

CABINET MINUTES

20 JUNE 2012

Chairman:	* Councillor Bill Stephenson	
Councillors:	† Bob Currie	* Thaya Idaikkadar
	* Margaret Davine	† Phillip O'Dell
	* Keith Ferry	* David Perry
	* Brian Gate	* Sachin Shah
	* Graham Henson	
In attendance: (Councillors)	* Marilyn Ashton	Minute 432
	* Susan Hall	Minute 432
	* Barry Macleod-Cullinane	Minute 432
	* Paul Osborn	Minute 432

- * Denotes Member present
- † Denotes apologies received

426. Welcome

On behalf of Cabinet, the Leader of the Council welcomed Councillor Sachin Shah, Portfolio Holder for Finance, to the Cabinet meeting. He also welcomed Leora Cruddas, Divisional Director of Quality Assurance, Commissioning and Schools, to her first meeting of Cabinet.

427. Agenda Order

The Leader of the Council received Cabinet's approval to vary the order of the agenda and bring agenda item 15, Whitchurch Playing Fields, forward due to the public interest in the item. It was noted that both the public and Councillor questions on the Whitchurch Playing Fields would be answered prior to the consideration of the substantive item. Thereafter, the Leader would revert to the order of business set out on the agenda.

428. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 11 – Primary School Expansion Programme

Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillor David Perry declared a personal interest in that he was a governor of Marlborough School. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 13 - Implementation of the Health and Social Care Act

Councillor Brian Gate declared a personal interest in that his wife was a health professional and worked in a General Practice. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 16 – Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD

Councillors Marilyn Ashton, Barry Macleod-Cullinane and Paul Osborn declared personal interests in that the Harrow West Conservative Association premises was situated in the area referenced in the report. They would remain in the room to listen to the debate on this item.

Agenda Items 16-17 – Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD, Development Management Policies DPD – Submission Consultation Document

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane declared personal interests in that he lived on the edge of the Harrow on the Hill Conservation Area and that his mother's property was situated in the Northolt Road development site. He would remain in the room to listen to the debate on this item. However, he would leave the room should his interests become prejudicial during the debate.

Councillor Marilyn Ashton declared personal interests in that she lived next door to the Bentley Priory site. She would remain in the room to listen to the debate on the items.

Councillor Husain Akhtar declared personal interests, particularly in relation to the Teacher's Centre and his support for School Academies and Free Schools. Additionally, the Harrow East Constituency Offices were situated at 209 Headstone Lane and referenced in the report.

Agenda Items 16-20 – Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD, Development Management Policies DPD: Submission Consultation Document, Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan: Pre-submission Consultation Document, Revised LDS, Revised Proposed West London Waste Plan: Pre-Submission Consultation Document

As an employee of the Greater London Authority (GLA), Councillor Stephen Greek declared personal interests due to the references made to the London Plan in the reports. He would remain in the room to listen to the debate on these items.

General Interest

Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar declared a personal interest in his capacity as the Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts.

429. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 4 April and 24 May 2012, be taken as read and signed as correct records.

430. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that the following petitions had been received and that they were referred to the Corporate Director Place Shaping and Interim Director Environmental Services, as appropriate:

1. Anti-Social Behaviour on Footpath between Eastcote Lane and Primrose Close

Councillor Graham Henson presented a petition signed by 65 people with the following terms of reference:

“We, the undersigned, are totally fed up with the anti-social behaviour that takes place on a regular basis along the public footpath between Eastcote Lane and Primrose Close.

There are groups congregating in this area, drinking, swearing, smoking, drug taking, couples coupling, graffiti, detritus, using the area as a lavatory, intimidating residents and rubbish being dumped that have included cooking oil, fridges, building materials, televisions and carpets.

We therefore demand that the Council, in liaison with the police urgently, take action to put in place measures to deal with this disgraceful and unwarranted anti-social behaviour.”

2. Proposed Wood Lane Bus Route

Councillor Marilyn Ashton presented a petition signed by 62 people with the following terms of reference:

“We, the undersigned, confirm that we have read the attached letter to Councillor Phillip O’Dell and that we support the views expressed in this letter.”

The petitioners objected to the proposed Wood Lane Bus Route and the letter made reference to a number of issues and set out arguments and constructive suggestions.

3. Anmer Lodge Petition

Councillor Marilyn Ashton presented a petition signed by 66 people with the following terms of reference:

“We, the undersigned, express considerable concern at the decision of Harrow Council to market the Anmer Lodge and adjacent car park site

without proper consultation, engagement or planning documentation. We therefore call on the Council's administration to:

- cease all current activity on the Anmer Lodge and car park site;
- complete the process of adopting a Supplementary Planning Document/Planning Brief, before giving any consideration to marketing the site;
- conduct a complete and thorough consultation exercise with local residents, businesses and Ward Councillors on both the development of the SPD/Planning Brief and on any subsequent proposals put forward by developers.”

4. Petition to Harrow Council to reject planning application for 3rd floor extension to 90-100 Pinner Road, Harrow

Councillor Bill Stephenson presented a petition signed by 65 people with the following terms of reference:

We, the undersigned, urge Harrow Council object to the planning application of a 3rd floor extension to 90-100 Pinner Road, Harrow, for the following reasons:

- Overdevelopment – the development size is inappropriate. The current streets are 2-storeys and the existing development is of 3-storeys and a further storey extension takes it to 4-storeys;
- Character of the area – the development will alter the character of Devonshire Road and Pinner Road;
- Parking – the development will add additional requirements for parking in the area. This will cause increased traffic in Devonshire Road, as the on site parking proposals are not adequate, existing residential scarce spaces will be further congested. Any new development should not add stress to parking and as such not have any residential permits.”

The following comment was also included within the terms of reference: “As directed by the National Planning Policy Framework, the wishes of the local residents should be considered as such, I would respectfully urge that this application for further development be refused planning.”

431. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that the following public questions had been received:

1.

Questioner: Matthew Lloyd

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communication
(answered by Councillor Keith Ferry, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration)

Question: “Given the fact that the economy is flat lining due to the Tory led Government cuts and its failed attempts to get growth such as the pasty tax, granny tax and charity tax, does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that growth on a local level in Harrow must be encouraged, in order to deliver the much needed jobs for Harrow's residents, especially for young people?”

Answer: The Council has recently published the 2011/12 version of its Local Economic Assessment, the LEA in short. It looks at how the local economy is fairing and helps to identify when and how the Council can work to be the best support local businesses, residents and workers.

The LEA shows that Harrow is bearing up well given the state of the national economy and the continuing uncertainty at a European and wider level.

In comparison to the London and West London economy,

- Harrow has the lowest level of unemployment of all the west London boroughs;
- although unemployment in Harrow has increased over the period from January 2008 to December 2011, it is at a lower rate than for London as a whole;
- small businesses in the Borough, that is businesses employing 0-4 people, represent 78% of the total number of Harrow's businesses. This is the highest proportion of small businesses compared to the other west London boroughs;
- employment rates for those from minority ethnic groups and for disabled people are higher than West London, London and England generally;
- the level of business start ups in the borough has increased by 33% between 2008 and 2011;

- the Retail Risk Index, compiled by BMP Paribas regards Harrow's Town Centre as the fourth least risky town in the whole of the UK and therefore is less vulnerable to retail collapse and closure and best placed to withstand a weakening economy.

On a local level, this administration's approach has been to support job creation, safeguard jobs and support workless residents into employment. In respect of this approach the Council was busy in the last financial year.

We secured £860k in funding from Round One of the Outer London Fund. We used this money to deliver a programme of events and public realm improvements to stimulate foot fall and spend in Harrow Town Centre and North Harrow and to remove planning red tape in North Harrow to help new businesses set up. Every additional £1 spent by a shopper in a local café, restaurant, pub, or shop, visiting events, supported that business and helped safeguard the jobs of the staff employed by that business.

Our locally developed projects also provided work experience to young people and provided people living and working in the borough to develop their skills in retail, radio broadcasting, visual merchandising, film production, positive press and television coverage for Harrow was contained in the BBC TV News, Radio London, BBC Asian Network, Harrow Times, Harrow Observer and the Municipal Journal.

We will build on that success between 2012 and 2014 by investing £1,758,000 from Round 2 of the Outer London Fund in Harrow Town Centre. The money will be used to improve the vibrancy of the area, promote economic growth and safeguard existing jobs in the town centre.

Last year, the Council held four Job Fairs attracting 1,500 residents and 90 employers and training providers. This provided jobseekers the opportunity to learn about training opportunities, and apply for vacancies with local employers.

After 6 years, we have also adopted an updated Local Plan for Harrow, which provides the basis to create 4,000 new jobs and to attract and manage over £1bn of new investment into the Borough. We are continuing to work with the community, businesses and developers to complete the work on the Heart of Harrow Area Action Plan, which will help transform Harrow and Wealdstone

Town Centres, creating new opportunities for all.

