

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING
Monday, 13th February 2006 at 7.00 pm

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

Councillor J Moher also attended the meeting.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Thomas declared a personal interest in the item relating to proposed changes to Fortunegate Housing and Councillor D Long declared a prejudicial interest in the same item.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th January 2006 be approved as an accurate record.

3. Order of Business

The Executive agreed a change in the order of business to defer consideration of the Maybank Open Space item to later in the meeting in order to give more time for the petitioners to attend and present.

4. Wembley Regeneration and the Casino Panel Advisory Panel

This item previously considered at the January meeting of the Executive was called in for scrutiny at the Forward Plan Select Committee and considered on 30th January 2006. Members had before them the Select Committee minutes and Councillor John, who had attended, advised that she felt that there had been a good discussion with concerns aired. The Executive noted the motions put forward at the meeting, that impact assessments would be carried out and that consultation with residents would take place. Councillor J Moher added that the Forward Plan Select Committee had noted that the expression of interest as submitted was valid and appropriate.

RESOLVED:-

that the comments of the Forward Plan Select Committee held on 30th January be noted and the decision of this Executive taken on 16th January 2006 reaffirmed.

5. Review of the Cemetery Service

This item previously considered at the January meeting of the Executive was called in for scrutiny at the Forward Plan Select Committee. In light of unforeseen circumstances, the Forward Plan Select Committee on 30th January 2006 deferred consideration of this called-in item until their

next meeting. It was noted that the decision-making process had been halted in the meantime.

RESOLVED:-

that it be noted that due to unforeseen circumstances, the Forward Plan Select Committee on 30th January deferred consideration of this item to their next meeting.

6. **New Policy Guidance for Independent Schools who wish to apply for Voluntary Aided Maintained Status with Brent Council**

This report sought the approval of the Executive to a policy guidance document for independent schools who wish to apply for Voluntary Aided Maintained Status with Brent Council. Councillor Lyon (Lead Member, Children and Families) advised that the proposals tightened up existing guidance in the light of lessons learned from recent cases of schools who had applied for VA status. Consultation had taken place with the Schools Organisation Committee and it was felt that the guidance would also benefit other local authorities who could learn from Brent's experience.

RESOLVED:-

that the Policy Guidance Document for Promoters of new Voluntary Aided Schools, attached as Annex 1 to the report from the Director Children and Families be approved.

7. **School Funding Formula 2006-07**

This report sought approval of the Dedicated Schools Budget (DSB) for 2006/07 and 2007/08 and the school funding formula for 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Councillor Lyon (Lead Member, Children and Families) stated that the Borough had benefited from a large increase in the Schools' budget. The funding had been increased by more than 8% this year and in 2007/8 because the Government had recognised the Borough's financial difficulties awarding an additional £2m grant in both 2006/07 and 2007/08 to correct the position. The funding formula had been discussed at the Brent's Schools' Forum on 6th February, who had also recognised a need to re-balance the position in favour of primary schools to increase standards. Councillor Lyon circulated a motion which indicated changes to the recommendations taking into account discussion at the Schools' Forum meeting. In relation to recommendation 2.1 in the report from the Director of Children and Families relating to the dedicated schools' budget for 2006/7 and the Forum's recommendation to amend the dedicated schools budget in 2006/7 in order to increase trade union cover provision by £20,000 and correspondingly reduce the out of borough SEN provision, Councillor Lyon suggested that this not be agreed but the Forum be asked to consider the matter again and bring a further report to the Executive.

In connection with recommendation 2.3.7 in the report (Decoupling), Councillor Lyon noted that the recommendation was in line with that from the Schools' Forum. Regarding contingencies (recommendation 2.3.11), Councillor Lyon suggested that this recommendation be agreed bearing in mind the Schools' Forum's recommendations. Regarding additional formula factors (recommendation 2.3.12), it was suggested that the Schools' Forum recommendation be agreed. On increasing the value of the mobility factor (recommendation 2.3.13), it was proposed that the Schools' Forum recommendation be not agreed. Similarly new group size for 4FE primary schools (recommendation 2.3.14).

The Director of Children and Families outlined the rationale behind the proposal to set the threshold for SEN Decoupling at £5,000 as this would avoid unnecessary assessments and this had been accepted by the Schools' Forum. Protection for schools would be built in. Councillor Lyon confirmed that the Schools' Forum was very pleased to receive the new injection of funds.

Councillor John added that the Association of London Government had discussed at length the position of those local authorities spending above and below FSS levels and the Government had listened to representations.

