

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 7th January 2009 at 7.30 pm

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Castle and Coughlin.

Councillors Allie (Lead Member for Housing & Customer Service) and Detre (Lead Member for Regeneration & Economic Development) also attended the meeting.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

The Chair declared a personal interest as a Member of the Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) Board. However, she did not regard this interest as prejudicial and remained present for the duration of the meeting.

2. Deputations

None

3. Minutes of Last Meeting – 3rd December 2008

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2008 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, 15th December 2008

There were none.

6. The Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on Monday, 15th December 2008

RESOLVED:-

that the Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on Monday, 15th December 2008 be noted.

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

(i) St Augustine's High School BSF Programme: Shared Community Use of New Sports Hall Facility (Provision of New Community Sports Hall in South Kilburn)

Councillor Detre (Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Development) submitted apologies for absence on behalf of Andrew Donald (Assistant Director – Regeneration, Policy and Regeneration Unit). He advised that an agreement had been made between the Council, Westminster Council and St Augustine's High School on a land transfer agreement which would allow the school to build the facility on land previously owned by the Council, whilst in return the Council would acquire land from Westminster Council. The agreement was of benefit to the Council as it would mean Brent residents could use the Sports Hall, including on a "pay and play" basis, whilst the land acquired would be used to build a new children's play area to replace the facilities on the land that had been transferred. The agreement to use the Sports Hall would incur no costs to the Council, other than up to £50K of Section 106 funds to be used to provide capital funding to build reception facilities to make it suitable for "pay and display". In addition, £200K of Section 106 funds was to be transferred to the proposed South Kilburn Neighbourhood Trust (SKNT) to provide on-going revenue support, which on the basis of a £20K contribution each year would last for 11 years. The remaining £250 would be used on gym and/or fitness facilities in other areas in South Kilburn.

During discussion, the Chair sought confirmation on the source of the Section 106 funds and enquired whether there would be any free use of the Sports Hall available to Brent residents and could the hours of use be extended. She also enquired who would be responsible for the running costs of the Sports Hall and what would happen to any surpluses made. The Chair asked what incentive the school would have to promote use of its Sports Hall to Brent residents and whether the Sports Service would be involved in promoting its use. Details of what clubs may use the Sports Hall and who would be monitoring use of the £200K Section 106 funds was also sought. Councillor Mistry enquired what the hours of use of the Sports Hall for Brent residents were and, commenting on the need for provision of structured sports activities, asked how involved the Council would be regarding the use of the Sports Hall. Councillor Powney enquired whether a burden would be placed on Council Tax once the Section 106 funds had been spent. He also expressed concern that the school would have a motive not to market use of the Sports Hall outside of school use and emphasised the need to positively market this facility to Brent residents.

In reply, Councillor Detre confirmed that the Section 106 funds had been earmarked from a housing development by Genesis Housing Association in South Kilburn. The Select Committee noted that the Sports Hall would be available to Brent residents for 12 hours per week during term time and 29 hours during the school holidays. In addition, the Sports Hall could be pre-booked up to 6 months in advance and would allow opportunities for

organised sports to be arranged which would be of particular benefit to residents of South Kilburn where there were few sports clubs. Although no free use would be available, costs would not be high. Once Section 106 funds had been used, Councillor Detre suggested that as the SKNT was to be a charity, it should be able to raise additional "match" funding and extend the period over which the subsidy could be used. Councillor Detre stated that the school was to meet the running costs of the Sports Hall and it was likely that any surpluses would be given to the school. He suggested that marketing the use of the Sports Hall to Brent residents would not be an onerous undertaking and that residents could be leafleted, whilst in addition posters could be produced and announcements made in Brent Magazine, and the Sports Service could play a role in this. The Select Committee noted that residents associations and sports clubs could also become involved in how the Sports Hall would be used and that it was available to any sports club that wanted to use it. Members also heard that the SKNT would be monitoring the use of the £200K that would be allocated to it.

The Select Committee then agreed to a suggestion moved by Councillor Powney that the Select Committee expresses concern to the Executive that this did not set a precedent and that it also expresses concern that there were no proactive measures to promote use of the Sports Hall for South Kilburn residents and it requested that the Sports Service should promote such use. The Sports Service was also to be informed of the Select Committee's views.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Select Committee expresses concern that Capital funds are being used for revenue purposes and that it hopes that this does not set a precedent; and
- (ii) that the Select Committee expresses concern that there are no proactive measures to promote use of the Sports Hall for South Kilburn residents and requests that the Sports Service should promote such use

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

Maggie Rafalowicz (Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Regeneration, Housing and Community Care) introduced the report, advising that the Council's preferred partner to purchase the 110 unit Granville New Homes development, Hyde Housing Association, had subsequently reduced their offer in view of the property market situation over the past 12 months. The Council had felt that the revised offer was insufficient and after investigating a number of options, it was decided to dispose the development to BHP. The price of the sale would be sufficient to cover costs and provide BHP with its own homes and also provide them with an asset base. Members noted that 73 tenants had already indicated their approval of moving to the new homes.

