



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE Monday, 15 February 2010 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Lorber (Chair), Councillor Blackman (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Allie, Colwill, Detre, Matthews, Sneddon, Van Colle and Wharton

APOLOGIES: Councillors D Brown

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors HB Patel

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 January 2010 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. **Matters arising**

None.

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

Councillor Detre declared a personal interest in the reports relating to South Kilburn as a member of the South Kilburn Neighbourhood Partnership Board. In relation to the budget report the personal interests of other members relating to membership of school governing bodies were noted to be as declared previously.

4. **Petition - Closure of BACES, Harlesden**

Before the Executive for consideration were the terms of a petition from the students of BACES (Brent Adult Community Education Service) opposing the closure of the Harlesden BACES Centre on Craven Park Road and its relocation to the new Harlesden Library centre. Ms Palmer presented the petition on behalf of the students and outlined concerns which included the loss of on-site crèche and canteen facilities and a reduced curriculum. She felt that the move would result in a decrease in student attendance at a time when they should be supported in their efforts to improve life chances and set examples to their children. She referred to the relatively high levels of deprivation in the Harlesden area and the importance of adult education in helping students to alleviate social problems and become valuable members of society.

Mr Mikely, a student and resident of the borough for many years, supported the views expressed earlier in the meeting by Ms Palmer. Having attended the centre over a number of years, Mr Mikely had witnessed many students successfully

obtaining certificates and moving into higher education and employment. Mr Mikely, as a member of HEART (Harlesden Environmental Action Residents Team) spoke of the work he and others had done in cooperation with partners to improve the local environment and he saw the BACES centre as a spring board for teaching and learning. Mr Mikely put that the current teaching accommodation was barely sufficient to meet needs and that in the new centre some classes may have to close. Mr Mikely also felt that increasing the number of people able to speak English reduced the need for interpreters, the savings from which could be reinvested for educational purposes. He also referred to the centre's contribution in encouraging people away from crime and becoming economically active. He urged the Executive to make the move to the Harlesden Library premises a temporary one and in the meantime to improve the facilities at the Craven Park Road site.

Councillor Wharton (Lead Member, Children and Families) in response to the petitioners assured that the council valued the education provided at the BACES centre. He emphasised that the provision would not be ceasing but moving to newly refurbished and better equipped premises. It would also be next to the library and so able to offer complementary services. He accepted that there would be not be a dedicated crèche on site however advised that there were currently spaces at the nearby Stonebridge Centre.

Other members assured that they took a keen interest in the Harlesden area and welcomed the new £2m library facility due to open shortly which demonstrated the council's commitment to Harlesden. The Director of Children and Families contributed that the decision to relocate BACES to the new facility had been taken some time ago, and while there were no crèche or canteen facilities on site, capacity was being increased with larger sized rooms and enhanced IT provision. He added that use and provision would be monitored. The Executive welcomed the investment in the new Harlesden Library and hoped for a new service of which the council would be proud.

5. Order of business

The Executive resolved to take earlier in the meeting, those items for which members of the public were present.

6. Deputation - review of fees and charges

Mr Baig addressed the Executive and spoke in support of residents in temporary accommodation who had received correspondence in the year advising of the council's intention to no longer meet the costs of storing personal possessions held since 2006. This was a change from the previous undertaking. Mr Baig put that many of the families affected were vulnerable, had emotional and/or medical problems and this was now an additional burden which would not be means tested. He felt that many would have little choice but to dispose of their belongings as they were not able to find permanent accommodation. Mr Baig stated that he was very disappointed with the proposals and would be taking the matter further.

7. Review of fees and charges 2010/11

Councillor Blackman (Lead Member, Resources) introduced the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources which set out the proposed fees and

charges for council services in 2010/11. He outlined the overall approach which was to continue to maximise income but to freeze fees for adult and social care, education, services for the vulnerable and sports facilities. An exception was for specific fees and charges and changes to the policy for charging for removals and storage which up until 2006 was free when the decision was taken to introduce charges for new service users. It was felt that four years was a considerable time to have belongings in storage and so the proposal was to now bring these residents in line with the current arrangements. Councillor Blackman expressed sympathy for those residents affected, assured that transitional arrangements would be in place but felt it was appropriate for the council to now seek to cover costs.

