

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 31st August 2004 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor R Blackman (Chair), and Councillors Duffin (alternate for Taylor) and Moher.

Also present was Councillor Lyon (Lead Member for Education, Arts and Libraries).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dromey, Gladbaum, Harrod and Taylor. Apologies were also received from Councillor Kagan (Lead Member for Democratic Services) and Councillor Coughlin (Lead Member for Corporate Resources).

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

There were none

2. Deputations

There were none

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 28th July 2004

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2004 be received and approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

There were none

5. Call-in of Executive Decisions from the Meeting of the Executive on 16th August 2004.

There were none at this meeting.

6. The Executive List of Decisions from the Meeting of the Executive on 16th August 2004.

RESOLVED:-

that the Executive's List of Decisions from its meeting on 16th August 2004 be noted.

7. **Information requested by the Select Committee arising from consideration of earlier versions of the Forward Plan (2004/05)**

Connexions Service

Councillor Lyon (Lead Member for Education, Arts and Libraries) was present for this item.

Marianne Locke (Head of Library Service) outlined the details of the briefing note before the Select Committee and explained that the report to the Executive had been deferred to a future meeting. This report was subject to agreement by the Director of Education, Arts and Libraries, the Director of Finance and the Borough Solicitor regarding devolution of the Connexions Service contract to Brent. Members noted that the main contract would commence on 1st October 2004 with the full confederacy model, as detailed in the report, being implemented over the next six months. Councillor Lyon (Lead Member for Education, Arts and Libraries) confirmed that there would be a number of practical and financial implications for the Council, although the financial uncertainties of devolving the contract were yet to be qualified. Members noted that these details would be presented to the Executive in the future report.

Members noted the report before them and thanked the Lead Member and Marianne Locke and for their attendance at the meeting.

Proposal for creating a new voluntary aided Islamic primary school

Councillor Lyon (Lead Member for Education, Arts and Libraries) was present for this item.

The Lead Member for Education, Arts and Libraries explained that there were currently two proposals for creating voluntary aided schools at both Menorah High School and also The Avenue School. Members noted that the Executive was receptive to the proposals in principle and supported such applications so long as there was no financial disadvantage to the Council. The Lead Member highlighted particular concerns about the possibility that funding for the new schools would not be made available for 2004/05 at the time of transfer due to the operation of floors and ceilings on the Government's revenue plans. Consequently, the report to the Executive would detail the available options for proceeding based on the financial implications of the proposed transfers. Members of the Select Committee were advised that whilst the desired outcome was to approve the proposals, if the financial risks to the Council for full funding were evident then the Executive would reluctantly have to defer transfer to 2005/06.

Forced Marriages

Councillor Fox (Lead Member for Health and Social Care) was present for this item.

Janet Palmer (Interim Assistant Director – Children’s Services) advised Members that whilst there had been an increasing recognition about forced marriages as an issue in Britain, the DfES and the Government had only in recent years acknowledged it as abuse. Consequently, guidance to social workers had been developed on the topic to highlight ways in which to manage the issue. Members noted that this was a significant issue of consideration in Brent due to the level of diversity within the Borough. It was acknowledged that whilst the issue generally affected younger adults, it could also apply to vulnerable adults.

Ms Palmer confirmed that there had been two examples of threatened forced marriages in recent months in Brent and that as people became more aware of the issue, there was likely to be an increase in reported cases. Members were advised that guidance on the matter needed to be interpreted locally so that it could then be implemented in the most effective way by the Department. Ms Palmer confirmed that Brent was consulting with other agencies to develop an inter-agency protocol to deal with forced marriages in Brent. Members noted that the protocol and procedure would be presented to the Executive once they had been approved by the Area Child Protection Committee in October 2004.

RESOLVED:-

that the above briefings be noted.

8. **Briefing notes/ information updates requested by the Select Committee following consideration of Version 3 of the Forward Plan**

Authority to award contract for Sure Start Roundwood project at sites in Curzon Crescent and Longstone Avenue NW10

Councillor Fox (Lead Member for Health and Social Care) was present for this item.

Janet Palmer (Interim Assistant Director – Children’s Services) advised those present that the initial proposal was to establish an Early Years Children’s Centre on two sites, namely Curzon Crescent and Longstone Avenue. However, following some consideration by Sure Start it was felt that the plans should be revised to enable a more financially efficient redevelopment of the existing site at Curzon

Crescent. Members noted that this centre would provide a full range of day care, health and parenting facilities, although the crèche facility would be slightly smaller than previously anticipated.

In response to a question concerning the development of other facilities around the Borough, Ms Palmer confirmed that there were plans to develop a further six children's centres. It was acknowledged that the concept should be expanded across the Borough rather than being limited to the most deprived areas. Members were advised that parents had been considerably involved in and committed to the proposal from the outset.

Public library position statement

That the briefing note be noted.

Progressing town centre management

That the briefing note be noted.

Re-tendering of the Parking Contracts

Keith Balmer (Director of StreetCare) outlined the report that had been presented to the Executive on 12th July 2004 and referred to the accompanying briefing report which provided further details about the parking contract. He referred to a number of points raised by the Roads/ Use of Road Space Task Group.

Mr Balmer provided an update on the current situation and explained that meetings had been held to ensure improvements in frontline services. He confirmed that regular complaints were received by the two parking shops and therefore there was still room for improvement despite some progress.

