

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 25th February 2004 at 7.30 pm

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

Councillors Fox and Kagan were also present.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Moher.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

There were none.

2. Order of Business

RESOLVED:-

that the order of business be changed to that as set out below.

3. Deputations

There were none.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 27th January 2004

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2004 be received and approved as an accurate record.

5. Matters Arising

There were none.

6. Call-in of Executive Decisions

There were none.

7. The Executive List of Decisions – 9th February 2004

RESOLVED:-

that the Executive List of Decisions from its meeting on 9th February 2004 be noted.

8. **Information Updates requested by the Forward Plan Select Committee at its meeting on 27th January 2004**

At its meeting on 27th January, 2004, the Select Committee requested updates regarding the following items:-

(a) ***Meals Award of Asian and Caribbean Frozen Meals***

Members noted that four tenders had been received and that each of the competing tenders would now be assessed. In response to a question concerning customer satisfaction, the Lead Member for Health and Social Care confirmed that a panel, comprised of people from a variety of backgrounds, assessed the food to ensure customer satisfaction. At the request of some Members he then confirmed that he would gather more information about the composition of the panel for circulation to the Select Committee.

(b) ***IT Facilities for Members – Response to Query***

Rav Roberts (Information Technology Unit) circulated a briefing note to Members and updated the Select Committee about the use of Outlook Express on laptops, following an earlier request for clarification. The briefing note confirmed that Outlook Express would be added to the standard configuration which would be used for all future laptops and that security patches for Outlook Express would be supplied via the automatic software upgrade programme. In response to a number of questions concerning software compatibility on the laptops, Rav Roberts explained that all machines were locked down for security reasons and that any specific software requirements such as downloading Real Player would have to be discussed with the IT Unit. Members were then advised about Brent's position in the top 20 list of local authority web-sites, as featured in the Guardian on 25.02.04.

RESOLVED:-

that the information updates be noted.

9. **Briefing Notes requested by the Select Committee arising from consideration of the Forward Plan (*Issue 19 – 2003/04*)**

• ***Voluntary Sector Grants Criteria***

Karen Tyerman (Assistant Director, Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services) updated the Select Committee about the status of the

report which was due for consideration by the Executive on 8th March 2004. The revised report was circulated to Members for their consideration. Members noted that since the meeting of the Select Committee in November 2003, officers had developed an application form and monitoring procedures following consultation with the Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum. Any proposed changes had been clearly explained to all voluntary organisations and as part of this, a number of seminars had been arranged to provide information about the new application process and alternative funding options. Members were advised that the closing date for completed applications was 19th March 2004 for the July '04-March '05 period of funding, which was considered as a transition period. Ms Tyerman confirmed that a briefing would take place for Members in March but that she would liaise with the Group Offices to identify an appropriate date.

Members were advised that the report explained the new application process and included a revised criteria and priorities for 2004/05, based on the Council's previously agreed principles. Ms Tyerman confirmed that the revised criteria in Appendix 1 had to be met by all organisations which were then matched against the criteria in Appendix 2. Members noted that whilst some organisations might not meet all corporate strategy priorities, they would still be assessed as part of the application process. Regarding the issue of principles for funding and the requirement that all organisations provide performance and targets, some Members felt that this requirement was particularly unfair for smaller voluntary groups. Ms Tyerman confirmed that performance targets needed to be developed that were appropriate to the size and scale of the grant that was being awarded to the organisation. Members noted that more rigorous indicators and evaluation methods were necessary for the larger organisations or those that would receive larger grants.

Regarding the new application process some Members of the Select Committee stressed the need to ensure that the application form remained jargon-free. Ms Tyerman explained that the briefing seminars had been arranged so as to offer support and guidance to voluntary organisations not only about the application process but also about alternative funding options. A working group comprising of Representatives from a variety of voluntary sector organisations would continue to be invited to comment on the funding process and make suggestions for further improvements. Members were advised that the criteria for funding had been considered by the working group and all organisations applying for funding were aware of the criteria. Ms Tyerman confirmed that officers could contact all those currently funded organisations that had not attended the briefing seminars or applied for funding, to ensure that they were aware of the new application process.

Members thanked Ms Tyerman for her contributions to the work of the Select Committee and wished her every success in her new position as Director of Community Learning with the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note and the verbal update on the Voluntary Sector Grants Criteria be noted.

- ***Willesden Sports Centre PFI***

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note on Willesden Sports Centre PFI be noted.

- ***John Billam Update***

Shaun Faulkner (Head of Parks Service) updated the Select Committee about the John Billam sports ground pavilion, which had been leased to the Gujarati Aria Association (GAA) on a 125 year lease. He confirmed that a full report would be presented to the Executive in the near future regarding the status of the site, the lease arrangement which commenced in 2002, the outcome of the improvement works and consideration of how to spend the capital receipts that had been generated. The Select Committee noted that as part of the "Arrangement to Lease", conditions were imposed on the GAA to undertake improvement works to refurbish the pavilion and build new sports changing rooms within an agreed timescale. Once improvement works were completed to the satisfaction of the Council the full lease agreement would commence. Members were advised that improvement work at the site was despite some initial delays, progressing well and the pavilion had been completely rewired, graffiti removed and structural work completed. Completion of the remainder of the work was expected in April 2004.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Faulkner explained that the site would remain as a recreational facility. Consequently, the focus remained on improving the sporting facilities at the site including the football pitch which was below standard and suffered from poor drainage. However, Members noted that substantial funding was necessary to provide 1st class cricket and football facilities. In response to some questions concerning future usage, Mr Faulkner confirmed that local

residents and local schools such as St Gregory's were being kept informed about improvements to the site. In addition, a number of clubs had expressed an interest in using the facilities but all bookings would be considered by the site office¹ to ensure that there was not a monopoly on usage.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note and the verbal update on the John Billam sports ground pavilion be noted.