The Director of Housing and Community Care stated that residents had been consulted but the previous situation was inequitable and it was now appropriate to regularise the position. He reiterated that the new arrangements would not take effect until the new financial year and that transitional arrangements would be in place. Other members, while expressing sympathy, concurred that to have belongings in storage for years free of cost was no longer viable and that it was now time to address the situation and to help current residents to adjust to the new arrangements.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the proposed fees and charges set out in Appendix A to the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources to apply from 1 April 2010 (unless otherwise stated);
- (ii) that approval be given to changes to the Removals and Storage Charging Policy as set out in Appendix B of the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.

8. Introduction of Early Years Single Funding Formula and changes to the allocation and funding of Early Years Full Time Places in maintained and private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors

The report from the Director of Children and Families advised of the requirement to introduce an early years single funding formula (EYSFF) across the maintained and private, voluntary and independent sectors that underpin the delivery of the extended free entitlement to early year's provision. Brent had made significant progress in developing the EYSFF and Executive were being asked to approve implementation from April 2010 in line with a large number of London councils. Councillor Wharton (Lead Member, Children and Families) advised that in December the Schools Forum initially asked the council to delay implementation till April 2011. However, having had more time to consider the December Ministerial statement, as well as the advantages of not delaying implementation, the January the Schools Forum recommended the Council to implement the SFF from April 2010. An application for pilot status had been submitted and a decision was awaited. Councillor Wharton also advised that the opportunity was being taken to review how full time early years' places were allocated and funded and move to only offering these places to needy and vulnerable children. This would not take effect until September 2011 subject to consultation. A further report would be presented to the Executive later in 2010.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Early Years' Single Funding Formula and implementation from April 2010 be agreed in accordance with the recommendation of the January Schools Forum;
- (ii) that the application made in January to DCSF for pathfinder status be noted;
- (iii) that parents be consulted on the proposed allocation of full time early years' places based on need as set out in Section 6 from September 2011; a further report to be presented to the Executive following the consultation later in 2010.

9. **Building Schools for the Future project initiation document**

Councillor Wharton was pleased to confirm that Brent Council was accepted by Partnerships for Schools onto the Building Schools for the Future programme in December 2009 and to introduce the project initiation document. The Council's BSF programme would deliver around £300m of capital funding from the Government over three phases. Brent Council's BSF programme consisted of 23 secondary schools including special schools and Pupil Referral Units. The plan was to either replace or re-model all 23 schools. The first phase would deliver around £80m of capital funding. A local education partnership (LEP) was now required and discussions were taking place with Enfield and Barnet to establish whether a joint venture was possible as this would be more cost effective and efficient. Councillor Wharton drew attention to the funding gap referred to in the Director's report and emphasised that arrangements would need to be in place to ensure that the council's commercial interests in any joint venture were protected.

The Director of Children and Families stated that meetings regarding the LEP were taking place later in the week and initial discussions were encouraging. A further report would be presented to the next meeting of the Executive. The Interim Borough Solicitor stressed that every effort would be made to find a solution that was be satisfactory to all parties and which also protected the borough's welfare.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Transforming Learning in Brent – BSF Project Initiation Document be approved;
- (ii) that the anticipated funding gap as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report from the Director of Children and Families be noted together with the planned strategy to resolve the gap.

10. **Crest Boys and Girls Academies**

The report from the Director of Children and Families updated the Executive on the progress in establishing the Crest Boys' Academy and The Crest Girls' Academy in new accommodation and sought approval to proceed with the submission of the Outline Business Case for the construction of new buildings to Partnerships for Schools and the Department of Children and Families . It also informed Executive of the approach to engaging the overall project manager and the technical advisors.

Councillor Wharton (Lead Member, Children and Families) referred to the meeting of the Executive in July 2009 where, after an extensive debate, the decision was taken to proceed with the scheme to rebuild John Kelly Boys' and Girls' Technology Colleges on the existing site. A feasibility study had showed that the rebuild could take place on the existing site, without the need to purchase adjacent land, leaving more open space than currently available. Moreover, the first phase could be built without the need for demolition, reducing the need for temporary buildings the cost of which it was hoped would be met from government funding.

The Executive also had before them appendices to the report which were not for publication as they 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 the Director of Finance and the Director of Children and Families be authorised to submit the Outline Business Case to Partnerships for Schools in the form set out in Appendix 1 to the report from the Director of Children and Families with the detailed content completed by the Director of Children and Families, subject to the FAM allocation being increased to meet the Council's estimate of costs as set out in Appendix 5 or the Director of Finance being satisfied that any costs over and above the FAM allocation can be met from an existing capital budget and upon approval to commence procurement via the PfS National Framework;
- (ii) that the Section 151 Officer be authorised to complete and issue the letter confirming the affordability of the scheme, subject to the FAM allocation being increased or the Director of Finance being satisfied as set out in paragraph 2.1 template attached as Appendix 4 to the Director's report;
- (iii) that the local authority's commitment to the project as set out in Appendix 2 to the Director's report be confirmed and approved given to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in the form set out in Appendix 3 or with such amendments as the Director of Children and Families, in consultation with the Borough Solicitor, considers to be appropriate.

