

SUMMONS ITEM 9(b)

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

FULL COUNCIL – 28th NOVEMBER 2005

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

The Committee met on Wednesday, 27th October 2005. The following summarises the main business conducted at the meeting.

The Committee received two reports which provided updates on the responses from the Executive and service areas to the recommendations of the task groups on increasing childcare places and access to financial services. It was pointed out that the Director of Housing and Customer Services had agreed to take responsibility for implementing the recommendations of the access to financial services task group and that its report would be submitted to Partners for Brent in November. The Executive had been pleased with the work produced by the task groups and further progress reports are to be submitted to the Overview Committee on 7th February 2006

The Committee considered a scope for a task group to review the Council's current approach to income collection and debt recovery. It was explained that the Council's debt recovery strategy was being reviewed and it was thought this work would be improved with Member input, so it was timely for the Committee to establish this task group. However concern was expressed about the time commitment expected of Members in the run up to the local elections next May. In the circumstances it was agreed that Members of the Committee would be kept informed of the progress and issues arising from the review with the invitation to submit their comments as the review proceeds and that an interim report on the review would be submitted to the 7th February 2006 meeting of the Committee.

A progress report was submitted on the work of the task group on community access to schools. The task group had so far met on 2 occasions. The first meeting heard from ContinYou, the organisation charged with supporting local authorities to deliver the extended schools agenda and the Council's Extended Schools Officer. The second meeting comprised a visit to Queens Park Community School, Brent's designated 'Fully Extended School'. Key findings so far identified by the task group were outlined to the Committee. The task group is to next meet at Mitchellbrook primary school, currently part of the Neighbourhood Renewal project which aims to transform the school into a valuable community resource.

The Committee received the report of the Community Consultation Strategy Review Group. The task group had been established to form part of the consultation on the Council's new draft consultation strategy. The task group had met three times and considered a wide range of issues which had resulted in key findings and recommendations which were set out in the report. The Committee was informed

that the Head of Consultation would now be looking at incorporating the recommendations of the task group when finalising the new consultation strategy. It was felt that the review of the strategy had been enhanced by the Member input from the task group.

Finally, the Committee received a report outlining the key issues and trends across area and user consultative forums, which took place during the second meetings cycle of 2005-06.

Councillor N Thompson.
Chair, Overview Committee.