

EXTRACT
MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 23rd April 2008 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Coughlin (Chair) and Councillors V Brown, Castle, Long and Powney.

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Allie (Lead Member for Housing and Community Care) and Malik.

Councillor Dunwell also attended the meeting.

7. Briefing notes/information updates requested by the Select Committee following consideration of Version 11 of the Forward Plan (2007/08)

(ii) *Barham Park Estate Redevelopment Options*

Councillors Castle and Long declared personal interests as members of the Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) Board, however neither felt that their interests were prejudicial and remained present to consider this item.

Maggie Rafalowicz (Assistant Director [Housing Strategy and Regeneration], Housing and Community Care) presented this item, stating that Notting Hill Housing Trust had been selected as the preferred partner for achieving a redevelopment scheme following a competitive selection process. Notting Hill Trust had been requested to produce a scheme that was acceptable to residents and the Council and to be financially viable. Discussions between the Trust, BHP and the Council were ongoing. It was noted that there was a small number of residents who had a strong desire to remain Council tenants.

Maggie Rafalowicz advised Members that the Trust and Countryside, the Trust's development partner, put forward proposals to the Council at a meeting in February 2008 for a mixed tenure development of 356 units comprising social rent, shared ownership and private ownership and these proposals were in line with previous discussions with residents. Meanwhile, officers were undertaking a housing need assessment and survey of all residents on the estate and a consultation on the proposals would take place in May 2008. Countryside had indicated that there was potential to access regeneration funding of up to £10 million from English Partnership who had indicated that they may consider schemes outside of the Thames Gateway. Such a redevelopment agreement would be agreed between Countryside, English Partnership, the Trust and the Council whilst BHP's role would also be discussed. Members noted that it was intended to submit a pre-application proposal to English Partnership in June 2008 and a report presented to Executive in autumn 2008.

During Members' discussion, Councillor Castle asked what the likely amount that would be received from English Partnership would be if the application was successful and if the total financial gap could not be covered, whether it

could be partially met. He enquired whether there were alternative proposals if the ones put forward were not successful in obtaining English Partnership funding. With regard to the social housing element, he asked how the proportion was derived at, whether this equated to the tenants who currently lived on Barham Park Estate and whether some residents who wished to continue to rent would have to move should their numbers exceed this proportion. Councillor Castle also sought further information on the extent of consultation undertaken with residents.

Councillor Long sought details on the current number of units, the total number of social units proposed, bedroom numbers, height of buildings, whether the proposed development was solely centred along Harrow Road and the whether the right to buy would be offered. She asked if alternative funds to redevelop the site would be available if funding was not obtained from English Partnership. Councillor Long also enquired if Barham Estate properties were no longer to Decent Homes standard and therefore eligible for improvements under this programme. Councillor Powney sought further details of the proposed mixed used development and commented that it would have been useful for the Lead Member for Housing and Community Care to respond to Members' questions.

With the agreement of the Chair, Councillor Dunwell addressed the Select Committee. Councillor Dunwell enquired about accommodation arrangements for tenants whilst the proposed redevelopment was in progress, including how many would be temporarily re-housed and for what period at each stage.

The Chair queried how allocating funding to redevelop the Barham Park Estate would meet English Partnership's objectives. He sought information on any other works taking place on the site and arrangements for those who wished to remain Council tenants. He expressed concern that accommodation standards appeared to be slipping whilst redevelopment options were being pursued. The Chair also enquired at what stage Barham Park Estate would be eligible for Decent Homes works and was there financial provision for this to be undertaken.

In reply to Members' comments, Maggie Rafalowicz advised Members that there were no definite figures regarding funding English Partnership, but it was anticipated that £7–8 million was the approximate amount that would be sought. Although there were no direct dealings between English Partnership and the Council, Countryside were confident that an agreement would be obtained. Members noted that there would be further information on a possible agreement after a meeting between the various organisations in May 2008. Maggie Rafalowicz felt that it was likely that if an agreement was reached, it would be to fund the entire redevelopment. The Select Committee was advised that there were currently 187 residential units on site, with the proposed redevelopment of 300 units on Barham Park and a further 56 units on an adjacent Harrow Road site. Of the 187 units that would remain as social housing, 122 would be rented and 65 as shared ownership, whilst approximately 170 units would be privately owned. Accommodation would include 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed units according to people's needs. There would be a mixture of houses and flats, with some buildings being up to 4

storeys and others 6 storeys. The figures reflected current residents' own views and the fact that some residents wished to leave Barham Park Estate. It was felt that the proportion of mixed tenure proposed was workable based on the surveys undertaken to date.

Maggie Rafalowicz stated that if the redevelopment was to go ahead, it would be done so in phases to minimise disruption to residents although a small number may be temporarily re-housed during construction. She stated that there had been a large amount of consultation previously undertaken and although consultation had not been quite as thorough over recent months, more surveys were being undertaken. Maggie Rafalowicz reaffirmed that there was a small but very vocal group of residents who wished to remain Council tenants.

Maggie Rafalowicz advised the Select Committee that English Partnership had a number of funding pots with different criterias. Each required physical regeneration and to be able to offer benefits to the community as a whole. The funding pot for the redevelopment of Barham Park Estate was relatively small and the Council and its partners would need to highlight the benefits to residents for this funding to be obtained. Maggie Rafalowicz stated that emergency and general repairs and works were being undertaken at present. If the application for funding was successful, then the redevelopment could commence soon after, subject to residents' approval. Alternative options would need to be considered if the application for funding was not successful and Maggie Rafalowicz advised that there was not currently any funding specified to be used to undertake improvements to Decent Homes standards for Barham Park Estate.

The Chair highlighted his concerns about the lack of certainty and alternative plans if funding for redevelopment of Barham Park Estate was not obtained. Members then agreed to the Chair's motions that the absence of the Lead Member for Housing and Community Care be noted and that the Executive be recommended to ensure a contingency plan based on decent homes and modern insulation standards be in place should a redevelopment option not be able to be undertaken.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the briefing note be noted;
- (ii) that the absence of the Lead Member for Housing and Community Care to respond to Members' questions be noted; and
- (iii) that the Executive be recommended to ensure that a contingency plan based on decent home and modern insulation standards, taking into account rising energy costs, be in place should a redevelopment option not be able to be undertaken.

D COUGHLIN
Chair