

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE
Tuesday 19th December 2006 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Coughlin (Chair) and Councillors Bessong, Jackson, Kansagra, J Long, Mistry and Powney.

Also present was Councillor Dunwell.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Leaman (Vice-Chair).

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

There were none.

2. Deputations

There were none.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting – 28th November 2006

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2006 be received and approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Call in of Executive Decisions from the meeting of the Executive on Monday 11th December 2006

There were none.

6. The Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on Monday 11th December 2006

RESOLVED:-

that the Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on 11th December 2006 be noted.

7. Briefing notes/information updates requested by the Select Committee following consideration of Version 7 (2006/07) of the Forward Plan

(i) *Regeneration Action Plan*

Andrew Donald (Assistant Director, Regeneration) was present but Councillor O'Sullivan (Lead Member, Regeneration and Economic Development) was not present. The Committee requested that the Chair

write to the group offices to once again express concern at the non—attendance of members of the Executive at meetings of the Forward Plan Select Committee.

Andrew Donald then gave a brief outline of the report to members, explaining that there was an increased emphasis on economic development and on external investment for funding for regeneration schemes. It was also vital that the regeneration strategy included an opportunity for Brent to maximise the benefit of London's hosting of the Olympics and Paralympics in 2012. There had been an extensive consultation exercise prior to producing the Regeneration Action Plan 2007-2009 and the report had been considered and endorsed by the Executive on Monday 11th December 2006.

The Chair invited members of the Committee to raise any questions. Members queried whether the ongoing regeneration of the King's Cross area would impact upon Brent. Andrew Donald, in response, advised that there would be a positive influence in terms of the number of employment opportunities, as well as an impact on the capacity of the large regeneration organisations. Members heard that a negative impact on land value, retail or residential areas was not anticipated, given that demand throughout London remained consistently high.

In answer to a question regarding the impact of the decision not to bid for a casino in Brent, Andrew Donald explained that Wembley remained one of the fastest moving regeneration projects in London, with the recognition that this development must include not just residential areas but also additional benefits. Prospects for supplementary regeneration works included retail areas, the plan for the largest cinema in London and conferencing facilities. It had been recognised that it would be problematic to offer conferencing as a stand-alone option and discussions were ongoing with Quintain regarding the possibility of including such facilities as part of the wider regenerated area, which included hotels, the stadium and the arena.

There was some discussion of the potential effect that new retail areas would have upon the retail area of Wembley High Street and Andrew Donald stated that whilst the two areas would not be in direct competition, it should be recognised that the retail on the High Street had encountered some difficulties, and that it was anticipated that new retail areas would improve the quality of retail throughout Brent, including Wembley, which in turn would meet the needs of customers by providing them with a choice about where to shop.

Some members expressed the view that more needed to be done to make the borough a user-friendly environment for pedestrians, and Andrew Donald advised that the huge improvements made to Wembley Park station and the other stations in the borough had greatly improved the services on offer. He stated however that with ongoing regeneration work planned throughout Brent over the next ten years, it would remain a

challenge to the Council to provide a user-friendly environment to all residents and visitors.

The Committee considered other areas of the borough, including Alperton and the manufacturing units based around Staples Corner, and asked what was planned in order to improve these areas. Andrew Donald explained that small, independently-owned industrial units presented a challenge in terms of moving to more appropriate areas, as given the marginal nature of these businesses the necessary funding for such a move was not always readily available. Work was being conducted in conjunction with the Park Royal Partnership to develop positive strategies in connection with these areas, and to build a strong employment base which would assist residents with remaining in the borough to work. It was noted that this approach had positive environmental implications in addition to assisting Brent's economy.

In response to questions regarding the Cricklewood/Brent Cross expansion, Andrew Donald advised that this project was currently undergoing consultation, with planning permission likely to be applied for during 2007. It was likely that there may be pressure for an expansion of the residential and retail facilities as there wasn't sufficient demand for an expansion of the business facilities.

With regard to which areas were regarded as growth clusters, Andrew Donald advised that film and media, retail and food were all regarded as sectors which were strong in the Borough and should be promoted as investment opportunities. The Committee heard that a detailed economic development plan was scheduled to be presented to the Executive by March 2007.

