

At a meeting of the West Area Committee (Planning) held on Thursday, 9 February 2006 at 7:30 pm at the Public Meeting Room, Feltham Library, Feltham High Street.

Present:

Councillor Cooper (Vice Chair in the Chair)

Councillors Bowen, Chatt, Chopra, Cooper, Ellar, Fincher, Hills, Howliston, Hunt, Jacks, Morgan-Watts and Nakamura

Apologies for Absence

Councillors Awan, Driscoll and Hughes, D.

162. Declarations of prejudicial interest or any other communications by members

- a) Councillors Chopra, Cooper and Fincher noted their membership of the Sustainable Development Committee.
- b) Councillor Chatt noted that, with regard to Item 8, 36, Staines Road, he had had contact and discussions with the applicant.
- c) With regard to item 8, Councillor Bowen noted that he had been contacted by members of the public, and he had spoken against the officer's recommendation. He would therefore withdraw during the discussion on that item.
- d) With regard to item 11, Rear of 88-104 Hanover Avenue, Feltham, Councillor Jacks noted that he had handed in a petition at the last meeting from residents who were in opposition to the application, however he did not have a predetermined view.
- e) Councillor Cooper apologised for the short-notice given in the change of venue for the meeting; the Library had been closed on health and safety grounds. More notice of the change of venue would be give in future.

163. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th January, 2006 were approved with the following amendments :

- a) With regard to Minute 151a) Councillor Hunt had declared an interest in item 5, he had been contacted by the applicant.

164. Matters Arising

- a) With regard to Minute 153a) an item referring to 14, Harlington Road West, Councillor Bowen noted his personal regret that the Enforcement Action had not yet been carried out. He had received communications from the neighbours, who were very distressed. The Director of Legal Services representative undertook to pursue this issue.
- b) With regard to Minute 150, regarding the Jubilee Clock, Councillor Cooper noted that the Rotary Club had originally donated the clock, it was safely stored but a new site needed to be found in the rebuilt town centre.
- c) With regard to Minute 160, Conservation Area Character Appraisals, it was noted that the comments of members had been requested. A follow-up report had yet to come

back to the Committee. Members requested that a report be brought back in due course, to include the issue of parking on the pavement, crossovers in Conservation Areas, and including the request that Church Road, Hanworth, near St Dunstan's Church be added to the Conservation Area in Hanworth.

- d) With regard to Minute 161, Feltham Town Centre – Parking Issues, Members noted that the action had not yet been carried out, and asked that a letter be sent as a matter of urgency to the developers on behalf of the Chair and Vice- Chair, inviting a representative to attend the next meeting of the West Area Committee. A delay was unacceptable.

165. SAP (UK) Ltd, Clockhouse Place, Bedfont Road, Bedfont

(See the report of the Director of Planning, ref P/2005/3122, Agenda item 5)

Simon Hoets (West Area Planning Manager), asked that the tabled responses from the Office & Building Services Manager at SAP UK (Ltd), and the Crime Prevention Design Adviser, Hounslow Police Division be noted.

The main problem identified by the company was the vandalism and damage to vehicles on site.

Councillor Hunt commented that he did not believe that the new fence would prevent vandalism of the site. It could be easily removed, as it had been at the Southville Youth Centre. Permission was very rarely given for such fencing above 2m because it was unattractive.

Councillor Hills concurred with the points made by Councillor Hunt. He suggested that more time be set aside for alternative solutions to be discussed in detail with SAP. The managers had not attended to discuss the issue with the Committee.

Councillor Howliston suggested that the fence be restricted to 2m, which could be built without planning permission.

Resolved :

That the application for a 2.5m to 1.5m high means of enclosure (Fence) be refused.

166. 48 Gloucester Road, Feltham

(See the report of the Director of Planning, ref P/2005/3637, Agenda item 6)

Resolved:

That it be noted that the application had been withdrawn.

167. 74 Hampton Lane, Feltham

(See the report of the Director of Planning, ref P/2006/0106, Agenda Item 7)

Simon Hoets (West Area Planning Manager) noted that the road was a classified road and that a rear access was available.

Resolved:

That the application to construct a vehicle crossover to create a means of access from the highway to the house be refused.

168. 36 Staines Road, Feltham

(See the report of the Director of Planning, ref P/2005/3314, Agenda item 8)

(Councillor Bowen withdrew from the room during the discussion on this item)

Simon Hoets (West Area Planning Manager) noted that the trees, as seen in the aerial photograph, had been removed from the back of the property. In answer to queries from Members, Simon Hoets noted that there was access at the back of the alleyway if needed by the emergency services, in the event of a fire.

Resolved:

That the retention of two storage sheds to the rear of the site be agreed.

169. 17 Redford Close, Feltham

(See the report of the Director of Planning, ref P/2005/3576, Agenda Item 9)

Resolved:

That the erection of a two storey side extension be agreed.

170. 55 Exeter Road, Hanworth

(See the report of the Director of Planning, ref P/2006/0105, Agenda Item 10)

It was noted that the road at the back of the property was not accessible to the applicant.

Resolved:

That the retention of a means of access be agreed.

171. Rear of 86-104 Hanover Avenue, Feltham

(See the report of the Director of Planning, ref P/2006/0034), Agenda Item 11)

(Councillor Cooper noted that the application was in his ward)

Members made the following comments:

- i) That the development would not be appropriate to the character in the local area.
- ii) The development was in contradiction to the Council's policy in respect to "backland developments"
- iii) They had concerns regarding the increase in traffic which could be caused, and in

particular an access by road onto already dangerous bend in the road.

