



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE Monday, 26 July 2010 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor John (Chair), Councillor Butt (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Arnold, Beswick, Crane, Jones, J Moher, R Moher, Powney and Thomas

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Adeyeye, Chohan, S Choudhary, Harrison, McLennan and Mitchell Murray

1. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 June 2010 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the deletion of 'Kingsbury' and the substitution therefor of 'Queensbury' in Clause 7, line 11 – Award of contract for construction of Kingsbury intergenerational children's centre.

3. **Director of Environment and Culture**

The Executive extended best wishes to Richard Saunders, Director of Environment and Culture, for a speedy recovery.

4. **Deputation - Transitions Services Task Group**

Alilyah and Sadé, representing the Care in Action Group which contributed to the task group report, were in attendance with Natasha Thomson (Children in Care participation worker). Alilyah and Sadé addressed the meeting regarding the recommendations made by the Transitions Services task group. They spoke in support of children being able to attend activities, families being helped at an early stage before children have to go into care, allowing siblings leaving care to be able to live together and having a named point of contact to help young people in their dealings with the statutory services. They also supported the idea of a foyer project that would allow young people to be able to call into one office for a range of advice and guidance and also reduced waiting times.

The Chair, on behalf of the Executive, thanked the Care in Action Group representatives for attending and giving members the opportunity to hear young people's views. Natasha Thomson responded that the young people had enjoyed the opportunity of working with the council.

5. **Order of business**

The Executive agreed to change the order of business to take early in the meeting those items for which members of the public were present.

6. **Transition Services Task Group**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee established the Transitions Services Task group to look at the services in place for vulnerable young people in Brent aged 16 to 25. The task group's focus was on young people who were offenders or at risk of offending, care leavers, those in contact with secondary mental health services, those who have moderate learning difficulties, teenage parents and young people who were not in full time education, training or employment.

Earlier in the meeting, the Executive heard from representatives of Care in Action who spoke in support of the task group recommendations. Councillor Jones (task group chair) drew attention to the needs of young people with physical difficulties support and the initial resource implications of switching focus to early intervention and prevention which would need to be developed with health service partners. She supported the call for a central advice point, the family intervention project and concurred with the view that life chances were hampered when siblings were split up. Councillor Jones acknowledged that some of the recommendations in the report would be challenging to implement. She thanked the other task group members for their work.

The Executive agreed the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that agreement be given to the Task Group recommendations as set below out and in the report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration:

Recommendation 1 – The task group recommends that officers working with the Children in Care Council, known as Care in Action, develop a range of activities to bring elected councillors and young people in care together to discuss ways of improving council services. This should not just be restricted to services for looked after children, but the range of services provided in Brent.

Recommendation 2 – The task group recommends that steps are taken to weight the criteria for adult social care services and mental health services to better reflect the needs of young people in transition. For example, mental health assessments for 18 to 25 year olds are adapted to meet the needs of young people to recognise the difference between those in transition and older adults.

Recommendation 3 – The task group recommends that NHS Brent fully re-commissions the early intervention in psychosis service in 2010/11 and that it reports to the Health Select Committee during 2010/11 outlining the work of the service and the commissioning priorities for mental health services in Brent.

Recommendation 4 – The task group recommends that officers develop a proposal for the remodelling of services for vulnerable young people so that there is greater emphasis on early intervention and preventative services. This should build on

initiatives such as implementation of the Common Assessment Framework, the development of children's centres and introduction of the Family Intervention Project. The task group believes the development of a fully integrated preventative service is an aspiration the council and partners should be aiming to deliver and see this as a long term project. If implemented, it could ease the difficult transition from children's to adult's services as positive interventions will happen at an earlier stage in a young persons' life. Initial follow up on this recommendation will take place in 12 months time (April 2011) by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to see how it has been progressed.

Recommendation 5 – The task group recommends that Brent Housing Partnership and Registered Social Landlords in Brent change their tenancy management procedures and policies to allow siblings who are leaving care the opportunity to share a tenancy if there is a desire to do so. This will affect a small number of care leavers each year that would benefit from the support provided by living with a brother or sister.

Recommendation 6 – The task group recommends that the Young People in Care Services Team and Housing Services work up a solution to allow young people in care the opportunity to go to university outside of London but maintain a tenancy in Brent so they retain a link with their home area. This will affect a small number of young people each year, but could have a significant impact on their life chances if implemented.

Recommendation 7 – The task group recommends that adult social services makes it clear who is the named contact for organisations working with vulnerable young people to improve the referral process and to assist young people when they are contacting statutory services.

Recommendation 8 – The task group recommends that a prospectus of services for young people aged 16 to 25 in Brent is developed to help sign post young people in transition to the most appropriate services. The prospectus should include contact details for services and referral routes and should be used as a one-stop guide for staff and young people. Statutory services and voluntary organisations should be included in the prospectus.

