

**MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 at 7.30 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Long (Chair) and Councillors V Brown, Butt, Mistry, H B Patel, Powney and Tancred.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Coughlin.

Councillors D Brown (Lead Member for Highways & Transportation), Detre (Lead Member for Regeneration & Economic Development) and Van Colle (Lead Member for Environment, Planning & Culture) also attended the meeting.

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

None declared.

**2. Deputations**

None

**3. Minutes of Last Meeting – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2008 be received and approved as an accurate record.

**4. Matters Arising**

*Apology for absence*

Members noted that Councillor Tancred had left a message with Councillor V Brown before the previous meeting confirming her apology for absence.

*Emission Based Residents Parking Permit Charges*

The Chair sought clarification as to why the report had been withdrawn from the Executive meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> November and would there be another report on this matter. Councillor Powney sought reasons as to why the scheme would not follow the model adopted by Richmond Council. In reply, Councillor D Brown (Lead Member for Highways and Transportation) advised that the report had been merged with a Review of Brent's On and Off-Street Parking Charges and that the charging was emissions based, with some lower emission vehicles receiving parking for free. The scheme devised was not based on the Richmond model but was the most appropriate solution to the circumstances particular to Brent.

5. **Call-in of Executive Decisions from the Meeting of the Highways Committee Meeting on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and the Meeting of the Executive on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008**

*(i) Progress Report on the Controlled Parking Zones Programme*

Councillor D Brown gave a brief introduction to the report, and referring to the reason for call-in, explained that inclusion of Robson Avenue into Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) GS was not to be implemented as there was not majority support from local residents for such a scheme.

The Chair expressed concern that regard had not been given to visitors to the Brent Association of Disabled People (BADP) offices, Willesden Hospital and the Millennium Centre and sought details as to who had been consulted regarding introducing a CPZ scheme to the road. She enquired about the possibility of introducing disabled parking spaces along Robson Avenue. Noting that only 1 property did not have access to off-street parking along this road, the Chair asked whether respondents to the consultation who did have off-street parking should have equal validity to those who did not. Councillor Powney asked what other roads were included in CPZ zone GS and commented that as it was a large area, introducing the CPZ to the entire area if there had been majority support would have been prudent bearing in mind the possibility that Robson Avenue would be subject to displacement parking. Councillor Mistry sought confirmation that all roads in the borough required majority support from residents in the consultation prior to CPZs being introduced.

In reply Hossein Amir-Hosseini (Team Leader, Traffic Management Section, Transportation Unit) confirmed that all properties had been consulted in Robson Avenue in respect of the CPZ and that the Millennium Centre had responded. A consultation form had been sent to a Sonia Edmonds of Willesden Hospital. Hossein Amir-Hosseini also confirmed that the consultation had received 10 responses, 5 supporting inclusion in CPZ zone GS, and 5 against. Members noted that the GS zone also included Furness Avenue and Wrottesley Road which had been included in the CPZ scheme and that the results of any consultation were analysed on a street by street basis.

Councillor D Brown emphasised that CPZ schemes would only be introduced to roads where there was majority support from the consultation. He stated that concerns with regard to disabled parking spaces would be considered and advised that up to 2 disabled parking bays could be introduced to roads even though they were not part of a CPZ. Councillor D Brown also commented that there were examples throughout the borough of one or a small number of roads had not been included in a CPZ in their area as these roads had not shown majority support for such a scheme.

Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member for Environment, Planning & Culture) added that the Highways Committee would in future re-consider the processes involved in consultation and in particular the issue of action to be taken where response rates were low.

The Chair commented that even introducing 2 disabled parking spaces would not resolve the issue of visitors to Willesden Hospital, and in view of the results of the consultation, suggested that the road should be re-consulted and the views sought from both the hospital and BADP. She stated that BADP were likely to submit a petition in respect of parking issues for this road.

RESOLVED:-

that upon considering the report from the Director of Transportation, the decisions made by the Highways Committee be noted.

