

Meeting of the Executive
Monday 16th July 2007 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Lorber (Chair), Councillor Blackman (Vice Chair), and Councillors Allie, D Brown, Colwill, Matthews, O'Sullivan, Van Colle and Wharton.

Councillors Dunn, Dunwell, Mistry and Moher also attended the meeting.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Clues.

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

None.

2. **Minutes of previous meeting**

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th June 2007 be approved as an accurate record.

3. **Deputation - Northwick Park Golf Course - grant of lease pursuant to agreement for lease entered into between Brent and PlayGolf Holdings Plc**

The Executive were addressed by Ms Gaynor Lloyd a local resident who has had a longstanding involvement in the development of the site and who was one of the complainants referred to in the report from the Directors of Finance and Corporate Resources and of Environment and Culture. She urged the Executive to give careful consideration to proposals to complete a lease on the Northwick Park Golf Course site and referred to the Ombudsman's decision to investigate complaints into the Council's management and planning arrangements in relation to the project. Ms Lloyd outlined the history of the golf course's planning consent and expressed concerns regarding market valuation, lease conditions to be imposed and benefits to the Council. She felt that there was a lack of frankness in the process, questioned the accuracy of some of the assertions in the planning reports and added that a decision to grant a 99 year lease may be regretted.

4. **Northwick Park Golf Course - grant of lease pursuant to agreement for lease entered into between Brent and Playgolf Holdings Plc**

The Executive received a report from the Directors of Finance and Corporate Resources and of Environment and Culture which set out the current position regarding the occupation of the Northwick Park Golf Course by PlayGolf Holdings Plc under an Agreement for Lease. The report also outlined the decisions of the Planning Committee and the Planning Inspector in respect of applications from PlayGolf to vary the original consent for its operations on the land including provision of a further parking area, adventure golf facility and a baseball batting cage. The report to members asked for approval for officers to complete the lease and to agree that the Head of Property and Asset Management be authorised, before completion, to vary the lease terms so as to ensure the Council will share in

the income from the adventure golf facility and baseball batting cage. The report also advised of action undertaken by officers to resolve the issues created by the construction by PlayGolf of the driving range across a section of Public Right of Way (PROW) 37.

Councillor Blackman introduced the report and responded to the deputation earlier in the meeting. He acknowledged that while the report before members was to do with the lease, there were a number of planning issues outstanding. Councillor Blackman felt that there was a need to regularise the position and consequently proposed a motion to defer consideration of the report in the light of the notice served on the Council by the Open Spaces Society requesting the removal of three obstructions to the public right of way and in view of the notification received from the Ombudsman that he would be investigating two complaints in relation to the project.

The motion in the name of Councillor Blackman was put to the meeting and agreed.

RESOLVED:-

that consideration of the report be deferred pending further consideration of this matter.

5. Parking Forward in Brent – results of preliminary consultation on Brent Parking Strategy Review

Councillor D Brown introduced this report which informed members of progress made on the development of a new borough-wide Parking Strategy document for the Council. In light of the consultation responses received to date, approval was sought for the further research and development of a number of specific parking policy topics / areas. It was noted that consultation would continue until the end of August and the Director of Environment and Culture confirmed that the suggested topic papers would bring out for discussion the areas now considered to be controversial and that this list could be added to if necessary. The Director also confirmed that the discussion papers would not include issues around the speed of vehicles compared with emissions. However, there will be a topic paper on charging for parking permits based on vehicle emissions.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the progress made on the development of the parking strategy be noted;
- (ii) that officers draft for internal circulation a series of topic papers examining the feasibility and financial implications of the parking initiatives outlined in paragraph 3.32 of the report from the Director of Environment and Culture;

- (iii) that approval be given to carry out a second stage of consultation based on more detailed policy proposals, following on from the stage one 'fact finding' process and the development of more detailed parking topic papers for wider circulation and comment.

6. Use of Paddington Cemetery by Salusbury School

This report provided members with the background to the proposed use of Paddington Cemetery by Salusbury School as an environmental studies area. The Lead Member (Environment, Planning and Culture) Councillor Van Colle, assured that consultation had been extensive and that changes had been made as a result. He was satisfied that the dual usage arrangements could be managed to the satisfaction of all parties.