Recommendation 9 – The task group recommends that officers are instructed to work up proposals for a foyer project in Brent, bringing together a small amount of accommodation plus associated services to deliver a holistic, one stop service to meet the needs of vulnerable young people in transition from childhood to adulthood. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider an update on progress in implementing this in October 2010.

Recommendation 10 – The task group recommends that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asks officers to prepare two further task group scopes to look at services in place for young people in Brent:

- (i) Transition services for young people with physical disabilities
 - (ii) Mental health services for young people in Brent aged 16 to 25.
- (ii) that the task group members be thanked for their work.

7. Deputation - Performance and Finance Review Quarter 4, 2009/10

Appended to the performance and finance review report from the Directors of Finance and Corporate Resources and Policy and Regeneration was an analysis of recently announced central government grant reductions and proposals to reduce growth funded by the Performance Reward Grant used to fund initiatives. Elaine Henderson (Brent Friends of the Earth) and Lorraine Skinner (local resident) addressed the Executive and spoke in support of the continuation of the Green Zones project and the work and projects designed to tackle climate change. Elaine Henderson referred to the Climate Change strategy adopted by the Executive in June 2009 work on which was already behind schedule and which would be further hindered by the loss of support funding. Lorraine Skinner referred to the Green Zones scheme which encouraged residents to increase recycling levels through education, helped develop a sense of community and would reduce the amount spent on landfill. The scheme had been recognised by Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and plans were being made for its expansion. Ms Skinner put that should the scheme be abandoned as result of the grant cut and the resultant loss of two staff, a similar scheme would eventually have to be devised to carry forward this important work.

8. Performance and Finance Quarter 4, 2009-2010

The report from the Directors of Finance and Corporate Resources and Policy and Regeneration report summarised Brent Council's spending, activity and performance in Quarter 4, 2009/10 and highlighted key issues and solutions to them. It took a corporate overview of financial and service performance and provided an analysis of high risk areas. The report was accompanied by appendices providing budget, activity and performance data for each service area, the Local Area Agreement, ring fenced budgets and the capital programme. Vital Signs trend data and graphs was also provided along with the council's overall budget summary. The report also contained details of the recent government announcements reducing various grants to the council and asked the Executive to agree action to balance the revenue budget.

Earlier in the meeting, Elaine Henderson (Brent Friends of the Earth) and Lorraine Skinner (a local resident) addressed the Executive asking for continued support for the Green Zones scheme and Climate Change initiatives notwithstanding the loss of the central government Performance Reward Grant which currently funded this work. The Assistant Director of Environment (Policy and Regulation), Michael Read, responded that the government decision to cut the Performance Reward Grant mid-year was unexpected and further delays would worsen the situation. He conceded that there had been a delay in starting the work on the Climate Change strategy and plans to recruit a member of staff had since been caught by the recruitment freeze. He did however hope that work could be reprioritised to allow progress to be made. On the Green Zones scheme, the Assistant Director agreed that the scheme was a good idea however it was clear that it could not continue in its current form in the absence of funding. Other ways of communicating with residents would have to be identified.

Michael Read then responded to a submission from Unison members of the Planning Service, circulated to members of the Executive, concerning the impact

on service provision of the council's efficiency savings programme, in particular cuts as a result of the loss of the Housing and Planning Service Delivery Grant. The Assistant Director put that some posts within the Planning Service had been deleted as a result of a loss of income following a decline in the housing and development market and resources had to be balanced. Some service units had had to be merged to make savings and the loss of central government grant meant the council had to concentrate on statutory service provision. Given the timescales, it had been decided to make the savings in those areas that had been grant funded and to share the loss in funding across the council would adversely affect other services.

Members in discussion, regretted the loss of town centre management service previously funded by the Housing and Planning Delivery grant, which helped to bring funding into the council, improve the vitality of town centres and around which some services had been organised. Councillor Butt (Lead Member, Resources) contributed that the level of budget cuts was unexpected, especially where funding had been promised. He regretted the coalition government's decisions to withdraw funding, and that the council did not have the necessary resources but felt that failure to take decisions at this stage would lead to the need to make even more savings in the future. The Executive noted that consultation on the staffing reductions would now commence.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the council's spending, activity and performance in financial year 2009/10 be noted;
- (ii) that all directors ensure that where there are underlying spending pressures these are addressed in 2010/11 so spend is kept within budget and underperformance tackled, and that measures are taken, in consultation with relevant portfolio holders, to achieve this;
- (iii) that approval be given to the 2010/11 virements referred to in paragraph 5.11 of the report from the Directors of Finance and Corporate Resources and Policy and Regeneration detailed in appendix G;
- (iv) that approval be given to the budget reductions in those areas where government grant has been reduced in 2010/11 as set out in Appendix H of the Directors' report.