11. **Carbon Reduction Commitment**

Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member, Environment, Planning and Culture) introduced the report which set out the terms of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme, a mandatory carbon emission trading scheme starting from April 2010. Michael Read (Assistant Director, Policy and Regeneration) set out the processes required, explained the implications for its implementation and highlighted the actions the Council was taking to reduce CO₂ emissions from its operations. He highlighted the importance of accurate record keeping to avoid penalties and the financial implications should the council be at the lower end of the carbon reduction commitment performance league table in the first year. Michael

Read added that a council project group would be looking into the feasibility of installing automatic meter readers for council offices and schools.

Councillor Van Colle expressed the wish for the council to lead by example but expressed concern at the financial implications and the complexity of the arrangements for which it would be difficult to budget, noting that the final regulations had not yet been published. Councillor Lorber (Lead Member, Corporate Strategy and Policy Coordination) stated that the council in accepting the scheme, would be thinking creatively of ways of reducing CO₂ emissions.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the introduction and implications of implementing the government Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme be noted;
- (ii) that approval be given to the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources having responsibility as Lead Officer for implementing Carbon Reduction Commitment for the Council;
- (iii) that the Carbon Management Steering Group develop a framework for penalising departments including schools that have not reduced their CO₂ emissions;
- (iv) that it be noted that the outcome of the review of the bronze project 'Review of energy supply and costs' will determine whether to install automatic meter readers for council offices and schools;
- (v) that it be noted that the requirement for an annual budget of approximately £43K plus lost interest on the cash flow from 2011/12 and note the implications of losing approximately £43K in the first year as a penalty for being at the lower end of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Performance League Table;
- (vi) that it be noted that for each subsequent year from 2012 the penalty increases by 10% each year should the Council remain at the lower end of the Performance League table;
- (vii) that it be noted that as final regulations are yet to be published, any detail referred to is subject to change.

12. South Kilburn Regeneration - disposal of sites known as Albert Road and Carlton Vale roundabout

The joint report from the Directors of Housing and Community Care and Policy and Regeneration summarised the procurement process undertaken by the council to dispose of two sites within the South Kilburn Regeneration area, known as Albert Road and Carlton Vale Roundabout and sought authority to dispose of these sites to London and Quadrant Housing Association. Also on the agenda for members that evening was an update report on the South Kilburn Regeneration project.

The Director of Housing and Community Care advised that there had been a good response to the competitive tendering exercise and staff within the regeneration and housing teams had worked hard to get the schemes through the planning process. Councillor Lorber (Chair, Lead Member, Corporate Strategy and Policy Coordination) added that this route had been pursued as central government funding under New Deal for Communities had not materialised. He was also pleased to note that the housing development now had had maximum height of up to 12 storeys. Councillor Detre (Lead Member, Regeneration and Economic Development) added that the process for the development of 500 homes had commenced and that the roundabout site scheme had been sensitively designed to be in keeping with the locality. The Director of Housing and Community Care confirmed that discussions were still taking place over the rent policy and Councillor Van Colle sought and received assurances that high standards of sustainability in terms of recycling and heating would apply.

Members paid tribute to staff involved for their efforts in bringing the initiative to this stage.

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:

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RESOLVED:-

- (i) that agreement be given to enter into a development agreement in respect of land at Albert Road, South Kilburn (known as Zone 11a) as shown edged red in the plan at Appendix 1 to the report from the Directors of Housing and Community Care and Policy and Regeneration, with London and Quadrant Housing Association, such agreement to provide for the acquisition of the land for the sum set out in Appendix 5 and to contain such other terms as are approved by the Director of Housing and Community Care in consultation with the Borough Solicitor;
- (ii) that agreement be given to enter into a development agreement in respect of land at Carlton Vale Roundabout, South Kilburn (known as Zone 3c) as shown edged red in the plan at Appendix 2, with London and Quadrant Housing Association, such agreement to provide for the acquisition of the land for the sum set out in Appendix 5 and to contain such other terms as are approved by the Director of Housing and Community Care in consultation with the Borough Solicitor;
- (iii) that the sum of £2,978,000 from the proceeds of the sale should be transferred to South Kilburn Neighbourhood Trust;
- (iv) that agreement be given to the remaining sum set out in Appendix 5 to the report from the Directors of Housing and Community Care and Policy and Regeneration from the proceeds of the sales be re-invested into the regeneration of South Kilburn, including for the purposes of bringing forward

further development sites within the regeneration area in line with priorities set out in paragraphs 4.4 of the Director's report;

- (v) that the rent assumptions for both sites as set out in paragraphs 3.11 and 3.12 of the Directors' report be noted.