Councillor Van Colle thanked all who had contributed to the agreement.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to the use of Paddington Cemetery by Salusbury School on the basis outlined in the report from the Director of Environment and Culture;
- (ii) that approval be given to the Director of Environment and Culture finalising the agreement with the School, subject to final agreement by the Diocese of Willesden on the proposed use.

7. Proposed Allocations Policy for Granville New Homes

In March 2007 the Executive agreed to sell Granville New Homes to Hyde and delegate powers to the Director of Housing and Community Care to proceed with negotiations. Granville New Homes forms the first phase of the South Kilburn Master Plan which was approved by the Council in July 2004. The original aim of allocating these homes to the tenants of the first phase blocks would be retained and any council tenant who wished to move into these homes would de-facto become tenants of Hyde Housing Association.

The report set out various options explored with a view to ring-fence allocations to households within the Master Plan first phase in order to enable the Council to achieve a cleared site for development and the Director of Housing and Community Care outlined a number of key changes proposed to the existing allocations policy. Priority would be given to South Kilburn residents. Compensation was payable to tenants in priority blocks who agreed to move and it was noted that the Director was being delegated authority to make further offers, in consultation with Lead Member.

The Director also referred to continuing delay by the Department of Communities and Local Government in making a commitment for gap funding for the main scheme which was giving rise to uncertainty. The Chair, Councillor Lorber, hoped for further progress on funding especially given recent central government announcements. He added that the

message needed to out to central government that existing commitments given to South Kilburn should not be overlooked and that the project, now in its seventh year needed to be able to progress projects related to infrastructure including housing, sports and community facilities.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given to a variation to the Council's allocations policy to incorporate the allocations process to the Granville New Homes as follows:

The new homes built on Granville Road, South Kilburn would be ring-fenced for allocation to current tenants of the Council living in South Kilburn. Priority decant status will be given to those tenants whose homes are listed under phase 1 of the approved Master Plan. These priority blocks are Marshall House, Ely Court, Cambridge Court, Bond House, Hicks Bolton House and Wells Court (in that order);

- (ii) that in respect of any vacancies created by those tenants moving from the priority blocks identified as Marshall House, Ely Court, Cambridge Court, Bond House, Hicks Bolton House and Wells Court (in that order), the Director of Housing and Community Care have discretion to let the properties on a non-secure basis in order to facilitate the regeneration programme (paragraph 4.17 of the report from the Director of Housing and Community Care refers);
- (iii) that in respect of any vacancies created by those tenants moving from any other block within the existing South Kilburn estate properties to the Granville New Homes, the re-letting of those properties be in accordance with the current Council policy with the priority given to South Kilburn tenants to relieve housing needs;
- (iv) that approval be given to the voluntary process as the basis of decanting tenants into Granville New Homes (paragraph 3.25 to 3.30 of the Director's report refers);
- (v) that approval be given to a policy of offering on a needs plus one basis for those currently under occupying larger units in order to provide incentives for these tenants to move into Granville (paragraph 4.15 of the Director's report refers);
- (vi) that approval be given to a policy of treating the tenants in the priority blocks as qualified to receive homeloss compensation payments and disturbance allowance (paragraph 4.12), noting that Hyde Housing Association will pay for the homeloss and disturbance payments;
- (vii) that approval be given to the criteria to be applied for agreeing the splitting of families (see paragraph 4.18 of the Director's report);

- (viii) that it be noted that in accordance with the decision made for the sale of Granville New Homes to Hyde Housing Association (Hyde) – residents who volunteer to move will become Hyde tenants and will be offered enhanced tenancy rights as part of any offer that Hyde may make to residents;
- (ix) that it be noted that there are no options on offer to the leaseholders within the first phase blocks proposed for the Granville New Homes allocation and in the long term none of these blocks will be vacated without resolving this issue. That it be also noted that Hyde Housing Association will consider options for leaseholders in Marshall House provided that the block is completely vacated by tenants and the Council agrees a development agreement for that site. Options will also be considered for Ely Court and Cambridge Court however these blocks would need to be vacated by tenants and the Council agrees a development agreement for those sites;
- (x) that authority be delegated to the Director of Housing and Community Care, in consultation with the Lead Member, to review the decision affecting the leaseholders in line with tenants' acceptance of Granville homes and negotiate with Hyde Housing Association options for Marshall House leaseholders once all tenants of Marshall House have accepted a move into the new properties.

