

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 18 January 2005
(7:00 - 7:25 pm)

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

Also Present: Councillor A C Clark, Councillor B Cook, Councillor J R Denyer, Councillor T J Justice and Councillor Mrs V M Rush

Apologies: Councillor G J Bramley, Councillor L A Smith and Councillor T G W Wade

252. Minutes (21 December 2004)

Agreed.

253. Attendance at Society of IT Managers Autumn Conference 2004

Further to Minute 50 (20 July 2004), received and noted a report on the Society of IT Managers Autumn Conference 2004.

254. Urban Design Framework and Public Realm Strategy for the Borough: Interim Fencing and Boundary Treatment Design Guidelines for the Borough

Received a report on proposed interim Fencing and Boundary Treatment Design Guidelines for the Borough which will be an integral part of the Council's Public Realm Strategy and link into the Urban Design Framework, both of which are due to be adopted later this year.

Agreed, to assist the Council in achieving its Community Priorities of 'Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer', 'Raising General Pride in the Borough' and 'Regenerating the Local Economy', to:

1. Approve the Fencing and Boundary Treatment Design Guidelines as a document for wider consultation;
2. Approve the subsequent use of the Fencing and Boundary Treatment Design Guidelines as interim design guidance until incorporated into the wider Public Realm Strategy for the Borough;
3. Support the exploration of issues pertinent to the successful implementation of the Public Realm Strategy, such as programming, finance, procurement, management and maintenance regimes, safety requirements and the impact on Disability Discrimination Act requirements; and
4. Support the production of the Urban Design Framework and Public Realm Strategy as tools to ensure improvements to the natural and built environment and public spaces of the Borough.

255. Land Disposal

Received a report on the proposed disposal of surplus and under-utilised Council-owned property and vacant sites as part of a programmed approach in support of the Council's Capital Programme. Noted that the proposal in respect of land at Beacontree Heath is being withdrawn at this stage and a further, more comprehensive report on options for this area will be presented in due course. With regard to The Lawns and Woodlands site, the Director of Regeneration and Environment agreed to confirm to the Chair the boundary lines of the area for disposal.

Agreed, to assist the Council in achieving its Community Priorities of 'Regenerating the Local Economy', 'Improving Health, Housing and Social Care' and 'Raising General Pride in the Borough', to:

1. The disposal of the Council's freehold interests in the properties and vacant sites listed in the report, with the exception of the land at Beacontree Heath which will be the subject of a further report in due course;
2. Note that the terms of the sales will be approved by the Director of Regeneration and Environment in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Constitution and relevant legislation; and
3. The removal of the 'Timber Yard' site in Reede Road, Dagenham from the Council's Land Disposal Programme.

256. Private Business

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

257. Use of Right-To-Buy Receipts: Refurbishment of Oldmead and Bartletts Houses - Preparing for a PFI Bid

Received a report on proposals to include the refurbishment of Oldmead House, Exeter Road and Bartletts House, Vicarage Road, Dagenham, in the Housing Capital Programme for 2005 – 2007.

Noted that the funding for the refurbishment would be met from "windfall" Right-to-Buy receipts in 2004/05, which have arisen as a result of higher property values and a higher than projected number of completions. Furthermore, in view to the potential for the Council to secure Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funding for future refurbishment programmes in the Borough, the specification for these works would allow the testing of a potential PFI specification and provide solid practical experience on which to base a future PFI Business Case.

Agreed, in order to assist the Council in achieving its Community Priorities of 'Improving Health, Housing and Social Care', 'Raising General Pride in the Borough' and 'Regenerating the Local Economy', to:

1. The allocation of an additional £5.7m from Right-to-Buy receipts in 2004/05 to the Housing Capital Programme across the years 2005/06 and 2006/07;

2. This funding being used to refurbish Oldmead and Bartletts Houses, with the explicit aim of testing a potential PFI specification;
3. The Council's Education PFI Team being engaged as part of this project; and
4. The details of the refurbishment scheme and the precise allocation over 2005/06 and 2006/07 being determined through the Council's Capital Programme Monitoring Office process.

258. Update on Re-Provision of Disability Day and Residential Services

Further to Minute 325 (9 March 2004), received a report on the programme of modernising day and residential services for disabled adults and proposals for future service provision in the light of the benchmarking exercise of in-house and external providers. Noted that the new residential unit and resource centre on the site of the former Gascoigne Centre is due to be completed in Autumn 2005 and that discussions on the service provision proposals took place at the Employee Joint Consultative Committee on 13 December 2004.

