

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 22nd April 2009 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Long (Chair), Councillor Castle (Vice Chair) and Councillors V Brown, Jones (alternate for Councillor Coughlin), Powney and Tancred.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Coughlin, Mistry and H B Patel.

Councillor Detre (Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Development), Councillor John, Councillor Moloney, Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture) and Councillor Van Kalwala and also attended the meeting.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None declared.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting – 1st April 2009

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on the 1st April 2009 be received and approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

Sustainable Communities Act

Arnold Meagher (Legal Adviser) agreed to update Members with regard to the possibility of signing up to the Sustainable Communities Act. The Chair also sought clarification of the Executive's response to the Select Committee's recommendations on this item.

4. Call-in of the Executive Decisions from the meeting of the Executive held on Monday, 6th April 2009

(i) North Circular Road Regeneration Area

The Chair agreed to a request from Karen Jaeger to address the Select Committee to represent the views of some residents on Brentfield Estate. Karen Jaeger asserted that hardly any residents had received consultation forms with regard to the North Circular Road (NCR) Regeneration Area. She urged that residents of the Estate be given the opportunity to provide their views in the consultation. Acknowledging that this issue had been presented at the Area Consultative Forums (ACF), she stated that residents from the Estate did not frequently attend these as they rarely dealt with issues specific to Brentfield. Furthermore, Karen Jaeger still awaited consultation forms that she had requested at the Harlesden ACF. With regard to the Shri Swaminarayan Temple, she felt that the relevant residents, including those on Brentfield Estate, had not been consulted and that they had already expressed opposition to homes being demolished during previous consultations.

Philomena Cullen, also a resident of Brentfield Estate, echoed these views, stating that residents did not wish to have their homes demolished and be replaced with landscaped gardens, adding that this would lead to a number of older persons needing to be re-housed.

The Chair then agreed a request from Councillor John to address the Select Committee. Councillor John asserted that residents in Brentfield Estate and Stonebridge had not been given sufficient opportunity to respond to the consultation and had not received the consultation leaflets. Councillor John concurred that none of the ACFs were specifically aimed at residents in these areas. In addition, Stonebridge ward councillors had not been invited to provide their input into the consultation. She felt that there were other issues, such as the need for changing rooms at Gibbons Recreation Ground, that were of greater concern for residents. She suggested that a long term plan should be put in place to improve air quality on the stretch of NCR from Stonebridge Junction to the Ikea store. Another priority was the need for change to a level crossing at the junction of Brentfield Road and the NCR as it presented safety concerns in its present layout. Councillor John felt that these residents should be given the opportunity to contribute to the consultation and she added that she felt the response rate to the present consultation was low in any case.

The Chair agreed a request from Councillor Van Kalwala to address the Select Committee. Councillor Van Kalwala felt that there were a number of gaps in the consultation process and suggested that it would be beneficial to hold a public meeting with local residents and ward councillors to provide feedback. In addition, he suggested that the address of those residents responding be recorded so that due relevance could be placed on their views. He also commented that the delivery company responsible for delivery of the consultation documents could not guarantee 100% delivery. The Chair also agreed to a request from Councillor Moloney to address the Select Committee. Councillor Moloney stated that residents needed to be given clear indication as to whether there would be compulsory purchases of dwellings in the NCR regeneration area and how other proposals would affect them. He concurred with Councillor Van Kalwala that a public meeting should be held and it be explained to residents how regeneration would impact upon and be beneficial to the area and to seek their views through further consultation.

In reply, Councillor Detre (Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Development) stressed that this was a long term vision for the regeneration of the NCR area. It was intended to improve the area through a number of ways, such as reducing air and noise pollution, increasing green spaces, improving transport, improvements at the junction with Brentfield Road, introducing pedestrian crossings, improving the view and the surroundings of the Shri Swaminarayan Temple and providing better access and links to St Raphael's Estate. Councillor Detre emphasised that air quality on the North Circular Road was a particular concern that needed to be addressed. With regard to the consultation, he advised that approximately 8,000 consultation documents had been distributed and 323 on-street interviews with residents undertaken. Overall, there had been 1,025 responses to the consultation documents which represented a comparatively high response rate for exercises of this type. The

responses showed significant support for the key objectives and the majority of proposals contained within them, although it was noted that support was not as strong with regard to removing the first row of houses along the North Circular Road and for new parkland setting for the Shri Swaminarayan Temple. The item had also been presented to the Harlesden, Wembley and Willesden ACFs and overall Councillor Detre felt that residents had been provided plenty of opportunities to provide their input whilst a number of responses had been received from Brentfield Estate and St Raphael's Estate. However, he indicated that he would be willing to extend the consultation for an additional 2 weeks in order for ward councillors to distribute additional consultation documents to areas they felt had not been properly consulted. He advised that providing changing rooms at the Gibbons Recreational Ground was not a regeneration issue.

Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Development) stated that the consultation was widespread and thorough he felt that the response rate was high for consultation exercises of this type. He acknowledged that certain roads may not have received the consultation documents and that residents on these roads should be given additional time to respond. He advised that certain issues, such as improved crossings and other traffic matters were not regeneration issues and would be better served being raised at meetings of the Highways Committee who could be requested to lobby Transport for London (TfL) for funding.

The Select Committee then discussed the item in depth. Councillor Castle stated that TfL would also need to be consulted with regard to issues such as level crossings. He stressed that proposals were at an early stage and no specific proposals had been agreed yet, including issues such as compulsory purchases. He suggested that residents highlight the roads they felt had not been consulted and that they be given an additional 2 weeks to respond, with ward councillors distributing additional leaflets. In addition, ward councillors could arrange public meetings during this period. Councillor Castle also enquired whether there were any proposals to consult specific residents.

Councillor Powney commented that he felt the consultation response was low and enquired whether the locations of those responding on-line was known, suggesting that if a large proportion were not from the regeneration area that this would reduce the validity of the exercise. He queried why the on-line survey's results showed significantly stronger support for the Shri Swaminarayan Temple proposals than the on-street survey and he expressed some doubt that these proposals had overall support from residents in the area, especially as it was certain to involve demolition of dwellings. With regard to the consultation document, he felt that questions included, such as whether a particular issue was important, did not necessarily mean that changes or redevelopment were supported even if it was agreed that these were important issues. Concern was expressed that some distribution companies did not always achieve 100% delivery to the target addresses, particularly when this involved delivery to blocks of flats and he sought clarification as to how the consultation document was presented and distributed, adding that each consultation form could be individually addressed to improve response rates. He sought information with regard to improving

access to St Raphael's Estate and Melissa Clark (Head of Major Projects, Policy and Regeneration) agreed to brief him over further feasibility proposals for the area. Councillor Jones sought confirmation that there were no plans to demolish dwellings even though consultation was underway with regard to extending green spaces.

The Chair expressed interest in the consultation responses being broken down to the various areas within the regeneration proposals and she enquired how many on-line respondents had indicated that they were from the Brentfield area. She suggested that it would be prudent to address the issues concerning Brentfield Road junction with the NCR first and to bid for TfL funding for improvements as this would facilitate improvements along other parts of the NCR. She also felt that there should be proposals to address traffic issues in the Neasden area of the NCR and to improve the air quality. The Chair commented that attendance of the Harlesden ACF from Stonebridge residents was particularly low, whilst Willesden ACF was seen as even less relevant to them. The Chair expressed concern that Brentfield residents had not had the opportunity to be involved in the consultation, whilst the consultation document was difficult to disagree with as it posed general questions. In particular, she felt that residents views around Brentfield Road junction be given extra weight prior to any decision to demolish dwellings in that area.

In response to the issues raised, Melissa Clark confirmed that the consultation process followed the Council's standard procedures, however the Council was seeking ways of improving consultation and the views expressed at this meeting would be considered. In addition, presentations had been made at the Brentfield, St Raphael's and Mitchelbrook Area Resident's Board, as confirmed by Philomenia O'Riordan and at the Brent Housing Partnership Board meeting, where residents including Karen Jaeger were in attendance. The Select Committee heard that those who undertook on-street interviews were asked if they lived within the proposed regeneration area, although their precise address was not requested. Exact postcodes of respondents could not be requested on the on-line survey, although the areas in which they lived was, with 13% of on-line respondents indicating that they were from Brentfield. She re-emphasised that the proposals remained as part of a vision at this stage and that the relevant residents would be consulted over specific plans. With regard to traffic levels on the NCR, Melissa Clark advised that these were not going to reduce and therefore other measures to mitigate traffic noise and air pollution needed to be investigated. One such proposal in the consultation had included the removal of the first row of houses along the NCR, however this remained merely one of a number of potential measures that could be considered.

