

**MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2003 at 7.30 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor R Blackman (Chair), Councillor Dromey (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Harrod, Moher and Taylor.

Also present were Councillors Jones (Lead Member for Environment and Planning), Kagan (Lead Member for Democratic Services) and Lyon (Lead Member for Education, Arts and Libraries).

**1. Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2003**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2003 be received and approved as an accurate record.

**3. Matters Arising**

There were none.

**4. Call-in of Executive Decisions**

There were no decisions called in

**5. The Executive List of Decisions**

(i) *13<sup>th</sup> October 2003*

The Select Committee noted the Executive List of Decisions for the meeting of the Executive on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2003.

(ii) *12<sup>th</sup> November 2003*

The Select Committee noted the Executive List of Decisions for the meeting of the Executive on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2003.

**6. Voluntary Sector Review**

This item had been considered by the Executive on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2003. The Select Committee had requested that this item be further considered following their meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2003.

In July 2003 the Council issued a consultation paper entitled "From Patronage to Partnership – building a new relationship with the voluntary and community sector". This report now before members summarised the outcomes of the consultation and set out the recommendations on the next steps.

Councillor Lyon recounted the approach to carrying out the review. He stated that the intention of the review was to develop a funding regime that was more objective and transparent on how the Council supported the voluntary sector. He hoped that it would also encourage other organisations to apply for funding. In future voluntary groups applying for funding would need to demonstrate that their activities supported the Council's corporate strategy objectives and that they had explored all other funding opportunities. The review was not intended to reduce the amount of funding available. The introduction of the new funding regime would be phased in as set out in paragraph 3.3(c) of the report. However, Councillor Lyon pointed out that this paragraph in the report included some errors and he tabled a corrected version.

In answer to questioning by members of the Select Committee, it was explained that the intention of the review was to open up access to funding to a wider group of organisations than had historically been the case and this would be made possible by some old grants being phased out. The total budget provision for grants was subject to the budget-making process for 2004/5 and the review did not pre-judge this.

Councillor Blackman expressed concern that organisations did not know against what criteria they were going to be assessed. Karen Tyerman, Assistant Director, Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services, explained that new funding criteria would be developed and published some time in February or March next year. The closing date for applications would be April 2004. Whilst this did not leave much time for organisations to match their needs to the criteria, the Select Committee was assured that the voluntary sector was already well aware of what factors were in mind in developing the criteria and so could begin planning their funding application. Councillor Blackman emphasized that certainty even if it was bad news was better than uncertainty and organisations needed to be certain of what they faced. Karen Tyerman outlined the phasing arrangements if a group that had previously been funded was unsuccessful in its application next year. Within these arrangements the Council would support the organisation to explore alternative funding options. It would also not stop the organisation from applying for funding in the following year if it moved closer to meeting the new criteria. All organisations in receipt of grant-aid had received a copy of the consultation paper and a large number of responses had been received. It was accepted by the Executive that some organisations would find themselves in a difficult situation but measures had been put in place to ameliorate the effects of the

review. In-house Council expertise existed to assist groups both through universal advice to all organisations through seminars, posted information, etc and by working with specific organisations who could be identified at an earlier stage as possibly not qualifying for grant funding under the new arrangements. It was also suggested to the Select Committee that BRAVA should be supporting groups by providing advice.

The issue of organisations receiving funding from the Council which was matched by alternative sources of funding and the implications should the Council funding be cut was recognised by Councillor Lyon. Another issue raised was that of organisations wishing to apply for a small amount of grant-aid but being put off by the complexity of the process in making an application. Karen Tyerman stated that this was also recognised and the burden on applying for smaller sums would be considered as a next stage to the review. Also raised by the Select Committee was the position of organisations that held assets for a specific use but which might count against them in applying for grant-aid. The Executive responded that each case would need to be looked at individually and would depend on how the resources were tied to the organisation but it was expected that the Council might need to develop a policy on this. It was submitted that the Council needed to be transparent in such cases to avoid organisations wasting their time in applying in the first place.

The Chair concluded the discussion by stating that the Select Committee accepted the principle of the need to reform the area of voluntary sector support but the Council needed to be careful how this was done. The Select Committee had voiced a number of concerns over how the changes would be managed.

