

SUMMONS ITEM 7(c)

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

FULL COUNCIL – 19TH SEPTEMBER 2005

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

This is my first report to Council and I am pleased to be able to provide a brief update for Members about the different activities that have been underway.

The **Scrutiny Committee** met on 19th July 2005 and considered a number of items including the 2005/06 Scrutiny Work programmes, issues regarding current and future task group activity and the Annual Scrutiny Report 2004-05. Having commented previously on the Annual Scrutiny Report 2004-05, Members were happy to approve the final draft which will be circulated to all Councillors in due course for information. It is hoped that this document will allow us to reflect on scrutiny's achievements in the last municipal year whilst also prioritising issues for future development and I would urge all Members to read the report.

A number of meetings of the different scrutiny sub-committees have taken place since my last report. The **Forward Plan Select Committee** has continued to meet regularly with its latest meeting taking place on 8th September 2005. It considered a small number of briefing notes on items including Approval of Enforcement Policy, BACES – Adult Education 3 Year Development Plan, Kingsbury Pool – Update on Progress and Future Options and Private Sector Strategy. Items that have been identified for further consideration and monitoring over the forthcoming months include the Domestic Violence Strategy, the Parking Policy, Wembley Redevelopment Crowd Safety and Security and Recommendations for Award of Contract for Bridge Strengthening and Associated Works Outside Wembley Park Station.

The **Performance and Finance Select Committee** met on 6th September and considered a number of items including Revenue and Benefit Performance, Risk Management, Vital Signs, the LPSA Monitoring Report and the 2004/05 Provisional Revenue Outturn and Revenue Budget 2005/06. It also considered future task group activities and established a task group to consider how local residents perceive performance data and the relationship with performance and service delivery. Interest in serving on this task group will be sought from amongst the Political Group offices and once agreed, meetings will commence. It is anticipated that the investigations will conclude in December 2005 and a final report presented in January 2006. I would like to wish the task group good luck with its investigations and to invite input from across the Council.

At its meeting on 12th July 2005, the **Quality of Life Scrutiny Panel** considered a number of petitions on a range of issues including the condition

of footways and driveways and the standard of StreetCare services in certain areas in the borough, and the regeneration of Gladstone Park. A number of residents attended the meeting and commented on the issues raised in the petitions, including two young people who, as users of Gladstone Park, took the opportunity to speak on behalf of petitioners about a request for the further regeneration of Gladstone Park. In addition to these items, the Panel also considered progress on Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) Achieving Decent Homes, future task group activities and; updates on the Wembley Stadium Area Development, South Kilburn Masterplan and Neasden Goods Yard. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 21st September, at which time Members will consider an update on the Best Value Review of Regulatory Services, parking enforcement in controlled parking zones (CPZs), the Public Convenience Strategy, the Planning Enforcement Policy and an update on Neasden Goods Yard. With regards to the Empty Properties Strategy Task Group, Members will meet again on 12th October. It is anticipated that this will be the penultimate meeting before the task group concludes its investigations and drafts its final report.

The **Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel** met on 6th July and considered the final report of the Inspection of Older People's Services, the Green Paper on Independence, Well-Being and Choice; and an update on the task group. It is scheduled to meet on 14th September 2005 at which time it will consider the Adult and Social Care Improvement Plan, the London Social Services Pilot Improvement Project with IDeA and an update on current and future task group activities. Having agreed a revised scope and membership for the Access of Older People to Sport and Leisure Facilities in Brent Task Group in July, investigations are now underway and a mapping exercise has been undertaken. This task group will focus on the difficulties older people face when trying to access information about facilities and will consult with as many organised groups as possible as part of the investigations. The task group is expected to meet again in November with the final report expected in January 2006.

At its meeting on 13th July 2005, the **Children and Families Scrutiny Panel** considered a range of items including the Review of EDP and an update on the Annual Education Standards Report (2003/04), the Children & Families Self Assessment (APA) and a response from the Executive concerning the future organisation of Wembley Manor Schools. With regards to task group activities, the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel identified a way to move forward regarding the Building Schools for the Future Task Group. This task group was established some time ago but investigations had been delayed for a variety of reasons. I am pleased to announce that the task group's investigations are expected to commence in the near future once a detailed scope has been drafted. Support for the task group will be provided by officers in the Children and Families department.

With regards to officer support for the Scrutiny process here in Brent, I am pleased to be able to advise Members that following a successful recruitment drive, we now have additional members of staff within the Policy and Regeneration Unit who will assist members with a range of Scrutiny activities.

I hope that with this additional support the Scrutiny sub-committees will be able to undertake a variety of interesting and useful investigations throughout the course of the year.

**Councillor Suresh Kansagra,
Chair, Scrutiny Committee**