Councillor Detre stated that data protection issues needed to be considered with regard to the on-line survey and therefore the complete postcode could not be requested. However, he acknowledged that some proposals, such as showcasing the borough's key attractions, did attract considerably more support on-line than it did through other methods. He advised that the consultation documents were delivered in the same way as for previous consultations although it was possible that a 100% delivery rate was not

attained. The consultation survey had been carefully put together by an organisation specialising in such exercises. Councillor Detre agreed the importance of obtaining residents views and repeated his offer to extend the consultation by 2 weeks to allow the opportunity for ward councillors to circulate consultation surveys to residents in those roads that had not received them. He confirmed that there were no plans to demolish any dwellings at present and that any such plans would need majority residents' support before being undertaken and only if residents could be re-housed in similar accommodation close by and that the necessary funding was available. Consultation was also being undertaken with regard to increasing green spaces. Councillor Detre agreed that there was a need to improve the junction of Brentfield Road with the NCR, to improve pedestrian facilities and to improve air quality and he advised that these would be undertaken providing funding could be obtained from the relevant source. He added that TfL could be lobbied for funding of some of the initiatives suggested, including those relating to junction improvements and pedestrian crossings and, if Government funds were available for green initiatives, schemes could also be submitted for funding.

Members then agreed to the Chair's recommendations with regard to Brentfield Road/NCR junction, demolition of properties on the NCR and parkland setting for the Shri Swaminarayan Temple.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that upon considering the report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration, the decisions made by the Executive be noted;
 - (ii) that the Executive be requested to agree that priority is given to resolving the problems of the Brentfield Road/North Circular Road junction before any decision or action is taken to demolish properties on that section of the North Circular Road;
 - (iii) that the Executive be requested to agree that a bid to Transport for London be submitted for a major re-design of the Brentfield Road/North Circular Road junction, given the current issues and the impact of the Brent Cross development; and
 - (iv) that the Select Committee notes the low level of support for a new parkland setting for the Shri Swaminarayan Temple and requests that the Executive agree to remove this element from the Vision document.
- (ii) ***Local Development Framework – Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations***

Councillor Van Colle briefly introduced the report, stating that because the Government Guidance was not available until November 2007, that a redrafting of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations document was necessary, with extra information required. Ken Hullock (Policy Manager, Planning Service) added that the LDF required additional information on how development would be delivered and on the

infrastructure required to support it, as well as including information on the new Travellers Policy.

With the agreement of the Chair, Councillor Arnold addressed the Select Committee. Councillor Arnold sought confirmation with regard to the length of the consultation period once the LDF had been approved by Full Council in May 2009. In commenting on the economic and housing development in South Kilburn, she enquired whether there was an Action Plan for the area in view of the Council's commitment to revitalising town centres. Councillor Arnold continued that residents in the area were keen to see the improvements gained by regeneration funding from 1999 to 2006 maintained and to maximise opportunities to improve the area. She felt that residents were more likely to shop locally in such areas during the economic downturn. Councillor Arnold asked if the Council could look at working more closely with Camden Council with regard to improving the area.

The Select Committee then discussed this issue. Councillor Jones enquired how many other Councils had experienced similar problems in submitting their LDFs. Noting the pressing need for more housing, she commented that this issue needed to be looked at in finer detail at an early stage. Councillor Powney enquired how beneficial it was for the LDF not to be required to be considered by the Executive for a second time. He asked if the locations of the 2 extra schools required by 2018 could be identified in the Sites Specific document. The Chair enquired what local primary and secondary schools would be extended in the context of Church End Growth area and she enquired whether bus provision, which she felt inadequate in the area, would be consulted upon.

In response to the issues raised and the reasons for the call-in of this item, Ken Hullock advised that the public consultation period would commence from 26th May 2009 for 6 weeks prior to the LDF Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations being submitted to the Government. The consultation would include all residents being written to and the documents would be available in libraries and one stop shops, whilst statutory bodies and all others who had expressed an interest would be consulted. The Council would provide a summary of the responses and these would then be considered by the Independent Inspector prior to the documents submission. Ken Hullock advised that as only a few minor changes were anticipated following submission to the Independent Inspector, the LDF would not be required to be re-submitted to the Executive. However, he advised that more significant changes would require approval from the Executive. With regard to extension of schools in the context of Church End Growth area, Ken Hullock advised that Cardinal Hinsley School was a likely site, although this would depend on the likely impact of any developments in the area which may also affect other schools. An alternative option to consider could include expansion of other schools such as Queens Park Community School, although no specific plans had been put forward. Ken Hullock advised that consultation was likely to be undertaken with regard to bus provision in Church End. With regard to the need for 2 more schools in Brent by 2018, further consideration would be needed as to whether this would take the form of 2 new schools or the expansion of existing ones. Copland School already had expansion plans and

it was envisaged that there may be a need for an additional school in the south area of Brent and any proposals would also depend on whether any suitable sites became available.