Finally, 5 things we are doing to stimulate growth:

- firstly, investing £5m in the town centre as a catalyst to the £1billion in investment we will be attracting to develop Harrow's key sites;
- secondly, introducing an infrastructure levy to enable private development to support new infrastructure investment across Harrow;
- thirdly, develop a place promotion campaign with developers to market Harrow as a place for new investment and visitors;
- fourthly, establishing a clear role for the use of the Council's strategic property in the Heart of Harrow as a destination for visitors, employers and investors;
- and fifthly, produce a toolkit to support new business growth in Harrow Town Centre, and local shopping centres, and investment profiles for 2 district centres.

Supplemental Question: So, given the fact that we have been widely successful here in Harrow and with 7m people on the brink, 250% in private businesses struggling with debt and a crash just around the corner, is it not time that the Council lobbied the government for bold and determined action and asked the Conservatives to get an economic's lesson?

Supplemental Answer: You are absolutely correctly in everything you say and I would agree with it wholeheartedly.

2.

Questioner: Anton Ganesan, Cub Scout Leader
(asked by Councillor Stephenson)

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety
(answered by Councillor Idaikkadar, Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts)

Question: "I am a Cub Scout Leader with 1st Stanmore Scout Group and am very supportive of the Consortiums.

Plans to regenerate the Playing Fields and provide facilities to young people to become better citizens.

I was rather disappointed that some elderly people do not want a facility like this for young people to use that will keep them away from wasting their time.

My question to you is: Why a project like this has taken such a long time to materialise and why it is still dragging on?

If you ask any young people and people who work with young people whether they want such a facility the answer will be YES. I am in scouting for a long time and in UK for more than 20 years and I hope my expectations are reasonable.”

Answer:

Firstly, I can easily understand why the young people that you represent would be supportive of our plans for the Whitchurch Playing Fields site.

Although a substantial proportion of Harrow is made up of open space, only a relatively small amount of this is available for publicly accessible sports pitch use and, unfortunately, many of these pitches are not of the quality that our local sports men and women, boys and girls require, or expect, in the 21st Century.

The cost of establishing and maintaining high quality sports pitches is substantial. During these exceptionally difficult economic times it has become even more difficult for the Council to directly fund the development of essential sports infrastructure.

So the Council has turned to private sector partners to see if they can provide the resources to enable us to ensure that our residents can have access to high quality modern sports facilities.

So one of the reasons these things take so long is because of the need to ensure that everyone has a chance to have their say.

Assuming that Cabinet this evening decides to commission the Whitchurch Consortium to take the project forward, I will ensure that the detailed planning process is undertaken in a robust way.

It is crucial that we do not rush this next phase, rather that we get it right and, as part of this, that we ensure the widest possible involvement in the formal consultation process which will be undertaken by the Council's Planning and Licensing Services.

3.

Questioner: Eddie Morris

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety
(answered by Councillor Idaikkadar, Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts)

Question: "As a Scout Leader of the 1st Stanmore Scout Group, we are very supportive of the Consortiums plans to regenerate the local playing fields as through our consultation with them we have been excited by their plans to enhance local wildlife habitats, ecology and biodiversity on site. Not only would this be good for wildlife but it would also provide the local Schools and Nurseries with a much needed educational resource.

Can the Council recommend a local expert that could work with the Consortium to enhance this offer?"

Answer: The Council employs its own ecologist within the Planning Department, who alongside a landscape architect is responsible for overseeing our programme for biodiversity enhancement across the borough, as part of the Green Grid.

Given that the Council's ecologist may be expected to advise the Planning Service in the determination of a planning application for the site in due course, in this case I would suggest that the Whitchurch Consortium contact the Harrow Nature Conservation Forum who are already working hard to improve the ecological assets of the borough.

I will ensure that the Whitchurch Consortium's manager and Harrow Nature Conservation Forum are put in touch with each other as soon as possible.

I am really encouraged by your Scout Group's interests in this important matter and if I can provide you with any assistance as you develop your own plans please do not hesitate to contact me.

Supplemental Question: I have seen the playing fields being neglected and at last someone is actually planning to do something and it seems very sad that a lot of people are against. My question is could this be supported by the Council because obviously it is a very good plan to do?

Supplemental Answer: Thank you for your support. I will do everything we can for you.

4.

Questioner: Mrs Vrinda Guha
(asked by Councillor Bill Stephenson)

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety
(answered by Councillor Idaikkadar, Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts)

Question: “As a former pupil and later a teaching assistant at Whitchurch First School, I have watched the grounds and the pavilion gradually fall into a very poor state. There have been incidents of vandalism, drug dealing and other criminal activity happening in the school car park and the derelict pavilion. Only last month the side of the school was set fire to causing thousands of pounds of damage. Therefore, I think it is great that the Whitchurch Fields Consortium plans to regenerate the local playing fields and construct a new pavilion, secure the grounds and provide free use for the school children.

How is the Council going to help the Consortium in tackling the criminal and antisocial behaviour currently blighting the site?”

Answer: It is disappointing to hear of the unfortunate incidents at the Whitchurch School and Playing Fields site.

Site security will be a key feature of the Whitchurch Consortium’s proposals for the new facility.

It will be vitally important that effective security is maintained, in particular when our youngest residents are using the new Centre.

Additionally the security arrangements need to manage customers using the facility, in particular those attending hospitality based events, to ensure that any rowdy behaviour is stopped in its tracks and, importantly, to minimise disruption to residents adjoining the site both during events and also during the arrival and departure phases.

The Council works with the Metropolitan Police Service, as part of the Safer Harrow Partnership, to maintain Harrow’s position as one of the safest boroughs in London.

Where there are outbreaks of anti-social behaviour, the Partnership can put in place targeted action depending on the particular circumstances.

5.

Questioner: Shyama Gauri Sodha
(*Questioner did not turn up so question was not asked*)

Asked of: Councillor David Perry, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services
(*to be answered by Councillor Idaikkadar, Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts*)

Question: "I am a local resident to the Whitchurch Playing Fields and teach art on Saturday at The Sai School of Harrow in Stanburn School. I am happy that the Whitchurch Fields Consortium proposals are not only concentrating on sports alone and providing facilities for art, music and drama too.

How is the Council going to support the Consortium in providing this facility for local clubs and schools?"

Written Answer: Through the Whitchurch Playing Fields project, the Council is endeavouring to enable the development of much needed, high quality, modern sports and leisure facilities.

The Council can only bring these developments to fruition, in partnership with other organisations.

The Whitchurch Consortium has already undertaken a substantial amount of work to bring together sports clubs and community groups, who are interested in working with them, to help the establishment of the new facility.

Assuming that the Consortium is now formally commissioned to take this exciting project forward, the Council will do everything that it can to facilitate links with all relevant groups and organisations, to ensure the success of this really exciting project.

I am sure my colleague, Councillor David Perry, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services, will do all that he can, through his Directorate, to ensure that the right people are brought together, so that we can all have something to celebrate, not just when we open the new facility but for many years to come.

6.

Questioner: Jyotsna Dey
(*Questioner did not turn up so question was not asked*)

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety
(to be answered by Councillor Idaikkadar, Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts)

Question: "As an elderly resident living in Stanmore, I am encouraged by The Whitchurch Fields Consortium's plans to enhance and increase wildlife by creating a nature reserve and a garden area. Not only would this be good for the local Schools but it would provide somewhere for elderly members of the community to enjoy.

Can the Council recommend a local expert that could work with the Consortium to enhance this aspect?"

Written Answer: Thank you for your encouragement for the Whitchurch Consortium's proposals.

The Harrow Nature Conservation Forum could provide the expert advice required at this stage.

I think this is an appropriate approach, and I will do what I can to help facilitate this contact and the involvement of the members of Harrow Nature Conservation Forum.

7.

Questioner: Mr Thomas Moran
(Questioner did not turn up so question was not asked)

Asked of: Councillor Keith Ferry, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration
(to be answered by Councillor Idaikkadar, Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts)

Question: "I am an immediate resident of the Whitchurch Playing Fields and aware of the current traffic issues. The Consortium's plans to mitigate this by having increased grasscrete parking spaces, cycle racks, shuttle services and pedestrian entrances will go a long way to addressing these issues, but how will the Council work collaboratively with The Consortium to address the traffic issues further?"

Written Answer: I am acutely aware of the concerns that have been raised by residents who live in very close proximity to the Playing Fields, regarding traffic related issues.

The Whitchurch Consortium are required to submit a detailed planning application before taking forward proposals and when these further details are received by

the Council, a comprehensive review of the traffic and parking issues, will be undertaken by specialist officers, as part of the Council's assessment of the application. It is at this stage that the Council will determine if traffic management interventions are required.

In respect of existing parking pressures in the area, I am advised that a review of parking in the vicinity was conducted earlier in the year, and a detailed consultation on the introduction of "at any time" waiting restrictions at junctions along Wemborough Road, is scheduled as part of the Council's work programme.

8.

Questioner: Rebecca Anne Bishop
(Questioner did not turn up so question was not asked)

Asked of: Councillor Keith Ferry, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration
(to be answered by Councillor Idaikkadar, Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts)

Question: "As a resident of Stanmore I have been following the tender process for the playing fields quite closely. I am very interested with The Consortium's idea to give start-up businesses the opportunity to be involved in running different aspects of the site and would be keen to run the cafe part or catering side. I would like to know how is the Council going to support the Consortium through the planning phase to avoid delay and help local residents setting up businesses in partnership with The Consortium?"

