



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE Monday 16 January 2012 at 7.00 pm

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

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Al-Ebadi, Cheese, Chohan, Colwill, Gladbaum, Harrison, Hashmi, Hector, Hunter, Kansagra, Kataria and Thomas

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

None declared.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 December 2011 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Matters arising**

None.

4. **Deputations - Willesden Green Redevelopment Project**

Dilwyn Chambers spoke as a local resident on the Willesden Green Redevelopment Project. Dilywn Chambers expressed concern about an apparent lack of details regarding responses from consultation in the report. He felt that the art gallery, bookshop and Brent Irish Advisory Service (BIAS) had been given due notice that there would be no space for them at the new site as opposed to being properly consulted and he suggested that neither library staff nor users had been consulted about the proposals. The Executive heard that the Valued Customer Panel set up in February 2011 was yet to meet. Dilywn Chambers contested the accuracy of paragraph 4.14 in the report.

Martin Francis, speaking as a local resident, addressed the Executive over his concern about there being no provision for the Willesden Green bookshop in the proposals. He commented that the bookshop stocked a wide range of books and provided an important educational role in the local community, including providing discount books for local schools. The Executive heard that the bookshop had been praised in *The Guardian* newspaper. Martin Francis stated that although the report had mentioned that there was no space available for the bookshop at the new site, it had not given the reasons as to why and he felt that the bookshop would provide

a welcome attraction for the new site and provide community cohesion. Furthermore, the bookshop was up to date with rent payments. Martin Francis concluded by asserting that the council should be championing successful local businesses such as the bookshop and he requested that space for it be provided.

Philip Bromberg addressed the Executive speaking as a representative of Brent SOS libraries. He stated that Brent SOS libraries had sent a letter to the Head of Libraries suggesting that Cricklewood and Kensal Rise libraries be kept open during the redevelopment of the Willesden Green site, which would be at no cost to the council and provide an ideal solution, whilst Brent SOS libraries would be willing to work with the council on this matter. Philip Bromberg felt that there was not sufficient information for a decision on the proposed interim service delivery to be decided and further information from library staff was required. Furthermore, the costings for Grange Road and the second additional temporary location were not known, whilst the locations for alternative sites for study spaces remained unspecified. He asked that any decision be deferred before this information was known and to keep Cricklewood and Kensal Rise libraries open during the Willesden Green redevelopment project.

Edward Lazarus, a resident of Cricklewood, also addressed the Executive. He began by stating that the closure of Cricklewood and Neasden libraries, along with the redevelopment of Willesden Green library, meant that some 200 study spaces had been lost and that this meant that effectively only ten study spaces remained to cover a large area. These study spaces played a vital role for some school children, particularly those in deprived areas who may come from overcrowded homes and the loss of the spaces meant they would have no other place to go and impact upon the education of those who needed it most. Edward Lazarus asked that Cricklewood Library re-open for two years whilst the Willesden Green Redevelopment Project was being undertaken.

Councillor John (Chair and Leader of the Council) thanked Dilywn Chambers, Martin Francis, Philip Bromberg and Edward Lazarus for their contributions.

5. Willesden Green Redevelopment Project

Councillor Crane (Lead Member for Regeneration and Major Projects) introduced the report which followed on from the report in February 2011 that had approved proposals to redevelop the Willesden Green site. The previous report had indicated that the building was generally in poor condition, whilst a poor customer experience of the museum had also been identified. Furthermore, the excessively high cost to refurbish the building meant that this was not an option, however the redevelopment of the site would be at zero cost to the council. It had been agreed to temporarily close the Willesden Green site whilst it was being redeveloped and to operate an interim service delivery during this period.

Councillor Crane advised that the report for this meeting provided recommendations with regard to awarding a contractor to redevelop the site and further details concerning the proposed interim service delivery strategy. The Executive noted that the building had a wide variety of uses and was a major civic building in south Brent. Consultation with residents, residents' groups and councillors had contributed to a visionary statement for the future of the site. Willesden Book Shop and BIAS would be assisted by the council in identifying

alternative sites. Councillor Crane confirmed that an Environmental Impact Assessment had been undertaken and the contractor proposed was committed to Community Engagement Strategy. The building presently occupied by BIAS had listed building status, however all three tenderers had indicated that it would not be viable to preserve the building in their schemes. Members were informed that the proposals would also require planning permission. It was intended to not only ensure the site was a major hub for the south of the Borough but also to act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the Willesden Green area. Funds from the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund were also being used for the "New Windows for Willesden" scheme.