RESOLVED:-

Dedicated Schools Budget

- (i) that the Dedicated Schools Budget for 2006/07 as set out in Appendix A to the report from the Director of Children and Families be approved, noting that a more accurate assessment of Dedicated Schools Grant will be made once the January 2006 pupil count data has been received from all schools, and this may require some small adjustment to the budget as set out in the Appendix. This recommendation includes approval to the increase in Nursery Education Grant value recommended by the Schools Forum at its meeting on 5th December 2005 and that the Schools Forum be asked to consider any increase in the Trade Union cover provision as part of their review of items within the Central Expenditure Limit for 2007/8 and to bring a further recommendation to this Executive;
- (ii) that the Dedicated Schools Budget for 2007/08 be approved in principle, as set out in Appendix B to the report, noting that a more accurate assessment of Dedicated Schools Grant will be made once the January 2007 pupil count data has been received from all schools, and this is likely to require adjustment to the budget as set out in the Appendix. Once a more accurate assessment of 2007 pupil numbers can be made a revised DSB will be reported to the Executive for approval as part of the 2007/08 budget process;

Funding Formula for schools

- (iii) that the following changes to the schools funding formula for 2006/07 and 2007/08 be approved:

- a) that the allocation of threshold funding to be on the historical basis recommended by the Schools Forum for both 2006/07 and 2007/08, with a review in 2006/08 to looking to phase the historical basis out from 2008/09 (table 3.21);
- b) that there be no change to the social deprivation factor (table 3.21);
- c) that the split site factor for Alperton and Kingsbury High schools be revised as proposed by the Schools Forum (table 3.21);
- d) that the split site factor for the Cardinal Hinsley/Convent federation be scaled down over the three years starting 2007/08 on the basis 85% in 2007/08, 65% in 2008/09 and 45% in 2009/10, with 2009/10 being the final year (paragraph 3.22);
- e) that the place factor for the nursery schools be revised as recommended by the Schools Forum (table 3.21);
- f) that the new financial regulations for schools, agreed without amendment from those sent out to schools for consultation in the autumn 2005 apart from the technical adjustments required by the Authority and agreed by the Schools Forum on 6th February 2006 (table 3.21);
- g) that in relation to the proposal for SEN decoupling, the threshold be set at £5,000 and that protection for secondary schools losing funding through the new arrangements be paid at the current projected level loss, based on the consultation paper schedule, for three years. The aim being to move to a £7,500 threshold in 2008/09, subject to the views of the Schools Forum on the success of the initial scheme. (paragraph 3.23);
- h) that there be a new formula factor to provide transitional funding for merging schools, to be applied for two years - the year of the merger and the year after - and that it be a lump sum payment of £100,000 for each of the two years (paragraph 3.22);
- i) that the small loan scheme as set out in the autumn consultation paper be agreed (table 3.21);
- j) that a contingency for Hard to Place Pupils be created on the basis recommended by the Schools Forum (table 3.21);
- k) that all current unallocated ISB items be deleted with effect from 1st April 2006 apart from that related to in-year SEN statement changes and those related to rising rolls at September each year (paragraph 3.26), and that agreement

be given to the Schools Forum's recommendation not to change their original recommendation from their meeting on 5th December 2005 to retain the rising rolls threshold at an increase of 10 pupils in a year group;

- l) that the Schools Forum's recommendation that there should not be any new formula factors in 2006/07 or 2007/08 in relation to personalised learning, practical learning options 14 to 16 or workforce reform be agreed (Forum minutes – Appendix F);
- m) that in regard to the value of the mobility factor, the recommendation from the Schools Forum be not agreed and that the value of the mobility factor be increased by £77k in order to meet more fully the estimated additional administrative burden caused by high mobility in some schools (paragraph 3.29);
- n) that in relation to the creation of a new Group size lump sum for 4FE primary schools, the recommendation from the Schools Forum be not agreed and that a new lump sum with a value of £333,876 be created for such schools;
- o) that £1.6m be allocated specifically to the primary sector through the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) to address the relative under-funding of schools in the primary sector (paragraph 3.28) and that £236k be similarly allocated to the secondary sector through the AWPU (making £400k in total for the secondary sector, including the protection recommended in paragraph (iii) (g) above).

8. Proposed Community Schools Admission Arrangements September for 2007

This report advised on the need to agree proposed admissions arrangements for Brent's Community Schools for the September 2007 intake. It was noted that the consultation would take place on the final admission arrangements for these schools to be agreed before 15th April 2006.

RESOLVED:-

that the proposed admissions arrangements as outlined in Appendix B to the report be agreed and these be allowed to go forward for statutory consultation.

9. Big Lottery Funded Project – Additional financial support required to allow build of new changing pavilion at Gladstone Park

This report sought a decision on the funding of the shortfall of up to £275,000.00 from the Environmental and Cultural Services capital programme to build a new changing pavilion in Gladstone Park. This was

one of the projects within the Council's Big Lottery Fund (BLF) portfolio and a £275,000 contribution would also be needed to be made from the capital programme before the contract could be awarded. Councillor Jones (Lead Member, Environment, Planning and Culture reminded that the matter had been raised at a recent Full Council meeting and that this was a welcome improvement for a well used park.

The Executive also had before them an appendix to the report which was not for publication as it contained the following category of exempt information as specified in the Schedule of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1985:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority).

