

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 16 December 2003
(7:00 - 8:20 pm)

Present: Councillor C J Fairbrass (Chair), Councillor C Geddes (Deputy Chair), Councillor J L Alexander, Councillor S Kallar, Councillor M E McKenzie, Councillor B M Osborn, Councillor J W Porter, Councillor L A Smith and Councillor T G W Wade.

Also Present: Councillor J R Denyer, Councillor M A McCarthy, Councillor Mrs V M Rush and Councillor A G Thomas.

Apologies: Councillor G J Bramley.

219. Minutes (2 December 2003)

Agreed.

220. Winter Maintenance Policy Statement and Plan

Received a report seeking the adoption of a Winter Maintenance Policy Statement and Plan to incorporate recent changes in legislation and reflect improved operating procedures.

Agreed to adopt the Winter Maintenance Policy and Maintenance Plan in order to assist the Council in achieving the Community Priority of "Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer".

221. Social Services Star Ratings

Noted a report setting out the Social Services Star ratings as published on the 13 November 2003. Barking and Dagenham has retained its one star rating, with an improvement in children's services prospects from "uncertain" to "promising", however, adult services remain at "uncertain".

222. Sure Start and Children's Centres

Received a report seeking to locate the role of Lead Agency for the four Sure Start projects with the Education, Arts and Libraries Department, which will sit alongside the Council's role as Accountable Body for all four Sure Starts.

Agreed, in order to clarify the future governance and accountability for the Four Sure Start programmes, to:

1. The Education, Arts and Libraries Department as the Lead Agency; and
2. A new post of Children's Centre Co-ordinator, to be funded from the Sure Start Delivery Plan.

223. National Social Services Conference

Received a report providing feedback on this year's annual conference. The report also sought approval for attendance and contributions to next year's conference and to endorse the election of the Director of Social Services as the next Chair of the Greater London Association of Directors of Social Services.

Agreed, that:

1. The Council be represented by two officers and two elected Members at next years conference in Newcastle, to be held on 20 - 22 October 2004;
2. The Council runs a Policy Forum or Fringe Event at the National Conference; and
3. The Director of Social Services election, as the Chair of the Greater London Association of Directors of Social Services, be endorsed.

224. Anti-Age Discrimination Policy Commission

Noted the contents of the final report of the Anti Age Discrimination Policy Commission, prior to its submission to the Assembly on 7 January 2004, and placed on record our thanks to those Members, officers and witnesses who participated in the Commissions investigations.

225. Annual Report on Equalities and Diversity in Employment

Received a report presenting statistical information and details of the actions taken in 2002 / 2003 in respect of the Council's performance in the area of equalities and diversity in employment.

Agreed, in order to continue to develop Equalities and Diversity in Employment in line with national and local developments, the:

1. Actions recommended for 2003 / 2004, in accordance with the Council's Five Year Strategy on Equalities and Diversity in Employment; and
2. Additional actions recommended for 2003 / 2004 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

226. LIFT Programme

Further to Minute 409 (15 April 2003), received a report seeking confirmation of the Level at which the Council should join the LiftCo company.

Agreed, in order to progress the partnership with LiftCo, that:

1. Councillor Mrs J Blake, in support of the Portfolio holder for Improving Health, Housing and Social Care, be appointed to represent the Council on the newly formed Strategic Partnership Board of LiftCo; and

2. The Council remain at level 2 pending a review to take place in approximately 6 months, at which time reconsideration will be given to joining at Level 3 but not to become a shareholder.

227. Barking Hospital Site

Noted a report and subsequent request for clarification on the strategic future of the Barking Hospital site in light of recent changes in the senior management of the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and developments in the PCT's Project Group.

228. London Boroughs Grants Scheme

Received a report outlining the current position of the London Boroughs Grants Scheme and the proposal by the Corporation of London to take on the designated council function from 31 March 2004 as the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames has given notice of its withdrawal from this position.

The report also deals with the Grants Scheme budget for 2004 / 2005, which represents a 4.3% reduction in Borough contributions compared to this year.

Agreed to:

1. The variation to the Association of London Government (ALG) Agreement, as set out in the Appendix to the report, to enable the London Boroughs Grants Scheme to continue from 1 April 2004;
2. The Grants Scheme budget for 2004 / 2005 as set out in Section 3 of the report; and
3. Endorse the Chief Executive's response to the ALG dated 4 December 2003.

229. Statement of Accounts - 2002 / 2003

Noted the final Statement of Accounts for 2002 / 2003 incorporating the unqualified Audit Certificate from the appointed auditors. The accounts were still subject to finalising work on the grant claims.