Written Answer: Quite rightly the focus of the project has been on the sports and leisure opportunities and the concerns of local residents.

You raise a really important issue, which is about the opportunities for growth in our local economy if this project can be taken forward to completion.

This project is also about the establishment of long term partnerships. Clearly a partnership between the Council and the Whitchurch Consortium, but also a partnership between the Consortium, its customers, local residents, its suppliers, and the many sports clubs, community groups and schools, whose use of the new facilities, is vital to ensuring the long term success of the project.

As part of the partnership with the Council, we will be working with the Whitchurch Consortium to maximise the

opportunity for local companies. I will also be looking to ensure that available jobs, in particular for our younger residents are clearly promoted within the borough and I will also want to ensure that the available jobs provide good quality training and career development opportunities.

The Council's Economic Development Officers, will be available to advise the Consortium on engagement with, and the involvement of local businesses.

If you let me have your contact details, I can pass these onto the Consortium, and I am sure that they will be in touch with you.

Good luck with the development of your catering business.

9.

Questioner: Raymond Read

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration
(answered by Councillor Idaikkadar, Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts)

Question: "Following conversations with Councillors, in particular Councillor Navin Shah, their responses make me think that the decision to allow this development in the playing fields will go ahead and will be rubber stamped. What assurances are there that the interests of immediate local residents will be protected from the effects of increased traffic, and nuisance from the many visitors to the pavilion late into the evenings and weekends and all day events?"

(There will be constant pressure on the lives of local residents 24/7)."

Answer: Firstly, I wish to make clear in the most robust way possible, that no aspect of this project will be 'rubber stamped'.

I hope you agree that this evening's report has presented a reasonably balanced view of the issues and concerns which have been raised by local residents in particular.

The planning process is a formal regulatory function which is quite independent of the day-to-day or commercial business management functions of the

Council.

If commissioned to take this project forward the Whitchurch Consortium will be required to submit a detailed planning application to enable the new facilities to be established. The Planning Committee will determine the application at a public meeting. Planning officers will undertake formal consultation with residents and the product of this consultation will be reported in an impartial and objective way to the Councillors, who are Members of the Planning Committee.

Additionally, the Licensing Committee will consider any application submitted to it quite independently of all other Council functions and public consultation will also be required as part of this process.

As part of its applications, the Whitchurch Consortium will need to demonstrate how they will act to manage any identified adverse impact for the local community.

Having considered all material issues the Planning and / or Licensing Committees may place conditions to ensure appropriate management of the new facility and to minimise impact for residents.

The officer report makes clear that the commercial negotiations relevant to this project will be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet for formal approval. This is another example of the care that the Council is taking in respect of this important and sensitive matter.

I would like to assure all residents that there will be no rubber stamping on any issue relevant to this matter. There will only be the most careful consideration of all material issues at each point in the decision making process.

Supplemental Question: This is just another extra lot of traffic and extra development that is in the area amongst lots of other developments. We cannot ignore the fact that Stanburn School, which is next door, is going to have quite a large increase in pupils. Is it going to be considered by alongside this application? There is a large amount of traffic going to be created by that.

Supplemental Answer: As part of any planning application, they have to submit a Travel Plan and the Planning Committee will consider all traffic impacts during their deliberations and they will make a decision on their own, independent of any other Council officers.

10.

Questioner: Mrs Chelsie Cassel

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: "I have three children who play football on Whitchurch Playing Fields and consider this site to be unsuitable, as it currently does not have any essential amenities. Our Club, St Joseph's FC, are fined by the Middlesex Football Association each time we have a league match on this site as we do not have any changing rooms.

Harrow Council have not been able to provide such amenities and I understand that this has been due to the lack of finances. Whilst I am happy for another organisation to take over this site as these playing fields are not being maintained and attract unsocial behaviour (such as fires being started in the old pavilion, littering, alcohol, broken glass), my question is:

Will there be adequate toilet facilities, including female and male changing rooms as part of the new proposals?"

Answer: Yes, there will most definitely be adequate toilet facilities and changing rooms.

The Council is working to establish a modern sports facility and it is essential that the 'club house' provides superb changing and welfare facilities because this is what our sports men and women, boys and girls, require and expect.

Although the club house will provide a range of ancillary facilities, I know that the Whitchurch Consortium understand that the primary purpose of the building is for the provision of necessary welfare facilities to directly support the use of the outdoor sports pitches.

11.

Questioner: Himat Gami

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: "The Corporate Director Place Shaping has clearly chosen to ignore the strength of feeling in the March consultation meeting in which the residents were strongly against the proposals. He is recommending

these proposals as the Council wants to off-load their responsibility. It's a bit pointless collecting signatures from people who are not going to be affected by the changes. It is rather irrelevant that other sports clubs are in support so long as "it's not in my back yard". We have a massive Harrow Leisure Centre in our Borough and this is adequate.

My question to the Portfolio Holder is how many people are in favour of the proposal whose back garden actually falls into the Whitchurch Playing Fields?"

Answer:

I cannot agree that the report ignores the views of residents who are against the Whitchurch Consortium's proposals.

The report which Cabinet will consider this evening contains clear and objective summaries of the issues and concerns that have been raised by residents.

On page 247 of the report (the penultimate paragraph) there is a clear statement which reads '... residents immediately adjoining the site are particularly concerned about the adverse impacts that the Whitchurch Consortium's proposal will have for them.'

The same paragraph states that only seventeen signatories from the adjoining streets have shown support for the proposal.

I can quite understand why the residents whose homes are located on the streets immediately adjoining the site are most concerned about this proposal. I am really sympathetic to your views.

However, the Council has to consider the needs of the entire borough. We have a severe shortage of good quality outdoor sports facilities. This project has the potential to improve this situation.

The Council will also do all that it can to ensure that any adverse impacts for the local community are minimised.

Supplemental Question:

I still did not hear from your answer how many people from the signatures that were collected, whose back garden falls into the Whitchurch Playing Fields, actually said "Yes"?

Supplemental Answer:

I have already said in my answer there are seventeen signatures from the adjoining streets.

12.

Questioner: Hilla Moshenson

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: "In a recent discussion with residents the Whitchurch Consortium boasted that it had visited some 4000 houses as part of its consultation. Given that most houses have more than a single occupancy, the 1200 signatures on the Consortium's petition was obtained from less than 20% of the people the consortium visited, are you willing to accept that the majority of residents in the area object to the consortium's selection as is constantly represented by residents to the Council?"

Answer: I accept and fully understand that a significant number of residents in the area are concerned about the Whitchurch Consortium's proposals for the Whitchurch Playing Fields site.

The key issue for the Council is that majority of our outdoor sports pitches are of inferior quality and we need to do everything reasonably possible to provide modern high quality facilities for the entire community of Harrow.

The Whitchurch site is comprised of twenty two acres which has been designated and set aside for sports playing field use.

Our sports men and women, boys and girls, need to be able to develop their skills on good quality pitches. Good quality pitches supported by modern ancillary facilities, will also in my opinion, encourage greater participation in active sport and recreational activities. I hope that you can support the Council's efforts to do everything possible to enable appropriate sports facilities development to be taken forward in an appropriate way, always ensuring due consideration for the impact on local residents.

Although I fully appreciate the concerns of residents whose homes are associated close to the site, you have my assurance that the Council will do everything reasonably possible to ensure that disruption and inconvenience is minimised.

I hope that you can understand that our overriding objective is to ensure the provision of good quality sport and leisure facilities for the entire community of Harrow.

Supplemental Question: It does sound like you have made up your mind. Why has the Council not actually engaged in the consultation and left it for the bidder to blow its trumpet with figures that are fictitious at best, rather than go out there and listen first hand to local residents. You proclaim to be the Council that listens and are you going to listen tonight because I am not sure that you are from your answer?

Supplemental Answer: I do not accept that they do not listen to you. A sports open day, was designed to show people the maximum impact. The pitch was changed by 90° and they were planting more trees to cover the flood light effect. There are so many things they are doing. This is only the beginning. There is a long way to go, then we have to negotiate how we commercially agree on that and they are going to consult you and we are going to consult you on that. We are always going to do our best to make sure any inconvenience caused to you is minimal.

13.

Questioner: Jennie Doble, asked by Stephen Lewis

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: “I understand that the Council has to get best value for money for Harrow Residents, but surely there are also other Government directives to local Councils, to consult and work with local communities to obtain their views and to take these views into consideration when making decisions.

How do Harrow Council ensure these two directives are compatible and how will you put this into operation in relation to Whitchurch Playing Fields?”

Answer: As I have stated in responses to previous question, our overriding objective is to ensure the provision of modern high quality sports and leisure facilities which are available for use by our entire community.

We have not yet commenced the detailed commercial negotiations relevant to this project. What we have done is concentrated on engagement, in particular with the residents who live closest to the Whitchurch Playing Field site.

In so doing we have been able to obtain a clear and comprehensive understanding of, in particular, local

concerns and this feedback will be incorporated within the detailed planning for the development and operation of any new facility.