Members expressed the view that with the budgetary restraints imposed during the current financial year and during the 2007/2008 financial year, the targets detailed in the Regeneration Action Plan could be difficult to achieve and requested further information. Andrew Donald acknowledged the budget position and stressed that a relatively small proportion of the regeneration budget stemmed from the Council's contribution. The loss of some grants did mean that there would be hard choices to be made, but robust bids would be made for available external resources. Following further questions, Andrew Donald advised that the Administration had proposed to cut the Council's general fund contribution to regeneration in 2007/08 by £110 000. This would consist of a transfer of staff and overhead costs for the Harlesden and Stonebridge team out of the general fund and into the regeneration grant fund previously used for this project (£85 000). It would also consist of a cut in the Council's contribution to the Kilburn Town Centre Management initiative of £25 000. In terms of the loss of external regeneration grant, in 2007/08 the following net losses would occur:

- (i) the loss of revenue grants towards employment and neighbourhood work, at a reduction of approximately £1.5 million per annum;

In 2008/09:

- (ii) the loss of neighbourhood renewal grant worth £2.7 million per annum.

The Chair thanked Andrew Donald for his report.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Executive be asked to note the view of the Committee, namely that the Regeneration Action Plan 2007-2009 was poorly resourced, with any cut in finances likely to endanger the proposals to be detailed in the upcoming economic plan scheduled for presentation to the Executive by March 2007.
- (ii) that the report be noted.

(ii) *Wembley: from Vision to Reality*

The Chair invited questions from members, following which a question was posed by members regarding the feasibility of delivering a museum in accordance with the report's proposals. Andrew Donald advised that there was a reasonable opportunity to deliver a museum, which would nonetheless be dependent on available external resources. Members heard that any development for a museum would be rooted in the needs and demands of the local community, and in such a way as to ensure the development would also be commercially viable.

Some members enquired whether there was a market for the higher class of shops proposed for the new retail area. In response, Andrew Donald explained that the shops were planned to be designer outlets and that the developers had identified a demand not only in Brent but throughout London for a shopping destination of this nature.

In answer to a question about Wembley hotel space and whether this customer base should be increased, Andrew Donald advised that the hotels in the Wembley area had the third largest amount of bed space in London, and that it was believed the market for this had the potential to increase but only once the rest of the area's development was more advanced.

The Chair thanked Andrew Donald for his report.

RESOLVED:

that the briefing note be noted.

(iii) *London Olympics and Paralympics 2012 – Fulfilling Brent's Potential*

RESOLVED:

that the briefing note be noted.

(iv) I.T. Strategy

RESOLVED:

that the briefing note be noted.

(v) Amendment of the Air Quality Management Area

RESOLVED:

that the briefing note be noted.

(vi) Draft Parking and Enforcement Plan (PEP)

RESOLVED:

that the briefing note be noted.

(vii) Tree Policy

RESOLVED:

that this information be noted and that a full briefing note be made available to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

(viii) Brent tPCT – update on financial position

RESOLVED:

that the briefing note be noted.

(ix) Day Service Options for Older People

RESOLVED:

that the briefing note be noted.

8. The Forward Plan (Issue 7 2006/2007)

Issue 7 of the Forward Plan (06/11/06 to 09/03/07) was now before members of the Select Committee. Following consideration of Issue 7 of the Forward Plan, the Select Committee made the following requests:-

Cottage – Kenton Road

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item. This briefing note was requested for the meeting of the Select Committee on 30th January 2007. The relevant lead member and lead officer were not requested to attend this meeting and respond to members' questions, subject to the level of detail contained in the briefing note.

Council-wide review of fees and charges 2007/08

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item. This briefing note was requested for the meeting of the Select Committee on 30th January 2007. The relevant lead member and lead officer were not requested to attend this meeting and respond to members' questions, subject to the level of detail contained in the briefing note.

Supply of Library Management System – Participation in the London Libraries Consortium's Framework Agreement

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item. This briefing note was requested for the meeting of the Select Committee on 30th January 2007. The relevant lead member and lead officer were not requested to attend this meeting and respond to members' questions, subject to the level of detail contained in the briefing note.

Tree Policy

Following the update received at this meeting regarding the ongoing consultation process on this item, the Select Committee requested a briefing note subject to the conclusion of the consultation process. This briefing note was requested for the meeting of the Select Committee on 30th January 2007. The relevant lead member and lead officer were not requested to attend this meeting and respond to members' questions, subject to the level of detail contained in the briefing note.

Towards the Mayor's Housing Strategy

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item. This briefing note was requested for the meeting of the Select Committee on 30th January 2007. The relevant lead member and lead officer were not requested to attend this meeting and respond to members' questions, subject to the level of detail contained in the briefing note.

Review of Carlyon and Worksteps

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item. This briefing note was requested for the meeting of the Select Committee on 30th January 2007. The relevant lead member and lead officer were not requested to attend this meeting and respond to members' questions, subject to the level of detail contained in the briefing note.

RESOLVED:-

that the above requests be noted.

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

There were none.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 30th January 2007.

11. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm.

D Coughlin
Chair