

**LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**

**MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE  
12<sup>th</sup> November 2003**

**REPORT FROM THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER**

**For Action**

**Wards Affected  
Various**

**SUBJECT: Update on Items Selected by Non-Executive Members at Council During 2002/03**

**1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report details items selected by non-executive Members since this item was first included in the constitution. Non-executive member items have been raised at Full Council in June, September and November 2002 and April and September 2003 and this report reminds the Executive of the items raised (with the exception of those raised in September 2003). and the original response provided. It also provides an update on each of the items

**2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Executive is asked to note the decisions taken at Council in response to the non-executive Member items and to inform Council of the actions since taken as a result.

**3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

**4 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

**5 DETAIL**

- 5.1 In accordance with Standing Order 40, Non-Executive Members selected from an order determined by way of a random ballot conducted in May 2002 are entitled to raise an issue of their choice at a meeting of full Council at which non-executive Member items are to be debated. The item must relate to the functions of the Council or affect the inhabitants of the borough. Non-Executive Members who become Executive Members lose their right to raise an item under this standing order. The Member selected by way of random ballot (or the Member nominated by such Member to stand in his/her place) has to submit to the Democratic Services Manager at least ten days prior to

the meeting at which the item is to be raised a note of the item he or she will be raising in no more than 100 words. The note will be included with the summons for the meeting.

- 5.2 At every meeting at which Non-Executive Member Items are on the agenda a period of up to 45 minutes is allowed to raise not more than three such items and to respond to and comment thereon in accordance with the following procedure. It should be noted that during 2002/03 standing orders permitted only 30 minutes at each Council meeting for no more than two items to be raised.
- 5.3 The selected (or nominated) Members are allowed up to three minutes to raise their issues and following a short debate the Leader or, if the Leader so indicates, another Member of the Executive is allowed up to three minutes to respond to the issues raised. Full Council then moves to the vote on whether to request the Executive to consider further the issues raised unless the Leader or other Member of the Executive indicates that the Executive will in any event consider further the issues raised in which case no vote is necessary.
- 5.4 Listed below are the non-executive member questions asked throughout the municipal year 2002-2003:-

#### **Council – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2002**

##### **The Wembley Challenge – Councillor V Brown**

Councillor V Brown called for a co-ordinated approach towards renovating Wembley Town Centre including leisure and shopping facilities and supported by a planning strategy that reflected crime prevention and housing demands in the area.

The Executive expressed its willingness to consider all the points raised as part of its Annual Policy Programme and report back to Council in the autumn on progress.

##### **Update/response to the item**

The planning strategy for Wembley High Road is within the Replacement Unitary Development Plan, now nearing final adoption. It is intended to produce a report on Wembley High Road initiatives for the Executive in the Spring of next year however Autumn of this year however the resource demands of the wider Wembley regeneration initiative may result in some delay.

## **Council – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2002**

Strategic Planning for Kilburn High Road – Councillor Thompson

Councillor Thompson referred to the need for a Master Plan to provide a long-term “holistic” vision for Kilburn High Road and a coherent framework within which development decisions could be taken.

Councillor R S Patel, on behalf of the Executive, proposed that consideration be given to modifying the supplementary planning guidance on the area and this was accepted by Council.

### **Update/response to the item**

A high planning application workload and the demands of the South Kilburn New Deals initiative has meant that no work has been possible to date on the production of local planning guidance. The Planning Committee, at their meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> July this year, agreed to the preparation of a planning brief for Kilburn Square as a first step in providing wider guidance that ultimately will form the basis of a local action plan for the High Road under the new development plan system to be introduced through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill.

## **Council – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2002**

Planning for School Places – Councillor Duffin

Councillor Duffin raised the need for the planning process to address the pressure on school places created by new housing developments.

It was agreed that the Executive, when considering the planning of secondary school places, should be requested to take account of the following points:

- the role of the School Organisation Committee in reviewing annually the provision of school places,
- pressure on certain schools due to insufficient places,
- section 106 money being spent on measures that will help the local community close to the development generating the section 106,
- many places being taken by people from outside the borough
- increase in school capacity possibly through new-build.