Our commercial negotiations will be undertaken to ensure that 'Best Consideration' can be demonstrated. In so doing we will aim to strike an appropriate balance between total capital investment, lease term, subsidised access, charging policy and site utilisation.

You will understand that there is a balance to be found between each and all of these elements and crucially impact on the local community will be a key overarching consideration when determining the final agreement.

14.

Questioner: J Pais
asked by Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: "By commissioning Whitchurch Consortium to develop and run the sports and leisure facilities on the site you are committing yourself to granting the necessary licences for liquor and late night entertainment, without which the project would not be viable. The Consortium would not have pursued the project this far without assurances from the Council that the licences are only a formality. Will the contract with Whitchurch Consortium include written guarantees regarding noise, opening hours, light pollution and anti-social behaviour etc. and will the Council withhold the licence, if necessary?"

Answer: The Council has given no commitment whatsoever regarding the grant of licences. We cannot do that and it is illegal.

As I stated in my response to Mr Read's question earlier, the Licensing function operates quite independently of all other Council functions.

Assuming that we complete a Development Agreement with the Whitchurch Consortium, a planning application is approved and the development is constructed, there is no guarantee that a licence will be granted automatically.

The Licensing Committee has wide ranging powers of determination from refusal of the licence to granting with

conditions.

Assuming that any applications are approved, it is likely that in determining the application that both the Planning and Licensing Committees will impose appropriate conditions. It would be understandable if the Planning and Licensing Committees incorporated conditions, in respect of noise, opening hours, external lighting and anti-social behaviour.

These conditions will be incorporated within the Lease Contract thereby providing the most robust controls possible.

Any person has rights to ask the Council to review a licence at any time if the facility is not being managed in an appropriate way.

Supplemental Question: Given the fact, as Mr Pais originally asked in his question about the business case being founded upon the licence function to enable them to hold social functions within the pavilion, there seems to be issues when you go through all the paperwork about security and so forth, extra work that is going to be required; how is the business case stacking up with all these extra costs with the necessity to have a major function hall at the pavilion to fund everything? Have you looked through it and have you looked through the business case to satisfy yourself that, in fact, what they are proposing is not basically a function hall with some community sports but is, in fact, community sports with just merely a bar.

Supplemental Answer: I have no idea what the Licensing Panel is going to do. If they say "no alcohol", the agreement may break down. The bidders may simply walk out. We have to operate on the reasonable expectation assumptions which may not work. We just have to wait and see. It is going to be many months before the financial model is refined, revised and see whether it is workable or not.

15.

Questioner: Stephen Lewis

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: "In its Cabinet decision to proceed to award preferred bidder status to the Whitchurch Consortium, the Council placed significant emphasis on the soundness of the Consortium's business case. Does the Portfolio Holder

continue to believe that Whitchurch Consortium's business case to provide community sports on the playing fields remains viable?"

Answer: Assuming that Cabinet commission the Whitchurch Consortium to take the project forward, the necessary detailed commercial negotiations will now commence.

As part of these negotiations the Council will require the Whitchurch Consortium to present a revised Business Plan and to demonstrate that it will be commercially viable over the term of the plan.

Prior to making the decision at Cabinet in November 2011 to appoint the Whitchurch Consortium as the preferred bidder, Council officers had undertaken a financial review. This will be repeated again at various stages until such time as the lease is finally completed.

16.

Questioner: Mrs Melanie Lewis

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: "The draft DPD submission that is being considered tonight emphasises that "the site is suitable for community outdoor sports use only" and that "development will be restricted to the minimum necessary to support outdoor sports use, and must not prejudice the role of this site as a flood storage area." What restrictions are you proposing to limit re-development of the pavilion by the Whitchurch Consortium to prevent it being used as a venue for social events rather than community sports and have you considered the impact of the proposed all-weather pitch on the role of the site as a flood storage area?"

Answer: The size and use of the pavilion will be considered at the planning application stage and appropriate conditions applied, to ensure that the proposed development is consistent with the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and other planning policies relevant for the site.

The Development Agreement and Lease will provide an absolutely clear link with any planning permission. The Lease will also require the Council's explicit approval before any planning permissions are submitted in the future. The Council as Landlord will need to agree that it

is prepared to accept the submission of the planning application, prior to any consideration by the Planning Committee.

The layout of the site, including the all-weather pitch, has been developed in discussion with the Environment Agency. Further discussions will be undertaken with the Environment Agency on the location and impact of all of the different components of the proposed scheme prior to the submission of the planning application, to guide the drainage strategy for the site, maintain flood storage capacity and determine any measures that may be required to mitigate the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Supplemental Question: Mr Trehern's letter to the Ombudsman does not mention the Environment Agency once. So when is this consultation by the Environment Agency going to take place, when according to the Ombudsman it should have happened some while back. Would you not agree?

Supplemental Answer: You mention Mr Trehern's letter which I have not seen, so I cannot respond.

Andrew Trehern: There is an ongoing Ombudsman investigation so I think it will be appropriate to maintain the correspondence between the Council.

17.

Questioner: Michelle Stern

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: "What guarantees can the Council give that this not a commercial development of a bar and function hall masquerading as a sporting facility?"

Answer: At pages 145 and 146 of our agenda papers this evening are the site specific references for the Whitchurch Playing Field site, from our proposed Site Allocations, Development Plan Document.

Mrs Lewis' question clearly stated the Planning Policy context for this important sports facility.

I can therefore answer your question with a high degree of confidence that planning permission will only be granted for the development of this site if the Planning Committee is confident that the primary function of the playing field site remains 'outdoor sports use'.

Supplemental Question: I would like to ask, given the incompetence of the Consortium's presentation on 26 March and the fact that they run Blake Hall which is in an isolated location and hosts events up to 2.00 am or later, has direct access to 'A' roads and no housing nearby, how do you consider that this a suitable company to be running this very different site and that they are competent to do this?

I hope Harrow Council has reserves in the bank for when residents sue Harrow Council for their neglect of duty to its residents when we are flooded because they have displaced all the water somewhere else.

Supplemental Answer: There are two questions there. Whitchurch Consortium did not say they are going to run the facility exactly how they are running in Wanstead. This is a different location; they are going to run it separately. This is the whole idea of this development agreement. The officers and they will sit down and make sure everything is going the right way and that it is appropriate for that location.

432. Councillor Questions

RESOLVED: To note the following Councillor Questions had been received:

1.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: "For an administration which says it values the views of local residents, why are you pressing ahead with awarding the Whitchurch Consortium with the contract to develop Whitchurch Pavilion and Playing Fields, when the paper before Cabinet tonight makes it abundantly clear local residents don't want this to happen?"

Answer: The Council has been thinking about opportunities to improve the Whitchurch Playing Fields for many years.

In fact, the background selection of this evening's report clearly states that Cabinet considered the matter in November 2008.

You are also aware of the poor quality of most of our outdoor pitches, and the time has come, even in this challenging economic period, to see what can be done to provide improved facilities for our sports men and women, boys and girls. I really do hope that you can

support me in this endeavour.

The Whitchurch Playing Fields is a substantial site and therefore has a borough-wide strategic significance. Given its playing field designation, it is wholly appropriate that we consider this site for development as a modern, high quality, sports and leisure facility.

However, and this is a really important issue for myself and my colleagues on Cabinet, any development of improved sports and leisure facilities which we agree to take forward on this site is only approved once we are entirely satisfied that the disturbance and inconvenience to local residents has been minimised.

The very last thing that we want to achieve is a wonderful new sports and leisure facility at the expense of our local residents' enjoyment of their homes.

As I have said in responses to questions from members of public, the Council has to take a borough-wide view. We will do everything possible to find a good and appropriate balance between the needs of our sports users and local residents.

Supplemental Question: Is it not a fact that when the Consortium did present at the public meeting, you described the presentation as flawed and failed to make a case, that there was an outcry at the meeting by the residents about how poor it was. Is it not a fact that residents have repeatedly raised questions, as they have done tonight again, about the impact it will have on their lives. Is it not a fact that the report does not give weight to the residents in the immediate locality.

Supplemental Answer: As I said before, we need to look at it Borough-wide. We are not looking at just the local area.

2.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: "In the DPD paper that went to Overview and Scrutiny on the 12th June, it explicitly ruled out any housing being permitted on the Whitchurch Pavilion and Playing Fields site. How is this compatible with the Whitchurch Consortium proposing 24-hour live-in caretaker/security on the site, why haven't you as Portfolio Holder noticed this restriction and ruled this facility out, and what would

the impact on the business case be of ruling this facility out?”

Answer: I am advised that your question at Overview and Scrutiny Committee related to the Site Allocations Development Plan Document. Your query is recorded on page 8 of the Cabinet Supplemental Agenda 2 which is the reference from Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

I assume that your query relates to the statement on page 252 of the Cabinet papers, under the section ‘Safety and Security’.

The statement reads ‘The Consortium proposes additional security through a 24 hour caretaker living on site and with repairs and upgrading of the existing boundary fencing. There is a further intention to install non intrusive CCTV to facilitate site wide operations.’

The Site Allocations DPD is absolutely clear and I quote from page 146 of this evening’s Cabinet papers:

‘The site is currently open space and is an important recreational destination. The site is suitable for community outdoor sports use only. Development will be restricted to the minimum necessary to support outdoor sports use, etc’.