Councillor Powney (Lead Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods) added that the issue of study spaces was covered in paragraphs 6.2-6.22 of the report. A number of options were being explored in providing study spaces and it was possible that the total number of spaces could even increase.

The Chair sought clarification with regard to statutory consultation during the planning application and whether the bookshop was aware that the council would assist in identifying an alternative site for them. In reply, Councillor Crane confirmed that there would be consultation on a number of levels with users and residents and that this would be followed by the statutory planning consultation. There were a number of vacant properties in the Willesden Green area and the bookshop would be approached for assistance in finding alternative accommodation.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Director of Regeneration and Major Projects in consultation with Director of Legal & Procurement be authorised to award and enter into a Development Agreement with Galliford Try Plc in respect of the Willesden Green Library Centre site as shown crossed hatched black in the plan A at Appendix 1; such agreement to provide for the acquisition of the land as shown edged blue and green in the plan B at Appendix 1 and the development of a new cultural centre within the land as shown edged orange in the plan B at Appendix 1;
- (ii) that the Director of Regeneration and Major Projects be authorised to dispose of the land at Chambers Lane Willesden Green shown crossed hatched black on Plan C at Appendix 1 to Galliford Try Plc to form part of the Willesden Green Library Centre site as shown crossed hatched black in the plan A at Appendix 1;
- (iii) that the Director of Regeneration and Major Projects (where the Director of Regeneration and Major Projects in conjunction with the Director of Legal and Procurement consider applicable) be authorised to take the necessary steps to override or where requisite extinguish rights and interests in the land which might otherwise act to constrain the development by:-
 - (a) appropriating the land shown crossed hatched black in the plan A at Appendix 1 for planning purposes when it is no longer required for the purposes for which it is currently held
 - (b) taking any other legal steps as may be necessary to achieve this objective;

- (iv) that authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Major Projects in consultation with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services to authorise the detailed design and detailed costs for the "Council Works" as detailed in Section 5.2, 7.5 and 7.6;
- (v) that the proposed interim service delivery strategy as detailed in paragraphs 6.4 -6.36 below for the services currently provided at the Willesden Green Library Centre be endorsed;
- (vi) that the detailed Impact Needs/Requirements Assessment in Appendix 15 and the detailed Equality Strand Analysis, key issues and proposed mitigation in Annex 15.1 be noted;
- (vii) that the proposed consultation strategy outlined in Appendix 2 be endorsed.

6. Procurement of Highway Services

Councillor J Moher (Lead Member for Highways and Transportation) introduced the report that sought approval to participate in a collaborative procurement exercise to set up a pan-London contract for Highways Services. Although the present in-house arrangements were working well, it was felt that by working with Transport for London and other London boroughs, better agreements, greater value for money and savings could be made. Councillor J Moher added that the council could undertake separate procurement exercises in some areas if it so wished.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the Council to participate in a collaborative procurement exercise known as the London Highways Alliance Collaborative which would lead to the establishment of a framework agreement by Transport for London for the supply of an extensive range of highways orientated services from 1 April 2013.
- (ii) that approval be given to the collaborative procurement exercise as described in paragraph 2.1 to exempt from the normal requirements of Brent's Contract Standing Orders in accordance with Contract Standing Orders 85(c) and 84(a) on the basis that there are good financial and operational reasons as set out in the body of this report.
- (iii) that the work the Director of Environment & Neighbourhood Services is leading on, as part of the Council's "One Council" programme, to identify the optimum mechanism for delivering highways services in Brent, as set out in this report, and that a further report will be presented in due course setting out a proposed way forward which will include consideration of use of the London Highways Alliance Contract be noted.

7. Cross-borough procurement of cultural services

Councillor Powney introduced the report and advised that approval was sought to undertake a collaborative procurement exercise with regard to the future delivery of leisure services with the London boroughs of Harrow and Ealing. He advised that the cross-borough arrangement was proposed to commence on 1 April 2013,