### **Update/response to the item**

The Director of Education has set up a Place Planning and Development Group with a specific remit to keep under review the nature and quality of pupil and place numbers data (including pupil projections). The balance between supply of and demand for schools places across the statutory age range and liaise with other relevant Council departments such as Environment (Planning and Housing for example) internally and other organisations externally (the GLA for example) to ensure that the Place Planning process

continues to improve and matters impacting on that process, such as S106 Agreements, can be overviewed and reviewed.

Section 106 money is sought to address problems associated with the additional demand for school places or other impact caused by new housing development. Policies in the Unitary Development Plan support this approach. Once secured it is important that this money is effectively spent and improvements to the monitoring of Section 106 money and the creation of a new Corporate Group to oversee the spend process should ensure that this happens more effectively. The strategies developed through the Education Service will normally allow for funding from planning obligations to be targeted at the nearest school to the development; other schools will not be ruled out as the impact of the development may make itself felt on a wider range of schools.. In examining areas where significant change is envisaged, such as Wembley, it will be important to determine the future educational needs of the area so that provision can be secured for new schools/improved school capacity where they are required.

### **Council – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2002**

#### **Examination Results – Councillor Halder**

Councillor Halder commented on the achievements of pupils in the borough's schools, which he submitted was as a result of the priority given to education over recent years.

It was agreed that the Executive should be asked to take account of the following points when considering the issue of school standards and targets for future years:

- the results reflect the hard work of parents, teachers, students, support staff and governors,
- the request for special attention to be given to the primary sector in order to maintain the success in future years,
- the ambitious plans the Council had to maintain performance.

#### **Update/response to the item**

Brent's results at all key stages are now generally in line with national averages. This represents a major improvement at Key Stage 3, where previous results were below national averages. The Key Stage 3 strategy team has supported schools in this achievement, which also reflects the work of primary schools in giving pupils a good start to their secondary education. Results at Key Stage 4 have also improved.

Reaching national averages should be recognised as a significant success, because Brent has above average social deprivation, pupil mobility, and the proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language.

Brent's Education Development Plan (2002-7) lays out the priorities, one of which is raising standards in primary schools. Each year, detailed plans are produced; outlining how each priority will be pursued. A key activity is the review of standards, which takes place with each school in November; results are analysed and targets set for each cohort of pupils for the next few years, agreed between the schools and the LEA.

Extra support is provided for schools which need it. In primary schools, this support is organised through the Primary Strategy. Until now, the Primary Strategy has focused on English and mathematics, but from September 2003, it will be extended to leadership and management, and to the wider curriculum.

### **Council – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2002**

#### **Temporary Accommodation – Councillor Allie**

Councillor Allie referred to a report from the Audit Commission regarding the use of accommodation outside the borough by the Council to house people on a short-term basis. He stated that 540 people were housed outside the borough and that the report highlighted that accommodation of this type was generally below acceptable standards.

It was agreed that the Executive should be asked to consider further the issues raised including:

- unacceptable standards of temporary accommodation outside the borough,
- reference to the objectives laid down in the Corporate Strategy which referred to people of the borough being able to access the best possible services,
- request that the current accommodation lists be reviewed in order to ensure they were of a high standard,
- acknowledgement of rising house prices across London and associated difficulties with housing in general.

#### **Update/response to the item**

The Housing Resource Centre has successfully reduced its use of out of borough hotels since the Homelessness Best Value Review in March 2002. At that time, we had 642 homeless households in hotel accommodation, 252 of whom were in placements outside the Borough. This situation occurred because we had insufficient emergency accommodation available in Brent to meet the demand, and, primarily, because we had insufficient self-contained accommodation to offer to homeless households. It reflects the chronic shortage of supply to meet demand at that time.

The Homelessness Best Value Review raised concerns about the use of and quality of hotel accommodation used outside the Borough. The Housing Resource Centre has always tried to minimise use of this type of accommodation and, as reported to Members in 2002/3, we expected that the

grants received from the Government's Homelessness Directorate would enable us to expand our access to self-contained accommodation by making greater use of privately owned properties.