Local residents have raised concerns about anti-social behaviour on the site as it exists today and about ongoing site security, if the Whitchurch Consortium’s proposals are implemented.

Clearly the deployment of a site manager or caretaker, who is resident on the site, could be part of a broader security plan as referenced in this evening’s Cabinet papers. However, the introduction of a residential unit on the site may be controversial and sensitive from a planning policy perspective.

At this stage as the Cabinet report states ‘The Consortium propose’. That is all we have at this stage – an initial outline suggestion and I understand that other similar facilities use a similar approach to good effect.

If the Whitchurch Consortium wish to include this proposal as part of their detailed planning application for the site, this will be subject to determination by the Planning Committee.

Supplemental Question: In terms of the proposal by Whitchurch Consortium to build what they described as a bungalow on the site,

probably next door or on top of the Tesco's that they were proposing on the site, could you explain to me, have you gone through the covenants that relate to the land to check whether or not any of this is entirely within their proposals and in keeping with the paper and the decision tonight?

Supplemental Answer: Barry, there is no mention of Tesco's anywhere. I have not seen it. There is no mention of a bungalow. What they are proposing, as part of the pavilion there would be some sort of accommodation for the caretaker, related to his job.

This is their proposal only. In the development stages we will look at it again and this is a proposal made some time ago. The Planning Committee has the final authority to say whether they will get planning permission or not.

3.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder for Children, School and Families

Question: "You said a month ago that Harrow should expect its school expansion allocation from the Department for Education "in a couple of weeks". Paragraph 23 of the report tonight shows the Council is clearly still waiting for this funding. Can you please provide an update on this situation, and clarify any known causes for the delay?"

Answer: Since the autumn, Children's Services took over the responsibility for net capacity figures and their officers have been working and meeting with DfE officials to resolve some of the historical inaccuracies that you are aware of with our figures.

The officials have accepted the corrections that we have made to the figures and have submitted a new funding request to Ministers. We are still awaiting the outcome of that submission. I would like to mention that London Councils requested six months' ago for the methodology of how our allocation is calculated and we are still waiting for that. There was a promise by Mr Gove directly to Councillor Stephen Reed, Lead Member for Children's Services for London Councils, and I was in a meeting with him on Monday and that has yet still to be actually revealed.

What I can say is that the good news is that DfE officials

have indicated that our revised allocation will be significant. I do not, at the moment, have the exact figure in writing but I do have trust in Mr Gove in his direction to his officers and to then come forward with the amount we would expect and I would like to say that had the figures been correct in the first place and I acknowledge there was some errors in that, it is certainly the figure that we would have expected in the first place.

Supplemental Question: Given that you knew that Harrow's figures had been blighted a year earlier for that very big funding for £500m, why was a potential impact on the subsequent pot of £600m, not disclosed, leaving us to find out via the media that we had no funding at all?

Supplemental Answer: In the light of the decisions that we made, I was involved in discussions with officers to try and resolve the issue. If you feel that you were not kept in the loop and that it should have been more of a public declaration, I think there is certain discussions that we have to have with Council officials and also with the officials in the DfE which sometimes have to be kept on a confidential basis until such time we can get a proper resolution. As I said, we recognise the data was incorrect. We have now made steps to ensure that future submissions to DfE will not have that same problem.

4.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder for Children, School and Families

Question: "Given comments by a Cabinet member suggesting little administration involvement in the establishment of a Free School at the Teachers' Centre from September 2012, can you confirm the precise details of the timings and extent of your participation in the process?"

Answer: I do not recognise the first part of your statement. The comment made by a Cabinet Member suggesting little administration involvement in the establishment of a Free School, however, I will continue to answer the question as best I can.

The announcement the DfE approved the I-Foundation's application was in October 2011. From that point onwards, the administration authorised officers to enter into the process of facilitating the I-Foundation's proposal.

I have been briefed regularly by officers about the possible sites for the school that had been identified by the proposers. It is, as you know, the proposer to actually identify an appropriate site for their particular school and then, of course, they bring that forward to the local authority in the normal way. Various reasons the sites that they wanted, they were not considered to be suitable by officers. Our officers have worked very hard in identifying, both informally and formally, with the I-Foundation to try and identify a mutually acceptable site. I have been involved in that process through the briefing methods and officers have consistently referred the proposer to the Area Action Plan that designates that currently the Teachers' Centre site as a possible site for a future school.

Late April, the DfE actually confirmed that it had asked the proposers to consider the Teachers' Centre site and the plans for this possibility were shared with officers on 8 May. Following a meeting, Members and senior officers have met on a number of occasions with the I-Foundation to determine the way forward. The Leadership group has discussed the issue regularly and determined a communications strategy that started on 28 May with our letter to residents and also the press release and the residents around the Teachers' Centre and the Krishna Avanti sites.

The I-Foundation as proposer is required to consult on the establishment of the Free School and will consult on their proposed permanent solution for the Teachers' Centre to be used, if that is their wish, as a permanent site for the school.

The political meetings that we have had this week have led to the establishment of a Stakeholder Reference Group to oversee the Free School project and that will involve elected Members, including myself, of course. Cabinet will make a decision in the autumn following a thorough consultation and engagement and this decision will be subject to a full planning consultation and planning permission.

You will be aware under the new legislation that the Local Authority is now the champion of parental choice in education, as set out by the Secretary of State, Mr Gove. To carry out this responsibility without future funding to build new provision coming directly to the Local Authority, we therefore enter into opportunities like this for the benefit of our children and their parents.

We had over 250 parents attending the meetings with the I-Foundation regarding the temporary school and I think that is a testament to the choice that is being offered in this particular case and may I say that the I-Foundation also has an excellent reputation both educationally and also with our partnership through the Krishna Avanti School and I am very happy to be working with them as a partner.

Supplemental Question: Yes, the original question came because Councillor O'Dell was quoted as saying that it was an officer decision which of course is quite a strange thing to be quoted as saying.

Are you embarrassed about being involved therefore in this decision and what concerns do you have regarding the location of this Free School on the site?

Supplemental Answer: I am certainly not embarrassed about working with a partner who will actually provide a further excellent school to add on to the outstanding schools that we already have in this borough and Harrow has been selected as the location because of its outstanding achievement in education which has been cultured cross-party throughout the years, both Conservative and Labour administrations. I am certainly not embarrassed by that.

The concerns I have are that whatever site we have for the future school, that it is actually for the best interests of the pupils that go there, to provide an excellent education. At the same time we are also mindful of the effect that any school expansion has on the locality and we will seek in the proper way to make sure that any development is done in a proper way and I can assure you again that, as Councillor Ferry alluded to earlier, there will be a proper process regarding the planning application and a proper process regarding consultation but I am certainly not embarrassed being involved in an organisation like I-Foundation.

5.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor David Perry, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: "Could you explain how going out to tender for a 5-year contract to run the Council's libraries is compatible with your manifesto pledge not to privatise "our superb in-house library service"?"

Answer: No long term decisions have yet been taken on the library service and tonight's report is merely formally exploring potential savings in order to protect the long term future of the service.

Supplemental Question: So you are spending £44,000 for no reason. Given that once again it has been forgotten in the report to mention that 74% of residents in your own consultation decided that they wanted the Council to run the library and he seems to forget that his manifesto that he stood on and all Cabinet Members stood on, says that you will not privatise our superb in-house library service. It says that possible services should be delivered in-house, be democratically controlled and accountable and says that the road to privatisation of our services nearly always ends up being inferior and more costly.

Given that you believe that, why do you think this will save money?

Supplemental Answer: What the report outlines, and a final decision is due at the end of the year, never will the sovereignty of the service ever be passed over.

You talk about us wasting money but let me give you a bit of an education on the money we are spending on the Library Service that has been very well received: installation of wi-fi in our libraries, which we are working towards; the upgrade of the people's network which again is in much need of upgrading; many people go along to our libraries to update things such as CVs if they are out of work. Our libraries are moving towards community hubs and I believe that we are taking the Library Service in a direction which is enhancing the offer for residents. I do not necessarily believe that where we are going to look at exploring potential savings is selling our Library Service down the river, as you claim, but enhancing it across the borough.

6.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor Graham Henson, Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services

Question: Could you provide an update on the progress of the Shared Legal Practice programme?

Answer: You were at the Cabinet meeting in April where we endorsed it. It has been accepted within Barnet Council as well, at their Cabinet. Since then officers have worked hard to complete the agreement governing how it will actually run. There have been a number of positive joint staff meetings involving all the legal staff from both the Councils, unions and myself. The Leader went to one of them as well to see what they think of it all and both Councils are working towards the agreed start date of 2 July when we look forward to welcoming the Barnet staff to Harrow in Civic buildings 3 and 4.

Supplemental Question: Is he proud of some of the things that are going on at the moment? He talks about the successful staff meetings. However, the branch Secretary of Harrow Unison was thrown out of one of those meetings and just the other night at a committee meeting in Barnet, its Planning meeting made a number of potentially unlawful decisions based on flawed legal advice. Does he not worry that we are liable for some of these decisions and this is before the contract even starts.