230. Budget Monitoring Report: April to September 2003 / 2004

Noted the current position of the Council's revenue and capital budgets for the period April to the end of September 2003 and the position and projected out-turn of the Housing Revenue Account.

Agreed, that:

1. The Director of Education and Libraries and the Director of Social Services ensure continued delivery of their Action Plans;
2. Members receive further updates on their progress in future budget monitoring reports; and

3. The carry forwards from the 2002 / 2003 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be incorporated into this and future year's programmes.

231. Passporting of Schools FSS and take up of the Standards Fund Grant Allocation 2004 / 2005

Received a report setting out a requirement for local authorities to confirm to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) their intention to passport the full amount of Formula Spending Share, as specified by the DfES, to the Schools Block for 2004 / 2005, and take up the full allocation of 2004 / 2005 Standards Fund grant by 31 December 2003.

Agreed, that the Director of Education, Arts and Libraries informs the DfES that Barking and Dagenham Council intends to passport the required increase in schools' funding of £5.97m in full to the Schools Block, and to take up in full the Standards Fund grant allocation for 2004 / 2005.

232. Private Business

Agreed to exclude the public and press for the remainder of the meeting, as the business was confidential.

233. Corporate Financial Services - Staffing Matter

Received a report outlining the need to increase the financial and technical support within the corporate finance function. The report also outlined the need to review and strengthen the overall corporate financial arrangements.

Agreed, in order to strengthen the Council's corporate financial support to enable the Authority to adhere to relevant legislation and accounting standards, to:

1. The creation of a LSMR post "Principal Technical Manager" in the Finance Department;
2. The attached job description; and
3. The transfer of £400,000 from the annual contribution to the authority's insurance fund, to finance both this new post and to strengthen corporate financial arrangements following a wider review.

234. Beacon Youth Centre - Remodelling and Extension

Further to Minute 425 (29 April 2003), received a report seeking to award a contract to remodel and extend the existing Beacon Youth Centre.

Agreed, the award of contract to Claydon Associates to the value of £911,026.53, plus professional fees etc of £85,000 for the re-modelling and extension of the existing Beacon Youth Centre for the provision of a purpose built extension for performing arts rehearsals and productions.

235. Provision of Care in Specialist Housing with Care Scheme

Further to Minute 125 (23 September 2003) received a report seeking to award a contract for the provision of care in the new specialist Housing with Care Scheme on the former Saywood Lodge site.

Agreed, in order to provide a high level of care to the Service Users at the new Scheme, to the award of contract to TLC Care Services for a period of five years at an hourly rate of £12.80, equating to a minimum annual cost of £223,642 based on 336 hours per week.

236. Tender for the Provision of Drop In Centres for People with Mental Health Needs

Received a report providing an update on the current Drop-In Centres service for people with mental health needs. The report also provided details of the tendering exercise to be undertaken, which will determine the way in which the service is provided in the future.

Agreed, in order to appoint a Care Provider to provide a high level of care to the Service Users at the Drop In Centres, to:

1. The tendering exercise, as set out in the report, to provide drop in centres for people with mental health needs; and
2. The Portfolio holder for Improving Health, Housing and Social Care to nominate a Member to be involved with the packaging and specification of the above mentioned contract.

237. Grays Court Intermediate Care Scheme

Received a report seeking to award a design and build contract for the Intermediate Care Resource Centre. The report also sought to agree a rental figure for the Primary care Trust (PCT) relative to their capital contribution of £435,000.

Agreed, in order to develop a service which reduces the number of delayed transfers of care by re-enabling people to return home and gain independence, to:

1. Award the design and build contract for Grays Court to Miller Construction at a cost of £4,753,000; and
2. To charge the PCT a rental figure for the facility of £372,000 per annum.

238. * Appointment of Construction Contracts Consultant

Received a report setting out the following urgent action taken under Article 1, Paragraph 17.1, of the Constitution:

The Director of Housing and Health appointed JR Knowles Ltd to provide construction contract advice in respect of the MRA Kitchen and Rewire programme.

The report also sought to waive Contract Rules for the undertaking of the formal tender process in order to appoint JR Knowles Ltd to undertake further audit activities as detailed in the report.

Agreed, in order to undertake an audit of the Shape Up for Homes programme, to appoint JR Knowles Ltd to carryout work as detailed in the report.

Both fees to be capped at the sum set out in the report. These sums will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme.

* Item considered as a matter of urgency with the consent of the Chair under Section 100 (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.