9. Determination of proposals for the alteration (expansion by one form entry) of Park Lane Primary School

Councillor Arnold (Lead Member, Children and Families) introduced the report which sought the Executive's determination of the statutory proposals (published on 20 May 2010) for the alteration of Park Lane Primary School with the net effect that the school expanded to a 2fe school. The report also requested an exemption from contract standing orders in relation to the appointment of a structural engineer to design the expansion scheme. Councillor Arnold referred to the considerable increase in demand for primary school places and that the proposals would help address the current shortage. It was confirmed that given the limited playground size, discussions were taking place with the Parks Service to allow the school use

part of King Edward VII Park on the west boundary of the site for supervised play and recreation.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the statutory proposal published on 20 May 2010 for the alteration of Park Lane Primary School so that it expands from 210 places to 420 places with effect from January 2011, conditional upon the grant of planning permission under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 by January 2011;
- (ii) that approval be given to an exemption to the requirement in Contract Standing Orders to get three quotes for a Low Value Contract in relation to the appointment of a structural engineer for this expansion project, on the basis of the good operational and financial reasons set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report from the Director of Children and Families.

10. Brent Transport Service approval for procurement of managed service contract staff

The report from the Director of Children and Families requested approval to invite tenders in respect of a 'Managed Services for the Supply of Staff Services' contract for Brent Transport Services, as required by Contract Standing orders 88 and 89, to commence in April 2011. The Lead Member (Children and Families) Councillor Arnold advised that contracts had to be reviewed in the light of changes in legislation of the options available (employment of temporary staff through agencies, managed service contract, employment of permanent staff or the full outsource of the BTS Service) a managed service was the preferred option.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the pre-tender considerations and the criteria used to evaluate tenders for a managed service for the supply of staff services for BTS as set out in paragraph 7.0 of the report from the Director of Children and Families;
- (ii) that approval be given to the invite of tenders for a managed service for the supply of staff services and their evaluation in accordance with the approved evaluation criteria referred to in paragraph (i) above.

11. Criteria for transport services

Councillor R Moher (Lead Member, Adults, Health and Social Care) introduced the report from the Director of Housing and Community Care which sought approval for an Eligibility Policy which provided clear criteria for access to transport provision and promoted the adoption of alternatives, including the provision of independent travel training, which reflected the needs of the individual and help to promote greater independence. Consultation would now take place.

RESOLVED:

that approval be given to consult service users and their carers on the proposed adoption of the eligibility policy for access to council-funded transport for users of adult social care services. Under this policy, eligibility will be determined by assessment of a service user's access to existing transport, and an assessment of their mobility and ability to travel independently.

12. Modernisation of Direct Services

The report from the Director of Housing and Community Care identified the need to consult with service users, carers and stakeholders on the Day Opportunities Strategy, developed through the Direct Services Review as part of Adult Social Care Transformation. The Strategy aimed to improve the provision of direct services provided by the council to vulnerable people and provide better value for money. Councillor R in introducing the report also referred to the immediate problems with Stonebridge day centre. The day centre was no longer fit for purpose and required £150,000 immediate structural repair work followed by an ongoing programme of remedial work. Consultation would be taking place on options for relocation. Consideration would also be given to the services to be provided out of the proposed new day centre premises on the John Billam playing fields site.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the consultation on the Day Opportunities Strategy, this to include a review of all buildings accommodating directly provided adult social care services, and is intended to lead to their modernisation and transformation;
- (ii) that the issues relating to Stonebridge be noted and that options for addressing these issues will be discussed as part of the consultation.

13. Soil conditions investigations at St Raphael's and Brentfield estates

Councillor Powney (Lead Member, Environment, Planning and Culture) referred to the report from the Director of Environment and Culture which advised of Benzo-a-pyrene levels that may pose a significant possibility of significant harm which had been identified in three areas, two areas of St Raphael's Estate and one in Brentfield estate. Further soil sampling had been undertaken in May/June 2010 in order to finally identify the exact number of properties which exceed the 17 ppm (parts per million) determination value. Councillor Powney advised that a clean up would have to take place and that the council would apply to central government for grant funding at the earliest opportunity.

The Executive noted that a press briefing had already taken place and residents had been given information and were being kept informed.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the findings of the soil investigation at St Raphael's and Brentfield Estates be noted;
- (ii) that agreement be given to the approach to risk management and the threshold levels of 17 ppm for benzo-a-pyrene;

- (iii) that officers carry out such further investigations as are necessary in order to ascertain exactly how many properties are affected by the above threshold levels;
- (iv) that the options for remediating and agree soil replacement for the affected properties be noted;
- (v) that approval be given to waive the costs of basic remediation of privately owned properties;
- (vi) that the financial risks associated with remediation and the intention to seek grant funding from Environment Agency be noted and that a further report would be submitted when the outcome was known.