8. 2006/2007 Capital Outturn

The Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators for 2006/07 were agreed at Full Council on 6th March 2006 and monitored at regular intervals throughout the year. The forecast outturn was reported to Full Council on 5th March 2007 as part of the 2007/08 Budget Report. This report sets out the closing position on the 2006/2007 capital programme.

Councillor Blackman referred members to the changes between the forecast and the actual outturn for 2006/7 and the movement in resources available to fund the 2006/7 programme. A reduction in unsupported borrowing had impacted on Council Tax levels and this would need to be maintained. Councillor Blackman was pleased to draw members' attention to projects that had been funded under the capital programme in particular projects under the school's capital programme. He also highlighted areas of potential risk within the 2007/08 programme that were being monitored and Councillor Lorber referred also to the issue of aging stock on which the Council should be campaigning to central government for funding.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the outturn position for the 2006/07 capital programme be noted;
- (ii) that approval be given to the draft outturn position for 2006/07 on the Council's Prudential Indicators, noting that the contents of the Treasury Management Annual Report, also considered at this

meeting, contain further details on the Prudential Indicator outturn position for 2006/07;

- (iii) that, in accordance with the scheme of transfers and virements, agreement be given to the proposed changes to the capital programme detailed in paragraph 7.3 of the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.

9. **The 2006/07 Provisional Revenue Outturn**

This report set out the provisional revenue outturn for 2006/07. It showed an improvement in the position to that assumed when the 2007/08 budget was set. The report also sought approval for a number of virements in 2007/08.

Councillor Blackman (Lead Member, Resources) stated that there were a number of variances within service departments however the provisional outturn was better than anticipated and the improvement would be added to balances. He commended staff in the Finance Department for their achievements in reducing debt charges and interest receipts and for keeping a tight rein on the budget.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the provisional outturn detailed in Appendix A be noted;
- (ii) that agreement be given to all 2006/07 under-spends being added to balances, unless in specific earmarked reserves;
- (iii) that all directors ensure that spending is kept within budget and to take measures, in consultation with relevant portfolio holders, to achieve this;
- (iv) that approval be given to the virements in Appendix C of the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.

10. **Budget process 2008/09**

The report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources up-dated financial forecasts for 2008/09 and beyond in the medium term financial strategy and set out the process for putting together a robust budget for 2008/09 for consideration at Full Council on 3rd March 2008.

Councillor Blackman indicated that the financial settlement was expected to be tight and made reference to additional responsibilities the Council had to take on without additional funding. The budget gap was currently £16m in order to avoid an increase in Council Tax levels and he set out the measures outlined in the Director's report to bridge the budget gap which included maximising income and identifying savings options.

In discussion, Councillor Moher, drew attention to reference in the report to

the potential impact on Council services of a decision to freeze Council Tax. Councillor Blackman assured that frontline services would not be endangered and reviews would be carried out to ensure changes were appropriate. He pointed out that notwithstanding the tPCT financial pressures last financial year, serious frontline budget cuts were resisted. Long term planning was now in place to enable the Council to be more able to absorb financial pressures. Councillor Blackman emphasised the need to safeguard the vulnerable members of society.

Councillor Lorber pointed out that the financial problems experienced in the previous financial year had been outside the Council's control and went on to provide an update on the tPCT budget position. Regular meetings were taking place with the tPCT representatives however, he regretted that additional costs were being incurred by the tPCT through the employment of legal representatives. A planned meeting with government ministers had taken place for which the Council had prepared an informative dossier and he felt that the Council had been seen as having adopted a responsible position. Councillor Lorber concluded by stating that the Executive's position remained unchanged and it would continue to campaign in support of local residents. He referred to potential risks to the Council's budget and argued that the costs of the Freedom Pass should be included within the GLA precept.

In discussion members referred to areas of growth such as the planned increase in library opening hours to meet public library standard opening hours and expenditure on Dollis Hill House. Ward Councillor Mistry urged the Executive to use savings to save Kingsbury Library from closure.

