

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 25th July 2007 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Leaman (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillors Bessong (alternate for Councillor V Brown), Butt (alternate for Councillor Coughlin), Dunwell (alternate for Councillor Detre), Malik and Powney.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Coughlin, V Brown, Detre and J Long.

1. Appointments to Forward Plan Select Committee

RESOLVED:-

that the following appointments to the Forward Plan Select Committee as agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 24th July 2007 be noted:-

- (i) that Councillor Valerie Brown replace Councillor Corcoran as a Member of the Forward Plan Select Committee;
- (ii) that Councillor Bessong be appointed as first alternate for Councillor Valerie Brown on the Forward Plan Select Committee; and
- (iii) that Councillor Shah be appointed as second alternate for Councillor Valerie Brown on the Forward Plan Select Committee.

2. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

There were none.

3. Deputations

There were none.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting – 4th July 2007

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2007 be received and approved as an accurate record.

5. Matters Arising

Libraries Strategy

The Scrutiny Support Officer confirmed that a report back on the discussions at the PCG meeting scheduled in early July had been deferred until later in the month. Confirmation regarding the timescales for decision making by the Executive were not therefore possible, although a report to the Executive was anticipated in the autumn. Members reiterated their previous request for a detailed update on this item ahead of consideration by the Executive and were

advised that the Select Committee would receive a detailed update at the meeting on 22nd August 2007.

Review of Free Parking Areas

The Scrutiny Support Officer explained that consideration of a report on the Review of Free Parking Areas had been anticipated at the May meeting of the Highways Committee. However, as a result of insufficient information the report had been deferred until further notice. The item would continue to be tracked by the Select Committee.

6. Call-in of Executive Decisions from the meeting of the Executive on Monday, 16th July 2007

There were none.

7. The Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on Monday, 16th July 2007

RESOLVED:-

that the Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on Monday, 16th July 2007 be noted.

8. Briefing notes/information updates requested by the Select Committee following consideration of Version 1 (2007/08) of the Forward Plan

(i) Protective Parking: Wembley Stadium Event Day Parking Controls

Councillor D Brown (Lead Member for Highways and Transportation) was present at the meeting to respond to questions on this item.

The Select Committee had asked that the report which was considered by the Highways Committee on 10th July 2007 be presented to the Select Committee for discussion. Members sought detail regarding the decision that was taken by the Highways Committee and an overview of the implications of protective parking at Wembley Stadium.

The Lead Member for Highways and Transportation, Councillor D Brown explained that a full and frank discussion had taken place at the meeting of the Highways Committee on 10th July 2007. He confirmed that a full review on protective parking measures would take place in the future, at which point all councillors would be invited to comment. Councillor Dunwell referred to an outstanding petition concerning Area 27 of the protective parking zone and opposition by local residents about the proposed inclusion of marked out bays. Whilst acknowledging that this matter was likely to be considered within the review, Councillor Dunwell expressed concern that outstanding petitions of this kind might be omitted from the decision making and consultation process. The Lead Member advised that as the petition predated his role as the Lead Member for Highways and Transportation, Councillor Dunwell should contact

officers within the Directorate to confirm the status of the petition. He asked that he be copied into any future correspondence concerning this matter.

In response to a number of questions from Councillor Powney concerning the proposed timescales for the review, the Lead Member explained that whilst he was unable to clarify when the final report would be completed, the review was expected to commence once the first season of events had concluded at Wembley Stadium. The Lead Member explained that officers would have to clarify the exact start and completion dates of the review and the proposed timescales for reporting back to the Executive. In response to a question concerning the revenue generated from parking fines, the financial implications of issuing 3618 notices and the cost of undertaking 475 removals, the Lead Member again urged members to seek clarification from the service area but stressed that the scheme was intended to protect local residents rather than to generate income. A query was also raised regarding the options available to residents during weddings, funerals and social events. At this point it was agreed that the Scrutiny Support Officer would contact the Directorate for clarification about the issues raised by the Select Committee and information would be circulated.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the report and the decisions taken by the Highways Committee on 10th July 2007 be noted;
- (ii) that the Forward Plan Select Committee record its dismay that officers had not responded to a request that the appropriate officers attend the meeting and respond to questions on this item; and
- (iii) that clarification be sought from the service area on the following issues and circulated to Members of the Forward Plan Select Committee for information:-
 - (a) Clarification regarding the start date of the review;
 - (b) Clarification about the anticipated conclusion date of the review;
 - (c) Clarification about the proposed timescales for consideration of a future report on the outcomes of the review by the Highways Committee;
 - (d) Confirmation about the level of revenue generated by the implementation of protective parking measures;
 - (e) Confirmation about the financial implications of issuing 3618 notices and the cost of undertaking 475 removals; and
 - (f) Clarification regarding the options available to residents during weddings, funerals and other social events.