RESOLVED:-

that officers be requested to report back to the Select Committee on the outcome of the key actions identified in the report prior to them being reported back to the Executive.

**7. Information Updates requested by the Select Committee at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2003**

**(i) *Kingsbury Pool Development***

Councillor Jones stated that the Executive had ruled out the do nothing solution. It currently hoped to encourage Next Generation to adhere to its original bid. She could not be firm on the timescale involved but expressed concern that the Council may need to move towards re-tendering early next year on the basis of option 3 set out in the briefing note which involved a private sector solution with some public subsidy.

The Select Committee noted the current situation.

(ii) ***Review of Transport Grant to Voluntary Organisations***

The Select Committee noted the information update and requested that the appropriate officer provides an update on the further action taken and attend the next meeting of the Select Committee to answer questions.

(iii) ***Rent Review – Refectory and Central Middlesex Hospital***

Members of the Select Committee expressed some concern over this item and asked to be kept informed on the progress of discussions, including outcome, options and any agreed way forward.

(iv) ***Work Underway in Fryent Way***

A revised information update was tabled at the meeting. Councillor Blackman stated that the information did not answer the question asked by the Select Committee as to why Fryent Way had been identified for resurfacing when there were other roads in the Borough that appeared to be in a far worse condition. Councillor Jones explained the annual survey carried out against the criteria for formulating a priority list. The Select Committee noted the information.

8. **Briefing Notes requested by the Select Committee arising from consideration of the Forward Plan (*Issue 11 – 2003/04*)**

Councillor Jones explained that a Design Brief for Neasden Town Centre had been agreed, local residents had indicated a wish to have a CPZ implemented but the tenders for the de-pedestrianisation of the centre, re-paving and landscaping works had come in much higher than estimated and so there was a funding shortfall. She expressed her concern about the situation and stated she was pursuing the matter with officers. The Chair commented that the briefing note would have been more useful if it had contained the additional information given by Councillor Jones at the meeting.

The Select Committee was informed that it had not been possible for a briefing note to be prepared on the Youth and Community Review and that there would be more information available by the time of the next meeting of the Select Committee.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the briefing note on Neasden Town Centre and the updated position as reported to the Select Committee by Councillor Jones be noted;
- (ii) that the briefing note on School Caretakers' Houses be noted and a further update presented to the Select Committee prior to the matter being reported back to the Executive;
- (iii) that the briefing note on 522-524 Kingsbury Road – Lease Renewal be noted and should the matter not be reported to the Executive on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2004, a further update be presented to the Select Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2004;
- (iv) that an information update be presented to the next meeting of the Select Committee on the Youth and Community Review.

9. **The Forward Plan** (*Issue 14 2003 – 2004*)

Members of the Forward Plan Select Committee considered the latest version of the Forward Plan (Issue 14) and highlighted a number of items where further information was requested.

RESOLVED:-

that information on the following items be provided at future meetings of the Forward Plan Select Committee:-

(i) ***IT for Councillors***

Briefing note/report to the next meeting.

(ii) ***Consultants' Study on Civic Centre Options***

Briefing note to the next meeting updating the Select Committee on options consultants are looking at and issues they are considering. The lead officer to be requested to attend the meeting to answer questions.

(iii) ***Stonebridge School Accommodation***

Briefing note to the next meeting.

(iv) ***John Billam – Update***

Members of the Select Committee felt there was a lack of information on this item contained in the Forward Plan. The Select Committee asked that a briefing note be supplied to all members of the Select Committee within the next two weeks.

(v) ***Street Trees – Proposed Removal and Replacement***

Members of the Select Committee felt there was a lack of information on this item contained in the Forward Plan. The Select Committee asked that a briefing note be supplied to all members of the Select Committee within the next two weeks.

10. **Items considered by the Executive that were not included in the Forward Plan**

(i) ***2003/2004 Capital Budget Monitoring Report and Section 206 Update Report***

Noted.

(ii) ***Award of Contract for Payroll and IT Support Services***

Noted

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee is scheduled to take place on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2004. It was confirmed that the meeting after 6<sup>th</sup> January would take place on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2004.

RESOLVED;-

that the next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee be re-arranged to take place on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2004 (not 7<sup>th</sup> January as programmed).

12. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

R BLACKMAN  
Chair

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