

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 29th November 2005 at 7.30 pm

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

Also present was Councillor Coughlin (Lead Member for Corporate Resources).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fox, Jones, Moher and Nerva.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

There were none.

2. Deputations

The Chair advised Mr Chambers that he would be invited to address the Select Committee about Dollis Hill House at the appropriate time under item 7.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting – 27th October 2005

RESOLVED: -

that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th October 2005 be received and approved as an accurate record, subject to: -

- (i) the inclusion of apologies of absence having been received from Councillor Harrod; and
- (ii) an amendment to Item 11, Date of Next Meeting which should read as: “(i) that the meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee scheduled for 21st December 2005 be postponed to take place on an alternative date in January 2006, subject to room and Member availability and agreement by the Democratic Services Manager.”

4. Matters Arising

Recommendations for Award of Contract for Bridge Strengthening and associated works outside Wembley Park Station

The Select Committee noted the update précis notes which had been circulated to Members regarding the Wembley Redevelopment proposals and CCTV provision in the Wembley area.

Letter to Chief Executive

Councillor Blackman confirmed that a letter would be sent to the Chief Executive in the near future outlining the Select Committee's concerns and frustrations regarding deferred/delayed reports.

5. **Call-in of Executive Decisions from the Meeting of the Executive on 14th November 2005**

Members of the Select Committee were advised that following a successful call-in, a special meeting of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel had been scheduled to take place on Thursday, 8th December 2005 to enable Members to consider the decisions taken by the Executive with regards to the Expression of Interest for a Second Academy in Brent. Decisions regarding this report had been taken by the Executive at its meeting on Monday, 14th November 2005.

6. **The Executive List of Decisions for the Meeting that took place on 14th November 2005**

The Lead Member for Corporate Resources advised those present that at its meeting on 14th November 2005, the Executive considered the comments expressed by the Forward Plan Select Committee at an earlier meeting regarding the sale of land at Alperton School. The Chair had attended the Executive meeting and spoken on the issues raised by the Select Committee regarding this matter. Members were advised that the Executive had amended its earlier decision in light of the comments put forward by the Select Committee.

RESOLVED: -

that the Executive List of Decisions be noted.

7. **Briefing Notes/Information Updates requested by Select Committee following consideration of Version 6 (2005/06) of the Forward Plan**

(i) ***Parking Policy***

Keith Balmer (Director of StreetCare) outlined the details contained in the briefing note before Members of the Select Committee. He confirmed that a parking conference had taken place earlier in the year with approximately 50 attendees present at the conference. Members were advised that the results of the conference would be fed into the parking policy and that a draft Parking Enforcement Plan was to be prepared for formal adoption in June/July 2006. With regard to the parking enforcement contract, Members were advised that the contract had commenced in July 2005 and would not be re-

tendered for some time. Following a query by the Chair, it was confirmed that there may some contractual amendments in the future.

In response to a query from Councillor Harrod, Keith Balmer explained that attendance at the parking Conference had been organised by the Transportation Unit with residents and business representatives invited to attend. At this point the Chair requested that a note be circulated to all Members of the Forward Plan Select Committee outlining the rationale behind the Parking Conference and providing details about those people that attended the conference, including local councillors. The Chair stressed the significance of being informed about the outcomes of the conference, particularly if these were to influence the Parking Strategy. Some Members queried the level of involvement by local residents and sought clarification regarding how residents were selected to attend the event so as to ensure participation by a cross-representation of residents from across the Borough. Keith Balmer then explained that consultation would take place between January and March 2006 and that approval would be sought from the Executive on the Parking Enforcement Plan in mid-summer 2006.

RESOLVED: -

- (i) that the briefing note be noted;
- (i) that further information regarding the organisation of and outcomes of the Parking Conference be circulated separately to Members of the Forward Plan Select Committee.

