

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 23 November 2004
(7:00 - 7:50 pm)

Present: Councillor C J Fairbrass (Chair), Councillor C Geddes (Deputy Chair), Councillor J L Alexander, Councillor G J Bramley, Councillor H J Collins, Councillor S Kallar, Councillor M A McCarthy, Councillor M E McKenzie and Councillor T G W Wade

Also Present: Councillor Mrs M M West, Councillor W F L Barns and Councillor F C Jones

Apologies: Councillor L A Smith

194. Minutes (16 November 2004)

Agreed.

195. School Exclusions

Noted a report providing details regarding the performance of Borough schools in relation to school exclusions and provision for excluded pupils.

196. Barking Town Centre - Adoption of "Barking and Dagenham Code"

Received a report introducing the "Barking and Dagenham Code" which aims to set standards for surface materials, construction details, street furniture, etc. and provide a coordinated and distinctive look for the Barking Town Centre. The report also outlined details of four pilot areas, including the area around the Broadway Theatre, which is currently underway.

Agreed to adopt the "Barking and Dagenham Code" in order to establish standards for public realms and provide a coordinated and distinctive look for the Barking Town Centre.

197. Best Value Review Improvement Plan - Second Quarterly Progress Report

Noted the progress report on the implementation of the Regeneration Best Value Review Improvement Plan, which included the achievements to date against the twenty targets identified by the Review.

198. 71 Kier Hardie Way - Uplift of Restrictive Covenant

Deferred.

199. Final Report of the Health Scrutiny Panel's Review of Speech and Language Therapy Services

Noted the report of the above Scrutiny Panel, which will now be submitted to the Assembly on 5 January 2004.

200. Children and Families - Fostering and Adoption

Received a report reviewing the current policy of payments to Kinship Carers under Fostering Regulations, the Council's position on Supported Residence Orders / Special Guardianship and the current policy in relation to applicants seeking to adopt children from overseas.

The report also sought approval of a specific package of care to enable a profoundly disabled looked after child to move from residential care into a family placement.

Agreed to:

1. The revised schedule of allowances for Kinship Carers and Supported Residence Orders/Special Guardianship in line with the minimum recommendations made by the Fostering Network in order to comply with recent legal advice;
2. The suggested policy in respect of applicants seeking to adopt children from overseas in line with the British Association for Adoption and Fostering recommended levels; and
3. The specific package of support, outlined in paragraph 3.6 of the report, to enable a disabled looked after child to move from residential care into a family placement.

201. * Star Rating for Social Services

Further to Minute 166 (26 October 2004), noted that the Commission for Social Care Inspection has given the Council a 1 star rating for the year ending March 2004, which included improvements in Adult services moving up to promising prospects and Children services remaining as serving some people well and promising prospects.

202. * Head of Human Resources

Agreed to rename the post of 'Head of Organisational Development and Employee Relations' to the 'Head of Human Resources' in order to attract quality candidates to this position.

203. Private Business

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

204. Big Lottery Fund Award - Dagenham Park Sports Facility

Received a report advising of the success in achieving a significant grant award from the 'Big Lottery Fund' to support an investment at Dagenham Park School to replace existing PE provision with a state of the art sports, dance and fitness studio.

Agreed, in order to replace existing PE provision at Dagenham Park School with a state of the art sports, dance and fitness studio, to:

1. In principle, accept the Big Lottery Award of £2.773m with the conditions as outlined in the report, subject to final consent once the full costs can be reported;
2. In principle, meet the shortfall in cost of £1.7m by virement from the projects in the capital programme as detailed in paragraph 4.3 of the report, as it is anticipated that these projects will be funded from 'Building Schools for the Future';
3. Authorise officers to begin the process of securing both consultancy and construction of this facility through the publication of OJEU Notices;
4. Appoint Councillors Alexander and Smith to contribute to the contract packaging and specification of the project and in the subsequent evaluation and awarding of contracts in accordance with the Council Constitution's Contracts Rules (paragraph 3.6);
5. Note the risk on the Council's Capital Programme if the total scheme costs exceed the allocated budget, as all cost overruns would fall on the Council;
6. Note that officers are to undertake further work in order to achieve funding from Section 106 planning gain and report back to the Executive on progress;
7. Note that officers are to report back to the Executive setting out the full financial implications of the project prior to the Council making a final commitment to the scheme; and
8. Add this project of £4.3m to the Capital Programme, phased as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report, subject to the project being reappraised through the Capital Programme Monitoring Office process.

205. Community Music Service - Extension of Facilities

Received a report setting out the issues surrounding the proposed expansion of the Community Music Service's accommodation located at Fanshawe Crescent on the site jointly used by the Adult College of Barking and Dagenham.

Agreed, in order to resolve issues that are preventing the development of improved facilities for the Community Music Service, which is included in the Capital Programme 2004 / 2005, to:

1. Notify the Barking Amateur Boxing Club of the Council's wish to end their occupation of the gymnasium at the Adult College, allowing one full academic term as the period of notice. £10,000 will be made available to the Club to assist with relocation costs payable from the capital project budget;
2. Build additional accommodation for the Community Music Service on the gymnasium site; and

3. Offer temporary accommodation at the River Community Hall following its closure (see Minute 208).

206. John Perry Primary School - Erection of a Single Storey Children's Centre with Associated Community Facilities, Car Parking and Landscaping

Further to Minute 323 (9 March 2004), received a report seeking to award a contract to construct a single storey building to provide a Children's Centre on the site of John Perry Primary School.

Agreed to the placing of an order with Lakehouse Contracts Ltd. for the sum of £1,239,344.76 to undertake the erection of a single storey Children's Centre with associated community facilities, car parking and landscaping at John Perry Primary School.

207. Progress on the Former Leisure and Environment Services Department Reorganisation - Proposed LSMR Posts

Further to Minute 352 (30 March 2004), received a report outlining progress on the reorganisation of the former Leisure and Environmental Services Department, now known as the Regeneration and Environment Department. The report also sought approval for changing and creating LSMR posts.

Agreed, in order to enable the recruitment and filling of posts in the Regeneration and Environment Department, to:

1. The changes and grading of posts to LSMR with an effective date of 1 December 2004; and
2. Give delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration and Environment to approve the backdating of appointment (net of any interim honorariums already paid) from 1 April 2004 for those individuals that are already undertaking the full duties of the post.

208. Community Halls

Received a report proposing that the timescale for Community Associations to take on full delegated management of Community Halls is extended until September 2006 and detailing the revised savings that can be achieved in the financial year 2005 / 2006. The report also gives a summary of the work undertaken so far with the Community Associations.

Agreed, in order to assist the Council in achieving its Community Priority of "Developing Rights and Responsibilities with the Local Community" and in achieving its Medium-Term Financial Plan, to:

1. Extend the time by which the Community Associations have to sign a lease on the individual halls to the end of September 2006;
2. The closure of River Community Hall on 2 January 2005; and

3. Officers to continue to support the Community Associations to build their capacity and empower them to undertake the future management of their respective halls, thereby keeping more halls open within the community.

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