however the council would join when the current Vale Farm contract expires in November 2013. Councillor Powney referred to the briefing note circulated at the meeting that included an amendment to recommendation 2.5 in the report and an additional recommendation 2.7.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given for the council to participate in a collaborative procurement exercise that would lead to the establishment of a framework agreement for leisure services at Vale Farm Sports Centre.
- (ii) that approval be given to the collaborative procurement exercise detailed in 2.1 above to be exempted from the normal requirements of Brent's Contract Standing Orders in accordance with Contract Standing Orders 85(c) and 84(a) on the basis that there are good financial and operational reasons for Harrow leading on the procurement as set out in the report below.
- (iii) that approval be given to publish an OJEU notice for leisure services at Vale Farm Sports Centre and to carry out the pre-qualification exercise.
- (iv) that officers be asked to report back setting out the specification along with any necessary consultation results, equality impact assessment and seeking approval to the tender evaluation criteria before inviting shortlisted suppliers to submit a detailed tender.
- (v) that the procurement options set out in 3.10- 3.12 be noted. Also that approval be given for officers to proceed with Option 1 – Lead Borough Model (weak) and for the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Legal and Procurement to move to Option 2- Lead Borough Model (strong) if they consider it appropriate.
- (vi) that the proposed governance arrangements set out in paragraphs 3.16-3.19 be noted and that officers be asked to report back to the Executive for approval to the governance arrangements once they have been developed further.
- (vii) that the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Legal and Procurement be authorised to decide whether the contract should be tendered for a period of 5 years or 10 years following discussions with Ealing and Harrow.

8. Annual Audit Commission Letter

Councillor Butt (Deputy Leader/Lead Member for Resources) introduced the item and explained that the Annual Audit Letter for 2010/11 summarised the findings of the Audit Commission. He stated that the council had experienced a particularly challenging year due to the migration of financial information into a single Oracle system, the transition of accounting statements to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and fundamental structural changes including the downsizing of Finance staff to achieve £1.5m savings. However despite these challenges, Councillor Butt confirmed that an unqualified audit opinion of the 2010/11 accounts had been achieved.

The Chair then invited Andrea White (District Auditor, Audit Commission) to address the Executive. Andrea White began by advising that the first figure on page 81 of the agenda of the Annual Audit Commission Letter should read £538K and not £533K. She confirmed that an unqualified audit opinion had been issued for the 2010/11 accounts, the Brent Pension Fund and for Value for Money. It had been acknowledged that the council had experienced a challenging year with the changes to financial reporting and the need to achieve savings stretching capacity. Some weaknesses had been identified on financial reporting that required the Audit Commission to undertake additional work on some accounts. An additional fee had been incurred as the council had published its audited statement of accounts after the 30 September 2011 deadline. However, despite some errors being identified, there had been no significant changes to the reported outturn. With regard to Value for Money, Andrea White advised that a sound framework and planning was in place although there was some room for improvement in respect of internal controls and financial planning. There was also a need to embed risk management and good procurement practice across the council, to increase the council's reserves.

Andrea White concluded by advising that councillors work closely with officers to provide clear direction on their priorities, undertake a monitoring role and ensure that corrective action is taken at an early stage to help the council address the significant challenges it faces.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services thanked the Audit Commission for the work undertaken with the council despite an especially challenging year. The Chair added her voice of thanks on behalf of the Executive.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the contents of the Annual Audit Letter be noted;
- (ii) that it be noted that the Audit Committee will monitor progress against the main features highlighted and delivery of the Action Plan.

9. **Revised Treasury Management Code**

Councillor Butt advised that approval for the revised Treasury Policy Statement was sought prior to it being referred to Full Council for final approval. The revised code followed on from the 2011 Code of Practice and Guidance Notes issued following the enactment of the 2011 Localism Bill.

RESOLVED:-

that the revised Treasury Policy Statement to Full Council for approval be recommended.

10. **Treasury mid-year report**

Councillor Butt introduced the report that updated Members on recent treasury activity and sought approval to recommend the report to Full Council. Councillor Butt advised that the council had been awarded preferred creditor status with

regard to deposits from Glitnir Bank and it was anticipated that a proportion of the deposit would be returned in the next six weeks.

RESOLVED:-

that the report, which has also gone to the Audit Committee, be noted and that it be recommended to Full Council.

11. **NNDR discretionary rate relief**

Councillor Butt introduced the report which sought agreement of the discretionary relief applications as set out in appendix two of the report and to agree the granting of Meanwhile Space CIC 100% discretionary rate relief in respect of their short term occupation of units in Willesden as detailed in appendix three of the report.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the discretionary rate relief applications in Appendix 2 be agreed;
- (ii) that the granting to Meanwhile Space CIC 100% discretionary rate relief in respect of their short term occupation of units in Willesden as detailed in Appendix 3 be agreed.

12. **Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund**

The report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement sought agreement to the creation of a newly named Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund from existing Main Programme Grant and Advice Services Budgets and maintaining the overall level of funding as detailed in Section 6 of the report. As existing grant terms come to an end, the report proposed allocating the Main Programme Grant budget to grant-funded Borough Plan aligned projects, enhancing infrastructure support for the voluntary sector and some advice, guidance and advocacy. The report also sought agreement to extending existing arrangements for advice services and some of the grant projects to enable a review of the advice, guidance and advocacy in 2012-2013.