Through the implementation of our action plan to minimise B&B usage we have been able to reduce our use of out of borough hotel accommodation from 252 households in March 2002 to 25 households on the 15<sup>th</sup> August this year - a reduction of 90% since the Audit Commission inspection of the Housing Resource Centre. We also plan to transfer all remaining households back into Borough during August 2003. After that date, we will stop placing out of Borough, unless there is a significant reason why a client cannot be placed in Brent, such as fear of violence.

With regard to standards of accommodation in Brent hotels and hostels, we only use blocking booked establishments which have either an A or B grade standard. Where we are using non-contracted hotels, they are either A, B or C1 Grade properties. This type of accommodation in Brent is therefore of a generally high standard and is routinely inspected by Private Housing Services.

There are severe housing pressures in London, particularly in boroughs like Brent, where the demand for social housing substantially exceeds the supply. However, by the end of this financial year, as hotel numbers continue to reduce, we expect all households in emergency accommodation to be in A or B grade Brent hotels, limited to a 6 week stay for families, with no household placed outside of the Borough, unless they are unable to be housed in Brent.

### **Council – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2002**

#### **Investment Strategy – Councillor Hughes**

Councillor Hughes raised the issue of Section 106 monies and submitted that the Council was not spending the monies within the restrictions imposed by S106 and it was not clear what level of funding the Council had available to it under S106. He also wanted to know on what it was intended to spend the monies.

It was agreed that the Executive should be asked to consider the matter raised by Councillor Hughes in light of a report that was anticipated would be submitted to the Executive in January 2003.

#### **Update/response to the item**

A report was presented to the Executive providing an update on Section 106 monies held by the Council and recommendations on how the management of Section 106 money could be improved. As a result of that report, agreed by the Executive, a corporate officer group has been set up and systems are being developed to improve the monitoring of agreements and the spending of the money collected. A further report is due to be considered by the Executive, providing a progress update at the end of the year..

## **Council – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2003**

### Commuter Parking and Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) – Councillor Moher

Councillor Moher referred to the outcome of consultation in the area he represented which had forced the Council to take a different approach to the problem of commuter parking. He felt existing CPZ options were too rigid. He also expressed the hope that improved consultation would lead to a less confrontational approach with residents

It was agreed that the Executive should be asked to consider further the issues raised in the item submitted by Councillor Moher.

### **Update/response to the item**

Councillor Moher was referring to the public consultation on the CPZ for Kingsbury. Residents opposed the controlled parking zone and requested that a one-hour parking prohibition be used instead to prevent commuters from parking. The main area of disagreement between residents and officers centred on the parking strategy requirements to address commuter parking problems through the use of CPZ's and not with one hour parking bans. The other area of concern from residents was over the need to levy charges with CPZ's. Much of the opposition to CPZ's results from the Council's adopted policy and not with the way consultations on proposals are undertaken. Officers are not confrontational and try to conduct consultations in an informative and accessible way, however the schemes that are offered have to be in accordance with the parking strategy. In the case of Kingsbury the CPZ scheme was being offered as a means of mitigating the effect of the Central London Congestion Charging Scheme and Brent had successfully bid for funding to consult on CPZ's as a possible way of tackling this. Transport for London (TfL) had agreed to fund consultations on CPZ proposals as this approach met our parking strategy and the Mayor for London's transport strategy requirements. It must be taken into account that these were consultations to find out residents' views and no proposals were being imposed on residents. It was a requirement of the funding that support be shown for the proposals. The Highways Committee has also demonstrated that schemes are only introduced where there is majority support. Currently there are no other alternatives within the scope of the Council's powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act or as a part of the Council's adopted strategy which could be used as an alternative to controlled parking to tackle commuter or other on-street parking problems effectively.

The views of Councillor Moher were fed into the Roads/Use of Road Space Task Group which has now reported to the Quality of Life Scrutiny Panel. The Executive will consider the recommendations of scrutiny in November or December this year.

