneration and Growth to approve the pre-tender considerations for the Temporary School Expansion Programme 2014-15.

7. Universal Infant Free School Meals - allocation and use of capital grant funding

On 23 January 2014, the Minister of State for Schools outlined the basis of how local authorities and head-teachers were to be supported in enabling schools to comply with government requirements in offering universal free school meals to all children in Key Stage 1 from September 2014 and announced that £150 million capital funding would be available to local authorities, dioceses and trustees of voluntary aided schools to support schools in providing free school meals. In order to enable schools to meet the minimum requirements by September 2014, the report from the Director of Children and Families sought approval for the development of a costed programme of works to schools to enable the delivery of Universal Infant Free School Meals. The report also requested delegated authority to agree the pre-tender considerations and the award of a work contract or contracts to deliver prioritised schemes arising from the programme of works.

Councillor Crane (Lead Member, Regeneration and Major Projects) in introducing the report, referred to the tight timescales involved to have provision in place by

September 2014 and Councillor Pavey (Lead Member, Children and Families) regretted the lack of time and funding.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that be noted that the Operational Director for Regeneration and Growth (Property and Projects) would develop a costed programme of works at schools as described in the report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth for the delivery of Universal Infants Free School Meals for agreement by the officer-level Major Projects Review Panel;
- (ii) that approval be given to the use of capital from the sources described in the report to deliver the programme of works once agreed;
- (iii) that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth to agree the pre-tender considerations (including evaluation criteria) for the procurement of a works contractor or contractors for the delivery of the programme, and for the procurement of design services if not delivered in-house;
- (iv) that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer to award the contract(s) referred to above.

8. Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation - Delivery Partner Contract Award

The report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth followed the decision in September 2013 to invite tenders for a single partner to deliver an energy efficiency programme under the Government's Green Deal scheme, with a specific focus on the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), which was designed to tackle fuel poverty, provide affordable warmth and reduce carbon emissions. The report described the tender process, the bids received and made a recommendation for award. Councillor Crane (Lead Member, Regeneration and Major Projects) advised that Lakehouse Contracts Ltd was recommended to be the single delivery partner.

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 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely:

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) that agreement be given to the award of a contract for a single delivery partner for Green Deal and ECO works in Brent to Lakehouse Contracts Ltd;
- (ii) that it be noted that the award was subject to the agreement of Brent Housing Partnership, as they were joint client for the contract with the Council.

9. **Cable easement and lease for the construction of an Electricity Sub Station - rear of Tenterden Sports Ground off Preston Road, Harrow**

Councillor Crane (Lead Member, Regeneration and Major Projects) introduced the report which sought approval to the grant of a lease and cable easement for land with an area of approximately 10 sq metres located to the rear of Tenterden Sports Ground located off Preston Road, Harrow HA3 0OQ to UK Power Networks (UKPN), for a term of 40 years for the construction of an electricity sub station. Councillor Pavey (Lead Member, Children and Families) as ward councillor for an affected neighbouring ward, reported that residents welcomed the proposals.

RESOLVED:

that approval be to the granting of the lease and the cable easement, on the terms set out in Appendix 1 of the report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth.

10. **Disposal of 10 Coverdale Road, Cricklewood NW2**

The report, introduced by Councillor Crane (Lead Member, Regeneration and Major Projects) sought approval to proceed with the disposal of the council's freehold interest in the large vacant residential Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwelling at 10 Coverdale Road, Cricklewood NW2 4BU for a capital receipt, which was to be reinvested into the acquisition of additional medium-sized family homes to improve the alignment between housing need and housing supply.

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 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely:

"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 freehold interest in the subject property on the open market for a capital receipt, which was forecast to be significant given the location and size of the property;
- (ii) that the Operational Director of Property and Projects, Regeneration and Growth be authorised to agree the terms of the disposal and the most appropriate disposal route;
- (iii) that subject to approval of the overall capital programme funding position in the Budget Setting Report to be submitted to members in March 2014, agreement be given to ring-fence the net capital receipt for the acquisition of additional medium-sized family homes for which there is an acute shortage.

11. **National Non-Domestic Rates – Autumn Statement – Business Rates Relief**

Councillor R Moher (Lead Member, Resources) highlighted the main elements of the government's Autumn Statement of 5 December 2013 which announced a measure of reliefs for business ratepayers. These included giving up to £1,000 relief to all occupied retail properties with a rateable value of £50,000 or less for both 2014/15 and 2015/16, and also giving 50% relief for 18 months to businesses that move into retail premises that have been empty for a year or more. The government expected authorities to use their local discount powers to award these reliefs. The government had also announced a proposal to exempt all newly built commercial property completed between 1 October 2013 and 30 September 2016 from empty property rates for the first 18 months, up to the state aids limits. The report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth advised that the council was expected to use its local discount powers for implementation. Under the provisions of section 47 of the Local Government Finance 1988 the report sought ratification of the implementation of the government's announcements and in view of the numbers of ratepayers who will be entitled to relief, sought to authorise the Chief Finance Officer to implement these three schemes so that officers could award these discretionary reliefs which satisfy the criteria set by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for these schemes.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the scheme awarding up to £1,000 discount in business rates in 2014/15 and 2015/16 to occupied retail shops with a rateable value of £50,000 or less as detailed in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.5 of the report from the Director of Regeneration and Growth pursuant to the council's powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 be approved;
- (ii) that the scheme awarding 50% relief in business rates for 18 months to businesses who move into and occupy retail premises between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2016 that have been empty for a year or more as detailed in paragraphs 3.10 and 3.11 of the report and which satisfied the criteria to be confirmed in guidance to be issued by the DCLG be agreed pursuant to the Council's powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988;
- (iii) that the scheme to exempt newly built commercial properties completed between 1 October 2013 and 30 September 2016 from empty property rates for up to 18 months as detailed in paragraphs 3.12 and 3.13 of the report and which satisfied the criteria confirmed in guidance issued by the DCLG in September 2013 be agreed pursuant to the Council's powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988;
- (iv) that the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to implement the schemes referred to in paragraphs (i) (ii) and (iii) above so that the agreed discretionary discounts and reliefs in business rates could be awarded in compliance with the criteria set out by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