RESOLVED:-

that approval be given to the proposed approach to the 2008/09 budget process as set out in the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.

11. The Treasury Management Annual Report 2006/07

The report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources detailed Treasury Management activity and performance during 2006/07.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be approved and recommended to full Council for adoption.

12. Vital Signs Performance Digest Quarter Four January to March 2007

This report introduced the Vital Signs for the period January to March 2007 (quarter four). The Vital Signs monitored the Council's performance against key indicators. Cathy Tyson (Assistant Director, Policy and Regeneration) set out areas of improvement such as the number of looked after children placed in the borough, reductions in waste tonnage and improved Council Tax collection. Areas resistant to change included complaints levels,

numbers of children exclude from school and those waiting for school places. Kerbside recycling also needed to be improved.

Councillor Blackman drew attention to a new, targeted publicity campaign that highlighted the penalties for non-payment. In response to a question, the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources stated that there was no evidence of a decrease in bill payment as a direct result of the closure of the Town Hall cash office. However, there had been an increase in the take up of payment by direct debit.

RESOLVED:-

that the Council's performance against key performance indicators be noted.

13. LAA Annual Review 2006/07

This was the first Annual Review of Brent's LAA, showing performance over the past year against the targets in the LAA Outcomes Framework. The purpose of the report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration was to demonstrate the effect the LAA has had over the past year on performance against key targets.

The Assistant Director, Policy and Regeneration, reminded the Executive that this was the first full year's performance report and was pleased that there was a significant improvement in shared priorities information. Of the 20 stretch targets, had met this year's targets however, five were more than 10% away from meeting this year's target. Cathy Tyson highlighted areas of good performance which included crime reduction, satisfaction surveys for park cleanliness and increased numbers of young people taking part in sporting activity using Council facilities. She was also pleased to report that savings had been achieved based on methodology used in the Council's efficiency statement returns. It was felt that the LAA had given greater coherence to partnership working however, Cathy Tyson acknowledged that some of the health targets were at risk due to the current financial position surrounding the tPCT. Discussions continued and a mapping exercise was being conducted.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the LAA Annual Report and progress toward delivering the agreed local outcomes be noted;
- (ii) that approval be given to the submission of the report to the Government Office for London.

14. Voluntary Sector Funding – Task Group Report

The report before the Executive introduced a report from a Task Group set up by Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review how the Council funds the Voluntary Sector through its Main Programme Grant. The Voluntary

Sector Funding Task Group made recommendations for the reform of how grant funding was distributed for consideration.

The Assistant Director (Policy and Regeneration) stated that from the consultation that had taken place it appeared that there was a general consensus on the need for change and modernise the allocation process especially as new groups had difficulty in accessing funding. There was a need for a more co-ordinated approach across the Council and for clear funding priorities. Capacity building should take place through the Voluntary Sector Team and the Voluntary Sector compact should be adhered to. The Voluntary Sector welcomed the report however it was noted that there would be resource implications and a detailed report and action plan would be brought forward in the Autumn.

Councillor Mistry, the Task Group Chair, also referred to the implications of the emphasis on encouraging new groups to come forward for funding namely that funds were seen to be being taken away from the traditional voluntary sector and given to BME (Black Minority Ethnic) groups.

The Chair, Councillor Lorber, recalled previous attempts to review voluntary sector grant funding which had not met with success given the complexity of the issue. He made reference to the past practice of encouraging new applications which, under the old arrangements, stood limited chance of being successful. Councillor Lorber also questioned whether a period of up to three years would be sufficient time for proposed changes to take effect. Councillor Van Colle agreed that voluntary sector funding was a long standing problem however he was able to cite examples of organisations who, having had their Council funding withdrawn, were able to find alternative sources of support. Councillor Mistry emphasised the need for change, that the Voluntary Sector Team were overwhelmed and the need for monitoring to take place.

The Executive thanked Councillor Mistry and the other Task Group members for their work in producing the report.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the recommendations as set out in the Voluntary Sector Task Group report be noted;
- (ii) that officers take these recommendations and comments into account in developing an Action Plan for revising the Council's Main Programme Grant application process, to be submitted in early autumn for consideration;
- (iii) that members of the Task Group be thanked for their work.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.

P LORBER
Chair