

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 1st June 2004 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Gladbaum and Councillors Harrod, Freeson (alternate for Councillor Dromey) and Taylor.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Blackman, Coughlin, Dromey, Kagan and Moher.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

There were none.

2. Deputations

There were none.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 10th May 2004

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 10th May 2004 be received and approved as an accurate record subject to the following amendments:-

- (i) that the first sentence in the first paragraph on page 4 reads as:-

“Ken Hullock (Team Manager, Policy) introduced a briefing note and advised Members of the Select Committee that the Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes on Design Statements and Affordable Housing had been to the Planning Committee for consideration.”

- (ii) that the first sentence of the second paragraph on page 4 reads as:-

“Councillor Harrod queried the 50% affordable housing mix and enquired about the LDA’s planning application which was recently determined by the Planning Committee and which only included 33% affordable housing.”

4. Matters Arising

There were none.

5. **Call-in of Executive Decisions from the Meeting of the Executive on 24th May 2004**

There were none.

6. **The Executive List of Decisions from the Meeting of the Executive on 24th May 2004**

RESOLVED:-

that the Executive's List of Decisions from its meeting on 24th May 2004 be noted.

7. **Briefing Notes requested by Select Committee arising from consideration of earlier versions of the Forward Plan (2003/04)**

Council Tax Discounts

Laurence Knight (Client manager Revenues) outlined the provisions of the Local Government Act 2003 and the powers given to the Council to grant special local discounts for Council Tax. Members were advised that the Executive would consider the report on 12th July 2004 regarding qualification for Council Tax discounts. Some Members enquired as to what guidance had been issued and whether there was anything that specified how classes could be determined. Mr Knight confirmed that guidance had not been circulated to local authorities by the Government regarding classification for eligibility for discounts. Whilst there had been some discussion regarding qualification for a discount in extreme cases such as when residents were affected by flooding some Members queried how severe an incident would have to be to enable a resident to be entitled to a discount. Consequently, there were some concerns expressed regarding the definition of criteria for eligibility. Members considered the options that will be considered by the Executive and highlighted a preference for the second option but stressed the need to ensure that if an application fell outside the specified criteria, it should be judged on its own merit.

RECOMMENDED:-

that the Forward Plan Select Committee favours the second option but urges the Executive to ensure that if an application does not meet the specified criteria, it will be judged on its own merit.

Chesterfield House – Floors 5 & 6

Marcus Perry (Head of Property Services) updated the Select Committee regarding the purchase of the lease from the Inland Revenue, enabling the Council to accommodate a further two floors of at¹ Chesterfield House until 2009. In response to a query, Mr Perry confirmed that a planning application had been submitted by the owners of Chesterfield House for redevelopment of the site. However, the Council's tenancy at Chesterfield House would not conclude until 2012 and redevelopment of the site would be dependent on the owners buying the Council out. Members noted that the report to the Executive would include all the relevant financial details.

Youth and Community Centres Review - Update

Marcus Perry (Head of Property Services) confirmed that a status report would be presented to the Executive on 12th July 2004, updating Members about youth and community centres across the Borough. Members noted that the report had not yet been drafted due to a number of delays caused by on going negotiations with centres including the Mahogany Arts Centre and the Pakistan Centre.

Some Members enquired about the Gladstone Centre and queried why there was still no integrated approach to developments at the site, despite the Planning Committee's earlier approval for the redevelopment of changing room facilities at the centre. Mr Perry confirmed that two separate projects were underway but that these had been running to two separate timescales with pressure on the Council to build new changing room facilities and encourage usage of the playing fields. Members noted that the development of a Children's Centre had been the subject of discussion for over 12 months and consultation was still on-going with local residents. Members noted that whilst efforts were being made to ensure that the projects were undertaken in an integrated approach, this was complicated by time constraints on spending the allocated budget for the redevelopment of the changing room facilities. In acknowledging the on-going negotiations with Barnados and the benefactor's family, the Chair expressed some concern about the lack of joined up thinking and on-going delays and stressed her support for a more integrated approach to the projects.