13. South Kilburn Regeneration - dealing with housing issues (voids)

Councillor Allie (Lead Member, Housing and Customer Services) introduced the report which aimed to update members on the progress made for the South Kilburn Regeneration programme in relation to the use of voids during the regeneration programme.

RESOLVED:-

that authority to find a solution for the use of voids using the criteria in paragraph 3.30 of the Director's report be delegated to the Director of Housing and Community Care, seeking all relevant consents if so required.

14. Housing Revenue Account Budget 2010-11 for rent increase proposal for council dwellings for 2010-11

Councillor Allie (Lead Member, Housing and Customer Services) presented to members the Revised (Probable) HRA Budget for 2009-10 and the Draft HRA Budget for 2010/2011. Members were required to consider these budget estimates and the associated options, taking account of the requirement to set a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget that does not show a deficit. Councillor Allie announced an average overall rent increase (excluding service charges) of £0.87 per week with an average overall decrease on the non HRA Brent Stonebridge dwellings. He noted that council housing finance reforms were expected to see an end to the HRA regime and he hoped that its replacement would be more equitable.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the Revised (Probable) Budget for 2009/2010 (Appendix, 1 Table 1 of the report from the Director of Housing and Community Care);
- (ii) that the draft Budget for 2010-11 be noted, in the light of officers' advice contained in the report;
- (iii) that approval be given to the growth of £150k in 2010-11 and a further £150k in 2011-12, and the proposal for funding that growth, as set out in paragraph 3.39 of the Director's report;
- (iv) that approval be given to the savings/budget reductions as set out in paragraph 3.44 of the Director's report;
- (v) that approval be given to an average overall rent increase (excluding service charges) of £0.87 per week, which is an average overall increase of 1.09%. This to be applied on an individual basis to each property based on the

Government's rent convergence guidelines as detailed in paragraphs 3.22 to 3.26. This will raise an additional £419k rent income;

- (vi) that approval be given to increase HRA Council Dwelling service charges by 1.23% raising an additional £35k;
- (vii) that approval be given to an average overall rent decrease of £0.54p per dwelling per week on the Brent Stonebridge Dwellings, which is an average overall rent decrease of 0.5% as set out in paragraph 3.58 of the Director's report. This would reduce the annual rent income by £9k;
- (viii) that approval be given to decrease the service charges on the Brent Stonebridge Dwellings by an average of 37.8% or an average of £3.21 per dwelling per week as set out in paragraph 3.61 of the Director's report. This would reduce the annual service charge income by £55k;
- (ix) that authority be delegated to the Director of Housing and Community Care to agree the ALMO management fee after negotiations with that organisation on the basis it is funded from agreed overall financial resources for the financial year 2010/11.

15. Removals and storage

The report from the Director of Housing and Community Care related to furniture removals and storage services in respect of the personal property of homeless households and those who have been evicted from Council property and have left personal goods behind. The report requested authority to award a contract for furniture removals and storage services to commence on 1 April 2010 as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89. This report summarised the process undertaken in tendering this contract and, following the completion of the evaluation of the tenders, recommended to which contractor the contract should be awarded.

The Executive also had before them appendices to the report which were not for publication as they contained the following category of exempt information as specified in Schedule 12 of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1972:

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RESOLVED:

that approval be given to award the Contract for Furniture Removals and Storage Services to Crown Promotions and Removals Limited, the contract to run from 1 April 2010 until 31 March 2012, with an option to extend the contract for up to a further two years.