(ii) ***Dollis Hill House***

The Chair of the Forward Plan Select Committee invited Mr Chambers to address the Select Committee. Mr Chambers explained that following consideration of this issue at the meeting of the Select Committee in July 2005, there was little to indicate that progress had been made regarding the Trust's development of a business plan. Mr Chambers went on to outline a number of issues regarding the development of Dollis Hill House including references to the Local Development Framework, the statement of community involvement, the potential allocation of Section 106 funding to Dollis Hill House, the relationship between Dollis Hill House and the draft Cultural Strategy and potential involvement by the Mayor of London for the future development of Dollis Hill House.

Shaun Faulkner explained that on the basis of discussions that had taken place at the Forward Plan Select Committee meeting in July 2005, he had subsequently written to the Trust to request the revised business plan. However, this document had not been received and no indications given as to when the revised business plan would be submitted to the Council. Members were advised that a request had recently been submitted by the Trust under the Freedom of Information Act for all documentation regarding Dollis Hill House. In response to comments made by Mr Chambers, the Lead Member explained that although some monies had been allocated to the development, a business plan was necessary to support the future development and to make it an attractive venture. Members were advised that whilst the Council was trying to progress the matter as best as possible, all parties were waiting for submission of the business plan. The Lead Member for Corporate Resources explained that a future report to the Executive depended on when the business case was presented by the Trust. Whilst a report was anticipated at the Executive meeting in January 2006, it was unlikely that a decision would be taken in the near future regarding Dollis Hill House.

Referring to the Trust's failure to secure lottery funding to develop a business plan as a result of involvement in the redevelopment proposals by the tPCT, the Chair sought clarification regarding the current position. Shaun Faulkner confirmed that during a meeting in the summer, he had shown Trust representatives a letter that indicated that the Trust was very unlikely to secure lottery money in order to develop a business plan. The Select Committee requested to see a copy of the letter regarding HLS funding. Following a query regarding whether the Trustees were still enthusiastic about developing a business plan, Mr Chambers explained that there was little dialogue between local residents and the Trust regarding the future development of Dollis Hill House but that the Trust was doing a good job.

RESOLVED: -

- (i) that the briefing note be noted;
- (ii) that a further briefing note be presented to a future meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee in advance of a report being presented to the Executive for consideration regarding Dollis Hill House (whenever appropriate);
- (iii) that representatives from Dollis Hill House Trust, relevant officers and the Lead Member be requested to attend the

appropriate meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee to respond to questions; and

- (iv) that a copy of the letter outlining the Trust's likelihood of securing HLS funding be circulated to Members of the Select Committee for information.

(iii) ***Ground Work Trust Western Extension Consultation***

Keith Balmer (Head of StreetCare) advised those present that in Irfan Malik's absence he would attempt to answer any questions put forward by the Select Committee. Members were advised that this report sought approval to go out to consultation on a groundwork trust for the Borough to address social and/or economic needs arising from deprived areas across Brent. Members were advised that the Ground Work Trust would work with partner agencies to identify specific projects. It was noted that approval was sought to go out and consult with the Council's stakeholders, including business partners and voluntary organisations, to assess how a Ground Work Trust could benefit the Borough. Outlining the future process, Members were advised that following an approach by Ground Work West London and the Council to Ground Work UK, the matter would come back to the Executive for agreement to submit a bid to the ODPM via Ground Work UK, seeking financial contributions. Members were advised that this forthcoming report to the Executive was the first stage of the process.

Councillor Dromey explained that Ground Work had been involved in initiatives in both Roe Green Park and Grove Park and that feedback from local people in these areas had been very positive. He explained that there had been a great deal of community engagement and extensive consultation had been undertaken. Shaun Faulkner (Head of Parks Service) explained that Ground Work was able to access various grants for environmental/business development and had demonstrated its ability to pull different sections of the Council together and maximise funding opportunities. He confirmed that Ground Work had recently contacted the Parks Service about future environmental improvement projects. At this point the Lead Member for Corporate Resources confirmed that this report would be considered at the January meeting of the Executive.