Marcus Perry then went on to comment on other centres across the Borough including Preston and the Mall and Wembley and advised Members that a comprehensive planning application for the Wembley centre would be resubmitted in the summer. Members also enquired about a number of centres around the borough including the Tiverton

¹ Amended at meeting on 30.06.04 - delete "of".

Centre and were advised that the centre had been sold some years before and was currently derelict. Mr Perry confirmed that a more comprehensive update on each of the youth and community centres would be included in the report to the Executive on 12th July 2004.

South Kilburn Masterplan and South Kilburn Masterplan – Effect of Impact Assessments

Martin Cheeseman (Director, Housing) referred to the briefing note in the agenda and advised the Select Committee that a report would be presented to the Executive in July 2004. This report would present the completed draft Masterplan covering education, housing, health and regeneration facilities and developments. Members noted that the Masterplan would be delivered at a cost of £630m and funded through a variety of sources including the Council, the London Regional Housing Board, New Deal for Communities (NDC) contributions and the sale/rental of housing units. The Director of Housing confirmed that the Executive would be asked to approve funding and the contract process to deliver the Masterplan. Whilst it was anticipated that a set criteria would be established to identify a suitable contract, it was important that flexible and imaginative proposals could be considered. Members were advised that restrictions on the Council kept changing and therefore flexibility was important.

At this point, Councillor Harrod declared an interest as a Member of the Brent Housing Partnership BHP) Board. The Legal advisor to the Select Committee confirmed that Councillor Harrod could participate in the discussion.

Some Members queried the degree of consultation that had been undertaken with local residents and whether the public was aware of the implications of the Masterplan in terms of housing and council tenancies. Martin Cheeseman explained that there had been on-going consultation with local residents within a complex set of circumstances that could potentially confuse local residents. Consequently, he stressed the need to ensure that clear information about the Masterplan and the options contained therein were fed back to residents without unreasonably raising expectations. Regarding the housing implications of the Masterplan, the Director confirmed that of the proposed 775 properties that would be developed (about a third of the existing stock), all would be retained by the Council as part of an extension to the Council's existing ALMO. Since the remaining housing would probably be provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) it was possible that some residents would be transferred to an RSL as part of the Masterplan process.

Some Members commented on the effect of the impact assessments and queried where housing, educational, health and leisure facilities

would be located as this information appeared to have been omitted from the report. The Director of Housing confirmed that the briefing note did not cover the impact assessments as these had not yet been completed, although it was anticipated that the report to the Executive on 12th July 2004 would contain these details. He advised members of the Select Committee that all interested parties had discussed the details of the Masterplan but that the emphasis had been on how the plan should be developed, what facilities should be included and how these could be funded rather than the particular location of the facilities. The Director explained that the housing element of the development had progressed quicker than other elements but that the Planning Department had contributed significantly to the development of supplementary planning guidance. Members noted that the Masterplan would go to the Planning Committee for initial views and thereafter to the Executive. The Masterplan would then go back to Planning Committee so that the details of the Masterplan could be agreed. Councillor Freeson enquired about the Planning process for the Masterplan and requested clarification about the timescales for this process as this still remained unclear. The Director confirmed that he would seek clarification on this matter and respond directly to Councillor Freeson.

Members of the Select Committee expressed concerns that the Masterplan focussed on housing redevelopment as a separate development rather than the development of a full range of community facilities in an integrated approach. The Director explained that the Masterplan had been delayed because initially it had not adequately covered non-housing issues. However, these had now been addressed. The Chair referred to page 9 of the briefing note and the objectives of the Masterplan but highlighted the need to ensure that in approving the Masterplan and the Effect of Impact Assessments reports, community developments should be concurrent with housing development from the outset in a strategic approach that ensured that the needs of all residents were addressed.