We are already making these mistakes; we are already throwing people out of meetings. Does he not think this is opening us up to huge potential reputation and financial risks?

Supplemental Answer: Well, I am not aware of Harrow Unison representative being thrown out of a meeting. They have not contacted me about that.

With regard to the meetings, you have probably taken your legal opinion from those websites that pop up every now and then. I am not a legal expert and I rely on our legal officers advice to say whether the decisions were legally made at the Planning meeting at Barnet last week. I will let legal officers advise whether the decisions were made correctly or not. I am not qualified to make that view.

7.

Questioner: Councillor Marilyn Ashton

Asked of: Councillor Keith Ferry, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration

Question: When is the Council likely to adopt the extension to the West Drive Conservation Area in Harrow Weald?

Answer: The programme this financial year 2012/13 provides for the completion of the conservation area appraisals, management strategies and supporting Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas including Little Common, Stanmore Hill, Canons Park Estate, Kerry Avenue, Old Church Lane and Edgware High Street.

The Harrow Weald Conservation Area appraisals, management strategies and SPD which will include West Drive, is programmed for completion in the next financial year 2013/14.

Once this area has been completed, the entire suite of conservation strategies for the Borough will have been delivered.

Supplemental Question: It has not escaped my notice that it is two years since you had control of this Council and you have been Portfolio Holder. Would you agree that there is a risk, since the extension to the Harrow Weald Conservation Area, the West Drive Conservation Area, is similar to the extension we did in Metroland when we were running the Council but the difference is that this one has not been done yet and has not had, because it was a new extension, Supplementary Planning Guidance, thereby it has never actually had an appraisal?

Do you not think that there is a risk that this will not cover enough weight if you leave it that long and could I ask you for an undertaking to perhaps get on with it a little bit more quickly because two years have gone by and so far we have not done any of the ones that were left over from when we lost control of the Council?

Supplemental Answer: The risk as far as I am concerned is minimal. The reason that we have put these on the backburner is because our very small planning policy unit have been concentrating on producing Development Plan documents and the Core Strategy. You can weigh the amount of work that the three people have done in the last few months here. It contains at least 60% of the papers that were issued for this Cabinet and I have instructed them to complete the Development Plan documents which I believe are the first priority, before going back onto the Conservation Area proposals and management strategies.

8.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Bob Currie, Portfolio Holder for Housing
(answered by Councillor Graham Henson, Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services)

Question: "The Government announced £19 million of funding to combat tenancy fraud in January 2012. Can you confirm if Harrow received any of this funding and, if so, how it was used?"

Answer: The announcement was made in December 2010 and Harrow received £100,000 in March 2011, although the funds were not ring-fenced specifically to be spent on fraud. However, the decision was made in Harrow to use the funds to start a campaign to tackle social housing fraud with some considerable success to date which has been publicised. In fact as a direct result of this funding, 11 social housing properties have already been returned and over 100 other cases are under investigation.

The money has been spent in certain ways:

- to undertake a key audit in flats to identify anyone who should not be living there;
- to undertake tenancy audits on more than 30% of our stock in 2011/12;
- to employ a specialist fraud officer in partnership with corporate Anti Fraud Team to investigate potential fraud in Council tenancies. They are working in conjunction with the Fraud Team.

It is envisaged that this work will be built on moving forward as we seek to make this ongoing work a permanent feature in our future service delivery plans. In addition, in 2012/13 we plan to do more proactive work with RSLs in Harrow to assist them to tackle fraud in their housing stock. To this end we have invited 19 Housing Associations who have properties in Harrow to meet with the Specialist Investigation Officer and the Chartered Institute of Housing on 28 June 2012. This is to encourage engagement and partnership working around fraud. The Homes and Communities Agency is very keen for the funding to be shared with Registered Providers.

Supplemental Question: That is really good news. Are we looking to fund around the same amount of money or are we ring-fencing any? What sort of money are we going to put going forward now that that fund has gone?

Supplemental Answer: Well as I said, they are going to make fraud a permanent feature within the Housing Development Plan and will also work in conjunction with our Council's Corporate Fraud Team. We are aiming to do a joined-up approach across the whole Council around overall fraud rather than just putting it into a silo.

The following questions were not reached in the time limit of 15 minutes. It was noted that written responses would be provided, which have been reproduced below:

9.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications

Question: With £0.8 million extra being allocated to the Transformation and Priority Initiatives Fund, what sort of projects do you hope to finance with this additional funding?

Written Answer: The additional allocation of £0.8m will be available to fund Transformational activities and Invest to Save projects. These will provide ongoing savings to the Council. At this stage there are no specific proposals that are being considered.

10.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and Communications

Question: Could you provide an update on the status of the Transformation and Priority Initiatives Fund?

Written Answer: The detailed position on the use of the Transformation and Priority Initiatives Fund is set out in appendix 2 to the Cabinet report on the Revenue and Capital Outturn 2011-12. An extract of the figures is shown below:

	£000
Initial Fund Amount	2,529.0
Transformation Bids approved	582.4
Severance costs approved	656.0
Balance at year end	1,290.6
Less used to fund carry forward requests	107.0
Balance on fund carried forward to 2012-13	1,183.6

Aside from the bids approved, bids totalling £301.6k were rejected and decisions deferred on bids totalling £575k. The detail of these was supplied to the conservative group in March. Those where decisions were deferred are currently being reviewed.

Note the fund was previously anticipated to be required to fund a significant element of severance costs. This is no longer the case for 2012-13.

433. Forward Plan - 1 June - 30 September 2012

The Leader of the Council informed Cabinet that agenda item 14 'Shared Public Health Service – Outline Business Case' was Key but had not been included on the June Forward Plan. The Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been notified that this item would be included on this Cabinet agenda for decision.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 June to 30 September 2012.

434. Progress on Scrutiny Projects

RESOLVED: To receive and note the current progress of scrutiny projects.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

435. Key Decision - Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration introduced the report, setting out the changes that had been made to the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) for pre-submission consultation and submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public. The Portfolio Holder added that consultation was a legislative requirement and would allow the public to provide a challenge on the Plan.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council) That

- (1) the Site Allocations DPD be agreed for pre-submission consultation;

- (2) the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration be authorised to approve any changes to the Site Allocations DPD that are required, in response to the pre-submission, consultation and prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public.

Reason for Recommendation: To progress production of the Site Allocations DPD in accordance with the adopted Local Development Scheme.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation].

436. Key Decision - Pre-Submission Development Management Policies DPD

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration introduced the report, setting out a summary of the changes that had been made to the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) for pre-submission consultation and submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public. The Portfolio Holder added that consultation was a legislative requirement and would allow the public to engage formally with the Council on the Plan.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council) That

- (1) the Development Management Policies DPD be agreed for pre-submission consultation;
- (2) the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration be authorised to approve any changes to the Development Management Policies DPD that are required, in response the pre-submission consultation, prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public.

Reason for Decision: To progress production of the Development Management Policies DPD in accordance with the adopted Local Development Scheme.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation].

437. Key Decision - Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan: Pre-Submission Consultation Document

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration introduced the report, setting out a summary of the comments made to consultation on the Preferred Option document in January 2012 and the changes that had been made to prepare it for pre-submission consultation and submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public. The Portfolio Holder added that consultation was a legislative requirement and would allow the public to engage formally with the Council on the Plan and comment on the soundness of the policies.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council) That

- (1) having reviewed and commented on the pre-submission version of the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan, annexed at Appendix A, to

the report, the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan be approved for a six week pre-submission consultation;

- (2) the Divisional Director of Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, be authorised to make minor changes to the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan resulting from the pre-submission consultation, prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public.

Reason for Decision: To progress production of the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan in accordance with the adopted Local Development Scheme (LDS).

438. Key Decision - Revised Proposed West London Waste Plan: Pre-Submission Consultation Document

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration introduced the report which, following discussions amongst the partner boroughs, sought agreement to a revised site designation to Harrow's Depot site that would help overcome the Council's concerns in relation to the policy wording of the Plan. He added that the outcome of the revision would result in a reduced site area being proposed for waste management of 1.83 hectares and, overall, this would reduce the total site area identified in the WLWP to 27.54 hectares.

The Portfolio Holder added that, following public consultation and an assessment of the responses received, including further evidence based research, the draft WLWP would be reported back to Cabinet and Council for further approval to submit the draft WLWP with any further proposed changes to the Secretary of State for formal examination.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council) That

- (1) the West London Waste Plan: Pre-Submission Consultation document, at Appendix A to the report, be approved including the revision to the Harrow Council Depot site designation;
- (2) the revised West London Waste Plan: Pre-Submission Consultation document, at appendix A to the report, and the associated Sustainability Appraisal, be approved for an eight-week public consultation in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the amendments to the Harrow Council Depot site, which reduces the area to be safeguarded for waste management, be noted;
- (2) it be noted that final approval was also being sought to undertake consultations on the West London Waste Plan: Pre-Submission Consultation Document by five other West London Councils, namely Brent, Ealing, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond upon Thames, as members of the West London Waste Authority partnership

- (3) officers report to a future meeting on the outcome of the public consultation and any further proposed changes to the Plan prior to its formal submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

Reason for Decision: To enable the Council to make meaningful progress on the West London Waste Plan (WLWP) in order to meet targets set out in the London Plan 2011 and Planning Policy Statement 10, which is still extant.