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the BLF project and the service benefits it will bring to local communities and schools, be noted;
- (ii) that the proposed scheme be agreed, subject to the additional £275,000.00 funding being agreed at full Council in March 2006.

10. **Authority to tender for Care at Home Services for disabled children and young people**

This report sought authority to invite tenders for contracts for the provision of care at home services for disabled children and young people, as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the pre-tender considerations and the criteria to be used to evaluate tenders as set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report from the Director of Children and Families be approved;
- (ii) that approval be given to officers to invite tenders and evaluate them in accordance with the approved evaluation criteria referred to in (i) above.

11. **Press and Public**

RESOLVED:

- (i) that it be noted that the following item contained the following categories of exempt information as specified in the Schedule of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1985:

Information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority and

Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

- (ii) that in relation to the report concerning the selection of South Kilburn Regeneration Delivery Partner/Vehicle for South Kilburn Regeneration, notwithstanding that the report was not for publication the matter be considered in the presence of press and public in attendance.

12. **Selection of South Kilburn Regeneration Delivery Partner/Vehicle for South Kilburn Regeneration**

This report outlined the interview and selection process leading up to the recommendation of the proposed delivery partner. The report fully explained the evaluation of the tender proposals submitted by the bidders and sought a decision on the preferred partner for the South Kilburn Regeneration Project.

Councillor John suggested and the Executive agreed that this item be taken in public in order that interested parties present could hear the discussion.

The Lead Member (Housing and Customer Services), Councillor Thomas, reminded the Executive that in May 2005 agreement had been given to a formal tender process and the way forward. The Office of Deputy Prime Minister had said that stocks should be registered and a disposal programme put in place. A selection panel was established to look at preferred partners. A number of meetings took place and queries were raised. The proposed scheme involved the provision of 1,534 affordable homes and in excess of 1,400 homes for sale to provide cross subsidy for affordable homes, community facilities and establishing a community based housing association. Once the proposals had been submitted the Panel was unanimous in their recommendation proposing that The Hyde Group be selected as the Council's preferred delivery partner for South Kilburn Regeneration. Councillor Thomas also referred to gap funding outlined in the report, the bridging of which would be discussed with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Director of Housing and Community Care stated that the process had been exhaustive and very complex. Two strong bids had been submitted and he felt that the gap in funding was not unusual and had been anticipated. In order to enter into discussions with the ODPM it was necessary for the Council to first select its delivery partner.

Councillor Coughlin agreed that both bidders had been strong and referred to past experience of working with Hyde who had expressed a willingness to enter into full tenant participation. Councillor John outlined the recommendations before the meeting.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the recommendations of the Selection Panel be noted;
- (ii) that the Hyde Group be selected as the Council's preferred delivery partner for South Kilburn regeneration;
- (iii) that the Director of Housing and Community Care be delegated authority to undertake negotiations with the preferred partner on the terms of the offer in preparation for formal consultation;
- (iv) that the Director of Housing and Community Care be delegated authority to progress discussions with ODPM with regard to gaining assistance towards bridging the funding gap.

12. HRA Budget Report 2006/07

Councillor Thomas (Lead Member, Housing and Customer Services) introduced this report which set out the Revised (Probable) Budget for 2005/2006 and the Draft Budget for 2006/2007 as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Councillor Thomas reminded the Executive that the Council's rents used to be among the highest in London however in recent years the policy has been to reduce levels. As a result, levels were now moving towards the London average, however, Right to Buy sales continued to reduce the housing stock. The Council had a number of priorities, working in partnership with Brent Housing Partnership including aiming to meet the Decent Homes standard targets by 2010. Business Plan delivery was assessed to be good receiving a rating of 4 out of 4 from the ODPM. Furthermore, the Housing Strategy was assessed to be 'fit for purpose'.

Councillor Thomas stated that the proposed budget allowed for inflation, pay increases and superannuation and was in line with government policies. As a result of subsidy determinations the HRA would receive approximately £2m less than for 2005-06, however, there would be no reduction in services. The Lead Member drew attention to the arrangements for agreeing the BHP management fee and recommended that the Director of Housing and Community Care be given delegated authority to negotiate and agree the final figure. The Council would be working within rent restructuring guidelines and Councillor Thomas referred to the options available in setting the rent levels. Consultation had taken place with BHP and their comments were reflected within the report. Councillor Thomas proposed that rents be increased by 4.54% in line with rent restructuring policy and service charges increased by 3.2%.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Revised (Probable) Budget for 2005/2006 (Appendix 2 Table 1 of the report from the Director of Housing and Community Care be approved;

- (ii) that the draft Budget for 2006-07 (Appendix 2 Table 1) be noted in the light of officers' advice contained in the report from the Director of Housing and Community Care;
- (iii) that the savings/budget reductions as set out in paragraph 3.38 be approved;
- (iv) that approval be given to an average overall rent increase (excluding service charges) of £3.39 per week, which is an average overall increase of 4.54%. This to be applied on an individual basis to each property based on the government's rent convergence guidelines as detailed in paragraphs 3.24 to 3.28. This will raise an additional £1.638m;
- (v) that approval be given to increase service charges by 3.2% raising an additional £76K;
- (vi) that approval be given to increase the rents on Middlesex House (including Service Charges) by 3.2% raising £25K;
- (vii) that the Director of Housing and Community Care be given delegated authority to agree the ALMO management fee after negotiations with that organisation on the basis it is funded from agreed overall financial resources for the financial year 2006/07 and to agree an indicative fee for 2007-08 and 2008-09.

