

**LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**

**FULL COUNCIL – 29<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2004**

**REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

The Committee met on Wednesday, 27 October 2004. The following summarises the main business conducted and the conclusions reached.

*Area and Service User Consultative Forums*

The Committee considered a report which detailed key issues and trends identified by Area Consultative Forums (ACFs) and Service User Consultative Forums (SUCFs). There was concern about the proposed loss of funding for the SUCFs, through cuts in the Consultation Team budget; and members proposed that the Chair should register their misgivings with the Executive.

Members also argued that issues of concern raised by residents at the ACFs needed relaying to Overview Committee for further examination in a timely fashion. One method proposed by the Committee was that each ACF Chair should highlight an issue for consideration by the Overview Committee.

*Statement of Licensing Policy*

As required under the Constitution, the Committee considered the Council's Draft Statement of Licensing Policy. Members expressed concern that a possible cumulative impact policy would be applied Neasden alone, as some other areas also suffered from concentrations of licensed premises. The Committee heard that there were no plans at present to make any special provision for the Wembley area; and they recommended that consideration be given now to the situation that might arise when the new stadium opened. There was a lengthy discussion about the Council's powers to review particular licences and the enforcement powers available. Members also considered that a Proof of Age scheme should be applied at events when young adults would be present. The Committee was concerned that the information about licensing applications should be widely disseminated. The arrangements proposed, involving an email alert service and including applications with the weekly planning list, seemed to the Committee the minimum that should be expected. They recommended that the Draft Statement of Policy should be made more understandable by lay-people. To this end, they recommended the inclusion of an introductory explanatory section. The Committee was also concerned that, whilst head teachers had been consulted, the list of consultees had not included school governing bodies. Similarly, the Committee considered that the Primary Care Trust should have been consulted. The discussion concluded with a remit to the Chair to refer the Committee's comments and recommendations to the Executive.

### *Task Groups*

The Committee considered reports from four of its Task Groups.

The Increasing Household Recycling Task Group presented a draft final report of its findings and members discussed issues arising from contractors' fees and the accessibility of recycling venues. The report will now be finalised in the light of the discussion, and then submitted to the Executive.

The Access to Information Task Group produced a report outlining progress made to date. Members endorsed the Task Group's plans to scrutinise the implications of the Freedom of Information Act for data protection - and for confidential information, in particular. The Task Group's aim is to produce a set of findings to aid good practice, rather than a formal policy framework.

The Committee received and approved a progress report from the Task Group on Supporting Access to Financial Services Task; and commented on the work programme put forward.

An update was received from the Task Group on Increasing the take-up of Childcare. The work programme was endorsed; and members welcomed that the study was to include possibilities for integrating pre-school nursery education with childcare. Members heard that any increase in nursery care provision was likely to require an increase in funding. The final draft report of the Task Group was expected to come before the Committee at its next meeting.

### *Quoracy and Attendance*

Members also discussed issues of quoracy arising from low attendance levels at some of the task groups.

Councillor N Thompson.  
Chair, Overview Committee.