Following a query by the Chair with regard to the Council's financial contribution to the project, Keith Balmer explained that this would depend on the outcome of the consultation and the particular projects that would be undertaken. The Chair queried which hard to reach group of people would be identified to work

on the project and was advised that the Council would work with Ground Work to identify those groups in need of support. The Lead Member for Corporate Resources explained that Ground Work was plugged into both the Council's research and that of other local authorities which would be used to identify hard to reach people within the Borough so that specific projects could be identified. At this point Shaun Faulkner commented on ground Work projects that had been undertaken in St Raphael's and South Kilburn.

RESOLVED: -

that the briefing note be noted.

(iv) ***John Billam – Update on Progress***

Shaun Faulkner (Head of Parks Service) provided a brief update for Members regarding the pavilion at John Billam Sports Ground and outlined the main issues to be considered by the Executive at a future meeting. Members were advised that the GAA had now dismissed the original on site contractor and had appointed new contract managers to specify and quantify the outstanding works, had re-tendered these works and had appointed a new contractor in February 2005. Consequently, work was almost complete and feedback from the majority of residents was positive. Shaun Faulkner confirmed that the changing rooms exceeded earlier expectations with work having been undertaken to a very high standard. Councillors would be invited to attend the site and inspect the work once complete.

In response to a query from the Chair, Shaun Faulkner confirmed that there was no outstanding litigation between the GAA and the previous contractor as the matter had been resolved. Those present welcomed the redevelopment of the pavilion and stressed the potential benefits for local residents. The Chair stated that he looked forward to the opening in the near future.

RESOLVED: -

that the briefing note be noted.

(v) ***Joint Commissioning with PCT (now entitled Joint Working with the PCT)***

The Lead Member for Corporate Resources explained that a decision had been taken to withdraw this item from the December meeting of the Executive as a result of questions about PCT funding. The Council was awaiting information from

the PCT and a further debate would be necessary regarding the PCT's proposals on joint commissioning before a report could be presented to the Executive. The Lead Member for Corporate Resources confirmed that the framework outlined in the briefing note was still envisaged but that the Council was unable to define the financial implications until a response was provided by the PCT. It was anticipated that a report on this item would be submitted to the January meeting of the Executive.

RESOLVED: -

that the briefing note be noted.

8. **Information requests about items that were previously considered by the Executive**

Revised Park Strategy for Brent 2004 to 2006 and the Development Plan for Allotments 2004 to 2008

Shaun Faulkner (Head of Parks Service) commented on the Parks Service's achievements in recent years including the granting of Beacon status and an award for the Best Beds in the Greater London area. Members were advised that a significant amount of monitoring work had been undertaken in recent years including the annual residents' survey, the outcome of which enabled the Council to make improvements such as enhanced security and safety in parks and the reintroduction of the warden scheme. Shaun Faulkner referred to the allocation of capital funding and grant funding which had led to significant outcomes including the Northwick Park golf course development. Commenting on the work that had been undertaken by the Parks Service with regards to the Borough's allotments, Shaun Faulkner explained that there had been a significantly greater investment in allotments and overall occupancy had subsequently risen from 60% to 90% with waiting lists now on 14 of the 23 allotment sites. Shaun Faulkner stressed that residents were now very happy with the Council's approach to management of allotment sites.

In response to a query from Councillor Kansagra regarding toilet provision in Gladstone Park, Shaun Faulkner explained that public toilets, co-managed by the Council and an on-site café, were available in the park adjacent to the Stables Art Gallery. Members were advised that these were co-managed by the Council and an on-site café. It was noted that new changing rooms were to be developed at the park and that refurbished toilets would be available for use at peak times. Those present noted that the Council was looking at ways to increase public toilet facilities within the park and was working with residents and businesses to identify suitable options. In response to a further question from Councillor Kansagra regarding the development of a new community centre and combined facilities in the park, Shaun Faulkner

explained that a lot of work had been undertaken on site and it was hoped that there would be a greater increase in sports provision and subsequent improvements to the park and other facilities. At this point the Lead Member for Corporate Resources explained that despite attempts by the Council to secure the development of a new community centre and combined facilities at the park, the potential investors had declined to progress the matter further.