13. **Proposed changes to Fortunegate Community Housing**

This report set out proposed changes to Fortunegate Community Housing within the Catalyst Housing Group and sought in-principle agreement to the changes. Councillor Thomas (Lead Member, Housing and Customer Care) advised that the changes were designed to bring the Association in line with Housing Corporation guidance and to allow FCH to be a full member of the group. There were no proposals to change the composition of the Fortunegate Community Housing Board.

Councillor Thomas proposed an additional recommendation confirming a commitment to only supporting changes that would not adversely affect tenants' interests, which was agreed.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the proposed changes to Fortunegate Community Housing, whereby Fortunegate takes over Ealing Family Housing Association and Keystart stock within the borough and becomes the borough-wide housing association for Brent, within the Catalyst Group be agreed in principle;
- (ii) that it be noted Catalyst have indicated they are likely to propose changes to the board of Fortunegate Community Housing, which will include changes to resident and council membership, subject to the views of the Fortunegate board. Members will be asked to make a

decision about any proposed changes to council representation on the board, if and when the proposal is made;

- (iii) that it be noted that although no changes to the Fortunegate Board are being considered at this meeting, commitment to only support changes which do not adversely affect the interests of the tenants or diminish their influence in the development of Church End and Roundwood Estates, until such time as the redevelopment is completed, be reaffirmed.

(Councillor Thomas declared a personal interest in this item and Councillor D Long declared a prejudicial interest in the same item. Councillor D Long did not take part in the discussion and left the meeting for this item).

14. Leasehold service charges capping proposal for Leaseholders in South Kilburn

This report sought agreement to cap leaseholder service charges for major works to specific properties in South Kilburn. (Councillor Thomas, (Lead Member) advised that leaseholders had been concerned at the level of contribution towards the costs of refurbishments that may be attributed to them and therefore wished to set a maximum level. Discussions had taken place with South Kilburn NDC who had agreed to make a contribution of £552,000.

Councillor Thomas proposed an additional recommendation following discussion at the Forward Plan Select Committee on 30th January to establish the level of capping within the NDC contribution and consider imposing a mechanism for the claw back of grants paid should owners sell within a period of time.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the South Kilburn New Deal for Communities Board recommendations approved on 9th January 2006 (paragraph 8 of the report from the Director of Housing and Community Care refers) be noted;
- (ii) that the principle of a cap for leaseholders' service charges in South Kilburn, subject to identifying external funding for the shortfall, be agreed;
- (iii) that the Director of Housing and Community Care be delegated authority to establish the level of capping which will be contained within the NDC contribution offered up (as per paragraph 8 of the report) and to establish the mechanism for payment of the capped amount, which should include a repayment provision if possible;
- (iv) that it be noted the NDC contribution will be offered up in 2007/8.

15. **Brent Municipal Waste Strategy**

Councillor Jones (Lead Member, Environment Planning and Culture) introduced this report advising that all relevant stakeholders had now been consulted on the Draft Municipal Waste Strategy and outlined the key responses and proposals in the revised Draft Municipal Waste Strategy.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the two key responses from the consultation be noted and their inclusion in a revised Draft Waste Strategy approved;
- (ii) that the adoption of the Municipal Waste Strategy (Appendix A to the report from the Director of Environment and Culture refers) be approved.

16. **Roe Green Park – Outcome of Consultation on Improved Sport and Leisure Provision**

This report set out the main findings of a consultation exercise to determine potential new sports and recreation facilities for Roe Green Park. The report outlined what facilities could be provided and a timetable for their development.

Mr Dunwell representing QARA (the Kenton and Queensbury Branch) addressed the meeting and was most concerned at proposals in the report in particular the decision not to pursue the option to replace the Kingsbury Swimming Pool. He requested that the Executive delay a decision in order to allow a further round of bids from developers for a pool complex.

Councillor Jones (Lead Member, Environment Planning and Culture), introduced the report stating that it set out the outcome of consultation and protracted negotiations to persuade a commercial developer to provide leisure facilities in the area. The consultation had been conducted by Groundworks who were very experienced in this work and the response had been good. Most respondents felt that there was insufficient leisure activity in the area and Councillor Jones specifically referred to a project carried out by Kingsbury High School. From the completed questionnaires the top five facilities respondents indicated they would like to see were tennis courts, multi games area, adventure play equipment, exercise equipment (trim trail and shelters for sitting in). The general improvements desired included an improved play area and nature conservation. Councillor Jones accepted that residents regretted the loss of a swimming pool; however it had not proved possible to pursue this option given the site and the difficulties regarding restrictions on parking.

