

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 18 March 2003
(7:00 - 8:59 pm)

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

Also Present: Councillor W F L Barns, Councillor B Cook, Councillor J R Denyer, Councillor Mrs K J Flint, Councillor M W Huggins, Councillor Mrs V M Rush and Councillor Mrs P A Twomey.

Apologies: Councillor J L Alexander.

350. Minutes (11 March 2003)

Agreed.

351. Delivery of Housing Services

Received a report setting out details of the second round of recruitment in the community for Board members to sit on the Community Housing Partnerships (CHP).

Agreed to the placement of the successful residents on their appropriate CHP Board, as set out on the list attached to the report, in order that the Boards are up and running before the end of the financial year.

352. Barking Town Centre Market

Received a report setting out proposals to increase the rental charges levied on the Barking Town Centre market traders.

Agreed, in order to reflect inflation over the last three years whilst retaining the principle to break even, to the increase in charges from 1 April 2003 as set out in the report.

353. Programme of Twinning Events for 2003/04

Noted a report detailing events and activities to be organised in conjunction with the Borough's German twin town of Witten, Tczew in Poland and other associated towns during the forthcoming Council year.

Agreed, funding for the Dagenham Town Show and the Witten Onion Festival, as set out in the report, in order to raise the profile of the Borough on a national and international level.

354. Improving Social Services: Financial and Commissioning Framework

Received a report setting out a performance improvement and financial and commissioning framework to take Social Services to a robust position and continue the modernisation of social care.

Agreed, in order to continue to achieve improvements in the performance of Social Services, the:

1. '3 star plan' for Social Services - the vision for modernisation and performance improvement over the next two years via a review of the Commissioning Intentions 2003/04; and
2. Financial Framework for Accelerating Improvement via spending at Formula Spending Share (FSS) in 2003/04 onwards.

355. Sustaining Improvement in Educational Attainment

Noted a report setting out plans and targets for the continued drive to raise educational attainment in Schools in the Borough through funding of the Department at FSS.

This will allow the Department to continue to improve performance above national average and aim for the top quartile, address increasing problems with pupil mobility, support the Authority's application for Beacon status, assist with the implementation of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) action plan and the Education Development Plan as well as meet the Department for Education and Skill's (DfES) expectations that FSS be passed on to the education service in full.

356. Bed and Breakfast Costs and Financial Forecast 2003

Received a report outlining the reasons for the increases in Bed and Breakfast expenditure and the current and expected downward trend of reliance on Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Agreed, in order to reduce reliance on Bed and Breakfast accommodation:

1. The Bed and Breakfast budget for 2003/04;
2. To undertake a review of the percentage of all allocation of accommodation offered to homeless applicants; and
3. That a minimal target of 40% of housing allocations be made to homeless applicants.

357. Client Planning Team

Further to Minute 220 (November 2002), received a report setting out the process for engaging a consultant partner to provide advice and training within the construction planning team and the proposed structure of that team.

Agreed, in order to plan and procure more effective ways of delivering major programmes of work:

1. The Process for engaging a consultant partner; and
2. That Councillor B Osborn joins the tender evaluation team.

358. Review of Charges for the Collection of Trade and Other Waste, Emptying of Cesspools, Vehicle Crossings and MOT's

Received a report proposing increases in the charges for the collection of trade and other waste, emptying of cesspools, the construction of vehicle crossings, the carrying out of MoT vehicle tests and other services.

Agreed the increased charges as set out in the report, with effect from 1 April 2003, in line with the Charging Policy for Council services, in order to reflect the current costs of the services provided and increases in costs made to the Authority.

359. Provision of Interim Kerbside Recycling Scheme

Received a report outlining the proposed kerbside multi-material recycling scheme and details of the funding bid made to the 'London recycling fund' to part fund the project.

Agreed the introduction of a Kerbside Recycling scheme and the acceptance of the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) grant funding, in order to improve recycling performance and reach national Best Value Performance Indicator targets.

360. Review of On/Off Street Parking Charges

Received a report setting out the options for setting on and off street parking charges for the 2003/04 financial year.

Agreed, in accordance with the Council's Charging Policy, to:

1. Increase off-street parking charges by approximately 14%;
2. Increase on-street parking charges by approximately 4%;
3. The appropriate traffic orders being amended accordingly; and
4. The proposals set out in paragraph 5 of the report, subject to staff consultation being carried out in respect of the Town Hall staff car park.

