

CABINET MINUTES

17 NOVEMBER 2011

DRAFT MINUTE EXTRACT

Chairman:	* Councillor Bill Stephenson	
Councillors:	* Bob Currie	* Graham Henson
	* Margaret Davine	* Thaya Idaikkadar
	* Keith Ferry	* Phillip O'Dell
	* Brian Gate	* David Perry
	* Mitzi Green	
In attendance: (Councillors)	Marilyn Ashton	Minute 298
	Barry Macleod-Cullinane	Minute 298
	Janet Mote	Minute 298
	Anthony Seymour	Minute 298

* Denotes Member present

310. **Whitchurch Pavilion and Playing Fields**

Cabinet received a report of the Corporate Director Place Shaping, together with amended recommendations, which set out details of the January 2009 Tender to secure the refurbishment or replacement of the Whitchurch Pavilion, the maintenance of Whitchurch Playing Fields and the enhanced provision of sports, leisure and community use through a Partnering Development Project with the Council.

The Leader of the Council referred to an additional tabled document which contained further revisions to the recommendations, which he hoped would help allay some concerns raised by the questioners in relation to the consultation process.

The Corporate Director Place Shaping apologised to Cabinet and Belmont and Canons Ward Councillors for a misleading statement in his report and

confirmed that Ward Councillors had not been consulted on the proposals. Instead, they had been advised of the intention to present the report but that this course of action in itself was unacceptable to him. As a result, he had put in place business processes to ensure that such mistakes were not made in the future and that Ward Councillors were fully engaged in processes.

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts provided some background to the site since proposals were first put forward in 2008. He added that the site was of strategic significance and that, following a tendering exercise, 12 parties had expressed an interest in the site. He added that only two of those who had tendered, the Harrow Rugby Club and the Whitchurch Consortium, were shortlisted. Various options for the site had been considered, including an option for a lease to a preferred bidder, which was now being recommended to Cabinet.

The Portfolio Holder added that once the decision was made, meaningful consultations would be undertaken with local residents and Ward Councillors and he assured Cabinet that there would be no construction on site unless and until full planning permission had been granted.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services indicated his support for the Whitchurch Consortium, which had provided a sound business case for the development of the site. However, his work with local sports clubs would not stop here as he intended to create a thriving sporting community by engaging with those who had expressed an interest in this site, including other local sports clubs. The Portfolio Holder added that networking was an essential element in creating such a community and he hoped that local sports and rugby clubs would also engage in this process so that passions and experiences could be shared towards a common goal of creating an active community and reviving participation levels. Moreover, as a result of the London 2012 Olympic Games, external funding for sport event programmes had been obtained from Sport England and he urged sports clubs to engage in this process to achieve common goals.

He thanked all those volunteers who worked hard for their clubs and assured them that the Council was committed to help build on capacity to enable local sports clubs to thrive.

The Leader of the Council stated that the decision before Cabinet was challenging and acknowledged that errors in the consultation process had been made. As a result, the matter would come back to Cabinet following the consultation process for a final decision and he sought approval of the recommendations tabled at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) having considered the findings of this report and, in accordance with officer recommendations, the Whitchurch Consortium be selected as the Council's preferred bidder for the purposes of further consultation as set out below;

- (2) the Corporate Director Place Shaping be authorised to:
- (i) consult Ward Councillors on the proposals put forward by the Whitchurch Consortium;
 - (ii) agree arrangements for the Whitchurch Consortium to present their proposed development plans in a public forum;
 - (iii) place statutory advertisements required in connection with the proposed leasing of the open space land and to consider and respond to any representations received as a result of the above actions;
 - (iv) negotiate the Development Agreement, associated Service Level Agreement and Terms of the Lease;
- (3) note that the consultation results will be reported to Cabinet in due course prior to any final decision and that, in any event, no development shall take place unless and until the Whitchurch Consortium have obtained planning permission.

Reason for Decision: To attract inward investment providing for the Pavilion to be replaced and run in conjunction with substantially improved playing fields for the benefit of the community at large and at no financial cost to the Council.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.35 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chairman