

Briefing notes on Issues included in the Forward Plan Issue 6 2004/05

SERVICE AREA: Corporate Services

Report ref	Report title
	Copland Community School and Technology Centre (Copland School) – Proposed Development
<p>Summary / Nature of Decision to be taken/Intended Outcome</p> <p><u>Why Decision necessary and what prompted it</u></p> <p>The freehold of the school premises and part of the playing field were transferred to the Governing body of the Copland Community School and Technology Centre under section 74 and Schedule 10 of the Education Reform Act 1988. The effect of the transfer was that School Governors became the owners of the school premises and the playing fields. The playing field was transferred to the Governors of Copland School subject to the right of two adjoining schools, St Joseph's RC Schools (Junior and Infants) and Elsley Primary School, to use the playing field for sporting and other outdoor activities as existed immediately prior to 1st April 1982.</p> <p>The Council also granted a 99 years lease, from July 1997, of two areas of the playing field to the Governors of Copland School, subject to similar rights for the two adjoining schools. The net effect of this arrangement was to ensure the rights to access to the playing areas for Josephs RC Schools (Junior and Infants) and Elsley Primary School were protected.</p> <p>The Governors of Copland School have, for a considerable time, been endeavouring to secure funding for the badly needed improvement, adaptation and expansion or replacement of the existing school buildings, built originally in 1952 and which are in poor condition and provide increasingly sub-standard accommodation in relation to modern educational needs. Having exhausted the usual funding possibilities, the Governors explored a range of development options involving private development on part of the school site to fund the much needed new school buildings and sport facilities.</p>	

Copland School, working in conjunction with Chancerygate Group Ltd, has made an application for planning consent in respect of a proposal to provide a new 21st Century school comprising:

1. the construction of new school premises, including sports hall, swimming pool, gymnasium and performing arts accommodation; and
2. upgraded school playing fields, including installation of drainage, all weather pitches, hard sports area, three grass team games pitches, athletics area, cricket pitch and natural habitat area.

The planning application includes proposed private development (residential, retail and fitness centre) on the site of the existing school, fronting on to Wembley High Road and which the School proposes to sell to the developer in exchange for the new school development.

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills has determined, under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, to give consent to the scheme and which also has the support of Sport England and the GLA. The DfES's Building Design Unit (LSBDU) has also commented on the scheme for the school favourably.

The application is due to be considered by the London Borough of Brent's Planning Committee in the New Year.

The Governors of the School have requested the Council to enter into a number of property transactions to facilitate this development and including:

- a. the transfer of the Council's freehold reversion in the two areas of the school's playing field now leased to the school, as above;
- b. revised arrangements to protect the two adjoining schools' use of the playing field;
- c. transfer of the freehold interest in land surrounding the Council's Wembley Centre, subject to the Council retaining ownership of the Centre itself;
- d. transfer of the freehold reversion of the Dennis Jackson Centre, and which is subject to a 99 year lease from July 1974 to the Centre's trustees;
- e. works, to be agreed, for the improvement of the Wembley Centre; and
- f. arrangements for the Wembley Centre's use of parts of the new school intended for community use outside school hours.

A plan will be available at the meeting to illustrate these proposed transactions and how they relate to the planned development.

Nature of the decision to be taken / intended outcome

Subject to terms being provisionally agreed with all relevant parties, the Executive will be invited to agree terms negotiated and which will be subject to the planning consent for the overall development being granted by the Council's Planning Committee.

The proposed property transactions would:

1. facilitate the redevelopment of Copland School to proceed and which would achieve the badly needed replacement of the existing school buildings. The proposals for the new school buildings are of a high standard and, if built, would be likely to be seen as an additional flagship School for Brent;
2. enable the fulfilment of relevant conditions of the Secretary of State's consent for the Copland scheme namely:
 - that the two adjoining schools, St Josephs and Elsely, continue to have exactly the same facilities for playing team games on completion of this project as they do now; and
 - that the total area for team games is not reduced; and
3. bring major benefits to the local community as a result of:
 - the proposed improvement to the Wembley and Dennis Jackson Centres, neither of which are in good condition; and
 - the opportunity for the activities in those centres to use parts of the new school intended for community use (eg gymnasium, drama facilities, improved playing field facilities, etc).

Timescale for decision:

A report is planned for the meeting of the Executive on 17th January 2005 – having been deferred from the November meeting. The purpose of the report will be to invite Members to consider recommendations about certain land matters relating to the Council's freehold ownership of part of the Copland Community School & Technology Centre (hereafter called "Copland School" for the purposes of this report) and of other adjoining property.

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