**(ii) *Review of Sports Facilities within Brent***

Councillor Van Colle confirmed that the recommendations had been approved by the Executive as set out in the report. A key element of the report was the building of a third major swimming pool in Brent, to be located in the north part of the borough.

Members then discussed at length the various aspects of the report. With regard to the proposed swimming pool, the Chair enquired whether this was likely to be located on Council or privately owned land and what were the timescales involved. The Chair sought details as to how the various objectives of the strategy would be funded. She raised the question of what would be done about the Bridge Park site, commenting that it had been suggested by other service areas that this location could be used to provide housing and she enquired if other community facilities in addition to sports would be considered. She sought views as to whether Unisys would be prepared to sell the entire section of land they owned on the site. The Chair commented that many facilities lacked changing rooms and enquired whether there were any plans to allocate funding to provide these. She also enquired about the type of users for Charteris Sports Centre during the daytime and whether they could make use of a sports hall at St Augustine's School should plans for such a scheme go ahead and what were the timescales for introducing the third swimming pool and improvements to Vale Farm Sports Centre.

Councillor Powney also sought further details with regard to the Bridge Park site. With regard to Charteris, he asked whether the use of land on St Augustine's school was the preferred option. Information was sought as to whether proposals for the third swimming pool would delay improvements to Vale Farm. Referring to proposals for Vale Farm in the report, Councillor Powney sought clarification with regard to the site providing an ideal location for a 'sports village.' Councillor Mistry sought clarification of the ownership of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre and whether Section 106 funds could contribute toward the building of the third major swimming pool or whether such funds were tied to a specific location. She asked whether there were any plans for a swimming area for Roe Green Park and commented that it had been reported that the park was being used by gangs. Overall Councillor Mistry welcomed the review, however she commented that participation in sports in Brent was comparatively low and that more use and improvements to

open spaces was needed. Councillor H B Patel also welcomed the review, stating that it addressed areas that needed to be improved and he suggested that more attention be given to cricket facilities as he felt that there was a large demand for such provision in the borough.

In response to the issues raised, Councillor Van Colle stated that funding was yet to be identified, however the producing of the strategy would increase the Council's prospects of receiving funds, mainly from Government organisations. He reaffirmed that providing a major swimming pool in the north part of the borough was the strategy's first priority as there was an absence of such facilities in that area. It was likely that the swimming pool would be located on Council-owned land. With regard to the Bridge Park site, Councillor Van Colle advised that the co-operation of Unisys who owned land on the site was essential, however Unisys were currently overvaluing the land they owed. The Select Committee heard that providing a new public sports centre on the site was part of the scheme to regenerate the site, whilst other community facilities would also be provided subject to funding and through negotiations with Unisys which would also involve discussion on the proportion of land Unisys would be willing to sell. Councillor Van Colle stated that Roe Green Park was not a suitable venue for a swimming pool as it would involve removing the multi-games use facilities.

Turning to Vale Farm Sports Centre, Councillor Van Colle stated that as a reasonable level of facilities already existed, its redevelopment would not be a first priority until after the third swimming pool had been built and it was proposed that it be a wet and dry leisure centre. With regard to the 'sports village' concept, this could only be undertaken if a change of land classification was obtained and any new building would have minimal impact upon loss of open space. Councillor Van Colle acknowledged that development of sports centres should ideally mean facilities, such as changing rooms, being added whilst they were being built. The use of Section 106 funding depended on the individual terms of each planning application. Councillor Van Colle also advised that the timescales for any of the proposals in the strategy were dependent upon when funding was received.

Gerry Kiefer (Head of Sports Service, Environment and Culture) advised Members that a detailed strategy had been produced in order to enhance the prospects of receiving funding. With regard to Roe Green Park, she commented that this was popular for summer sports activities and that ward working officers and the police had indicated that this was an appropriate location for a multi-use game area. Members heard that Eton Grove open space required extensive draining and levelling. There was not a significant shortfall of health and fitness facilities being provided at Charteris Sports Centre although in order to meet the needs of the area it was possible that the Centre would be refurbished at some stage in the future. The Centre was mainly used by the over 50s, school children and those who worked unsocial hours during the daytime. Any partial closure during the refurbishment would mean that the Council would need to discuss with St Augustine's School the possibility of using their proposed sports hall, which may not be suitable for some activities such as badminton. Gerry Kiefer acknowledged that

additional changing rooms were needed in some locations in the borough although their provision would be dependent upon the funding received.