To provide, in due course, an up-to-date policy framework to assess planning applications for waste management facilities across the six West London boroughs: Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond upon Thames. Planning applications for waste management facilities would also be assessed by each borough against their individual Local Plans, including local development management policies and any other material considerations.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation].

RESOLVED ITEMS

439. Redefining Youth Engagement - Report from Scrutiny Review Group

Cabinet received a report of the Scrutiny Review Group on 'Redefining Youth Engagement', which set out the findings, recommendations and ways in which the Council could effectively communicate with young people in decision-making and community activity.

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families welcomed the report and stated that an interim report would be submitted to Cabinet in July with a detailed response report to a later Cabinet meeting. He expected the partners from Harrow Youth Parliament and Harrow Mencap to participate at the July Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Scrutiny Review Group 'Redefining Youth Engagement' be welcomed and that the Corporate Director Children's Services be requested to submit a report responding to the recommendations of the Review Group to Cabinet on 19 July 2012, including the giving of consideration to officer time and resources, such as meeting rooms being made available to enable implementation of the recommendations.

Reason for Decision: To respond to the recommendations and ensure engagement.

440. Timetable for the Preparation and Consideration of Plans and Strategies comprising the Policy Framework 2012/13

Cabinet received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services, which set out the requirements of the Council's Constitution in terms of the development of its policy framework and sought approval to the timetable for

consideration of the key Plans and Strategies comprising the Policy Framework.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the timetable for the preparation and consideration of the statutory Plans and Strategies, including the non-statutory plan and strategies, set out at Appendices A and B respectively, be approved;
- (2) variation to the timetable be reserved to the Leader of the Council;
- (3) additional Plans and Strategies, other than the Corporate Plan, set out at Appendix B, be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council for approval.

Reason for Decision: To comply with the requirements of paragraph 3 of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules set out in Section 4C of the Council's Constitution.

441. Key Decision - Revenue and Capital Outturn 2011/12

Cabinet received a report of the Corporate Director Resources, which set out the Council's Revenue and Capital Outturn position for 2011/12.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance was pleased to report an underspend of £1.3m on the Revenue Account which was an improvement on the position declared mid-year when an overspend had been forecasted. He added that the underspend was the result of careful financial management in-year, and paid tribute to all the Directorates, particularly the work carried out by the Children and Families Directorate in the use of the Council's Procurement Services and in bringing forward savings. The year-end position allowed the Council to allocate £0.5m to General Reserves, which would help mitigate the shunting of costs by central government to Councils and the poor settlements received.

The Portfolio Holder added that General Reserves held by the Council would rise to £7.5m, which would meet with the policy approved by Council in February 2012 based on the risk assessment of the budget. Moreover, the administration was investing in priority areas, such as £114k in public health and £50k in Summer Youth Projects, and he identified the Scrutiny report on Youth Engagement as an example of a 'listening' Council. The Housing Revenue Account position had also improved from the one that the administration had inherited.

In summing up, the Portfolio Holder added that the Council was committed to strong prudent financial management and was in a sound position to face the challenges from central government. It would continue to invest in its priorities.

The Corporate Director Resources explained that the underspend had been as a result of the early delivery of savings in the Children and Families Directorate, the carry forward of revenue of £2.8m and the delaying or

stopping of expenditure due to the spending protocol. She added that some of the expenditure had been stopped permanently but some of it would need to be spent in 2012/13 and was considered to be a timing difference rather than an actual underspend. Redundancy provisions had also been made. However, these measures did not mean that the budgets had been overstated or that there had been an overreaction with the spending protocol. However, the measures had been necessary and had served their purpose effectively.

The Corporate Director was grateful for the support given by other Directorates and Members in this regard. She added that the in-year pressures, such as on homelessness, had been addressed by increasing the budget and this demonstrated the close and important relationship between the in-year budget monitoring and annual budget setting and medium term financial planning process. The underspend had provided an opportunity to strengthen the balance sheet and deal with newly emerging issues whilst leaving £1m in contingency untouched. With relatively low level of reserves, it was important that spending was controlled carefully and the Council did not risk running an overspend at year-end.

The Corporate Director reported that there had been a significant underspend in the Capital budget. Some projects had been deferred, others delayed in order to allow contracts to be re-negotiated under the Council's Procurement Strategy thereby achieving better value for money. As a result of these actions, a sustainable Capital Programme had been achieved.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the underspend and thanked the Directorates for their contributions in this regard. He particularly thanked the Finance staff and made reference to the need to increasing their capacity.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the revenue and capital outturn position for 2011/12 be noted;
- (2) the proposed revenue carry forwards of £2.8m, as set out in paragraph 28 and detailed at Appendix 5 to the report, be approved;
- (3) the movements between reserves and provisions, as outlined in paragraph 27, be approved;
- (4) the net remaining revenue underspend of £1.3m, of which £0.5m allocated to the general reserves and £0.8m to the Transformation and Priority Initiatives Fund, be approved;
- (5) the additions, movements and virements on the Capital Programme during quarter 4, and as set out at Tables 2 and 3 of Appendix 3 to the report, be approved;
- (6) the carry forward on capital projects, as set out in paragraph 35 and Table 4 of Appendix 3 to the report, be approved;
- (7) the timetable for accounts completion and external audit review, as outlined in paragraph 38 of the report, be noted.

Reason for Decision: To confirm the financial position as at 31 March 2012.

442. Treasury Management Outturn Report 2011/12

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, summarising the Treasury Management activities for 2011/12. He reported on a favourable variance of £1.5m and the good rate of investment income received against an adverse economic situation.

The Portfolio Holder thanked staff in Finance for their work in achieving a positive outturn.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the outturn position for Treasury Management activities for 2011/12 be noted;
- (2) the report be referred to the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee for review.

Reason for Decision: To promote effective financial management and comply with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations 2003 and other relevant guidance.

To keep Cabinet informed of Treasury Management activities and performance.

[Call-in does not apply to decisions that have been noted]

443. Key Decision - Primary School Expansion Programme

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families introduced the proposals to expand permanently nine schools on seven sites following the publication of statutory proposals in April 2012. The report contained recommendations to enable Cabinet to determine the statutory proposals. The Portfolio Holder added that there was a shortage of approximately 70,000 primary school places across London and measures were being put in place to address the shortage. As far as Harrow was concerned, the work carried out by officers was to be commended, particularly the work relating to the Priority School Building Programme where eight Harrow schools out of the eleven application submitted had been selected for inclusion in the Programme.

The Divisional Director of Quality Assurance, Commissioning and Schools informed Cabinet that three schools included in the expansion programme had also been selected for the Priority School Building Programme. Two of these schools, namely Vaughan and Marlborough Primary Schools, were significant projects totalling £19m. The published dates for expansion of these schools was September 2013 and a significant amount of money had already been committed to these projects. However, the Priority Schools Building Programme would help reduce the funding commitment of the

Council but the government had not announced the timescales or the procurement arrangements of the Programme. As a result, Cabinet was being asked to approve further delegation to the relevant Directors and Portfolio Holders.

The Portfolio Holder was appreciative of the work carried out by officers from the Children and Families and Resources Directorates to ensure best value. They had established a good working relationship with the Department for Education. In conclusion, he commended the proposals to Cabinet which should be seen as an expansion for the future, with better and efficient buildings. The administration should be proud to leave this legacy for future generations.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) statutory proposals to expand permanently the following schools by one form of entry (30 pupils), to fill incrementally from the point of admission into the school, be approved:
 - Camrose Primary School with Nursery from September 2013
 - Cedars Manor School from September 2013
 - Glebe Primary School from September 2013
 - Marlborough Primary School from September 2013
 - Pinner Park Infant and Nursery School from September 2013
 - Pinner Park Junior School from September 2014
 - Stanburn First School from September 2013
 - Stanburn Junior School from September 2014
 - Vaughan Primary School from September 2013;
- (2) the Corporate Directors Children & Families and Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Children, Schools & Families and Finance, be authorised to negotiate and agree with the Department for Education and the government appointed agencies the financial arrangements for the rebuild of the schools in the Priority School Building Programme;
- (3) the Corporate Directors Children & Families and Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Children, Schools & Families and Finance, be authorised to agree and implement the building works to the remaining schools within the 2012/13 - 2014/15 Capital Programme estimated expansion costs.

Reason for Recommendation: To enable the local authority to fulfil its statutory duties to provide sufficient school places in its area.

444. Key Decision - Commissioning of Libraries and Leisure Management Services

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services introduced the report, which set out the work conducted for the potential commissioning of library and leisure management services in partnership with Brent (leisure)

and Ealing (libraries and leisure). The report also sought approval to proceed to the next stage to include invitations to tender and evaluation of any tenders prior to bringing a further report to Cabinet with the outcome of the tender process for approval of award or alternative delivery model.