Councillor Moher speaking as a Ward Councillor added that along with his co-councillors he had walked around the park with residents and that it was the view that the Council had done all possible to restore the swimming pool but it was not a feasible option. Residents were very pleased with the proposals and now wished the Council to progress the matter quickly. He

noted that the project was subject to funding. Councillor R S Patel agreed that the majority of residents were pleased with the proposal and felt that the plan was solid. Councillor Patel also suggested that a cricket pitch be included if at all possible for young people. Councillor Beswick endorsed the view that there should be no further delay in progressing the scheme.

The Executive agreed that this was the best decision in the circumstances. Councillor John referred to her personal experience of using the former Kingsbury Swimming Pool and felt that the decision before the Executive was the right one given the requirement to maintain open space and in keeping with the Council's parking policies. She also paid tribute to Kingsbury High School for the DVD they had produced which set out what the pupils wanted and urged them to continue their interest as the project took hold and developed. She added that she had not given up on the idea of a third swimming pool for Brent and hoped that funding might be available from Wembley Regeneration to meet this aspiration.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the feedback from the consultation exercise be noted;
- (ii) that the programme of facility development and improvements to the Park as outlined in paragraph 3.15 of the report from the Director of Environment and Culture, be agreed.

17. Response to HM Treasury on Planning Gain Supplement

The Treasury had released a consultation paper that proposed a Planning Gain Supplement (PGS) in line with the Barker review on improving housing supply. This proposed replacing Section 106 agreements with an infrastructure levy or supplement that was set, collected and controlled by central government and was returned in part to local government to provide infrastructure needed as a result of new development. Councillor Jones (Lead Member) outlined the terms of the draft response to these proposals as set out in the report from the Director of Environment and Culture which argued for greater local control over the imposition, collection and use of such a supplement.

RESOLVED:-

that the proposed response to HM Treasury as set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report from the Director of Environment and Culture on the consultation document on a Planning Gain Supplement be agreed.

18. Workforce Monitoring Report 2004/2005

Brent Council's fourth annual Workforce and Equalities Monitoring Report provided a profile of Brent's workforce by gender, ethnicity and disability and the impact of Brent's employment practices. It was the first time that the councillors' profile had been included in the report. There was an update on the action plan from last year's report and a new action plan for 2006-07.

Councillor D Long (Lead Member, Human Resources and Diversity) was pleased to report on the improved response rate especially that for school staff and he congratulated the Director of Children and Families for his efforts in this regard. The Director of Human Resources and Diversity reminded that the report met the requirements of the discrimination and race relations legislation and set out progress made and new targets. Responses were largely positive and she reminded of the Council's commitment to achieving a workforce that was reflective of the borough's population, noting that 30% of teaching staff from black and ethnic minorities. The Director also referred to the decrease in staff turnover.

Councillor Beswick welcomed the report considering that the borough was setting a good example which should be publicised. He also thanked officers for their work. Councillor John was also pleased with the response rate recognising the increase in participation as a positive sign.

RESOLVED:-

that the draft annual Workforce Monitoring Report 2005 be approved for publication.

19. **Consultation & Engagement Strategy**

This report provided an overview of the new Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2006-09 for Brent, (attached as appendix A to the report). The strategy set out the general principles of the approach to consultation and contained new strategic objectives and quality standards. The strategy also set out how the Council would build on its established consultation network and strengthen its approach to consultation and engagement generally.

Councillor Kagan (Lead Member, Local Democracy and Consultation) pointed out the ways in which the strategy would be beneficial across the Council referring to the on-line consultation tracker, consultation toolkit and also helping members in their local leadership roles. The Director of Consultation advised that the standards should be mandatory to ensure quality and suggested that partner organisations be encouraged to adhere to the principles. Councillor John concurred and suggested that consideration given to putting the strategy before the local strategic partnership board Partners for Brent.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the strategy be noted;
- (ii) that the key themes within the strategy, relating to the adoption of mandatory corporate consultation standards, be agreed;
- (iii) that the Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2006–09 be adopted.

20. **Freehold transfer of green open spaces on the Stonebridge Estate from the Housing Action Trust**

This report sought approval to take back the green open spaces forming part of the on-going multi-million pound improvement programme to the Stonebridge Estate.

RESOLVED:-

that the freehold acquisition of the sites identified in the accompanying plan attached to the report at nil consideration be approved; such acquisition to be subject to the Directors of Finance and Corporate Resources and Environment and Culture being satisfied as to the ability to fund the cost of maintaining these sites post-transfer.

