

**MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2005 at 7.30 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Dromey (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillors Hughes, Sengupta (alternate for Moher) and Taylor.

Also present were the Lead Member for Health and Social Care (Councillor Fox) and the Lead Member for Environment and Planning (Councillor Jones).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Blackman, Harrod, Lyon and Moher.

**1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

There were none.

**2. Deputations**

There were none.

**3. Minutes of Last Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2005**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2005 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 14<sup>th</sup> February 2005**

Members of the Select Committee were advised that the deadline for call-in was Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2005 and that no items had been called in from the meeting of the Executive on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2005.

**6. The Executive List of Decisions for the Meeting that took place on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2005**

RESOLVED;-

that the list of Decisions for the Executive Meeting on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2005 be noted.

7. **Briefing Notes/Information Updates requested by Select Committee following consideration of Version 9 of the Forward Plan**

(i) ***TfL Transportation Capital Approval Programme 2005/06***

Qassim Kazaz (Transportation Unit) and the Lead Member for Environment and Planning were both present at the meeting for this item to respond to Members' questioning.

Mr Kazaz (Transportation Unit) outlined the briefing note before Members and explained that an annual submission had been completed in July 2004 and presented to the Mayor of London. The Borough spending plan had been submitted to the London Mayor in August 2004 and had been accepted by TfL, consequently just under £5m had been allocated to the Council for 2005/06. A further £500k had been allocated through sub-regional partnership.

Members were advised that the report to the Highways Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2005 sought approval for spending plans for particular schemes and requested approval for the Director of Transportation to be given powers to design and implement chosen schemes in 2005/06. Members noted that the programme had to be completed by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006.

The Lead Member for Environment and Planning confirmed that the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) would replace the Borough Spending Plan as of 2006 and would outline the Transportation Unit's policies and proposals for a five-year period. Widespread consultation would be undertaken with local residents to enable them to contribute to the development of the detailed plan. Consequently, officers from the Transportation Unit were currently attending all local area consultative forum (ACF) meetings in order to discuss the plan with local residents and identify local views on transportation priorities across the Borough.

In response to a query from the Chair, Mr Qassim confirmed that the Council had bid for approximately £10m and been successfully allocated £5½m, one of the highest bids in London.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

(ii) ***Main Grants Programme (EAL)***

Jamal Ettetuani (Team Leader, Grants) and Marianne Locke (Assistant Director, Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services) were both present at the meeting for this item to respond to Members' questioning.

Marianne Locke (Assistant Director, Lifelong Learning and cultural Services) outlined the report to the Executive in April 2005 regarding the main EAL grants programme. Members were advised that in addition to existing organisations on the programme, eleven new organisations would receive funding. The total amount of funding through the programme would be £1.2m.

In response to a question from Councillor Sengupta, Mr Ettetuani explained that he would confirm to Councillor Sengupta after the meeting the exact amount of funding to the new organisations.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

(iii) ***Dollis Hill House Proposals for the restoration and adaptation into a health centre and facility for the community***

Marcus Perry (Corporate Property) and the Lead Member for Environment and Planning were both present at the meeting for this item to respond to Members' questioning.

Mr Perry advised Members that the tPCT had been scheduled to attend a recent ACF meeting in order to discuss the PCT's proposals for the development of the Dollis Hill House site. However, due to problems with the proposal, the tPCT's presentation had been postponed.

Members were advised that following a presentation to the main tPCT Board in February 2005, the Project Team had been requested to formulate a more robust business case for restoration of Dollis Hill House. Mr Perry then outlined the Board's main concerns about the running costs of the proposed facility and overall financial responsibility for the venture. He confirmed that the Project Team needed to consider other viable sites for the development of a medical facility in order to compare the costs of such a development against the anticipated costs of redeveloping the Dollis Hill House site.

Marcus Perry confirmed that the report would be deferred to a future meeting of the Executive to allow the Project Team to

further consider its proposals and seek approval from the main Board. A verbal update regarding the proposal was expected to the main Board in March 2005. He explained however that if the Project Team was unsuccessful with this proposal, there were few viable options regarding the future development of Dollis Hill House. He stressed that the Project Team was currently unable to justify the running costs of such a development and that this remained the crucial area on which they needed to firm up their business case.

The Lead Member for Environment and Planning explained that similar problems had previously been experienced by the Dollis Hill Trust regarding the development of a viable and robust business case. Mr Perry explained that the community element of any proposal was crucial and that the facilities had to remain affordable for local residents. The Lead Member stressed that should the tPCT be unsuccessful, the site might have to be demolished, subject to English Heritage's consent.

In response to a query from Councillor Hughes, Mr Perry explained that a number of development options had been considered but had proven unsuccessful. He referred to the issue of LDA funding and explained that officers had approached the LDA regarding viable funding options for the restoration of Dollis Hill House but this had not proven to be successful. The Lead Member explained that should the current proposal fail, the Council would consider the development of a lower scale community facility of some kind or the creation of a park.

In response to a query from the Chair, Mr Perry confirmed that the main Board meeting would take place in early May 2005. A verbal update would be provided to the main Board by the PCT Project Team in March 2005.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

(iv) ***Environment Fees and Charges***

Michael Read (Assistant Director, Environment) and the Lead Member for Environment and Planning were both present at the meeting for this item to respond to Members' questioning.