## **Council – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2003**

### Teenage Pregnancy – Councillor Kabir

Councillor Kabir referred to the increase in teenage pregnancies across the borough and stressed the need for greater emphasis to be placed on prevention. In addition she submitted that the Council needed to introduce a programme designed to prevent unwanted pregnancy, including improved sex education and easier access to counselling and contraception.

It was agreed that the Executive should be requested to consider further the issues raised in the item submitted by Councillor Kabir.

### **Update/response to the item**

There is a Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator in post who is responsible for implementing and co-ordinating the National Strategy at a local level in Brent. A Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Board has the role of monitoring and overseeing the implementation and co-ordination of the strategy. This involves a number of partners from both the statutory and voluntary sectors. A variety of initiatives are in place with the aim of reducing teenage pregnancy as well as supporting young mothers.

1. There is a successful Healthy schools scheme and a part-time Healthy schools co-ordinator is in place. Sex and relationship education is one of the strands of the scheme.
2. Neighbourhood Renewal funding has been secured to undertake a teenage pregnancy reduction and awareness projects. A One Stop Shop providing information, advice and guidance has been set up and a growth bid has been submitted for 2004/5.
3. A successful bid has been put forward to Connexions for a personal Adviser to provide intensive support for teenage parents.
4. In order to support the role of the Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator a new post for a Support Assistant has been created to work with the Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator in the implementation and co-ordination of the strategy.
5. More recently the Teenage Pregnancy promoted and delivered the Brent Fame Academy for young people in Brent. This was to ensure that the profile of the Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health Strategy was raised amongst young people in Brent.



### **Council – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2003**

Redevelopment of the Cricklewood/Brent Cross Area – Councillor R Blackman

Councillor R Blackman raised the issue of the threat posed to the regeneration of the Wembley Stadium industrial estate by the redevelopment of the Cricklewood/Brent Cross area. He submitted that all party commitment was needed to ensure that the right strategic decisions were taken for the Wembley area.

Councillor R S Patel agreed that it required the highest level of commitment from the Council and proposed that a small working party should be established to meet three times per year so that opposition members could be briefed on developments.

It was agreed to request the Executive to proceed with the establishment of a cross-party member level group on Wembley.

#### **Update/response to the item**

A Cross-Party Wembley Review Group has been agreed and met for the first time on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2003. This group will review fuller information on Wembley Regeneration and wider issues with an impact on Wembley such as Brent Cross/Cricklewood Sidings.

### **Council – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2003**

Contingency Planning for a Possible Terrorist Attack – Councillor Van Colle

Councillor Van Colle referred to events in the middle east and submitted that an all party group was needed to consider contingency planning in the event of a terrorist attack. He stated that as a councillor he was not familiar with the plans for responding to a terrorist attack. The Council had many public places to protect and he asked if there were sufficient resources for this, whether staff had received training and what role councillors had.

It was agreed that the Executive should be requested to ensure that Members are briefed on the planning for a possible disaster within the Borough.

#### **Update/response to the item**

All emergency plans are on the intranet and available in hard copy on request. Briefings are available from Keith Gosling on request. Any plans dealing with terrorist issues are for obvious reasons secret.

It is not for the Council to "protect council property from terrorist attack" in itself. The emergency services/security services have this general role. Within the Council, officers, managers, facilities management sections and health &

safety all have roles to play in the safety of facilities and people. As do every employee/citizen under health & safety legislation.

The Council has a general role in coordination of its response to a disaster however caused, the coordination of the voluntary and support response and provision of resources, etc. The Council would play a significant role in recovery issues.

New Civil Protection legislation has been consulted upon and the results in the form of new legislation are expected next year. It is expected there will be a re-enforcement of the role of Local Authorities - particularly in the area of community leadership

Recent exercises for CMT have been expanded to include senior Members, more will be held in the coming months, along with briefing sessions for Members.

## **6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Minutes of the Council meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2002

Minutes of the Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2002

Minutes of the Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Minutes of the Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2003

Anyone requiring further information on this report should contact Peter Goss (Manager, Democratic Services), tel 020 8937 1353.

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