

## **Forward Plan Select Committee**

**29<sup>th</sup> November 2005**

### **Update on Neasden Recreation Ground**

#### **Brent Parks Service**

Further to the request from the Forward Plan Select Committee [FPSC] regarding the current situation concerning the pavilion at Neasden Recreation Ground, I can now offer you a full response.

#### *Background*

Brent Parks Service Asset Group undertook a review of all its properties and facilities as part of its Best Value Fundamental Service Review 2000/01. The Asset group comprised senior officers from Parks, Sports, Core Property, Planning, Legal and Finance and in addition to this co-opted an independent leisure consultant from Chesterton's.

As part of this review it was agreed that Neasden Recreation Ground Pavilion be marketed, with a view to seek a suitable partner to reinstate the building to encourage sport and community use. A marketing exercise was undertaken and a preferred bidder was selected, the group were called Community 8, and their proposals included the refurbishment of the building with changing rooms and a small café.

Despite continued attempts and assistance by the Asset Group over some time, Community 8 never provided the required business plan to support its proposals. Therefore officers were never able to report the proposals of the preferred bidder to the Executive for approval to proceed. The Asset Group had to abandon these proposals. Community 8 was the only bidder which complied with planning constraints and required sports and community need policies of the Council and the property was not re-marketed.

However it was always considered that the building, due to its derelict state, would have to be demolished and an opportunity arose with the recent flood alleviation improvement works being undertaken by British Waterways on the Neasden end of the Welsh harp.

In short as part of the consent to allow access to the site and as part of the landscape proposals, the flood alleviation works include substantial new bunding, British Waterways agreed to demolish the pavilion and landscape the area.

The Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee had repeatedly called for the demolition of the derelict building, particularly after it became apparent that a new user for the building could not be found. The requests for demolition were not only articulated by members from Brent but also by Committee members and Councillors from Barnet who considered that the derelict building was an eyesore as seen from the Barnet side of the Reservoir.

#### *Current Status*

The derelict pavilion at Neasden Recreation Ground was demolished in November 2005. This followed discussions between British Waterways and Brent Council, an asbestos survey and a bat survey. No evidence of bats was found prior to demolition, and it was considered that the remaining structure was not conducive to use by bats. To further reduce the possible risk to any bats, the demolition was undertaken in mid-autumn, thus avoiding both the bat breeding season and commencement of the bat 'hibernation' period. Demolition was undertaken by contractors to Brent Council. By arrangement with the Council, British Waterways will cover the remaining hard standing with clean soil from their dam works.

There are no future plans to develop this site at present

**Shaun Faulkner**  
**Head of Parks Service**