The Chair advised that the issue of voluntary grants had been under serious consideration for some time and in addition to the Main Programme Grant, there were also a number of contractual arrangements with other voluntary organisations. The proposals were a culmination of the need to rationalise the voluntary sector across the three funding streams and it was also intended to establish a Voluntary Resource Centre in the fullness of time.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the creation of a newly named Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund from the existing Main Programme Grant and the Advice Services budgets be agreed;
- (ii) that the creation of three funding streams within the Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund in the financial year 2012 – 2013 be agreed, which are as follows:

- a funding stream using existing Main Programme Grant Budget for projects which run for two year and nine months aligned to Borough Plan priorities excluding crime and regeneration as set out in paragraph 4.3 of this report;
 - a funding stream using existing Main Programme Grant Budget to commission infrastructure support for Brent's voluntary and community sector for three years from 1st April 2012 until 31st March 2013 as set out in paragraph 4.10 of this report;
 - a funding stream containing existing advice, guidance and advocacy arrangements funded from the Advice Services budget and Main Programme Grant Budget from 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2013 as set out in paragraph 4.13 of this report;
- (iii) that agreement the addition of a further three year funding stream to commence in the financial year 2013-2014 for projects aligned to the range of borough plan priorities as set out in paragraph 4.4 of this report using the existing Main Programme Grant Budget as existing grant terms come to an end be agreed;

Grant projects aligned to Borough Plan priorities

- (iv) that the extension of (within existing budgets) all existing grant agreements under the children and young people's theme and decommission, with appropriate notice, these projects at the point the new themed funding becomes available be agreed;
- (v) that the decommission, with appropriate notice, the last set of projects being funded by the council under one year agreements at the point new funding streams become available with the exception of those covered by the advice, guidance and advocacy proposal be agreed;
- (vi) that agreement the decommissioning of the the crime and regeneration themed funding stream at the end of its three year grant period in March 2013 and replace it as outlined in paragraph 2.3 above, be agreed;
- (vii) that it be agreed to maintain the grant funding principles set out in paragraph 4.7 of this report;

Advice, Guidance and Advocacy

- (viii) that extending (within existing budgets) the existing one year grant agreements for projects provided by Brent Mencap, Brent Association of Disabled People and Age UK until March 31st 2013 whilst a review of advice guidance and advocacy stream is undertaken be agreed;
- (ix) that extending (within existing budgets) the existing arrangements for Brent Citizen's Advice Bureau, Brent Community Law Centre and Brent Private Tenants Rights Group until March 31st 2013 whilst a review of the advice, guidance and advocacy stream is undertaken be agreed.

Operational Arrangements

- (x) that the draft themed grant funding criteria as set out in Appendix 3 of this report be agreed;
- (xi) that the amended grant funding terms and conditions set out in Appendix 4 of this report be agreed;
- (xii) that authority be delegated, in line with arrangements in place in Housing and Community Care, to the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement to commission replacement projects where allocated funding is not taken up by a successful bidder or the project monitoring highlights a need to cease funding the agreed project.
- (xiii) that the review of advice guidance and advocacy will take place in the year 2012/ 2013 as set out in paragraph 4.13 of this report be noted;
- (xiv) that a further equality impact assessment will be undertaken for the review of the advice, guidance and advocacy funding stream in 2012/2013 which will accompany any proposals to the Executive arising from the review be noted;
- (xv) that the content of the equality impact assessment which is set out in Appendix 7 of this report upon consideration of the recommendations set out in this report be noted.

13. London Councils Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme

The report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement sought agreement to the London Councils Grant Committee budget for 2012/13 and the associated reduction in the level of contribution by the council to the London Borough Grants Scheme. The Chair added that the proposals were in the context of a comprehensive restructuring of the London Councils Grant Scheme.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the recommended budget for the London Councils Grant Scheme and the contribution of £377,097 to be paid by the Council towards the London Boroughs Grants Scheme for 2012/13 be agreed.
- (ii) that the reallocation of the sum of £83,832, which is no longer paid towards the London Boroughs Grant Scheme, be agreed by:-
 - (a) allocating the sum of £24,583 to cover the overspend created by the increase in the contribution sought from London Councils during 2011/2012 (as set out in paragraph 4.3 of this report), and by;
 - (b) allocating the remaining sum of £59,249 to Brent Council's Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund.

14. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

A JOHN
Chair