

SUMMONS ITEM 9(b)

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

FULL COUNCIL – 28 JUNE 2004

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

The Committee met on Tuesday, 22 June 2004. The following summarises the main business conducted and the conclusions reached.

Task Group Reports: Executive's Responses

The Committee had previously asked that the Executive should provide a considered response, including an action plan for implementation whenever appropriate, on all reports put to them by the Committee.

The Committee welcomed the assurance by the Executive Member for Democratic Services that the Committee's request was accepted; and that written responses in line with the Committee's request would be provided by the Executive from now on.

Youth Justice Plan

The Youth Justice Plan forms part of the policy framework and was submitted to the Committee for advice and consideration, after which the Committee is required to report to the Executive. The Committee, on this basis, considered proposals from the Director for Social Services for the Brent Youth Justice Plan, 2004-2005, which set out the resources, strategic aims, objectives and performance targets for the Brent Youth Offending Service, a multi-agency service established under the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998.

The Committee noted the report and the proposals contained in it; and agreed that it now go forward for the Executive's consideration.

Tuberculosis in Brent

The Committee considered the final report on this topic from its Health Overview Panel. The report's far-reaching recommendations are directed at the Primary Care Trust (PCT), the Hospital Trust (HT) and the Council's Executive.

The Committee adopted the report and its recommendations; and agreed that it should be submitted to the PCT, the HT and the Executive for their consideration and response.

Quality of Life for Older People – Executive’s response to the Committee’s report

The Executive has accepted all the recommendation’s set out in the report of Committee’s Task Group; and is committed to identifying the necessary resources to implement them forthwith. The Committee noted this outcome with satisfaction.

New Task Groups – Scopes

At its last meeting, the Committee agreed the setting up of three new Task Groups. At this meeting, it agreed the chairing and membership of these groups and the scopes for guiding their work. The chairs will be:

Increasing Childcare Places in Brent	-	Cllr Kabir
Supporting Access to Financial Services for Excluded Groups	-	Cllr Van Colle
Increasing Household Recycling	-	Cllr Wharton

The way is therefore now clear for the new groups to commence their work.

Future Work: Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act comes into force progressively from the beginning of 2005. It will affect local authorities as well as central government. The Committee considered how to go about implementing this new legislation in Brent.

It decided to set up a new Task Group to investigate, and consult within the Council on, what would be required to be done; and what the resource implications would be. The Committee adopted a definition of the scope of this work and agreed that it should commence as soon as resources were released by the completion of on-going work. This, it was expected, would be in September. A base membership for the new Task Group was adopted in readiness for this.

Future Work: Health Overview Panel: Sexual Health and Young People

The Executive and the Local Strategic Partnership have asked the Committee to consider, as part of the work programme of its Health Overview Panel, a study of the effectiveness of services and partnership working in promoting the sexual health of young people in the Borough.

To this end, the Committee agreed to ask its Health Overview Panel to consider favourably the inclusion of this topic in its work programme when it comes to review this at its next meeting on 8 July. The Committee also adopted a broad template for this work to guide the Panel's consideration.

Information Updates

The Committee was given verbal updates on:

Post Office closures: As a result of the Committee's work and the Council's representations, Post Offices Limited have decided not to proceed with one closure, Stonebridge Park; and to defer those immediately dependent on the Wembley High Road office until a satisfactory replacement for the existing branch office franchise has been found. The Committee decided to monitor closely any new arrangements for the Wembley High Road franchise, in order to ensure that they would be not only adequate to handle the existing traffic, but also the additional business that would fall on them once the proposed closures had taken place.

Member Consultation: The Committee's concerns to improve officer consultation with Members, especially by officers developing policies which would affect their wards, had led to new protocols being embodied in the Constitution. Beyond that, good practice was already being incorporated into staff training programmes, notably that for senior managers. A written report on what was being done would be provided for the Committee's next meeting.

Reporting arrangements for Area Consultative Forums: Consideration had been given by officers and chairs of area and user forums to the Committee's report. A response from the Executive to the recommendations was now awaited.

Councillor Noel Thompson,
Chair, Overview Committee.

23 June 2004