21. **Authority to invite tenders for Payroll and Human Resources IT Services**

This report requested approval to invite tenders in respect of the proposed Integrated Payroll and Human Resources IT Services contract to start 1st November 2007, as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the pre-tender considerations and the criteria to be used to shortlist and evaluate the Integrated Payroll and Human Resources IT Services Contract as set out in paragraph 3.11 of the report and that the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Borough Solicitor, be authorised to select the appropriate procurement procedure for the contract from the two options outlined in the report;
- (ii) that officers invite tenders and evaluate them in accordance with the approved criteria referred to in resolution (i) above.

22. **Council wide review of fees and charges for 2006/07**

This report set out the proposed fees and charges for Council services in 2006/2007. The proposed charges in this report were reflected in the figures in the separate report on the agenda on the 2006/07 Budget and Council Tax.

Councillor Coughlin proposed an amendment to the recommendations in the light of the Forward Plan Select Committee's decision to defer consideration of the review of cemeteries referred to earlier in the meeting which was agreed.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the proposed fees and charges set out in Appendix A to the report be agreed, to apply from 1st April 2006 (except for revised social services charges which apply from 10th April 2006 and sports

hall hire which applied from 1st January 2006) subject to postponement of the decision on charges for the cemeteries service until the Forward Plan Select Committee has had a further chance to consider the report on the Review of the Cemetery Service at its meeting on 28th February.

- (ii) that the Director of Environment and Culture be delegated the power:
- to approve a detailed scheme on charging for pre-planning advice (*paragraph 3.9 of the report refers*);
 - to adopt a revised charges scheme implementing proposed changes to building control fees (*paragraph 3.9 of the report refers*).

23. **2006/07 Budget and Council Tax Report**

Councillor Coughlin introduced this report by firstly thanking the Director and Deputy Director of Finance and Corporate Resources for all their help and hard work and personal advice over the year. He also thanked his colleagues on the Executive for the views they had contributed. Councillor Coughlin stated that the Council tax last year was the lowest to be set since the mid 1990s and the tax for this year was even lower below the current level of inflation. This continued the policy of ever decreasing increases in Council tax levels while maintaining investment in the environment and services. The proposed level would be £950.13p at Band D. Most properties in the Borough were Band C and this would amount to a 35 pence per week increase. Councillor Coughlin stated that the ability to set this level of Council tax which was below the London average was due to sound financial management and the Audit Commission had commended the Borough for providing value for money. He also added that no risks to balances would be permitted. The plan before the Executive would ensure a medium and long term financial strategy and he challenged the opposition to make public their spending plans and how these would be afforded. Additionally, the schools' budget was the largest ever and funding was being made available for social care, protecting the vulnerable, improving recycling rates and a large capital programme investing in school buildings and parks. He invited colleagues to refer to items of growth included in the draft budget.

Councillor John stated that she was proud to present such a budget which painted a good picture of the Borough. Councillor Jones (Lead Member, Environment, Planning and Culture), drew attention to the growth in Environmental Services and referred to funding being made available for parks, recycling, waste and also alleygating. She also expressed thanks to officers. The improvements had been reflected in improved satisfaction ratings and residents were also pleased with the provision of personalised disabled bays.

Councillor Lyon (Lead Member, Children and Families) commended the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Coughlin, for leading on this process. The Children and Families capital budget contained new

priorities with, for the first time, money being set aside for the acquisition of land for John Kelly school with a rebuild to commence when the Government's Building Schools for the Future programme comes on stream. The budget also provided for a second city academy and improvements to Alperton Community school. Councillor Lyon was pleased to point out that the Council would not be neglecting existing schools. Additional funding was included for improvements to St Mary Magdalen school in Willesden and expansion of special educational needs places and health and safety improvements. He also welcomed the new family centre to be opened the following year and was pleased that funding had also been made available for the Youth Service.

Councillor Thomas (Lead Member, Housing and Customer Services) thanked officers for their contributions. The budget included funding for a day centre for the homeless in Neasden (£140,000), £118,000 for call centre improvements for housing benefit customers and £61,000 for implementing the Housing Act. Funding was also included for improving staffing levels in the one stop shop and £740,000 of Government grant was available for temporary accommodation assistance. The Council would be £2m worse off under the HRA settlement and therefore there was a need for prudence to ensure there was no reduction in services. The Council would also be prioritising meeting the decent homes standard.

Councillor Fox (Lead Member, Adults and Social Care) referred to the value for money that had been achieved in service provision with growth in the budget year on year. This had been reflected in improved star ratings where it was considered that the vulnerable and elderly were being served well by the Council. He referred to the Government's priority to keep elderly people in their homes rather than in hospital which demanded greater resources.

Councillor Beswick (Lead Member, Crime Prevention and Public Safety) reminded the Executive that it was not always possible to measure improvements in public safety, however he felt that the Council was providing a value for money service in diverting young people from criminal activities and felt that the Borough was doing more than many other local authorities. He urged the Executive to publicise the improvements and to continue investing in increasing public protection.