16. Budget 2010/11 and Council Tax

The Executive had before them the 2010/11 Budget and Council Tax report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources which set out proposals for the 2010/11 revenue and capital budgets. Councillor Blackman (Deputy Leader, Lead

Member, Resources) in introducing the report began by thanking the Budget Panel for their work and also the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and his team. Councillor Blackman stated that the budget was complicated with the improvement and efficiency agenda being the main driving force and expected to yield savings. He considered the budget to be prudent and expected it to give rise to savings in excess of those outlined in the report. Councillor Blackman stated that the council would be investing in key areas such as child protection, adult social care, recycling, sports, youth, libraries and CCTV. The anticipated reduction in government grant had been taken into account and the council would also support concessionary fares notwithstanding the reduction of government funding. Despite difficulties, a balanced budget had been achieved with a freeze in council tax levels. The council was also able to largely deliver on its corporate strategy. Councillor Blackman was pleased to note that the Budget Panel, in considering the report, had not put forward any serious challenges and he felt that this was a budget of which the council could be proud. Councillor Lorber (Leader, Lead Member, Policy Strategy and Policy Coordination) added that the council was now considered to be on a sound footing and was determined to provide service improvement, eliminate waste and invest in services wherever possible.

Members, in considering the report, welcomed the budget proposals and the 0% council tax rise achieved in the face of difficulties many of which were beyond the council's control. They commended officers for their efforts in planning for the future. The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources announced that the Greater London Authority had confirmed a freeze in the GLA council tax precept which would be reflected in the report to Full Council, together with information on levies also recently received.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) This budget continues the Administration's sound financial policies. It delivers efficiencies to fund frontline service improvements and a 0% increase in Council Tax. Brent currently has the fourth lowest council tax out of the 20 outer London boroughs. This budget has been produced despite the backdrop of the worst economic conditions for more than a generation, combined with Central Government breaking funding pledges on concessionary fares, which has required the Council to find £1.5m to protect the full scheme for all residents;
- (ii) We have also developed a planned and innovative response to address the Government's cuts in resources. The Improvement and Efficiency Strategy is aimed at fundamental service transformation to raise the quality of frontline services, while at the same time taking costs out of the organisation to meet the challenges in the medium term;
- (iii) We have provided over £9m of growth to fund our priorities. This includes:
 - £2.3m for Child Protection Services;
 - £1m on Adult Social Care;
 - £60k on recycling;
 - £250k on supporting the redevelopment of Brent's secondary schools;
 - £800k on sport and youth activities;
 - £245k on combating climate change and carbon reduction;

£500k on Temporary Accommodation;
£100k on extra library books;
£68k for additional CCTV.

- (vi) We note that the Council has won £85m of additional funding for secondary schools through Building Schools for the Future, and £23m for Primary Schools to help modernise our schools and allow us to use them as wider community facilities;
- (v) The Executive notes the comments and recommendations of the Budget Panel and thanks them for their informed input into the overall process;
- (vi) The Executive notes the report and agrees to forward it as amended by:
 - Decisions of the Schools Forum on 8th February 2010 and any consequent changes due to these; and
 - any other changes to the budget figures from updated information;to Full Council on 1st March 2010 who are asked to agree recommendations 2.1 to 2.38;
- (vi) That it be noted that this report will be amended by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources prior to the council budget setting meeting to reflect changes per paragraph 6.

17. Authority to award the contract for the provision of Occupational Health services

Councillor Sneddon (Lead Member, Human Resources and Diversity, Local Democracy and Consultation) introduced the report which requested approval to award the contract for the provision of occupational health services to Connaught Compliance Services Limited as part of a Framework Agreement with the West London Alliance (WLA). He reminded the Executive of the decision taken in May 2009 to enter into a joint procurement arrangement and there was an expectation of making savings while still providing a good service.

RESOLVED:

that approval be given to the award of the contract for the provision of occupational health services to Connaught Compliance Services Limited for a term of three years commencing on 1 April 2010, with an option to extend for a further two year period.

18. Authority to participate in a collaborative procurement for the provision of services for the administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme

The report from the Director of Business Transformation requested approval to participate in a collaborative procurement with the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to set up a Framework Agreement for the provision of services for the administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme as required by Contract Standing Order 85.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the Council participating in a collaborative procurement exercise leading to the establishment of a framework agreement by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham for the provision of services for the administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme;
- (ii) that approval be given to the collaborative procurement exercise described in paragraphs 3.5 – 3.10 being exempted from the normal requirements of Brent's Contract Standing Orders in accordance with Contract Standing Orders 85(c) and 84(a) on the basis that there are good financial and operational reasons as set out in the report from the Director of Business Transformation.

19. Reference of items considered by Select Committees

- (i) *Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 8 December 2009: Update on the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2010-2015*

The Executive noted and agreed the suggestion from the Scrutiny Committee that consideration be given to ways of improving communication with the voluntary and community sector.

- (ii) *Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 15 December 2010: Allocation and funding of nursery places*

The Executive noted that matter had been dealt with earlier in the meeting.

20. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

P LORBER
Chair