Michael Read (Assistant Director, Policy and Regulation, Environment and Culture) advised that with regard to Bridge Park, the intention was that both sports facilities and housing could be provided on the site, although the proportion of private and social housing elements were yet to be determined and it was hoped that some affordable housing would be provided. He stressed that the sports centre would be Council controlled and would be publically accessible, although the actual management could be outsourced. The Select Committee heard that the Local Development Framework reports had identified the types of facilities needed in Brent, such as a large swimming pool in the north of the Borough. The progress of any development would be significantly influenced by external factors such as the economy, the housing market and the availability of Government funding and there was not likely to be access to National Lottery funding as most of this had been allocated to the 2012 Olympics. With regard to changing room facilities, Michael Read advised that these were particularly costly to provide and would require partnership funding initiatives to finance. He added that one of the strategy's priorities was pitch improvements and it hoped that these could be tied in with providing changing room facilities. Michael Read also advised that Section 106 Agreements usually identified a specific location of where the funding would be spent.

RESOLVED:-

that upon considering the report from the Director of Environment and Culture, the decisions made by the Executive be noted.

*(iii) Council Travel Plan*

Michael Read introduced the report, stating that the Travel Plan would help address a key Council objective with regard to sustainability which included reducing vehicle emissions and ensuring the Council took the leading role in the community to tackle this issue. The previous Travel Plan adopted in 2000 had been designed to encourage more environmentally modes of transport through soft measures, however this had had a limited impact. Current arrangements, such as providing unrestricted parking, free parking or subsidised commercial parking were contradictory to the Council's objectives and were inconsistent, inequitable and unsustainable. Meanwhile, very little in the way of subsidies were provided to staff who walked, cycled, or used public transport to travel to the workplace. Therefore it was proposed to remove subsidised commercial parking for staff which would represent a saving of £372,000 per year and this saving had been built into projections for the 2009/2010 budget. A charge on Council owed parking spaces, with a rate of £10 per week, or £2 per day being suggested although this was still under discussion. Encouragement to use public transport would include 5% off season ticket loans and such positive measures would be funded by the proposed parking charges.

Michael Read advised that consultation with staff had shown broad support for the proposals, although there had been some concerns raised with regard to the individual circumstances of employees. A review of the allocation of parking spaces would be undertaken for each office location with spaces prioritised by the following:-

1. Staff with disabilities
2. Those who require a car as part of the contract of their employment
3. Staff who can make a strong case for needing access to parking spaces
4. Staff with casual car user status
5. Other personal circumstances identified in the consultation, such as those with childcare considerations

Michael Read stated that most staff would be positively affected by the changes and staff were to be encouraged to consider changes they would need to make to their lifestyle prior to the introduction of the Travel Plan which was proposed for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. During this time, the Council would provide advice and support to staff on alternative measures, such as car sharing or staff travelling by car on certain days. Michael Read stated that such changes to staff's travel arrangements would not have a big an impact as might be imagined, citing the example of the withdrawal of parking spaces last year behind Brent House Annexe which had received no complaints, nor had it affected recruitment or retention. He stressed that through providing staff with clear notice and the necessary support to make changes, that the Travel Plan as proposed would be the right option to pursue.

