

SUMMONS ITEM 8(b)

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

FULL COUNCIL – 18th APRIL 2005

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

The Committee met on 22nd March 2005. 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). The Committee heard concerns expressed over the effectiveness of the user consultative forums and that some of the changes being imposed on the Council through the Childrens Act and Disability Discrimination Act required more robust consultation arrangements with these groups. It was agreed that a draft scope for a task group looking at community consultation should be prepared for the Committee to consider at its next meeting.

Task Groups

The Committee considered reports from two of its Task Groups.

The Increasing Childcare Places in Brent Task Group presented a draft final report of its findings and members discussed issues arising around the provision of places. It was agreed that the task group recommendations should be amended to refer more explicitly to the availability of professional advice to parents and include reference to delivery of this advice through the Children's Information Service. The report will now be finalised in the light of the discussion, and then submitted to the Executive.

The Access to Financial Services Task Group presented a final draft report of its findings. The Committee welcomed the report and felt that for a small amount of money useful advice could be provided to those people from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds which would allow them to make better informed choices in accessing financial services. The report will now be submitted to the Executive.

Options for New Task Groups

The Committee considered topics for future review. We were reminded of the joint scrutiny committee established on the rebuilding of Northwick Park Hospital. We were informed that unfortunately all the early deadlines for the provision of information by the PCT had passed. Discussions have taken place with Harrow who view the current situation very seriously and are taking the issues up with the Health Authority.

We have agreed to establish task groups on looking at increasing the community use of schools and on increasing physical exercise in Brent. In addition we have asked for proposals to come back to us on the scope for reviewing community consultation as referred to above and for an outline of what the scope might include for a task group to investigate developing co-operative, community and social enterprise in Brent.

Councillor N Thompson.
Chair, Overview Committee.