During discussion, the Chair asked what steps were required by the Government before the development could be completed and when would the properties be occupied by. She sought further explanation as to the delays

with regard to Hyde Housing Association's role in the development and queried why BHP's lease was for 29 years. Information on who would be responsible for setting rent levels and on service charges was sought. The Chair also asked whether it was intended that the development would represent the standards expected of other housing developments in the area. Councillor Mistry sought further information on rent levels and Councillor Powney details of the timescales involved.

The Select Committee noted advice from the Legal Adviser that up to 4 Secretary of State consents and compliance with measures as set out Section 32 of the Housing Act 1985 (disposal of Council land) and Section 25 of the Local Government Act (financial assistance to BHP by way of a loan) were required in order for the development to be completed. Members also heard that BHP's lease of the development was for a 29 year period in order that BHP had a sufficient period to generate income to support their loan repayments to the Council.

Maggie Rafalowicz advised that initially contractual and planning issues had delayed the sale of the development to Hyde Housing Association. However, subsequent differences with regard to costs had slowed progress significantly which led to the Council looking at alternative options for disposal. It was anticipated that the properties would be occupied by July 2009 at the latest, with all building work completed by April 2009. Members heard that the rent level set would be agreed between the Council and BHP. Councillor Allie (Lead Member for Housing & Customer Service) added that rent levels would be proportionate to existing ones and would be affordable.

(iii) Council-Wide Review of Fees

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

(iv) MHT 20 Year Leasing Schemes

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

(v) Barham Park Estate Redevelopment Options

Councillor Powney sought further details of the consultation with residents to be undertaken and stressed the importance of acquiring 55 additional units off-site in order to facilitate the decanting process during the 1st phase. He also sought details on the timescales involved. The Chair asked in what form the consultation would take place and who was responsible for acquiring the additional units. She also sought information on the design of the redevelopment.

In reply, Maggie Rafalowicz advised Members that both tenants and leaseholders on the Estate would be consulted, although the form in which the

consultation would be undertaken was still under consideration. However, it had been acknowledged that extensive consultation was still needed and although the feedback would not take the form of a ballot, the views of residents would be given due consideration. Maggie Rafalowicz advised that the Homes and Community Agency (HCA), which the Council was in discussion with over the gap funding application, had only been formed recently and although no timescale had been set, the Council would be making every effort to obtain the funding and proceed with the redevelopment. Notting Hill Housing were to acquire the additional units required and a meeting with them with regard to this was due to take place on the 16th January 2009. The Select Committee heard that some work had been undertaken in respect of unit design and that it had to meet certain standards in order to obtain funding, with environment and sustainability issues particularly important.

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note be noted.

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

Issue 8 of the Forward Plan (12.01.09 to 10.05.09) was before members of the Select Committee. Following consideration of Issue 8 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, including what areas were due to receive increases and whether these would include hard for people to pay increases. The request was made by the Chair.

(ii) ***Security Services***

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item updating Members on the progress of the Executive report, what were the main issues involved and would the security provided be in-house. The request was made by the Chair.

(iii) ***Partnering Arrangement with St Mungo's***

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item updating Members on the progress of the Executive report and an outline of the main issues involved. The request was made by the 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, 4th February 2009.

11. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were none.

Exclusion of Press and Public

Not for publication ('below the line')

These reports were not for publication as it contains the following category of exempt information as specified in the Local Government Act 1972, namely information covered by paragraph 8 of Schedule 12A: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

12. **Reports Not for Publication**

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

(ii) ***Granville New Homes – Development Update***

Maggie Rafalowicz advised of increasing costs in respect of the Granville Homes Development contract, with cost overruns on the building mainly relating to contamination issues. Rising costs were also due to the need to upgrade units and provide solar panelling.

The Chair sought information on the upgrades required, the lettings policy, whether the contamination related to the site only and what lessons had been learnt with regard to the issues experienced. Councillor Powney enquired whether construction costs were still rising and would any decrease in costs mean different arrangements in future.

In reply, Maggie Rafalowicz confirmed that the upgrades mainly concerned finishes and flooring, whilst lettings would be on a needs basis and contamination had been restricted to the site. The Council had learned of the need to carefully consider project management issues in such situations. Members also heard that construction costs were presently falling, however these would rise again once the recession was over.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.

J LONG
Chair