

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE
Monday, 30th January 2006 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor R Blackman (Chair), Councillor Dromey (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Harrod, Kansagra, Lorber (alternate), J Moher and Nerva.

Also present was the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ann John), Councillor Fox (Lead Member for Adults, Health and Social Care), Councillor H B Patel (part), Councillor R S Patel (Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Development) and Councillor Thomas (Lead Member for Housing and Customer Services).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hughes and Councillor Jones (Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture).

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

There were none.

2. Deputations

There were none.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting – 9th January 2006

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2006 be received and approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

There were none.

5. Change of Order of Business

RESOLVED:-

that the order of business be amended as follows.

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

(i) *Leaseholder Services Charges Capping Proposal to Leaseholders in South Kilburn*

The Lead Member for Housing and Customer Services (Councillor Thomas) and the Director of Housing and

Community Care (Martin Cheeseman) were present at the meeting for this item.

Councillor Thomas referred to the draft report before the Select Committee which would be considered at the Executive meeting on 13th February 2006. He explained that it was reasonable to ask leaseholders to meet the costs of the works that would be undertaken to bring properties up to and in excess of the Decent Homes standard. In response to a query from the Chair, the Director of Housing and Community Care (Martin Cheeseman) explained that this would be a one off proposal supported by funding from central government to bring properties in the South Kilburn area up to the Decent Homes standard. It was noted that the NDC had increased the standard of the Masterplan and that the cap would be significantly higher in South Kilburn compared to costs incurred by leaseholders elsewhere. In response to a query concerning the implications for right to buy applicants, the Director of Housing and Community Care confirmed that work would be undertaken on any properties where any applications were outstanding but that once properties had been purchased residents would have to meet the cap. It was confirmed that the NDC would provide a grant equivalent of costs and there be no incurred costs to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Councillor Nerva stressed the need to ensure value for money for all leaseholders and the need for assurances for residents that the work would be undertaken to a high standard. He highlighted the importance of ensuring that adequate information was routinely fed back to leaseholders about the proposed works and anticipated costs. He also commented on the need for clarity about methods of payment and adequate safeguards. In response to a query concerning the distribution of leasehold properties across the borough, the Director of Housing and Community Care explained that the cost of works on multi-unit sites were generally higher than individual units but provided assurances that all works would be undertaken to a high standard. Value for money would be guaranteed through the normal BHP tendering processes and was noted that widespread consultation via BHP would be undertaken with local residents in advance of the commencement of works. Members were advised that the normal safeguards for payment were in place.

In response to a query concerning the differentials in costs that would be incurred by leaseholders, the Director of Housing and Community Care explained that there was a significant variation in the costs to be incurred by leaseholders as a result of the

different types of work that would be undertaken. It was noted that a number of significant projects would be undertaken.

The Director of Housing and Community Care confirmed that internal improvements had already commenced on properties in South Kilburn but that external works was yet to commence. Following a query concerning value for money for double glazing works, Members were advised that particularly high standards of work had to be undertaken especially on multi-unit sites and that consequently the costs were significantly higher and the procurement process more complicated. It was noted that planning considerations had to be taken into account and subsequently such work was procured collectively. Following a query concerning financial safeguards for the Council, it was suggested by Councillor Lorber that some consideration should be given to the Council imposing claw back arrangements if a property was sold within a period after the owner had received a grant. The Director of Housing and Community Care indicated that this would be considered. Following a query from the Chair about the potential increase in costs and the implications for the Cap, Members were advised that the Council needed some flexibility to set the cap so that changes in costs and allocation of grants could be taken into account. It was noted that residents could not be notified about the final cap figure until the cost of works had been estimated. Negotiations concerning the estimates were on-going. The Select Committee stressed that residents needed to be assured from the outset that the cap figure would not increase over time as a result of unexpected rising costs during the next two years during which time the works programme would be undertaken.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the briefing note be noted; and
- (ii) that the comments made by Members of the Forward Plan Select Committee concerning the Leaseholder Services Charges Capping Proposal to Leaseholders in South Kilburn be forwarded to the Executive in advance of a decision being taken on this item.

(ii) ***Joint Commissioning with tPCT***

The Lead Member for Adults, Health and Social Care (Councillor Fox) and the Director of Housing and Community Care (Martin Cheeseman) were present at the meeting for this item.