At this point, with the approval of the Chair, Mr Chambers expressed concern that parks were not going to be included in the forthcoming Cultural Strategy. Mr Chambers explained that he was a member of the Gladstone Park Committee and that an application had been made to register the park as a new green/community green. He then went on to comment on the potential future use of the railway through Gladstone Park and queried whether this would be viable. Commenting on the possibility of a cycle route being established through the park Mr Chambers sought clarification as to whether this was a viable proposition. With regard to toilet provision, Mr Chambers expressed concerns that there did not appear to be an on-going commitment to include toilets in the borough's parks. Shaun Faulkner explained that he was unable to provide further details regarding attempts to declare Gladstone Park as a community space but confirmed that further details would be circulated in due course. Referring to the potential introduction of the cycle route through the park, Shaun Faulkner explained that whilst he was not aware of such a proposal, it could potentially be a viable option subject to the outcome of wide consultation.

With regard to toilet provision within the parks, Shaun Faulkner outlined existing toilet provision within the Borough's parks and stressed that a significant amount of work had been undertaken by the Council to improve public toilet facilities for local residents. It was noted that the Parks Strategy 2006 would further consider the issue of toilet provision.

Section 106 – Update

Commenting on the update note circulated in the agenda and the accompanying Section 106 schedule, the Lead Member for Corporate Resources explained that a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Executive regarding a proposal to establish a standard unitary charge which could be allocated to needy sites in a more flexible approach to S106 spending. Members welcomed the suggestion that the Forward Plan Select Committee should consider the unitary charge proposals in advance of a report going to the Executive.

RESOLVED: -

that the following information updates/clarification responses be noted: -

- (i) ***Pavilion at Neasden Recreation Ground***
- (ii) ***Salisbury Road Car Park Site: Proposed Sale***
- (iii) ***Disposal of Access Road Leading to Jewish Cemetery, Pound Lane***
- (iv) ***Draft Air Quality Action Plan***
- (v) ***Revised Parks Strategy for Brent 2004-2006 and a Development Plan for Allotments 2004-2008***
- (vi) ***Youth and Community Centres – Update***
- (vii) ***Section 106 – Update***
- (viii) ***Wembley Redevelopment – Crowd Safety and Security***

9. **The Forward Plan (Issue 7 2005/2006)**

Issue 7 of the Forward Plan (05/12/05 to 07/04/06) was now before Members of the Select Committee. Following consideration of Issue 7 of the Forward Plan, the Select Committee made the following requests: -

(i) ***Lease of Advertising Hoarding***

The Lead Member for Corporate Resources explained that following withdrawal of this report from the forward Plan a report would be re-submitted to the Executive in January 2006. The Select Committee requested a briefing note regarding the lease of advertising hoarding to the meeting of the Select Committee that would take place on 9th January 2006. The appropriate lead officer/lead Member were requested to attend the meeting to respond to questions.

(ii) ***Dollis Hill House***

The Select Committee requested a briefing note regarding this item to the 9th January meeting of the Select Committee if appropriate. However, it was anticipated that this report would not be available until the end of January 2006.

(iii) ***Cultural Strategy***

The Forward Plan Select Committee noted that a request to receive a briefing note on this item had already been made at an earlier meeting of the Select Committee. It was anticipated that a briefing note would be circulated to the meeting on 9th January

2006. The lead officer and the Lead Member for this item would be requested to attend the meeting to respond to questions.

At this point the Chair expressed concern that the Children and Families Department had programmed no items into the Forward Plan. The Lead Member for Corporate Resources explained that he would pursue the matter with the Director of Children and Families.

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

There were none.

11. Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: -

that the next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 21st December 2005 be postponed to take place on Monday, 9th January 2006.

12. Any Other Urgent Business

There was none.

The meeting ended at 9.12 pm

R BLACKMAN
Chair

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