Ken Hullock advised that Action Area Plans were considered where substantial changes were proposed, such as the Wembley Stadium area. Park Royal was another possibility, but appropriate sites for redevelopment needed to be identified. Possible development sites were limited in Kilburn High Road, apart from Kilburn Square which was specified under the Site Specific Allocations document, and in addition present economic circumstances were not favourable for development. However, it was possible that the Council could work with Camden Council to identify appropriate sites at a later stage.

Councillor Van Colle also emphasised that economic circumstances would play a major part in influencing what developments would be feasible in the next few years. Although every effort would be made to sustain the progress made in South Kilburn, sufficient opportunities did not presently exist and it was hoped that the housing projects in the area would help create jobs. With regard to revitalising town centres, Councillor Van Colle advised that there were proposals put forward through the Outer London Commission to designate Croydon, Stratford, Heathrow and Brent Cross/Cricklewood as new major hubs in the Greater London Authority's London Plan. The inclusion of Cricklewood had raised concern that its development could detract from town centres in Brent and the Council was opposing this along with a number of other West London boroughs. However, a new London Plan could result in changes to such proposals.

Members then agreed to Councillor Powney's suggestion that the Executive be requested to instruct the Planning Service to consider ways of developing Kilburn High Road in partnership with Camden Council. The Select Committee agreed, however, that it was not necessary to amend the Core Strategy in order to undertake this.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that upon considering the report from the Director of Environment and Culture, the decisions made by the Executive be noted; and
- (ii) that the Executive be requested to instruct the Planning Service to consider ways of developing Kilburn High Road in partnership with the London Borough of Camden.

5. The Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on Monday, 6th April 2009

RESOLVED:-

that the Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on Monday, 6th April 2009 be noted.

6. **Briefing notes/information updates requested by the Select Committee following consideration of Version 11 of the Forward Plan (2008/09)**

(i) North Circular Road Regeneration Area

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note on the North Circular Road Regeneration Area be noted.

(ii) Travel Plan

Councillor Powney felt that there were some measures listed which could still be undertaken, particularly ones with little cost implications such as supply of umbrellas. Members then agreed to Councillor Jones' request that a briefing note detailing the approximate costs of each of the measures listed and when a review of the Essential User Permits was due to be reported to the Executive be provided.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the briefing note on the Travel Plan be noted; and
- (ii) that a further briefing note detailing the approximate cost of the measures listed and providing clarification as to when a review of the Essential User Permits will be reported to the Executive be provided at the next meeting.

(iii) Climate Change Strategy

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note on Climate Change Strategy be noted.

(iv) Arms Length Management Organisation Settled Homes Initiative

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note on Arms Length Management Organisation Settled Homes Initiative be noted.

(v) Domestic Vehicle Footway Crossover Policy

Councillor Jones commented that there were no details of enforcement of the policy. The Select Committee then agreed to the Chair's request that a further a briefing note be provided with regard to the number of barriers erected to prevent vehicle access to crossovers and on when and how enforcement would be undertaken.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the briefing note on the Domestic Vehicle Footway Crossover Policy be noted; and
- (ii) that a further briefing note be provided at the next meeting providing details of the number of barriers erected to prevent vehicle access to crossovers and on when and how enforcement would be undertaken.

7. The Forward Plan – Issue 12 (2008/09)

Issue 12 of the Forward Plan (20.04.09 to 11.09.09) was before members of the Select Committee. Following consideration of Issue 12 of the Forward Plan, the Select Committee made the following requests:-

(i) *Drug and Alcohol and Offender Services Contract*

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item providing an outline of the Business Case. The request was made by Councillor Powney.

(ii) *Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Inclusion Strategy*

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item providing information on whether any alternative sites were being considered and if existing sites were to be extended or re-configured. The request was made by Councillor Powney.

Briefing notes requested following consideration of earlier versions of the Forward Plan.

(i) *Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014*

Members requested a briefing note on this item providing information in response to the Select Committee's request that they agree an Action Plan be put in place to expand the Houses in Multi-Occupation Registration Scheme. The request was made by the Chair.

(ii) *Supporting the Achievement of Fairtrade Borough Status in Brent*

Members requesting a briefing note on this item clarifying when the next report would be presented to the Executive. The request was made by Councillor Powney.

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

There were none.

9. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee would be confirmed at the Annual Council meeting in May.

10. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 10.20 pm.

J LONG
Chair