

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON
Monday, 14th November 2005 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Coughlin (Vice-Chair, in the Chair) and Councillors Beswick, Fox, Jones, D Long, Lyon, R S Patel and Thomas.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John and Kagan.

Councillors R Blackman, Mrs Fernandes, Moher and Van Colle also attended the meeting.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillors Fox and Thomas declared prejudicial interests in the item relating to the Non HRA Private Finance Initiative and would leave the meeting and not take part in discussion. Councillor Jones declared prejudicial interest in the item relating to consideration of the Second City Academy in Brent and withdrew from the meeting. Councillor Thomas also declared a personal interest in this item.

20. Deputation – Second Academy in Brent

Mr Dunwell, addressed the Committee on behalf of the Barnhill Residents Association 2004 and QARA Group speaking against plans for a second Academy in Brent in the Wembley area. He felt that the area was already congested and future development would lead to traffic chaos. He referred to the map appended to the report which depicted the possible catchment area of the proposed Wembley Stadium Academy which he felt indicated that most of the students would be travelling from the south of the borough which would lead to public transport problems. It would be preferable for the proposed site to be more centrally located. Mr Dunwell doubted the ability of planning restrictions to protect against traffic congestion citing past experience in the borough. He felt that existing successful schools should be supported and expanded and the fact that the Council did not have funding to build another school should not be a reason for risking further traffic chaos. He urged the Executive to use S106 funding for a new school.

21. Consideration of a Second Academy in Brent

The Executive considered a report attached to which was an expression of interest for the establishment of a second Academy in Brent to be submitted to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The proposal was to establish by September 2009 an all-through Academy for 1,630 3 – 18 year olds, to be built on the Wembley Park site. Circulated at the meeting was a note outlining concerns expressed by the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel on 10th November 2005 relating to the proposals.

The Director of Children and Families explained that if the second Academy were to be approved, the DfES would authorise the commissioning of a feasibility study, which would involve consultation with all interested parties including the local community. He stated that detailed plans would need to be prepared and outlined why the LEA was not in favour of the alternative option of establishing an open competition for any provider to establish a new school including that it was felt that it was in the best interests of the Council to work in partnership with a sponsor to provide a new school on the basis of shared values. He set out the advantages of the identified site in terms of the proximity to the Wembley Regeneration Area and addressed concerns expressed by the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel relating to consultation, suitability of alternative sites and expanding existing schools as an alternative option. The Director stated that expansion of existing schools would be required in addition to a new school and he had already agreed to include details of schools concerned and the number of forms of entry envisaged.

In response to the deputation, the Director of Children and Families stated that the proposed site was the best available and that there would be an extensive period of consultation over a period of six to eight months, conducted by the DfES in association with the sponsor. In response to questions from Councillor Van Colle, the Director replied that new administration elected following the local elections in May 2006 could take a different decision if it so wished, up until the agreement was signed and the site made over to a new academy trust. He assured that a traffic impact study would be carried out.

Councillor Mrs Fernandes (Chair, Children and Families Scrutiny Panel) referred to the extensive debate that had taken place at the recent meeting. Teacher representatives present were against the proposals and members were concerned at the proposed location and the process so far which was considered to have been conducted secretly. She felt that consideration should rather be given to other options including the expansion of other schools. Councillor Moher contributed that there was consensus for a new school points of difference were over the form this should take, consultation and location.

The Director of Children and Families responded that there was a pressing need for school places and that it was currently government policy to build academies. Consequently given the availability of resources a new Academy was the strongest option. He reiterated that the consultation process would be extensive and the chosen sponsor would play a lead role. The Director pointed out that in order for schools to be eligible for funding for expansion they had to fit set criteria which would not be the case where exam results were good.

Councillor Coughlin stated that the need for additional school places had been discussed for a considerable time and that the Council

needed a new school in addition to expanding existing premises. Central government policy was clear and in the absence of alternative funding sources the Academy option was inevitable. He did not consider that there were alternative viable sites and added that transport facilities would improve alongside the development in the area. Councillor Coughlin concluded by saying that his prime concern was for the parents and their children in need of school places.

(Councillor Jones declared an interest in this item and withdrew from the meeting. Councillor Thomas also declared an interest in this item.)

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the concerns raised by the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel be noted;
- (ii) that the submission of the Expression of Interest (Annexe 1) for the establishment of an Academy in Wembley be approved;
- (iii) that approval be given, in principle, to the acquisition of a site for the proposed Academy at Wembley Park Sports Ground from Transport for London (TfL);
- (iv) that the Director of Children & Families be authorised, in consultation with the Lead Member, to approve minor variations to the Expression of Interest which may be proposed by the DfES and sponsor.