14. Budget Strategy 2011/12 to 2014/15

Councillor Butt (Lead Member, Resources) introduced the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources report which set out the financial prospects for the council for the next four years within the context of unprecedented reductions in funding for local authorities. It sought Executive approval for the overall budget strategy based on the One Council Programme which aimed to deliver cost reductions through a planned and strategic approach to service provision. Councillor Butt referred to the further announcement expected in October 2010 as part of the comprehensive spending review, a 25% reduction announced in the central government's emergency budget. The One Council programme would be part of the initiatives to help bridge the funding gap. Councillor Butt argued that the spending cuts were being forced on the council by the coalition government and he regretted the adverse impact on residents and services.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources in response to questions on spending assumptions advised that projection figures would have to be revised and central government were being pushed to give consistent messages more certainty. This also applied to housing benefit proposals the position on which was also unclear. Attention was drawn to the increasing levels of inescapable growth and the Director advised that this was in main comprised of waste charges and the cost of freedom passes.

The Executive agreed the recommendations.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the latest forecast for the council's revenue budget for 2011/12 to 2014/15 at Appendix A to the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and the assumptions used to derive this be noted;
- (ii) that the overall budget process set out in the report be endorsed;
- (iii) that the proposed budget timetable be noted.

15. Learning Disability Resource Centre - relocation from Albert Road, South Kilburn to John Billam Playing Fields, Woodcock Hill, Kenton

The report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources informed members of the progress to date in the provision of new facilities for Adult Day Care and sought approval to the revised cost of the project. The report also sought approval of the variation of the Council's lease with Gujarati Ayra Association London (GAA London).

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 Schedule 12 of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1972:

"Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)."

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the total budget estimate as shown in Appendix 3 of the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources for construction of the day care centre at John Billam Playing Fields to replace the one currently situated at Albert Road.
- (ii) that the use of the IESE (Improvement and Efficiency South East) framework for the appointment of the main contractor be noted;
- (iii) that approval be given to the variation of the long lease to the GAA in accordance with the Heads of Terms as set out in paragraph 3.8 of the Director of Finance's report but on such detailed terms as are considered by the Director of Property and Asset Management to be in the Council's best interest.

16. **Brent Engagement Strategy**

The Director of Communication's report presented Executive members with a draft of the new Community Consultation, Engagement and Empowerment Strategy – the Brent Engagement Strategy 2010/14 which replaced the Community Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2006/09. The new strategy was a framework, partnership document, developed in the first instance between the Council and NHS Brent and overseen by the consultation board. The strategy was open to adoption by all member agencies of the local strategic partnership, 'Partners for Brent'.

Councillor Jones (Lead Member, HR and Diversity, Local Democracy and Consultation) highlighted the diversity implications of the new strategy designed for the most diverse borough in the UK: 54% of the population being from black and ethnic communities, a quarter of residents aged under 19 years or under and 130 languages being spoken in Brent schools. It was noted that the strategy committed the council and its partners to including ethnic minority communities and under-represented and seldom-heard groups in consultation and engagement activities.

The Executive noted that the future of one of the council's partners, the Primary Care Trust, was subject to central government review however the Director advised

that strategy had been designed around broad principles and the consultation process were was sufficiently flexible to be able to respond to change.

RESOLVED:-

that the draft of the new Community Consultation, Engagement and Empowerment Strategy be adopted as the Brent Engagement Strategy 2010-14, the strategy to be published formally in August 2010.

17. Reference of item considered by Forward Plan Select Committee

- a) *Enforcement of moving traffic and parking contraventions by means of CCTV cameras*
- b) *Main Programme Grant – funding for organisations providing regeneration, and community safety services*

Councillor J Moher (Lead Member, Highways and Transportation) gave feedback on the discussion at the Select Committee on the enforcement of moving traffic and parking contraventions which he felt had been useful.

In response to the Select Committee's request for priority to be given to funding for Brent Private Tenant's Rights Group the Executive noted that a number of organisations had submitted good applications however could not be grant funded due to lack of resources. Councillor R Moher (Lead Member, Adults, Health and Social Care) put, and the Executive agreed, that Brent Private Tenant's Rights should not necessarily be given priority over other applications at this stage.

RESOLVED:

that the Select Committee's recommendations be noted and approved with the exception of the recommendation relating to Brent Private Tenants Rights Group and the chances of funding becoming available which should be subject to clarification.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

A JOHN
Chair