361. Year 3 Cross Cutting Reviews

Deferred.

362. London Riverside and Barking Town Centre

Further to Minute 232 (November 2001), received a report seeking funding in order to take forward the draft Framework Plan and other studies, which will help in the delivery of the Barking Town Centre.

Agreed to vire £100,000, included within revenue reserves as contingency, towards supporting the delivery of the Barking Town Centre Programme.

363. Barking Town Centre Action Plan 2003/04

Further to Minute 106 (August 2002), received a report outlining the draft action plan for 2003/04 (attached to the report), which sets out the objectives, outcomes, performance indicators, 5 year priorities, a key programme map and milestones for the Barking Town Centre.

Agreed, in order to deliver the proposals for the Barking Town Centre, the:

1. Draft Barking Town Centre Action Plan for 2003/04, including the objectives, outcomes and priorities; and
2. Framework Plan as the strategic basis for the Barking Town Centre, subject to further development regarding the testing of the retail and movement strategies.

364. * Reception and Re-integration Unit, St. Georges Complex

Received a report setting out proposals for the erection of a demountable building to be used for a Reception and Re-Integration Unit, catering for children with a record of poor attendance at school, which will be funded by the Government's Behaviour Improvement Programme.

Agreed to waive the normal tendering arrangements in accordance with Section 4.1(e) of the Council's Contract Rules to accept the tender price of £133,615 submitted by Borrás Construction Ltd, in order to avoid any delays and additional costs involved in carrying out another tendering exercise in light of Borrás Construction Ltd having submitted the lowest price for similar work on the same site.

365. * Budget Monitoring Report - January 2003

Received a monitoring report covering the Council's capital and revenue expenditure to the end of January 2003.

366. * "Building of the Community Priorities"

Received a presentation regarding the strategy to deliver the first target of the Government's Decent Homes Standard and integrating this with local budget devolution to the Community Housing Partnership's.

367. Private Business

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

368. Supporting People Contracts

Received a report highlighting those services eligible to receive Supporting People grant and interim contracts to be issued as set out in the Supporting People strategy agreed in September 2002 (Minute 130 refers).

Agreed, in order to progress the implementation of the programme in Barking and Dagenham, the issuing of the Supporting People Contracts as set out in the report.

369. Treasury Management Annual Strategy Statement

Received a report setting out the annual strategy statement for 2003/04 in respect of the Council's Treasury Management functions.

Agreed the statement in accordance with the Treasury Policy Statement.

370. Head of Finance: Corporate Services - Additional LSMR Post

Received a report seeking approval for the creation of an additional Head of Finance Post to manage the Corporate Finance, Insurance and Accounts Payable groups. The report also outlined changes to the responsibilities of Heads of Finance posts in each of the service departments.

Agreed to:

1. The creation of a new post of 'Head of Finance: Corporate Services' at a single point salary (LSMR Point 67 - £50,820).
2. The changes and regrading of the four existing Heads of Finance as set out in paragraph 3 of the report.
3. The renaming of 'The Head of Corporate Finance' to 'The Head of Financial Services'.

371. * Land Disposal Programme and Lymington Fields

Further to Minute 238 (November 2002), received a report seeking the disposal of the largest of the Borough's vacant sites (Lymington Fields) as part of a programmed approach to identifying and reusing vacant and under utilised land and property whilst meeting the Council's needs for capital receipts to fund the Capital Programme.

Agreed, in order to meet the Council's Housing Strategy and Education Strategy targets, to:

1. Approve the disposal of vacant land at Lymington Fields; and
2. Consider entering into negotiations with the company named in the report for the sale of part of the Lymington Fields site (8.5 acres) at 'housing' land values and on the terms proposed by the officers, in order to realise the full land value.

372. * Customer First - Interim Management Arrangements and Review of Secondment

Received a report providing an update on the Customer First scheme, which is entering the implementation stage, and the recruitment to the post of Head of Customer First and of staff for the Planning Team.

Agreed to:

1. End the secondment of Lawrence Ashelford to the post of Head of Customer First, with effect from 1 April 2003. Lawrence Ashelford is to return to his substantive post of Head of Policy in Health and Social Care. A further report on the arrangements for the assimilation of this post will be presented to the next meeting of the Executive; and
2. The approach taken for the interim management of Customer First.

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