RECOMMENDED:-

that the Forward Plan Select Committee urges the Executive to consider that in approving the Masterplan and the Effect of Impact Assessments reports, community developments should be concurrent with the housing developments from the outset in a strategic approach that ensures that the needs of all residents are addressed.

Cemetery and Mortuary Service and Parks Service Capital Spend

Councillor Jones outlined the briefing note contained in the agenda and advised Members that the executive would consider a detailed report on 14th June 2004 regarding the proposed spend for the Cemeteries

and Mortuary Service, the proposed spend for the Parks Service and spend of the capital receipt from John Billam. Members were advised that at the time of drafting the briefing note, the capital spend allocation had not been finalised and therefore the figures could not be included within the note. However, the following finances had since been determined: - £789k total proposed capital spend (£623k allocated to the Parks Service and £134k allocated to the Cemetery and Mortuary Service) with £32k set aside as match funding for a wider improvement programme at Mapesbury Dell.

RESOLVED:-

that the above briefing notes be noted.

8. **Information Update Requested by the Select Committee at its Meeting on 10th May 2004**

Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes: Design Statements and Affordable Housing

Members noted the briefing note but Councillor Freeson sought clarification about when the guidance would be considered by the Planning Committee and expressed concerns about issues not being fully considered by the Planning Department.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the information update be noted; and
- (ii) that clarification regarding approval by the Planning Committee of the Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes on Design Statements and Affordable Housing be sought and forwarded directly to Councillor Freeson.

9. **The Forward Plan (Issue 1 2004/2005)**

Issue 1 of the Forward Plan (10th June to 1st October 2004) had previously been circulated to Members of the Forward Plan Select Committee. Following consideration of these documents, the Select Committee requested further information on the following issues to the future meetings of the meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee:-

- (i) ***Proposed Grant of Lease to Brent PCT Former Nurseries at Crouch Road NW10***
Request for a briefing note to the meeting on 30th June 2004 outlining the key issues. No Lead Member/ Lead Officer attendance at this meeting was requested;

(ii) ***Proposal for Creating a New Voluntary Aided Islamic Primary School***

Request for a briefing note to the meeting on 30th June 2004 outlining the key issues in report. Request for Lead Member and Lead Officer attendance at meeting on 30th June 2004;

(iii) ***School Meals Contract***

Request for a briefing note to the meeting on 30th June 2004 outlining the key issues in report. Request for Lead Member and Lead Officer attendance at meeting on 30th June 2004;

(iv) ***Connexions***

Members noted that this report had been deferred to the July meeting of the Executive as information from a neighbouring authority had not been made available. Consequently, this report would now go to the July Meeting of the Executive. Request for a briefing note to the meeting on 30th June 2004 outlining the key issues in the report. Request for Lead Member and Lead Officer attendance at this meeting;

(v) ***Best Value review of Sports Service***

Request that this item be considered by the Lifelong Learning Panel as part of its 2004/05 Work Programme, subject to approval by the Scrutiny Management Board;

(vi) ***Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance Note***

Request for an information update on the report and an outline of any further developments to the meeting on 30th June 2004. Request for Lead Member and Lead Officer attendance at this meeting of the Select Committee;

(vii) ***Forced Marriages***

Request for a briefing note outlining the key issues in report. Lead Member and Lead Officer attendance at meeting on 30th June 2004 has not been requested; and

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the above items be submitted for consideration by the Forward Plan Select Committee at its meeting on 30th June 2004 or future meetings thereafter.
- (ii) that the following request made at an earlier meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee be included on the agenda for the meeting in July 2004:-

Draft Air Quality Action Plan

A request was made by the Select Committee at an earlier meeting for a briefing note/ information update to be presented to the Select Committee at the meeting in July 2004;

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

There were none.

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 30th June 2004.

12. **Any Other Urgent Business**

A copy of a letter from Councillor B Blackman to Councillor Fox concerning Transport Grants to Voluntary Organisations was circulated to all Members of the Select Committee for information.

The meeting ended at 9.35pm

H GLADBAUM
In the Chair

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