Councillor J Moher welcomed the report which he felt should be publicised locally. He pointed out that the GLA precept had not yet been set. However he referred to a break down of the proposed 2006/7 budget for the GLA which included provision for the Olympics, Transport for London, Metropolitan Police and London Fire and Emergency Planning, all services that would benefit Brent. Additionally, the Safer Neighbourhood Scheme would be rolled out across the borough. He accepted that consultation had taken place but that it was difficult to engage with the public on the minutiae of budget making and recognising a general wish for improved services at no increased cost.

Councillor John also referred to the Mayor of London's plans to roll out the Safer Neighbourhood Scheme to all wards and to the funding received

from Transport for London which was appreciated locally. She paid tribute to the LDA and the support it had given to the Council and the other public sector projects in connection with the National Stadium development involving roads and access corridors, all of which were on target. The borough had been transformed as part of a general regeneration programme involving Chalkhill, Stonebridge and Church End and plans were also developing for South Kilburn. The process of setting the Council Tax had been a good one with all parties able to contribute. The tax would be the fourth lowest in outer London and Councillor John expressed pride in the Council's achievements.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources outlined changes to the budget proposals which were not significant. In particular, he drew attention to the GLA revenue budget to be announced and adjustments to service area budgets relating to Appendix D (ii) and the physical disability saving of £42,000 which would be replaced by an additional income for supported living rents. The next step was for the Executive to make recommendations to full Council which would be discussed at a joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 22nd February. Any further changes would be reported to that meeting.

Councillor John referred to representations she had received from representatives of people employed by the Royal London Society for the Blind workshop and the proposals in the budget report to withdraw funding over the next three years. Councillor John stated that she had agreed to meet with the representatives to hear their views and in the meantime she suggested that the proposal to withdraw this funding be rejected until such time as officers had undertaken a full and thorough review of the workshop funding including consultation with interested parties and examination of possible alternative sources of funding. The matter would then be considered afresh following assessment of the implications and options.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted and forwarded as amended by:

- (a) the final Greater London Authority precept; and
- (b) any other significant changes to the budget figures

and Full Council on 6th March 2006 be asked to agree the recommendations 2.1 to 2.39 in relation to the revenue and capital budget and Council Tax:

In respect of Section 3

1. Note the process, including consultation that has led to these budget proposals.

In respect of Section 4

2. Note the final 2004/05 outturn.

3. Note the latest forecast for the General Fund outturn (Appendix A) for 2005/06.
4. Agree to fund the one-off growth items in Appendix A(i) from 2005/06 resources.

In respect of Section 5

5. Agree the General Fund revenue budget for 2006/07, as summarised in Appendix B, or consider any amendments to that budget.
6. Agree the service area budgets including the growth and savings and other adjustments detailed in Appendices C and D, with the exception of the Physical Disability saving of £42k (Appendix D(ii)), which should be replaced by an additional £42k of income for supported living rents.
7. Note Appendix F and agree the budgets for central items and other budgets, or consider any amendments to those budgets.
8. Agree there will be a report back to the Executive on the proposed use of the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) performance reward grant and pump priming grant to enable delivery of the Local Area Agreement.
9. Note and, where appropriate, make provision for the contingent liabilities and risks set out in this section of the report.
10. Agree the approach to balances set out in the report.
11. Receive the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources in paragraph 5.38 in respect of his statutory duty under Section 25 of 2003 Local Government Act.

In respect of Section 6

12. Note latest estimate of the GLA precept.
13. Note the advice of officers on the capping limit.
14. Agree there is no surplus or deficit at 31st March 2006 for that part of the Collection Fund relating to community charge.
15. Note and consider the advice of the Borough Solicitor as set out in Appendix O.
16. Agree the instalments dates for Council Tax and NNDR for 2006/07, and the recovery policy for Council Tax as set out in Appendix H(ii).

In respect of Section 7

17. Agree the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the provisional service area cash limits for 2007/08 to 2009/10 set out in Appendix I.
18. Note the 30 Year General Fund Business Plan and the potential implications for the future finances of the Council.

In respect of Section 8

19. Note the new system relating to schools funding and confirm the Dedicated Schools Budget set out in Appendix K(i).

In respect of Section 9

20. Agree the Housing Revenue Account budget.

In respect of Section 10

21. Note the latest forecast outturn position on the 2005/06 capital programme, and agree the revised budgets.
22. Note the properties included within the 2006/07 disposals programme.
23. Agree the 2006/07 to 2009/10 programme as set out in Appendix M(ii), including the new capital allocations, and agree that:
 - The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources can bring forward schemes from later years of the programme; subject to resources being available;
 - The Director Housing and Community Care has flexibility to transfer funds between the private sector renewal programme and the social housing grant programme.
24. Note the levels of supported and unsupported borrowing forecast for 2006/07 and future years and the impact on council tax levels and housing rents.