12. Authority to invite tenders for advice and guidance services for older people and people with disabilities

Councillor Butt (Chair, Leader of the Council) introduced the report from the Assistant Chief Executive which followed agreement in July 2013 to proposals for the various advice and guidance arrangements which formed part of the Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund. The report requested approval to invite tenders in respect of Advice and Guidance for people with disabilities and older people as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that approval be given to the invite of tenders for Advice and Guidance Service for people with disabilities and older people on the basis of the pre-tender considerations set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report from the Assistant Chief Executive;
- (ii) that approval be given to the evaluation of the tenders referred to in (i) above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report;
- (iii) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive to agree the award of the contract to the successful bidder, in liaison with the portfolio holder for Corporate Strategy and Policy Coordination, for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.11 of the report;
- (iv) that agreement be given to an extension to the interim contract for advice for people with disabilities provided by Brent Mencap, until the start of the new contract being tendered as referred to in paragraph (i);
- (v) that the extension of the grant funded agreements with Age UK for provision of advice to older people and with Brent Mencap for provision of advice to people with learning disabilities until the start of the new contract being tendered as referred to in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.8 of the report be noted.

13. **Performance and Finance Review - quarter 3, 2013/14**

The purpose of the report from the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer was to provide members with a corporate overview of finance and performance information, to support informed decision-making, and to manage performance effectively. Councillor Butt (Chair, Leader of the Council) reported that consideration was being given to changing the way in which data was reported starting from April 2014 to give more information on the key performance indicators. Additionally, the Borough Plan would highlight work that had yet to be completed.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the finance and performance information contained in the report be noted and agreement given to the remedial actions as necessary;
- (ii) that the current and future strategic risks associated with the information provided be noted and agreement given to remedial actions as appropriate;
- (iii) that it be noted that responsible officers would be challenged over progress as necessary;

- (iv) that agreement be given to the budget virements as set out within the appendix to the report.

14. **Report from Task Group Tackling Violence against Women and Girls**

The Health Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee had expressed an interest in forming a task group to tackle violence against women and girls in Brent; focusing on Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriages. The task group was agreed in March 2013 and conducted an in-depth review into harmful practices. The task group report was attached as appendix A to the report from the Assistant Chief Executive. The findings of the task group's review were wide reaching, had an effect on many public services and had a direct impact on the lives of women, children and young people.

Councillors John, Kabir and Hunter, members of the Task Group were at the meeting for the presentation of the report. Councillor John (Task Group Chair) thanked her fellow members, officers and partner agencies for their contribution and support and was pleased to report that the Assistant Chief Executive had been nominated to monitor the implementation of the recommendations. The publication was timely in the light of the announcement by the Crown Prosecution Service of the first UK prosecutions over female genital mutilation and she welcomed the change in approach to the topic which was now one of human rights and violence. Councillor John summarised the findings of the report which included that while violence against women and girls was considered to be a global epidemic, there was little data on the prevalence in Brent. There was a need to target communities, share data and make information available in public places and she cited examples of women and girls who had been victims, had survived and were now free. Councillor John was pleased that the Brent Youth Parliament had been very supportive of the report.

Members of the Executive expressed support for the Task Group report. Councillor Pavey promised that his service area, Children and Families, would take the recommendations seriously. Councillor Mashari emphasised the need for an action plan with implementation timeframes, for awareness to be raised among school governing bodies and the need for a Lead Member for women's issues. Councillor Choudry paid tribute to the work of the task group, acknowledged that many communities found the subject uncomfortable but that efforts were being made to encourage debate and raise awareness. He welcomed the imposition of fines imposed on parents taking their children out of school during term time which he hoped would hinder the taking of young girls abroad for violent procedures. Councillor R Moher welcomed the report as an extensive, solid piece of work which was timely. She felt the council needed to show violent acts against women and girls was unacceptable, welcomed the work with schools and urged the council to raise community awareness.

On behalf of the Executive, Councillor Butt thanked the task group members and noted that a further report would be submitted in June.

- (i) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) that officers consider the individual findings of this important report and bring forward appropriate recommendations on their implementation by the end of

June 2014. Responsibility for co-ordinating and monitoring the council's response to the task group's findings would be with the Assistant Chief Executive's Service.

15. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

M BUTT
Chair