

## SUMMONS ITEM 9(c)

### LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

### FULL COUNCIL – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2005

#### REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

I have not reported to Full Council since September so I am pleased to be able to provide a brief update for Members about the different Scrutiny activities that have been underway.

A number of meetings of the scrutiny sub-committees have taken place since my last report including the **Forward Plan Select Committee** which has continued to meet regularly. At its last meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2005, a number of items were considered including Wembley Redevelopment Crowd Safety and Security, Relevant Area on Consultation for Admissions Arrangements and the Disposal of Land at Alperton School. The Select Committee considered a tracking report at this meeting which provided details about all the items that have been scrutinised since May 2004. As a result, a number of requests were made for further information to enable the Select Committee to monitor decisions taken by the Executive. At its next scheduled meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2005, the Select Committee will consider a range of briefing notes on items including the Parking Policy, Dollis Hill House and John Billam – Update on Progress.

The **Performance and Finance Select Committee** met on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2005 and considered a number of items including Revenue and Benefit Performance, BHP Update on Performance, Revenue Budget and Capital Monitoring, Vital Signs and the 2004/05 Internal Audit report. Representatives from Capita were present at the meeting to respond to questions from members of the Select Committee. With regards to task group activity the Performance Management Task Group has commenced its investigations and a final report is anticipated in the New Year.

Each of the three Scrutiny Panels have met at least once since my last report to Full Council and the 2005-06 work programmes are fully underway. At its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2005 the **Children and Families Scrutiny Panel** considered a range of items including School Funding, the Youth Service, Extended School Provision and an update on Looked After Children. The Panel also considered the following items that had been referred to it by the Forward Plan Select Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> October:- VA Status Lessons Learned and Brent's 2<sup>nd</sup> City Academy. I believe the Lead Member for Children and Families was present at the meeting to respond to questions on these items. With regards to task group activity, the Building Schools for the Future Task Group is expected to meet in the near future with the Director of Children and Families in order to progress the investigations. The next Panel meeting will take place in February 2006, at which time the Panel will consider

items including updates on Teenage Pregnancy, Looked After Children and Under Achieving Groups.

There was, I believe, a very busy meeting of the **Quality of Life Scrutiny Panel** on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2005, at which time Panel members considered 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 met on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2005 and consideration is now being given to production of the final report. I look forward to seeing the outcome of the task group's investigations and await the Executive's response to any recommendations that are put forward by the Task Group. The next meeting of the Panel is scheduled to take place in January 2006, at which time members will consider a variety of items including updates on previously considered petitions, updates on Planning and Parking Enforcement issues across the Borough, a report on BACES – Adult Education 3 Year Development Plan and status reports on South Kilburn Masterplan and the Wembley Stadium Development.

The **Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel** met on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2005 and considered the Adult and Social Care Improvement Plan, the London Social Services Pilot Improvement Project with IDeA and recruitment and retention issues in Adult Social Services. With regards to the Access of Older People to Sport and Leisure Facilities in Brent Task Group, investigations are still underway and the final report is expected in January 2006. Future issues that will be considered by the Panel at its next meeting in January 2006 include an update on the Social Services Star Rating and the Complaints Annual Report and as mentioned already, the final task group report which will then be forwarded to the Executive for consideration.

I am pleased to be able to confirm that the Council will be hosting a London wide **Budget Scrutiny Event** on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005, in association with the Association for London Government (ALG) and the London Scrutiny Network. This event is one of a number of projects being funded by the ALG's Improved Scrutiny Bid to the ODPM and has been organised to provide a focus on the challenges involved in budget scrutiny and to identify areas of best practice. The key speaker for the event will be Dick Sorabji (Policy Officer, LGiU) who has extensive knowledge of local government finance and budget scrutiny. A number of other speakers, primarily councillors from across London will be on hand to share their experiences of the budget scrutiny process. I hope the event will prove to be a huge success for the Council and will provide both officers and members from across London with the chance to debate issues around budget scrutiny. I look forward to being able to report back in the New Year on the outcome of the event.

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