In respect of Section 11

25. Agree the Treasury Management Strategy and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2006/07.

In respect of Section 12

26. Note the requirements of the Prudential Code.
27. Agree the Prudential Indicators set out in this section for affordability, capital spending, external debt and treasury management.

28. Note the arrangements for monitoring and reporting on Prudential Indicators.

In respect of Section 13

29. Note the measures in place to help deliver and monitor Value for Money.

In respect of Section 14

30. Note and agree the procedures for controlling expenditure set out in section 14.
31. Agree the updated schedule of Provisions and Earmarked Reserves set out in Schedule 1 of Appendix P.

In addition

32. Authorise the Council's Director of Finance and Corporate Resources to:
 - (a) Make payments on approved capital schemes in 2006/07.
 - (b) Borrow in 2006/07 up to the limits agreed within the Prudential Indicators.
 - (c) Enter such leasing arrangements as are necessary to finance the programme for 2006/07 and terminate or renegotiate any existing leases.
 - (d) Make such minor adjustments to budgets as are necessary.

The following sections of the recommendations relate to the calculation of the budget and Council Tax as set out by the statutory framework-

33. In agreeing the above recommendations and the budget in Appendix B, to note that the effect of all these measures is to produce overall council expenditure in 2006/07 of £236.691m.
34. To note that £1,178k is attributable to the net deficit on the Collection Fund.
35. To note that at its meeting on 13th December 2005 the General Purposes Committee calculated the amount of 94,047 as its Council Tax Base for the year 2006/07 in accordance with the Local Authorities (calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992.
36. In relation to the Council Tax for 2006/07 to resolve:

that the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2006/07 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

- (a) £827,776,000 being the aggregate of the amount that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (e) of the Act.
- (b) £592,263,000 being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act.
- (c) £235,513,000 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
- (d) £146,156,000 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates and revenue support grant reduced by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its general fund to its collection fund in accordance with Section 97(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- (e) £950.13 being the amount at (c) above less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount for the tax base specified above calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

(f) Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
633.42	738.99	844.56	950.13	1,161.27	1,372.41	1,583.55	1,900.26

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

37. To note that for the year 2006/07 the Greater London Authority has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, in respect of the Greater London Authority, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
192.41	224.47	256.54	288.61	352.75	416.88	481.02	577.22

38. that, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (f) above and the precepting authority referred to in the preceding paragraph above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2006/07 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
825.83	963.46	1,101.10	1,238.74	1,514.02	1,789.29	2,064.57	2,477.48

39. (a) that the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources be and is hereby authorised to give due notice of the said council tax in the manner provided by Section 38(2) of the 1992 Act.
- (b) that the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources be and is hereby authorised when necessary to apply for a summons against any council tax payer or non-domestic ratepayer on whom an account for the said tax or rate and any arrears has been duly served and who has failed to pay the amounts due to take all subsequent necessary action to recover them promptly.
- (c) that the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources be and is hereby authorised to collect revenues and distribute monies from the Collection Fund and is authorised to borrow or to lend money in accordance with the regulations to the maximum benefit of each fund.

24. **Petitions – Save Maybank Open Space**

The Executive received two petitions concerning Maybank Open Space in Sudbury, both protesting about the potential threat to sports facilities and open space in the area if current development plans were to be implemented. No representatives attended the meeting to address the Executive on either petition.

Paul McConnell (Project Director, Housing and Community Care) outlined the current situation regarding the area. In October 2003 the Executive had decided to pursue the redevelopment of the Barham Park estate, which adjoins Maybank Open Space at its eastern end. Notting Hill Housing Trust was selected as the preferred bidder for the redevelopment and over the past 12 months the Trust had been in consultation with residents to develop a suitable scheme.

Members were reminded that the Council did not have the resources to finance the redevelopment and, as there were no major sources of

government funding available to fund replacement social housing, these costs could only be met through the sale of private housing. This would require significantly more units on the site than currently exist.

Those present heard that the proposal would only involve using a small space (0.3 hectares) at the north-west end of the Maybank Open Space, and that an agreement had been reached with the Trust that the current football and cricket pitches on the site would remain unaffected by the proposal. The Notting Hill Housing Trust had met with representatives from the LNER Sports and Social Club. It was thought that this meeting was successful in alleviating concerns and that the club had been encouraged by the potential improvements to sports and leisure facilities offered by the proposal.

It was emphasised that the Trust was still consulting residents and stakeholders and there was at present no formal proposal to put to Members. If tenants voted for the finalised proposal following statutory consultation (as required under the Housing Act 1985), the Trust planned to submit a formal planning application in October 2006. Because of the potential loss of open space, this would have to go before both the Mayor of London and the ODPM for consideration.

In response to questions raised, Members were advised that under the proposal, the current "hard standing" on the green area would be upgraded and the existing playground relocated to a more suitable site.

RESOLVED:-

that the petitions be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm

A JOHN
Chair

Mins0506/Executive/exec13fl