During discussion, Councillor Mistry expressed concern that the individual's choice of whether to travel by car would be removed and replaced by the Council deciding whether or not the individual's circumstances allowed priority access to parking spaces. In particular, she was concerned about the future of car users with young children and she thought that parking charges would represent an unnecessary cost on staff. She asserted that visitors to the Town Hall One Stop Shop were likely to travel by car and would be inconvenienced by not being able to park near to it. Councillor Mistry suggested that the response rate to the consultation was comparatively low and she enquired whether staff were aware of the significance of the proposals. She also enquired whether the parking charges would cover a 24 hour period and sought clarification as to when the next report on the Travel Plan would be presented to the Executive. Councillor H B Patel stated that car use was still necessary for many staff due to practicalities and convenience, the expense of using public transport and issues concerning safety. He commented that more incentives were needed to travel to work by alternative methods to the car and that the Council should use its influence to improve public transport in the area. Councillor H B Patel also sought clarification as to the one-off costs identified with regard to staff walking to work.

Councillor Powney queried whether parking charges would eventually reflect their commercial value and sought clarification as to any subsidies that would be available to those staff who required car use to be able to fulfil their job requirements and whether those with lower emission vehicles would be

entitled to lower parking charges. He asked whether an interest free loan was available to staff who wished to purchase a car. Councillor Butt expressed concern that public transport use would mean an increase in the time staff spent travelling to work, stating that travel from West to East and vice versa across London was difficult by public transport and he suggested that the Council could provide a shuttle service for staff. He felt that the Council's Travel Plan should reflect travel arrangements made by schools. He also felt that proposals to provide emergency rides home after midnight should be set earlier. He sought details as to how the Essential Car User Allowance would be monitored and would there be any subsidies or incentives offered to travel by moped or motorcycle. With regard to parking charges, Councillor Butt noted that because of the financial impact, it could lead to staff parking on surrounding streets and thereby increasing pressure on parking spaces in these roads. He also sought details with regard to the response rate to the consultation.

Councillor V Brown suggested that flexible working arrangements could allow some staff with children to work from home on occasions, and in relation to schools, stated that most were encouraging parents not to drive their children to school. Councillor Tancred welcomed the report and suggested that all staff and Members should be encouraging greener methods of transport.

The Chair sought further details with regard to travel arrangements for staff with young children and enquired what Council buildings did the Travel Plan apply to and also sought clarification of parking arrangements for Willesden Green Library. She also sought confirmation that the Travel Plan would be implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.

In response, Councillor D Brown emphasised that the funds raised by parking charges would be used to promote sustainable transport use by staff and he explained that a number of other local authorities had already introduced similar schemes, placing greater need on the Council to take such steps to ensure it was in line with other councils. With regard to reduced charges for lower emission vehicles, Councillor D Brown felt that this would be difficult to implement for a number of reasons. In the case of day visitors to the one stop shop, there would be a number of practical issues to overcome involving checking of each vehicle, whilst for staff it was possible that they would nominate a lower emission car but arrive in a different vehicle. He welcomed any moves by the Council to pressurise the relevant organisations and reminded Members that the Public Transport Liaison Meeting was a Forum that pursued such aims. In respect of schools, Councillor D Brown advised that a number of them had green travel plans which the Council provided assistance in implementing. It was noted that subsidies were available for push bicycles, but not scooters or motor bicycles.

Michael Read stated that the Travel Plan would address the inequalities that presently existed whilst also increasing the number of staff using sustainable transport. He advised that many councils already charged staff to park on land they owned and in the long term, it was feasible that the Council would consider charging the real commercial value for parking spaces. Members heard that subsidies already existed for car users, including the Essential Car

User Allowance and the Casual Car User Allowance. Both of these allowances were to be reviewed and stricter criteria would be applied to them. Although lower parking charges for low emission vehicle could be considered, Michael Read suggested that a better alternative could involve applying an emissions based reimbursement for business mileage allowance, of which the current system favoured those with larger vehicles. It was noted that subsidised loans for purchase of cars was no longer available. Michael Read reemphasised that there was still significant consultation to be undertaken with regard to the details of the scheme on a number of issues. In respect of parking spaces, Michael Read advised that there were already limited spaces available and these would be further reduced when the Council moved to the Civic Centre. With regard to priority access to parking spaces, consideration would also be given, and where appropriate, sufficient flexibility shown depending on the personal circumstances of the staff member concerned. Michael Read advised that priority with regard to parking spaces on some sites was dependent on the length of time a staff member was employed by the Council and this was one of the many inequalities that the Travel Plan sought to address. The Select Committee heard that the parking initiatives would apply to all Council sites where there was significant parking provision for staff although this excluded schools as they had different business needs, whilst Willesden Green Library had a public car park. It was likely that parking charges would only apply up to 6.00pm, although there was still consultation to be undertaken with regard to this issue. Michael Read advised that working patterns were likely to change over the next few years, with more opportunities for working from home which would relieve pressure on parking spaces whilst also providing more flexible and convenient working arrangements for staff.