The Portfolio Holder added that a number of expressions of interest had been received: 3 for library management, 4 for leisure management and 1 for the joint management of both libraries and leisure facilities. For reasons of commercial sensitivity, the details had not been publicised.

Cabinet was reminded that out of the 2,000 residents who took part in the Let's Talk initiative, the majority had identified the Council as the best provider of a library service. Whilst the Council would take into account the results of the consultation, it needed to explore all avenues in the current financial situation and in order to protect the frontline services. No decisions had been made and further information would be made available at a future Cabinet meeting to allow a decision to be made.

The Leader of the Council stated that no decision had been reached and that a number of alternatives were being pursued. He also drew attention to the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 June which had been circulated to all Members.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the work carried out on the cross-borough leisure and libraries market testing, including proposals relating to further development of a shared service, be noted;
- (2) the further work carried out on the development of the full service specification and the preparation for formal market testing and procurement, be noted;
- (3) authority be delegated to the Corporate Director Community, Health and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Community and Cultural Services and Property and Major Contracts, to invite tenders, engage in discussion with bidders and proceed with the evaluation of tenders following any necessary consultation and equality analysis of the proposals, as outlined in paragraph 3.2 of the officer report;
- (4) it be noted that a further report would be submitted to Cabinet with recommendations for the award of contract(s) and/or suggestions for alternative delivery models;
- (5) the proposed outline collaborative governance arrangements be approved and it be noted that a report would be submitted to Cabinet to seek approval, prior to entering into those arrangements.

Reason for Decision: To deliver the next phase of transformation of Harrow's cultural services and to ensure the continuation of leisure and library service delivery whilst at the same time delivering efficiency savings.

445. Implementation of the Health and Social Care Act

Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director Community, Health and Wellbeing updating on progress in Harrow against the following key areas: Transfer of Public Health, Public Health Budget, Development of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Progress on the creation of a North West London Commissioning Support Service, Establishment of Harrow's Clinical Commissioning Group and Creation of Healthwatch.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the Health and Social Care Act received Royal Assent in March 2012 and from April 2013 local authorities would have a statutory duty to promote the health of its population. A Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board had been set up in Harrow and the arrangements were working well, particularly with the General Practitioners (GPs). A draft Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy had been produced and would be consulted on.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) it be noted that the Council would continue to lobby for a fair and viable public health allocation;
- (2) officers continue discussion with the Clinical Commissioning Group and the North West London Commissioning Support Service on opportunities to establish a 'joint venture';
- (3) a further report on any proposals to establish a joint venture with the North West London Commissioning Support Service be submitted to Cabinet;
- (4) once guidance was received, a further report on the proposed final arrangements of the Health and Wellbeing Board be submitted to Cabinet;
- (5) a report on the proposed process for Commissioning Healthwatch be received.

Reason for Decision: To progress the implementation of the Health and Social Care Act.

446. Key Decision - Shared Public Health Service - Outline Business Case

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing introduced the report, which set out a Business Case for an "in principle" agreement between Harrow and Barnet Councils to develop and implement plans for a shared public health function. The shared public health team would discharge the statutory public health responsibilities that would transfer from the National Health Service (NHS) to local authorities on the 1 April 2013.

The Portfolio Holder added that the transfer of the health functions from the NHS to local authorities would mean that Harrow would receive a ring fenced

budget based on NHS historical spend. For Harrow this was considerably lower and would not help fulfill our statutory obligations in the beginning. It also reflected the challenges that NHS Harrow had faced. The base line allocation was approximately £7.5m, which was the sixth lowest in London.

As a result, a shared public health team with another borough was being considered in order to ensure that allocated resources went further, whilst maintaining capacity and expertise. Harrow had explored opportunities and looked at shared arrangements with other Councils in the West London Alliance, and Barnet Council was considered to be the best option as both boroughs faced similar challenges. The Portfolio Holder thanked Dr Andrew Howe, Director of Public Health, Harrow, for his knowledge, expertise and contributions in moving forward on this journey. The Portfolio Holder asked for it to be noted that the suggestion in the paper that a Deputy Director be appointed for each borough was no longer correct.

Cabinet was informed that should the recommendations be agreed, negotiations with Barnet Council would continue. It was noted that since the issue of the Cabinet report, discussions between the Council had progressed well. Depending on the outcome of these discussions, a final Operating Model would be submitted for approval at a future date. Hosting was important to Harrow, and if this was not possible, a separate proposal which was also being considered alongside the shared service proposal would be put in place. The Portfolio Holder commended the report to Cabinet

The Chief Executive stated that the key driver behind the proposal was to ensure that the arrangements served the best interests of the Council and its residents. Both Harrow and Barnet had received poor financial settlements and their needs were similar. Therefore, in essence, both Councils had similar synergies and opportunities, including performance gaps. Moreover, both organisations' public health areas were mainstreamed and it was essential to build an Operating Model for consideration.

He thanked the Corporate Director of Community Health and Wellbeing, the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing and Dr Andrew Howe for moving this business forward in a positive manner.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the outline Business Case be approved and the "in principle" development of a shared public health service for Harrow Council and Barnet Council be agreed;
- (2) the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing and Corporate Director Community, Health and Wellbeing, be authorised to develop the operating model and structures between the two authorities;
- (3) a further report be submitted to Cabinet with a view to agreeing the final operating model and inter-authority agreement.

Reason for Decision: To implement the required transfer of Public Health to Local Government.

447. Key Decision - Whitchurch Playing Fields

Cabinet received a report of the Corporate Director Place Shaping, which provided a comprehensive summary of the consultation and engagement activity which had been undertaken in respect of proposed development of the Whitchurch Playing Fields, since November 2011.

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts was of the view that, if approved, the proposal would provide excellent facilities for people of all ages. The Portfolio Holder added that the consultation had been wide and that he was grateful that the site was being considered for development after many years. He added that this was only the second stage of the process and that many other considerations would be necessary before any development on the site could go ahead. Moreover, there were no guarantees that the development would go ahead. He assured that the proposal would not be 'noddled' through without robust and careful consideration. He commended the report to Cabinet.

The Corporate Director Place Shaping stated that the Whitchurch Playing Fields site was of strategic significance to the borough. The Corporate Director explained the consultation process following approval by Council in November 2011 and the feedback received following engagement with residents. He added that all Members of Cabinet had previously received the petitions received in relation to the proposals, including that organised by the Whitchurch Consortium in support of the proposals.

The Corporate Director added that this was the second stage of the process and that the report was impartial and comprehensive and had captured the key issues made by residents. He was of the view that the proposals would not adversely impact on the residents and that the object had been to manage, mitigate and minimise the impact on both the local community and the borough as a whole. The Council would have failed if the development would result in creating an adverse impact on the community.

The Corporate Director added that, if the proposals were approved, the Whitchurch Consortium would be expected to undertake pre-application consultation prior to the submission of a planning application, which would be considered by the Council's Planning Committee. He added that the planning process was an independent one.

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families was of the view that the proposal would create a legacy for future generations and that the young people of Harrow, who often felt that they were not listened to, would particularly benefit from the creation of a sport facility. The Council had an opportunity to develop a facility for families to use, and he expected the various processes to be approved independently.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services stated that a recently conducted survey by the Council had shown that only 15% sport

pitches were rated as good or excellent. The proposals from the Whitchurch Consortium would help improve this figure and he alluded on the support received from the various colleges, scout groups and sporting organisations to this investment in the borough during an Olympic Year. The Portfolio Holder added that it was important that the Council listened to the concerns of the local residents but at the same it had a vision to fulfil which was to improve the facilities in the borough. The Planning and Licensing processes were independent and he expected the applications from the Whitchurch Consortium to be analysed with vigour.

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing referred to a letter of support from Age Concern which would also wish to use the facilities. She added that older and disabled people would also benefit from the proposal.

The Leader of the Council referred to the work that previous administrations had done to bring the Whitchurch Playing Fields into use. He added that further reports would be submitted to Cabinet, including the Development Agreement, and that many issues had to be resolved before the proposals were brought to fruition.

RESOLVED: That, having considered the feedback from the consultation and engagement activity summarised within the report:

- (1) the Whitchurch Consortium be commissioned to develop a community sport and leisure facility, at the Whitchurch Playing Fields, subject to agreement in respect of commercial terms;
- (2) it be noted that negotiations in respect of the Development Agreement, associated Service Level Agreement and Lease Terms would now commence, as previously authorised by Cabinet.
- (3) it be noted that the outcome of the negotiations would be reported to Cabinet for final approval.

Reason for Decision: To attract inward investment to establish a modern sports and leisure facility, to include substantially improved playing pitches, for the benefit of the Community, at no direct financial cost to the Council.

448. Key Decision - Revised Local Development Scheme

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration introduced the report, which set out the revised content and timetable for the Local Development Framework (LDF) documents that the Council was intending to prepare over the coming years. The revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) was intended to replace the current outdated LDS.

RESOLVED: That the revised Local Development Scheme, at Appendix A to the report, be approved for publication, with the Scheme coming into effect from the 1 July 2012.

Reason for Decision: Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), the Council has a statutory duty to maintain an up-to-date Local Development Scheme (LDS). The revised LDS is intended to fulfill that requirement.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.51 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chairman