Michael Read (Assistant Director, Environment) advised those present that as part of the budget setting process all service areas were expected to achieve 2% savings and that consequently fees and charges across the service areas had

been reviewed. Mr Read advised Members that the forthcoming report to the Executive included proposed inflationary increases across a range of Environmental Services including the cemetery and mortuary service. Commenting specifically on the Citizenship Checking Service, Mr Read explained that once the pilot had concluded the Council would seek to increase its service charges from £20 to £30. He explained that Brent was one of only six or seven local authorities that offered this service and therefore there was a demand. With regard to other service areas, Members were advised that Land Charges had risen from £180 to £190 and that this would generate an additional £60,000 for the year. However this still left a budget downfall due to price increases in the housing market. With regard to the Cemetery and Mortuary Service, Members were advised that the charges had already been reviewed and increased in light of the need to develop a more businesslike approach. Consequently, the Executive was being asked to grant retrospective approval to the increased charges.

In response to a question from Councillor Hughes regarding charges for the Citizenship Checking Service, Mr Read confirmed that £37 of the processing fee received by the Home Office for this service was offered to the Council to cover ceremonial costs.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

(v) ***Review of Fees and Charges – Sports Service***

Michael Read (Assistant Director, Environment) and the Lead Member for Environment and Planning were both present at the meeting for this item to respond to Members' questioning.

Michael Read (Assistant Director, Environment) explained that the report to the Executive provided a strategic assessment of all fees and charges for all sporting facilities across the Borough. Members noted that the Best Value Review of the Sports Service had highlighted the need to carefully review fees and charges and improve sport services across the Borough. Mr Read explained that it was important to determine (i) which facility/user should be targeted to maximise income and get most from the facilities, and (ii) which users should be given discounts for these services. Members were advised that a separate review had been undertaken to look at sports facilities and fees and charges issues and therefore the outcome of the review would be presented to the April meeting of the Executive.

The possible introduction of a leisure card in the near future would also be considered at this time.

At this point Members were advised that the Council had to be clear about charging options before the Charteris/Vale Farm tender was finalised. The Lead Member for Environment and Planning confirmed that the Council wanted to ensure that charges aligned with corporate policies.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

(vi) ***Review of Fees and Charges for Adult Services***

Gordon Fryer (Social Services) and the Lead Member for Health and Social Care were both present at the meeting for this item to respond to Members' questioning.

The Lead Member for Health and Social Care advised those present that the report to the Executive would ask Members to note non discretionary charges and to approve a 3% increase in discretionary charges, in line with benefit charges. He confirmed that this was a normal rise. At this point a note was circulated to Members of the Select Committee to provide a breakdown of fees and charges.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

(vii) ***Grants to Voluntary Sector Organisations for Social Care***

Gordon Fryer (Social Services) and the Lead Member for Health and Social Care were both present at the meeting for this item to respond to Members' questioning.

The Lead Member for Health and Social Care advised those present that the Social Services Department had worked hard throughout the year to help organisations make contractual arrangements rather than continuing on the grants programme. Consequently only six organisations were planned to receive future grants and it was anticipated that by October 2005 all of these organisations would have agreed contractual arrangements. Henceforth there would be no further need to come back to the Executive and seek approval for grants to voluntary sector organisations. The Lead Member for Health and Social Care confirmed that organisations preferred to have contractual arrangements in place rather than bidding for grants.

Councillor Taylor enquired about the New Testament COG. Mr Fryer confirmed that this was a community based project that provided a three-day a week day centre offering welfare advice, transport for service users, a youth club, a summer youth scheme and a range of other services that were available to people receiving assistance from Social Services. The Lead Member confirmed that this was an important organisation that provided important services.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

**8. The Forward Plan (*Issue 10 2004/2005*)**

Issue 10 of the Forward Plan (07/03/05 to 01/07/05) was before Members of the Select Committee. Following consideration of this document the Select Committee requested further information to future meetings on the following issues:-

(i) *Copland School – Sale of Land*

Request for a briefing note to the meeting of the Select Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2005. The Lead Member and lead officer were not requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questioning.

(ii) *Lyon Park – Disposal of Caretaker's House*

Request for a briefing note to the meeting of the Select Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2005. The Lead Member and lead officer were not requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questioning.

(iii) *Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services – Fees and Charges 2005/06*

Request for a briefing note to the meeting of the Select Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2005. The Lead Member and lead officer were not requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questioning.

(iv) *Highways Maintenance Major Works Programme*

Request for a briefing note to the meeting of the Select Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2005. The Lead Member and lead officer were requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questioning.

RESOLVED:-

that briefing notes on the above items be presented to the Select Committee at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2005, in addition to any briefing notes that had been requested at previous meetings of the Select Committee following consideration of earlier versions of the Forward Plan.

9. **Item considered by the Executive that was not Included in the Forward Plan**

RESOLVED:-

that it be noted that the following item had been considered by the Executive which was not included in the Forward Plan:-

*Willesden Leisure Centre PFI – Authority to Issue Certificates*

The Lead Member for Environment and Planning advised those present that for reasons of urgency, this report which had not been included on the Forward Plan, had been considered by the Executive on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2005. Councillor Taylor confirmed that as Chair of Scrutiny he had given consent that the item be considered under urgency procedures.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee take place on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

11. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There was none.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

W DROMEY  
Vice-Chair in the Chair

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