Michael Read confirmed that one-off costs with regard to walking included providing staff with umbrellas and personal security alarms. With regard to the guaranteed ride home scheme, it was noted that this guaranteed a staff member a taxi drive home if other arrangements, such as car share, had failed, irrespective of the destination and this also applied to any meetings which finished after midnight. Michael Read acknowledged that the idea for providing a shuttle service for staff had some merit and that its feasibility could be discussed with Brent Transport Service. Subsidies for scooters or motorcycles were not being pursued due to the relatively high accident rates for this mode of transport. Michael Read reiterated that the 5% off season ticket loans was an attractive incentive and he felt that the package of subsidies to encourage more sustainable transport use was extensive. Overall, public transport users would be financially advantaged and by encouraging such use, pressure would be reduced on parking spaces. Michael Read felt that staff would adapt to the new arrangements and he did not foresee displacement parking in surrounding streets, which were already heavily parked. Michael Read advised that the consultation exercise did not take the form of a conventional survey but was based around group led discussions, including through building user groups which gave opportunity for more useful and detailed feedback. He concluded by stating that it was intended to introduce the scheme by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009, however there was possibility of slippage if key issues required further consideration.

RESOLVED:-

that upon considering the report from the Director of Housing and Community Care, the decisions made by the Executive be noted.

**6. The Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008**

Whilst considering the List of Decisions of the Executive meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008, an extract of the draft minutes of the meeting summarising the Executive's response to the reference from the Forward Plan Select Committee on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2008 was circulated. There was discussion about the role of Executive Members who have been invited to attend scrutiny committee meetings to respond to questions over decisions and reports of the Executive. Members then agreed to the Chair's recommendation that Lead Members should be expected to present the reports to scrutiny committees as opposed to the Lead Officers.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008 be noted; and
- (ii) that Lead Members invited to attend scrutiny committees be expected to present the reports as opposed to the Lead Officers.

**7. Briefing notes/information updates requested by the Select Committee following consideration of Version 6 of the Forward Plan (2008/09)**

- (i) ***South Kilburn Neighbourhood Trust (South Kilburn New Deals for Communities – Options for Succession)***

This item was considered simultaneously with item 7 (ii) below.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

- (ii) ***South Kilburn Regeneration (Proposals for Taking Forward the Delivery of the South Kilburn Masterplan)***

Councillor Detre (Lead Member for Regeneration & Economic Development) introduced this item and 7 (i) above simultaneously and advised that the South Kilburn Neighbourhood Trust (SKNT) was a legal vehicle set up as a legacy body for the South Kilburn New Deals for Communities (SKNDC) and to continue the progress that had been made. Turning to item 7 (ii), Councillor Detre advised that £100 million was required to deliver the regeneration of South Kilburn, however due to a number of reasons including the current economic climate, a £50 million shortfall in funds existed. Negotiations with the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) would continue until the end of January 2009 over increasing the allocation from their Stock Transfer funding pot, however if agreement was not reached by then,

alternatives would need to be considered. Councillor Detre then drew Members' attention to the map enclosed in the report of 7 (ii) highlighting the areas identified for regeneration and he set out the staged approach for the preferred options as set out in the report. In the short term, the land north of Albert Road had been identified to deliver 400 new homes and it was hoped that this could be completed within 18 to 24 months. Other opportunities in the short term included the acquisition of the Texaco Garage site on Carlton Vale, Gordon House, negotiations with Westminster City Council and St Augustine regarding the provision of a new sports hall and opportunities to provide a new Healthy Living Centre in South Kilburn.

