

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

FULL COUNCIL – 25TH JUNE 2007

REPORT FROM THE VICE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Dorman Long is unfortunately unable to attend the current meeting, and we wish him a speedy recovery. However, in his absence, I would like to report on the work of overview and scrutiny since his last update.

The work of the Forward Plan Select Committee has continued with a number of briefings, including one on the *Wembley Security Proposals*, which the Committee will be closely monitoring in the coming months. At the June meeting of the Committee, Lead members and officers attended to update and respond to questions on the report on the *Charging System for Bulky Household Waste*. The Select Committee voiced concern at the decision and put forward comments to the Executive, which included the view that charging for the collection of bulky household waste would lead to an increase in fly-tipping and landfill, as well as create delays in bureaucratic administration. Some members also expressed concern that the decision had not been adequately publicised.

The report on the vacant site at the corner of Park Road and Rucklidge Avenue was also scrutinised at this meeting. The Select Committee expressed the view that Registered Social Landlords and other developers should be approached to ascertain whether there was interest in developing housing on this site. It was also requested that the Executive consider making the site subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order in the continued absence of any development by the current owner. The views of the Select Committee have been referred to the meeting of the Executive scheduled for Monday 18th June 2007.

Since the last update, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met twice. The impact of the tPCT cuts on Children and Families Services has been a recurrent issue, and officers from the tPCT were present at the first meeting to discuss the issue. With regard to the task group, members have continued their work on improving outcomes for African Caribbean and Black African pupils by meeting with youth groups and other agencies demonstrating good practice in this area. Additionally, at the last meeting reports on bullying and school exclusions were discussed, and members expressed an interest in exploring both issues further during the course of the municipal year.

The remaining overview and scrutiny committees each met once during this period. At its last meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a referral from the Brent tPCT Turnaround Task Group, an update on the

Tourism Task Group report and the final report from the Voluntary Sector Funding Task Group. After full discussions, the Committee concluded that analysis of the Local Government White Paper, '*Strong and Prosperous Communities*', would be necessary. The Voluntary Sector Task Group was also praised for its hard work, with the final report due to be presented to the next meeting of the Executive. Lastly, the Committee confirmed the membership for the Increasing Participation in Sport through Sports Clubs in Brent and the Town Centre Regeneration Task Groups.

Health Select Committee met earlier this month and received 'self declarations' from the local health trusts, as part of the Healthcare Commission Annual Health Check process. Members were also updated on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy being jointly developed with the tPCT, as well as the Council's new responsibilities with regard to the forthcoming Smoke Free legislation, which will come into effect on 1st July 2007. The Committee agreed to invite the Chair of the Brent tPCT Public and Patient Involvement Forum (PPIF) to act as an observer to the Health Select Committee. It was noted that he would serve as a communication channel between overview and scrutiny and local PPIFs, in order to encourage closer working in the run up to the creation of Local Involvement Networks. Furthermore, following on from the work of the Brent tPCT Turnaround Plan Task Group, it was agreed that an ad-hoc Panel on local NHS Finances should be established to monitor the financial position of local health trusts. Councillors R Moher, Baker and Leaman were appointed to this ad-hoc panel, which will run until April 2008.

Finally, at the recent meeting of the Performance & Finance Select Committee, the effects of the Brent tPCT Turnaround Plan on the Local Area Agreement (LAA) were considered, with representatives from the tPCT, including the Turnaround Director, present to respond to queries. The two areas identified as most at risk from savings, teenage pregnancy rates and smoking cessation, were considered, and the measures that were to be taken to minimise the effects noted. The Select Committee discussed factors influencing procurement in Brent and noted the Council's property asset disposals programme in 2006/2007. Members also discussed forming a task group to investigate the performance of the new Waste Management contract that commenced on 1st April 2007.