The Lead Member for Adults, Health and Social Care outlined the detail contained in the briefing note and explained that on-

going negotiations were underway. The Director of Housing and Community Care confirmed that a meeting with the tPCT was expected to take place in the near future and that following the release of the White Paper on Adult Social Care, the relationship between the Council and the tPCT would be considered further and reported back to the Executive.

With regards to the tPCT's financial status it was noted that whilst there would be a strong commitment by the tPCT to long-term partnership working, there was still some uncertainty regarding available resources and potential limitations. The Lead Member stressed the need for clarity regarding the financial implications from the outset so that adequate arrangements could be agreed. It was confirmed that as a result of partnership working there would be varying degrees of joint liability with adequate arrangements put in place. The situation regarding the proposed redevelopment of Northwick Park was clarified and Members noted that the Adult Social Care Panel and the Health Overview Panel would be kept updated. The Chair acknowledged the timescales for further scrutiny of the Joint Commissioning with the tPCT report but suggested that the item be considered in further detail by the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel or the Health Overview Panel, if possible.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the update be noted; and
 - (ii) that the Joint Commissioning with the tPCT report be considered in further detail by the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel or the Health Overview Panel, if possible.
- (iii) ***Parking Policy - Update***

The Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture was unable to attend the meeting for this item.

Qassim Kazaz (Head of Strategy, Transportation Unit) provided an update for Members about the Parking Policy report which was scheduled for consideration at the Executive meeting in March 2006. Members were advised that the revised Parking Policy would reflect significant changes that had taken place since 2000 in terms of traffic management and transportation considerations across the borough. It was noted that work was on-going to develop the draft Policy which would be circulated widely for consultation following approval by the Executive in March. Members were advised that a Parking Conference had already taken place as part of the informal consultation process and that of the eighty invitees, approximately 40 had attended,

contributing their views for incorporation in the draft policy. It was proposed that following consultation between March-May 2006, the Executive would approve the final draft of the Parking Policy in June 2006. In response to concerns raised by some Members regarding the appropriateness of consulting on this matter around the forthcoming local elections, Mr Kazaz confirmed that the timescales for consultation would be considered following further discussion with the Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture and senior officers within the department.

Councillor Nerva stressed the need for consideration of and detail about issues such as parking enforcement, customer services and standards in the Parking Shop and One Stop Shops and the development of new initiatives to provide greater options for residents in terms of parking and transportation issues across the borough. Some Members queried whether the experiences and practices of other local authorities had been considered. It was suggested that a holistic approach was important and that ward councillors needed to be included in the consultation to ensure widespread discussion and contribution to the Policy. Members suggested that an Executive summary be produced in the final document to maximise accessibility. Some Members commented on specific measures and proposals across the borough concerning traffic barriers and cycle routes and stressed the need for clarity in the policy regarding the Council's position.

Commenting on the Wembley redevelopment, the Chair suggested that there were likely to be problems experienced during the initial stadium opening period and that therefore it was important that these issues did not dictate the introduction of significant measures. Mr Kazaz confirmed that the Policy would include details about a range of issues including parking enforcement and would provide linkage between this and other Council policies. He confirmed that all councillors would be forwarded a copy of the agreed Policy and agreed that consultation with the chairs of the Area Consultative Forums could be considered.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

7. Call-in of Executive Decisions from the Meeting of the Executive on 16th January 2006

The deadline for call-in was Monday, 23rd January 2006. Upon the deadline the threshold for the number of requests necessary to trigger

a call-in was exceeded concerning the following items: - Wembley Regeneration and the Casino Advisory Panel and Review of Cemetery Service. The Executive reports concerning these items were before Members of the Select Committee and the relevant lead officers and Lead members for each item had been requested to attend the meeting to respond to questions.

Wembley Regeneration and the Casino Advisory Panel

Councillor John (Leader of the Council) and Councillor R S Patel (Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Development) were both present at the meeting to respond to questions on this item, as were Phil Newby (Director of Policy and Regeneration) and Andy Donald (Assistant Director, Regeneration).

The Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Development provided an overview of the report that was considered by the Executive at its meeting on 16th January 2006, concerning this item. The Chair referred to the specified reasons for call-in and focussed primarily on the process that had been undertaken regarding the Council's expression of interest. He queried why such a commitment had been forwarded to the Casino Advisory Panel by the Chief Executive rather than by a formal decision making body of the Council. The Leader of the Council explained that an expression of interest had been submitted as the Council could not afford to miss out on significant regeneration and development opportunities in the Wembley area. Whilst the letter had highlighted the Council's interest, no decisions had been made concerning the final proposal. The Leader then spoke about some of the other 47 authorities, representing all political parties, who had expressed an interest in a resort casino only. The Leader referred to the need for modern conferencing facilities and hotel provision in the area, which could be provided as part of the proposed casino development. The Leader referred to the needs of local residents and highlighted the potential benefits of a regional casino in Wembley including the creation of over 3,500 jobs in the wider Wembley area. The Select Committee was advised that impact assessments were crucial to determine the likely impact of such a development in Wembley and that consequently these would have to be undertaken before the matter could be progressed further. It was noted that a detailed regeneration case would have to be submitted to the Casino Advisory Panel by the end of March 2006 and that detailed consultation would be necessary.

The Chair expressed particular concerns regarding how the expression of interest had been submitted without formal acknowledgement by the Executive and the lack of inclusion of this item on the Forward Plan. He also queried why the casino was now significant to the future of the Quintain development. The Director, Policy and Regeneration confirmed that any proposals would be subject to consideration by the

decision maker once detailed social and economic impact assessments which would explore the regeneration opportunities available to the Council, had been undertaken. It was stressed that the letter set out the Council's view that the development of a casino would only be pursued if it delivered the benefits sought by the Council.

The Chair expressed concerns about the proposed scale of a casino in the Wembley area, as indicated in the expression of interest and the potential social and environmental impact of such a large venue. Whilst acknowledging calls for marketable conferencing facilities in the Wembley area, some Members queried why such a large resort casino option was necessary. The Director of Policy and Regeneration explained that the report to the Executive on 13th March 2006 would include details about the benefits of a large scale casino in the Wembley area following an in-depth investigation to assess the options available to the Council. It was stressed that the Licensing and Planning considerations of any future proposal would have to be considered by Members in the normal manner. The Leader stressed that whilst the Council wanted to develop a high quality multi-use venue any future proposals would only be progressed following detailed impact assessments which ensured that the appropriate facilities for Wembley were developed. Members were advised that the initial concept behind the Quintain development had not referred to a casino but that land ownership of the area surrounding the Wembley development site had subsequently changed.

Councillor Lorber expressed concerns about the process that had been followed to date regarding the proposals and the Council's commitment to developing a casino in Wembley. He referred to existing problems in the Wembley area as a result of the redevelopment such as poor TV reception and commented on the potential impact of a resort casino in Wembley such as noise disturbance and traffic problems. He queried how local residents would feed into the development and whether this proposal reflected their regeneration needs and expectations. Whilst it was acknowledged that regeneration was vital, Councillor Lorber suggested that the environmental and social implications of the proposal were significant and that a smaller venue could sufficiently meet the Council's need for conferencing. Some Members queried whether the resort casino was the only option available to the Council or if the bid could be amended in due course. It was again suggested that since the expression of interest was part of the bidding process, the matter should have been submitted to the Executive for consideration. The Leader explained that the new stadium had encouraged confidence and investment in the area and indicated that a casino would enable a positive regeneration of Wembley.

Andy Donald confirmed that the expression of interest provided Members with the opportunity to agree to a resort casino in the event that there was evidence of the potential benefits. Alternatively,

Members could potentially pursue the development of a smaller scale casino. The Leader explained that marketable conferencing facilities, in line with the Wembley Vision, were dependent on the development of a large scale casino which would also provide a host of additional amenities such as restaurants, bars and shops. Andy Donald explained that the proposal was to provide year round international conferencing facilities for a maximum capacity of 5,000 people in what would be the largest venue of its kind in London. The Chair acknowledged that such a venue would be highly regulated but referred again to socio-economic concerns.

At this point Councillor Moher proposed a motion which acknowledged the decision taken by the Executive concerning the expression of interest, highlighted the Select Committee's reservations regarding the proposal and sought further notification about the proposals following the impact assessments. When put to the vote this motion was CARRIED. With the Select Committee's agreement it was recorded that Councillors Dromey, Harrod, J Moher and Nerva indicated their support for the motion whilst Councillor Lorber voted against the motion. Councillors Blackman and Kansagra did not participate in the vote.

Councillor Kansagra then proposed a motion which highlighted the Select Committee's concerns about the process that been undertaken to date concerning the expression of interest. When put to the vote this motion was CARRIED.