Turning to medium term aspirations, Councillor Detre stated that these included providing a solution to the housing blocks in the poorest condition south of Carlton Vale, adding that this was a key factor in progressing regeneration of the area. In order to deliver this, it was proposed that a twin track approach be adopted. The first approach involved use of Housing Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) credits and an expression of interest for £97,150,000 of PFI credits had been submitted to CLG on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008. Confirmation of whether this measure would be advanced to an outline business case was expected by February 2009. However, due to the competition for PFI credits, an alternative proposal was also being devised involving the possibility of a tenanted stock transfer ballot in the area and negotiations with the lead partner for regeneration, Hyde Housing Association, was being undertaken. In the longer term, the Council would need to consider how it could take opportunity of South Kilburn's favourable geographical location and the fact that the Council was the prime landowner in the area. Councillor Detre advised that because of the present economic conditions, a blend of initiatives would be required as regeneration could not depend solely on the private sector. To this end, it was proposed that the Council explore the possibility of establishing a joint venture vehicle to continue the regeneration of the remainder of South Kilburn.

The Chair enquired whether these regeneration proposals would involve Granville New Homes and whether there were any funds available with regard to relocating the Albert Road Day Centre. She also asked what areas the next report to the Executive would address and how long board members served on the SKNT board. Councillor Powney enquired if the re-location of the British Legion site in Albert Road would be part of proposals regenerating the wider area of South Kilburn including Queens Park. He also sought details with regard to community engagement and the extent to which this would involve councillors.

In reply, Councillor Detre confirmed that New Granville Homes were separate to these regeneration proposals and that the next report would include more details as to how the SKNT would operate.

Andrew Donald (Assistant Director, Regeneration, Policy and Regeneration) advised that the SKNDC had 14 board members, 4 of which were community representatives. The SKNT, which would oversee the spending of capital funds, would consist of 7 board members, 3 of which would be community representatives selected through a competitive process following advertising in

the local area. Duration of membership would include 2 permanent trustees, whilst other members would be appointed on either an 18 months or 3 years basis. Community engagement has to date been led by Hyde Housing Association, through the Project Steering Group. However, it was proposed that the Council to take a more direct role in community engagement, through establishing a Housing and Infrastructure Sub-Committee of the South Kilburn Neighbourhood Trust to replace the Project Steering Group.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

(iii) ***Dollis Hill House – Update on Progress by Training for Life***

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

8. **The Forward Plan – Issue 7 (2008/09)**

Issue 7 of the Forward Plan (08.12.08 to 20.04.09) was before members of the Select Committee. Following consideration of Issue 6 of the Forward Plan, the Select Committee made the following requests:-

(i) ***Fees and Charges***

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item updating Members on the progress of the Executive report. The request was made by the Chair.

(ii) ***Provision of New Community Sports Hall in South Kilburn***

The Select Committee requested Lead Member and Lead Officer attendance at the meeting to provide clarification of the decisions made at the Executive meeting. The request was made by the Chair.

(iii) ***Granville New Homes***

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item updating Members on the progress of the Executive report, or the Executive report if already published. The request was made by the Chair.

*Lead Member and Lead Officer attendance at the meeting was also requested.*

(iv) ***Future Options for the Sale of Granville New Homes***

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item updating Members on the progress of the Executive report, or the Executive report if already published. The request was made by Councillor Powney.

*Lead Member and Lead Officer attendance at the meeting was also requested.*

(v) ***MHT 20 Year Leasing Schemes***

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item updating Members on the progress of the Executive report, or the Executive report if already published. The request was made by Councillor Powney.

(vi) ***Barham Park Estate Redevelopment Options***

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item updating Members on the progress of the Executive report. The request was made by Councillor Powney.

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

There were none.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee would take place on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

11. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 10.15 pm.

J LONG  
Chair