(ii) Wembley Security Arrangements

The Vice-Chair in the Chair explained that this had been an on-going area of interest for the Select Committee and that more detailed information would be presented to members of the Select Committee for consideration in due course.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the update be noted; and
- (ii) that the item remain on the Select Committee's work programme for future consideration subject to the timescales for decision making by the Executive.

(iii) One Stop Shops and Tricycle Theatre

Councillor Allie (Lead Member, Housing and Community Care) and Sandra Carson (Assistant Director, Customer Service, One Stop Shop) were present at the meeting to respond to questions on this item.

Sandra Carson (Assistant Director, Customer Service, One Stop Shop) outlined the main issues in the briefing note before the Select Committee and addressed a number of specific points raised by members at their meeting on 4th July 2007. In response to concerns that had previously been expressed about informing residents about the new appointments system in operation at the Tricycle Theatre, members were advised about the correspondence that had been circulated and of the customer survey that was being rolled out in the Willesden Local Office to remind people about the interim appointment arrangements in operation. The results of the survey would be available in September and circulated to members for information. In response to concerns raised about reduced confidentiality as a result of the arrangements at Willesden Library, members were advised that there was actually less opportunity for people to be overheard in the office as a result of fewer people waiting to be seen and due to the layout of the office.

With regards to the permanent arrangements for Kilburn, members were advised that the experience of and the outcomes from the interim arrangements would inform the future permanent arrangements as would an analysis of management information, the survey results and feedback from residents. Feasibility work had been undertaken on 13 sites and as a result three had been identified as potential sites for hosting permanent arrangements. Further consideration would now be given to assessing the longer term viability of using either Kilburn Library; the BHP Office or the BACES Office. It was stressed that no decisions would be taken in advance of consultation with members, possibly in September.

Referring to the Kingsbury Shared Service, Ms Carson explained that the tender process was underway and a project plan had been developed from which a scheduled completion date of the end of January 2008 had been determined. Feedback from the Kingsbury Residents Survey which was conducted during May/June 2007 had since been analysed and a draft report submitted to the Project Board on 6th July 2007 for discussion. Work was now underway to analyse the results and some summary information would be circulated to senior members in August. Thereafter, the information would be used to inform the specification of the new shared service which was yet to be given an appropriate name. A decision was expected to be taken in September 2007 regarding the award of contract for the project. Ms Carson then referred to a number of headline issues arising from the survey including

concerns about parking and traffic issues at the site and possible noise and space issues. However, it was noted that on the whole there appeared to be few concerns amongst residents about the creation of a shared service.

In response to concerns expressed by Councillor Malik about the delays that had been experienced with the project and the impact on local residents, some of whom were having to travel longer distances to access Council services, Ms Carson explained that the tender process had been timely but that delays were also likely as a result of seasonal breaks, wiring and testing requirements. A realistic completion in January 2008 was now anticipated. It was noted that an appointments service would be available at the new shared service and residents would be informed about how to access services, taking into account language needs. With regards to staffing levels at the new shared service, staff would undertake generic duties including library work and face-to-face appointments. It was anticipated that 7-9 officers would work at the site but staffing levels and opening hours were yet to be determined, subject to service user requirements.

Following a query from Councillor Bessong concerning a 21% increase in customer demand at Willesden in June 2007 compared to June 2006, members were advised that there had also been an increase in demand at both the Town Hall and Brent House as a result of displaced customers from Kingsbury and Kilburn. Consequently, there had been an impact on waiting times at each site which had exceeded set targets and staff had been relocated. Increases in Housing Benefit and Council Tax enquires both at the local offices and via the call centre had been anticipated but by monitoring the current demand for services, an assessment would be made regarding how resources should be allocated in the future.

Councillor Dunwell queried whether 7-9 officers would be a sufficient number of staff to deal with face-to-face appointments and all other commitments at the new shared service. Ms Carson explained that this number of staff would allow for 2 One Stop Service officers to focus on appointments whilst the remainder of staff moved around the open plan site to meet and greet, interact with service users and respond to queries. Ms Carson explained that identified savings had come from sharing resources and that the emphasis was on enhancing the service and improving facilities in an effort to respond more effectively to customer demand rather than implementing budget cuts. Ultimately, usage would determine the allocation of resources at the site. In response to a further query concerning the availability of additional resources in the future, Ms Carson explained that the Executive was aware that this remained a flexible project that would, for the most part, be driven by customer demand with different communities demonstrating different needs. As a result, other options may have to be considered in the future such as the retention of a drop-in centre in the south of the borough.

In response to comments about parking issues and concerns raised regarding the possible linkage between accessing services and parking, members were advised that some Stag Lane users had expressed concerns about the available parking at Kingsbury Shared Service. It was noted that although the Council could only seek to promote the existing parking and the

Administration's focus remained on promoting the use of public transport, an additional disabled space would be created at this site. Ms Carson confirmed that a set bus service would operate between Kingsbury and Stag Lane for one to two months, depending on demand, in order to promote access to services.