In response to a question concerning proposed event day parking controls and enforcement, Mr Balmer explained that the contract specification was yet to be drawn up and that any proposed references to the number of event days on which parking controls would be enforced were purely an approximation. He confirmed that parking attendants would be required to enforce parking restrictions on event days and that the cost of this would have to be calculated into the contract. Members of the Select Committee were advised that the service provider would be advised about traffic management orders stipulating traffic restrictions across the Borough. He stressed the need to minimise the introduction of flexible and changeable restrictions which would complicate enforcement, although a degree of flexibility would be required in the contract.

With regards to 24hr cover, Subhash Radia (StreetCare, Manager [Parking]) explained that the contract would allow for an extension of enforcement to enable 24hr enforcement such as the patrolling of yellow lines. He explained that this would be a cost effective and flexible approach. The Chair commented on the possibility that the new contractor would attempt to enforce parking restrictions around the Borough more strictly and that this could potentially upset and confuse local residents. Mr Radia confirmed that the department needed a consistent approach to enforcement and that this was provided for in the report. Members were advised that warning notices might have to be displayed for a short period in certain areas highlighting the parking restrictions in that area and giving residents notice that such restrictions would be enforced by a specific date.

Members then discussed problems connected with footway parking restrictions, particularly in areas with narrow roads and highlighted the possible need for exemption from such restrictions if parking legally meant that roads would be come blocked and or access for emergency vehicles would be hampered. Mr Balmer stressed the need for judgement and balance when enforcing parking restrictions and acknowledged that this was a major issue that needed to be addressed further.

In response to a query about drawbacks to the tender, Mr Balmer confirmed that there was a good package of contracts that could work well together and that the department wanted to attract as much competition as possible. Members were advised that a parking forum was being planned to update Members and local residents about the parking contract. Further details would be sought from the Director of Transportation and fed back to Members of the Select Committee.

9. The Forward Plan – Issue 4 (6.09.04 – 7.01.04) 2004/2005

Issue 3 of the Forward Plan (09.08.04 – 03.12.04) had previously been circulated to Members of the Select Committee. Issue 4 of the Forward Plan (6.09.04 – 7.01.04) was now before Members of the Select Committee.

Following consideration of these documents, the Select Committee requested further information on the following issues:-

Ninth London Local Authorities Bill

Request for a briefing note to the September meeting. Members were particularly keen to hear about smoking in public places and licensing issues. The Lead Member and lead officer were requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questions.

Brent Civic Crime, Disorder and Misuse of Drugs Audit

Request for a briefing note to the October meeting. Lead Member and lead officer attendance subject to receipt of detailed briefing note.

One Stop Shop Annual Performance Report for October 2003/04

Request for a briefing note to the October meeting. The Lead Member and lead officer were requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questions.

Youth and Community Centres Review

Request for a briefing note to the September meeting. The Lead Member and lead officer were requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questions.

Pavilion at Neasden Recreational Ground

Request for a briefing note to the September meeting. The Lead Member and lead officer were requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questions.

Local Implementation Plan

Request for a briefing note to the September meeting. The Lead Member and lead officer were requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questions.

Wembley Stadium Event Day Parking Controls

Request for a briefing note to the September meeting. The Lead Member and lead officer were requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questions.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the above items be submitted for consideration by the Forward Plan Select Committee at its meeting on 28th September 2004 or to future meetings as indicated; and
- (ii) that a written update on the Draft Air Quality Action Plan also be considered at the September meeting of the Select Committee, as per an earlier request by Members.

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

At its meeting on 27th July 2004, the Highways Committee considered the following items that were not included on the latest version of the Forward Plan:-

CPZ Progress Report
Bus Priority Progress Report
Oakington Manor Drive area 20mph
Petition against bus route – Donnington Road NW10

RESOLVED:-

that further details about each of the above decisions that were taken by the Highways Committee at its meeting on 27th July 2004 be circulated to Members of the Select Committee for information.

11. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED:-

that the press and public be now excluded from the meeting as the following item contains exempt information as specified in Paragraph 9, Schedule 12A of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972, namely:-

“Any instructions to counsel and any opinion of counsel (whether or not in connection with any proceedings) and any advice received, information obtained or action to be taken in connection with:

- (a) any legal proceedings by or against the authority; or
- (b) the determination of any matter affecting the authority;

whether, in either case, proceedings have been commenced or are in contemplation.”

12. **Kingsbury Pool: Wiggins vs Brent – legal action**

This report was considered by the Executive at its meeting on 16th August 2004 and sought approval to the terms proposed during the Alternate Dispute Resolution mediation process (ADR) to settle the legal dispute over the Kingsbury Pool site between Wiggins Kingsbury Limited (Wiggins) and the London Borough of Brent (Brent).

Marcus Perry (Head of Property Services) advised the Select Committee about the details of the report and the lengthy legal action

that had taken place. He outlined the resolutions passed by the Executive at its meeting on 16th August and confirmed that the matter had now been concluded following a settlement with agreement over the terms specified in the Mediation Agreement. Members discussed the lengthy process of resolving the matter and highlighted the importance of focussing on the future development of Kingsbury Pool. Some Members then sought clarification about the status of the report and publication of the document following the conclusion of the legal process.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the update be noted; and
- (ii) that the status of the report be clarified following formal settlement of the case.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Noted that the next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 28th September 2004.

14. Any Other Urgent Business

There was none.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

R BLACKMAN
Chair

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