- ***Capital Spend on Carriageway and Footways***

Phil Rankmore (Director, Transportation Unit) referred to a briefing note and updated the Select Committee about how the capital spend would be allocated for carriageway and footway works across the borough. He explained that additional funding had been made available for 2004/05 and consequently an increased programme would have to be delivered. Following a series of condition surveys, independent surveys and taking into account feedback from Members' and complaints, a list of prioritised schemes was compiled. Members of the Select Committee noted that the majority of funding would be spent on footway renewals. In response to questions from some Members of the Select Committee, the Director of Transportation confirmed that grass verge work was undertaken with funding from both the footways and carriageway budget. Regarding the issue of work undertaken by utility companies, the Director of Transportation advised Members that previously the final reinstatement of pavements was done by the Council but that following changes to legislation, each utility would now be responsible for the reinstatement of the affected area of paving. Consequently, this would increase the pressure on the Council to be clear about which utilities were working, where and when. Members of the Select Committee noted that the condition survey would be concluded shortly and would be considered by the Executive on 29th March 2004. Members requested that the priority list for capital spend on footways and carriageways in 2004/05 be presented to the Select Committee for consideration at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the briefing note and the verbal update on Capital Spend on carriageway and footways be noted; and

¹ "site office" replaced by "Parks Service main office" – amendment agreed by FPSC on 17.03.04.

- (ii) that the priority list for capital spend on footways and carriageways in 2004/05 be presented to the Select Committee for consideration at the next meeting on 17th March 2004.

- ***Wembley Stadium Station Bridge/Link***

Phil Rankmore (Director, Transportation Unit) referred to the briefing note and updated the Select Committee about the development of a pedestrian link between the High Road and the Stadium. He explained that the project was being managed by WITT and involved substantial land acquisition, the construction of a bridge over the railway and the construction of a holding area for pedestrians all of which had to be completed by September 2005. Members noted that the LDA was the only organisation that could operate within the time constraints; securing funding in the region of £5.5m and acquire compulsory purchase powers. The Select Committee was advised that the compulsory purchase of a number of properties along the High Road by LDA was underway and whilst the matter had been in the public domain for some weeks there had, to date, been little reaction.

Members were advised that the pedestrian bridge would be offered to the Council by LDA as a public highway with the Council undertaking responsibility for all maintenance issues. As a twin arch structure the bridge would provide a gateway feature to the Stadium and would be an integral part of the Stadium development. The bridge would provide access to and from the station and the Stadium on a pedestrian deck, with occasional usage by maintenance vehicles. In terms of structural loading the bridge could be used by vehicles. However, Members noted that on non-event days rising bollards would prevent vehicular access to the bridge and all access to the bridge by vehicles such as emergency and maintenance vehicles would be managed by either the Police or TFL staff. Some Members expressed concern about the number of people using the footbridge and queried whether the link would be able to cope with the anticipated number of people passing through Wembley Stadium station, particularly on event days.

In response to a further question, the Director of Transportation confirmed that 37,500 people were expected to pass through Wembley Park station per hour and that having taken dispersal times into account it was anticipated that there would be a sufficient delivery of service. Regarding the issue of planning permission for the structure, Members noted that application would be considered shortly. In response to a question concerning the Council's

maintenance responsibilities, the Director of Transportation confirmed that the pedestrian bridge would have an anticipated life span in excess of 100 years and a paint guarantee of 25 years. Members noted that periodic inspections and small repairs would be necessary over time but ² that all maintenance would be undertaken and funded by LOBEG.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note and the verbal update on Wembley Stadium Station Bridge/Link be noted.

- ***Estate Access Corridor – Bridge Over Chiltern Line***

Members noted that a progress report would be considered by the Executive in March 2004, at which time it would be asked to approve additional funding proposals as a result of unanticipated delays and additional works to the bridge. Members of the Select Committee were advised that following exhaustive tests on the bridge since Christmas, completion of works to the bridge was now on schedule.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note and the verbal update on Estate Access Corridor – Bridge over Chiltern Line be noted.

- ***Stadium Access Corridor – Private Means of Access***

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note on the Stadium Access Corridor – Private Means of Access be noted.

10. **The Forward Plan (*Issue 21 2003 – 2004*)**

Issue 21 of the Forward Plan (23rd February to 19th June 2004) was circulated to Members at the meeting following its publication on 23rd February 2004. Members of the Select Committee then requested further information on the following issues:

RESOLVED:-

² Insert, "it was anticipated" – amended following agreement by FPSC on 17.03.04.

- (i) that the following information updates and briefing notes be circulated for the meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee on 17th March 2004:-
 - (a) Items Selected By Non-Executive Members at Council – Decision Tracking (briefing note)
 - (b) A Masterplan for Wembley (briefing note and lead officer to attend meeting)
 - (c) Capital Spend on Carriageways and Footways (information update)

- (ii) that the following briefing notes and information updates be circulated for the meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee on 14th April 2004:-
 - (a) Youth and Community Centres Review – Update (full report)
 - (b) 522-524 Kingsbury Road – Lease Renewal (briefing note and lead officer to attend meeting)
 - (c) E Government Programme 2004/05 (briefing note and lead officer to attend meeting)
 - (d) Disability Discrimination Act – Fourth Progress Report (briefing note on progress to date)
 - (e) Willesden Sports Centre – Closure relocation Strategy (briefing note on progress to date)
 - (f) Supply Demand and Temporary Accommodation (briefing note and lead officer to attend meeting)

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

There were none.

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 17th March 2004.

13. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There was none.

The meeting ended at 9.20pm

R BLACKMAN
Chair

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