Agreed, to assist the Council in achieving its Community Priority of 'Improving Health, Housing and Social Care' through the delivery of high quality, cost effective services, to:

1. Note the results of the benchmarking exercise;
2. The implementation of the proposals for the redesign of the in-house service as detailed in the report, to enable the Council to be comparable with other providers in terms of cost and quality; and
3. The provision of residential and day services for adults with learning disabilities on the new Gascoigne Centre site following the detailed service redesign.

259. University of East London: Report on High Court Proceedings and Urgent Action Taken Under Paragraph 17 of Article 1 of the Council's Constitution

Received a report on the outcome of High Court proceedings issued by the University of East London (UEL) in respect of restrictive covenants relating to the Longbridge Road campus site and the terms of a settlement reached between the Council and UEL in the light of the High Court judgement.

Noted the terms of the settlement, of benefit to the Council, agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Environment acting on advice from the Council's external solicitors and in accordance with the Urgent Action provisions of the Council's Constitution, and other associated matters.

260. Restructuring of the Arrangements for the Delivery of the London East Connexions Partnership's Connexions Service

Received a report on restructuring proposals relating to the London East Connexions Partnership (LECP), which is responsible for the Connexions Service in the Borough.

Agreed, in order to facilitate the ongoing provision of a careers service and community based support service to young people in the Borough and to enable a new VAT efficient delivery model for the Connexions Service in Barking and Dagenham, to the restructuring of the arrangements between the Council and LEPC as detailed in section 2 of the report.

261. LSMR Posts in Revenue Services

Further to Minute 365 (13 April 2004), received a report on the outcome of the evaluation of three senior posts within the Revenue Services Division of the Finance Department.

Agreed, in order to facilitate the continued delivery of the Council's Revenue Services Modernisation Programme, to:

1. The regrading and new job descriptions for the posts of Revenues Business Unit Manager (Rents & Benefits), Revenues Business Unit Manager (Income & Collection) and Revenues Business Unit Manager (Support Services), formerly the Rents & Benefits Manager, Income & Collection Manager and Finance & Business Support Manager respectively, as detailed in the report;
2. The effective date of the regrading for the Revenues Business Unit Manager (Income & Collection) post as 3 May 2004, when the new structure became effective; and
3. The increase of the market supplement for the Revenues Business Unit Manager (Rents & Benefits) post up to £10,000.

262. Regrading of Two LSMR Posts Within the Policy and Performance Service

Received a report on a review of responsibilities within the Policy and Performance Service in the Corporate Strategy Department.

Agreed to the regrading and new job descriptions for the posts of Performance & Review Manager and Policy & Information Manager, as detailed in the report, to be effective from 1 June 2004.

263. Restructure Within the Policy and Performance Service

Received a report on the proposed restructuring of the Community Development and Equalities & Diversity Units within the Corporate Strategy Department to form a new Community Cohesion Unit. Noted that informal discussions have taken place with affected staff on the proposals.

Agreed to:

1. The creation of a new Community Cohesion Unit as detailed in the report;
2. The deletion of the posts of Community Development Manager and Equalities & Diversity Manager, to be replaced by a new post of Community Cohesion Manager; and
3. Note that a potential redundancy will result from this restructure.

264. Roding & St Teresa's RC Primary Schools: New Kitchen / Dining Accommodation

Received a report seeking to award a contract for the construction of new kitchen / dining accommodation at Roding and St. Teresa's Primary Schools.

Agreed to:

1. The award of the contract for the construction of new kitchen / dining accommodation at Roding and St. Teresa's Primary Schools to Borrás Construction in the sum of £749,368.66; and
2. Note that in addition to the provision of £800,000 in the Council's Capital Programme, contributions of £10,000 from both of the schools and £50,000 from the School Modernisation Fund will be used to meet the total costs of the project.

265. Site Investigation at Thames View Estate

Further to Minute 80 (3 August 2004), received a report on proposals relating to additional soil contamination studies on the Thames View Estate to support and substantiate the results from the investigations that have already been carried out.

Agreed, in order to enable the Council to continue its obligation to inspect and identify areas of land that it considers may be contaminated and to support the Community Priority of 'Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer', to:

1. Note of the results of the site investigations carried out to date;
2. Additional investigations being undertaken on the Thames View Estate at a cost of £117,000, to be met from the Council's 5-year Contaminated Land Inspection Programme; and
3. The extension of the existing contracts with Hyder Consulting Limited and Land Quality Management to undertake these works, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4.5 of the Council's Contract Rules (Part D of the Council's Constitution).