In response to a query regarding the three proposed site options for permanent arrangements in Kilburn, Ms Carson explained that the Council was trying to identify the most suitable places from where to deliver the necessary services, particularly the appointments service. It was acknowledged that the service users in and around the Granville Road and Salisbury Road locations had very different needs. As a result, work would be undertaken to assess how best to deliver services and in the short term a further interim measure may have to be introduced to enable consideration of a suitable longer term approach. It was noted that an interim measure could potentially be in place for 2-3 years until such time that a longer term site was identified and refurbished. However, it was crucial that the project remain flexible to ensure that customer needs were adequately addressed in both short and long term plans. Ms Carson confirmed that following the closure of Dyne Road it had been anticipated that the PCT site would be developed. However, this option was now being reviewed on the basis of user needs, cost implications and PCT plans.

Members were advised that the Tricycle Theatre was an interim measure and was not appearing to be a good use of resources. As a result, a further interim arrangement may be implemented with a view to identifying a suitable long term site and developing a new facility. The timescales were such that a new development or refurbishment of an existing site may not be achieved by March 2008 but it was stressed that the Council had to be sure that the right site had been identified and service user needs would be best met. Following a query about the impact of delays to the Libraries Strategy on the identification of permanent sites for a shared service in the south of the borough, Ms Carson explained that close partnership working with Libraries continued. It was noted that Harlesden Library joint shared service was dependent upon the outcome of a Big Lottery Funding bid in September and that further discussions regarding Willesden and Kilburn would continue. Consequently, the Library Strategy was only one of many contributing factors in terms of identifying broader funding and partnership arrangements.

With regards to a comparison of enquiries figures in 2006/07, it was noted that whilst there was little difference, it was necessary to draw comparisons against April and May 2006/07 to get an accurate picture of usage and needs. It was stressed that a number of cross-Council factors may have impacted on the figures in June 2007 and therefore it was important to assess the figures during a wider period.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the briefing note be noted;

- (ii) that the Lead Member for Housing and Community Care consider the comments made by the Select Committee regarding the potential parking implications at future shared service sites; and
- (iii) that a further update regarding future options for service delivery, particularly in the south of the borough be considered by the Select Committee in September/ October 2007, subject to progress.

9. **The Forward Plan Issue 3 (09.07.2007 to 09.11.2007)**

Issue 2 of the Forward Plan (06.08.2007 to 07.12.2007) was before members of the Select Committee. Following consideration of Issue 3 of the Forward Plan, the Select Committee made the following requests:-

Clock Cottage, Kenton Road, Kenton, Harrow

Members of the Select Committee requested a briefing note to the Select Committee meeting on 22nd August 2007 outlining the background to and detail of the proposed Executive report.

The relevant Lead Member and lead officer for this item were not requested to attend the meeting.

Compulsory Purchase of land at Dollis Hill Industrial Estate for provision of new John Kelly School

Members requested a briefing note on this item to the meeting of the Select Committee on 22nd August 2007 with clarification about the issues relating to progress made towards acquiring land at the Dollis Hill Industrial Estate.

The relevant Lead Member and lead officer for this item were not requested to attend the meeting.

Children's Centres

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item to the Select Committee meeting on 22nd August 2007 in advance of consideration of a report by the Executive in September 2007.

The relevant Lead Member and lead officer for this item were not requested to attend the meeting.

S106 Planning Obligations SPD – Approval for Adoption

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item to the meeting on 22nd August 2007 in advance of consideration of a report by the Executive in September 2007.

The relevant Lead Member and lead officer for this item were not requested to attend the meeting.

Climate Change Strategy

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item to the meeting on 22nd August 2007 in advance of consideration of a report by the Executive in September 2007.

The relevant Lead Member and lead officer for this item were not requested to attend the meeting.

Stonebridge HAT Ballot Result

Members of the Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item to the meeting on 24th October 2007 in advance of consideration of the report by the Executive in November 2007.

At the current time, the relevant Lead Member and lead officer for this item were not requested to attend the meeting.

Dollis Hill House – Results of Marketing Exercise

Whilst members of the Select Committee were mindful that a detailed update had previously been requested to the meeting on 22nd August 2007, members sought an explanation as to why the item had been continuously delayed and requested clarification regarding the timescales for decision making.

Requested briefing notes previously requested and due for consideration at the meeting of the Select Committee on 22nd August 2007:-

- (i) Dollis Hill House – Results of Marketing Exercise*
- (ii) Review of Free Parking Areas*
- (iii) Borough wide roll-out of Free Voucher Parking Trial*
- (iv) Libraries Strategy*
- (v) Award of Contract for the Non-HRA Housing and Social Care PFI Project*

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

There were none.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee will be held on Wednesday, 22nd August 2007.

12. Any Other Urgent Business

There was none.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.

C LEAMAN
Vice-Chair in the chair