

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 30 May 2007 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Castle (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillors Beswick (alternate for Councillor D Long), Detre, Dunwell, Leaman, R Moher, Sneddon and Thomas.

Also present was Councillor Mistry.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Long.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

There were none.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting – 17th April 2007

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th April 2007 be received and approved as an accurate record subject to the following amendment.

Item 7, (page 3) be amended to state that ‘...and the action of the main Committee might have an overall effect on the tPCT issue’.

3. Matters Arising

There were none.

4. Appointments to Sub-Committees

RESOLVED:-

(i) that Councillor Gupta replace Councillor Shah on the Budget Panel, with immediate effect; and

(ii) that Councillor Crane be appointed as Vice Chair on the Health Select Committee.

5. Deputations

There were none.

6. tPCT Turnaround Plan Task Group referral to Overview and Scrutiny.

Phil Newby (Director of Policy & Regeneration) referred to Members’ request at the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that further information be provided on the areas of legitimate concern regarding the

tPCT. The report addressed those concerns and suggested ways in which the Committee could undertake work on this issue`.

Some Members felt that the issue of partnerships should be investigated by the Health Select Committee. In reply, Mr Newby explained that partnership working was within the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He added that it would be useful for the Committee to receive a briefing report on the Local Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, at its next meeting, as the Local Government White Paper could have potential implications on remit of Overview and Scrutiny.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the report be noted;
- (ii) that the Director of Policy and Regeneration submit a report providing initial analysis of the Local Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting.

7. Tourism Task Group -update

Councillor Dunwell gave a brief introduction to the draft Task Group report. The report included various issues surrounding tourism in Brent such as how activities were co-ordinated in the borough, what Brent's main tourism attractions were and the type of funding available. Councillor Dunwell stated that the report was a work in progress and would be completed by the next Committee meeting.

Some members emphasised that an in-depth definition of tourism and the role sports played in tourism should be included in the final report.

RESOLVED: -

- (i) that report be noted; and
- (ii) that a final report be presented at the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July.

8. Voluntary Sector Funding Task Group.

Councillor Mistry, the Chair of the Voluntary Sector Funding Task Group, gave a brief introduction to the report. She stated that the Task Group was set up to investigate voluntary sector funding, particularly in relation to the Main Programme Grant Fund. Councillor Mistry emphasised that it was clear from discussions held with voluntary sector individuals and organisations that there had been a great deal of consensus about the main issues and the need for changes. The Task Groups findings and recommendations focussed on the following areas: co-ordinating the council's approach, establishing funding priorities, length of funding period, applications, assessment and monitoring, capacity building and the Voluntary Sector Team.

Councillor Mistry expressed her gratitude to all those who had provided evidence to the task group including: the Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum, the BME Forum, Brava and the Voluntary Sector Team. She also thanked the Policy and Regeneration team for their expertise and assistance in supporting the task group and compiling the report. She added that if the recommendations were agreed by the Executive, feedback would be reported to the Committee six months after implementation.

The Chair asked if the overall consensus of voluntary organisations was that the current system was unfair. In reply, Councillor Mistry stated that all newly formed voluntary organisations felt that they were disadvantaged by the application process, as they did not have an established relationship within the Council. Councillor Mistry pointed out that records demonstrated the Council was more likely to award grants to organisations that had a history of dealings with the Council.

Members praised the Task Group for their hard work and final report. One Member stated that he had heard from one voluntary group that the process of agreeing outcomes this year had been onerous. It was explained that the Task Group had proposed that Council officers be made aware of the specific outcomes and outputs of voluntary organisations prior to their application. This would create a clear vision of how voluntary organisations intended to spend funds. Councillor Mistry explained that the report also contained recommendations as to how the Council could monitor voluntary organisations. She added that although funding was guaranteed for three years, funding would be released annually and be subject to service level agreements.

Some Councillors expressed the view that financial implications should have been included in the report. It was explained that there were no financial implications as far as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were concerned as it had no budget. Once the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the Task Group recommendations, a report which would include the service area's response, financial and legal implications would be presented to the Executive.

Councillor Mistry added that if the recommendations were agreed the Voluntary Sector Team would need support to implement them and that the Task Group would support any request for additional funding to fully implement the Grant Tracker software.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the recommendations of the Task Group are agreed; and
- (ii) that the report is submitted to the Executive, and
- (iii) that Overview and Scrutiny Committee would monitor the implementation of any recommendations agreed to by the Executive.

9. **New Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Scope and confirmation of membership.**

The purpose of the report was to agree the scopes of the Increasing Participation in Sport through Sports Clubs in Brent Task Group and the Town Centre Regeneration Task Group. The Committee was also asked to confirm membership of the Task Groups.

RESOLVED: -

- (i) that the Committee agree the scope of the Increasing Participation in Sport through Sports Clubs Task Group and the scope of the Town Centre Regeneration Task Groups as appended to the report; and
- (ii) that the Committee agree membership of the following Task Groups;
 - (a) **Increasing Participation in Sport through Sports Clubs in Brent:**
Councillor U Fernandez
Councillor S Hashmi
Councillor H Singh
 - (b) **Town Centre Regeneration**
Councillor P Corcoran
Councillor L Jones
Councillor S Kansagra

10. **Suggested Topics for Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups.**

After discussions, the Committee agreed the scope of the Work Programme. Members proposed additional topics concerning post office closures, fortnightly waste collection, road pricing and work place parking. It was agreed that a briefing on post office closures would come to the Committee when more information was available and that the other issues would be discussed again should they become more relevant to the Council.

RESOLVED: -

- (i) that the Director of Policy and Regeneration submit a briefing note on Post Office Closure at a future Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, and that this should be the only addition to the Committee's Work Programme at present.

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be Tuesday, 24th July 2007

12. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There was none.

The meeting ended at 8.25pm

Castle

Vice-Chair in the Chair