Review of Cemetery Service

Members were advised that due to unforeseen circumstances the Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture and Sue Harper (Assistant Director, Leisure and Registration) was also unable to attend the meeting to respond to Members' questions. Under the circumstances the Select Committee proposed that the matter be deferred to the next scheduled meeting to enable Members to sufficiently consider the reasons for call-in. It was noted that the suspension under Standing Order 21 of implementation of the Executive decision of 16th January 2006 would cease to apply before the date of the next scheduled meeting, unless the Executive agreed to a further period of suspension. It was proposed that a request for a further period of suspension of implementation be forwarded to the Executive and the Director, Environment and Culture. Members asked that their best wishes be forward to the Assistant Director of Leisure and Registration following her involvement in a car accident.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Forward Plan Select Committee notes the report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration following a letter inviting

expressions of interest by councils against the background of the timetable set by the Casino Advisory Panel. The explorative nature of this report for a regional casino only is also noted. In the circumstances, the Select Committee regards this tentative expression of interest as valid and appropriate. However, we reserve a final view until the areas of concern identified are fully researched and addressed such as problem gambling, transport arrangements, crime and noise nuisance. We welcome the assurance that we are only interested if a resort casino provides tangible benefits to local people as at paragraph 5.2 and Appendix 1. The Select Committee awaits the full Statement of Case and formal proposals following an economic impact assessment and the full social impact study as at paragraph 5.3. It also requests that further reports on this matter be circulated to and considered by Members in good time to influence any Executive decisions that may be taken before the deadline for receipt of a full Statement of Case on 31st March 2006;

- (ii) that the Forward Plan Select Committee requests the Executive to note that with regard to the Chief Executive's letter of interest dated 13th December 2005 in respect of a regional casino:- (i) that detailed political discussion as mentioned in the letter did not take place; and (ii) that the timescales from receipt of the letter from the Casino Advisory Panel and production of the letter of interest from the Chief Executive enabled plenty of opportunities for the issue to be discussed by a Council committee and/or the Executive before the letter of interest was submitted to the Casino Advisory Panel; and
- (iii) that the Executive be requested to postpone implementation of the Executive decision previously taken on 16th January 2006 concerning the Review of Cemetery Service so as to enable the Select Committee to consider the call-in at its next scheduled meeting, at which time the Lead Member and the appropriate lead officer will be requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questions. The view of the Select Committee will thereafter be forwarded to the Executive at its meeting on 13th March 2006.

8. The Executive List of Decisions for the Meeting that took place on 16th January 2006

RESOLVED:-

that the Executive List of Decisions be noted.

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

Issue 9 of the Forward Plan (06/02/06 to 02/06/06) was now before Members of the Select Committee. Following consideration of Issue 9 of the Forward Plan, the Select Committee made the following requests:-

Parking Policy

The Forward Plan Select Committee requested that a further briefing note be presented to the Select Committee at its meeting on 28th February 2006 to provide an update on the Parking Policy report. The relevant Lead Member and lead officer were requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questions. Outstanding information concerning the Parking Conference would be circulated separately in due course.

Award of Leisure Management Contract for Vale Farm and Charteris Sports Centres

The Select Committee requested a briefing note to its meeting on 28th February 2006 concerning the detail in the proposed report. The relevant Lead Member and lead officer were requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questions.

Wembley Regeneration and Casino Advisory Panel

The Select Committee requested that an update report be presented to the Select Committee at its meeting on 28th February 2006 providing detail about the anticipated report to the Executive in March 2006. The relevant Lead Member and lead officer were requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questions.

Preston Park Tender Results

The Select Committee requested a briefing note to its meeting on 28th February 2006 concerning the detail in the proposed report. The relevant Lead Member and lead officer were requested to attend the meeting and respond to Members' questions. In particular Members sought clarification as to why the forthcoming report had been deferred.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the above requests be noted;
- (ii) that the Select Committee's previous requests for information on the following items be noted:-
 - (i) Re-tendering of Waste Management Contracts; and
 - (ii) Dollis Hill House – Update.

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

Freeman Family Centre

At its meeting on 16th January 2006, the Executive considered a report on the Freeman Family Centre, which was not included on the Forward Plan. This report was considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with the urgency provisions (Access to Information Rules).

RESOLVED:-

that the reasons for urgency regarding this report be noted.

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee take place on Tuesday, 28th February 2006, subject to clarification about Member availability.

12. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There was none.

The meeting ended at 10.30 pm

R BLACKMAN
Chair

Mins0506/scrutiny/ForPlan30jal