172. Greenham Park House, Chertsey Road, Feltham

(See the report of the Director of Planning, ref P/2005/2231, Agenda Item 12)

Members made the following comments:

- i) It would be more acceptable if the top floors could be integrated into the roof space, to reduce the overall height of the development.
- ii) Members requested clarification as to the proportion of nomination rights the Council would have to the affordable rented accommodation.
- iii) Members raised concerns regarding the balance between landscaped open space and parking areas. Councillor Bowen expressed the view that he did not support the proposal to replace a few of the car parking spaces with further landscaping.

173. St Vincent's House, Faggs Road, Feltham

(See the report of the Director of Planning, ref P/2006/0140, Agenda Item 13)

[Councillor Chopra commented that he was in favour of the application and the Chair noted that he would be obliged to declare his interest at the Sustainable Development Committee in due course].

Members made the following comments:

- i) Some Members raised concerns regarding the proposal to build within the Heathrow airport's safety zone, and officers undertook to provide more detailed information about this aspect at the Sustainable Development Committee.

174. Victoria Works, Victoria Road, Feltham

(See the report of the Director of Planning, ref P/2005/3606, Agenda Item 14)

Members made the following comments:

- i) It was a large and dense residential development, higher than the Council's UDP recommendations.
- ii) The development was in close proximity to Leisure West, there were concerns that the issues of security would need greater consideration.
- iii) It would be better to retain a light industrial use for this site, not develop the site for flats.

175. Girling Way, Feltham

(See the report of the Director of Street Management & Public Protection, Agenda Item 15)

Resolved:

That a draft stopping up order be made in relation to the public highway Girling Way, Feltham under Section 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in accordance with the procedure set out in Section 252 of the Act.

176. Delegated Decisions

(See the report of the Borough Planning Officer, Agenda Item 16)

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

177. Results of Planning Appeals

(See the report of the Director of Legal Services, Agenda Item 17)

Councillor Cooper noted his annoyance and surprise with regard to item 1. Crescott Hall, where the Inspector had upheld an appeal.

Councillor Bowen expressed surprise with regard to item 2. Bedfont Lakes, Bedfont Green Close, Feltham. Members noted that there seemed to be an inconsistent approach to the issue of local transport links in both cases.

The Secretary of State had upheld the appeal with regard to Appeal B.

Members noted the decision by the Secretary of State not to award costs to the Council, but asked for clarification with regard to the s106 agreement.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

178. The Rough Riders Application

Councillor Jacks asked whether there was an update available on this issue.

Simon Hoets (West Area Planning Manager) noted that there was not.

179. Budget Information - Presentation by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Ellar, Leader of the Council outlined the fundamental budgetary factors, which underpin the Council Tax.

The Council raised 30% of its overall funds via the Council Tax, the Government contributed the remaining 70% from the annual Government Grant. The Government had made some recent changes to grant distribution in 2006/7. Hounslow had not received a good settlement it seemed.

In Hounslow the total grant increase had increased by 4.7% overall, however, because the

spending on Hounslow's schools had increased (based upon an increase in pupil numbers) the education spend was increased by 6%, and the non-education budget by 2%.

The experience of Hounslow was similar to the majority of outer London Boroughs, which had received a 2% increase in grant.

The Minister for Local Government had stated that the Government was expecting the average Council Tax increases to be less than 5% in the next two years.

Councillor Ellar commented that, to stay within Government guidelines, and avoid Capping measures, Hounslow had made more than £53m in savings and efficiencies since 1993/1994. More recently, Hounslow had worked with Hounslow Homes and CIP, to identify Gershon efficiency savings, and had identified £ 31.5m in 2004/05 with anticipated savings for 2005/6.

The performance of the Council is good, ranked as three stars by the CPA in December and "improving well" with regard to Direction of Travel.

Councillor Sharma noted that there were particular concerns about the accuracy of Government figures when the calculations of the borough's population were concerned. The Government figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) were lower than our own. Our estimates were 215, 976, they said 211,911.

Councillor Ellar informed the meeting that lobby meetings had taken place between Members and Government Ministers David Miliband, Phil Woolas and Nick Raynsford. Our grant had been adjusted by a marginal £31,000.

All main party leaders had met with Jim Fitzpatrick on 11th January, 2006 to discuss a wide range of issues, including the new grant system and population issues.

The final budget for 2006/7 would be set on the 7th March, 2006.

Residents had been consulted regarding their priorities, via the 2000 strong Resident's Panel and, for the last two years the priorities had been ;

- better schools
- better services for children and young people
- community safety
- cleaner streets

The response of the Council was to develop cross-cutting priorities, as set out in the current Executive Business Plan; £1m to be invested in the condition of the street scene; £20,000 for community safety' £300,000 additional funding for the needs of young people; the integration of children's services and supporting educational attainment. The attainment of young people was rising significantly.

One change this year in the funding to schools would be the "passporting" of education funds, which would go directly to schools, but this would have the effect of squeezing other services.

There was a need, Councillor Ellar noted, to make savings. The Council Tax would rise by 12% if such savings, amounting to some £6m were not made.

There were other costs to be met; increases in local government pension contributions for example; the cost of inflation; general cost pressures.

There would be additional cost to the borough as a result of anti - terrorist work. The Mayor of London's precept was another cost to the borough.

Finally, Councillor Ellar would be involve in the consultation with the business community on the 15th February, 2006.

Questions / Comments

Councillor Hills made the following comments;

The budgetary situation looked difficult. The Majority Party was not comfortable in making cuts to services.

Could the Leader confirm that the figures of the Office for National Statistics would not have an impact upon the Council RSG (Rate Support Grant), this year, or settlements to come.

The concept of Capping had been an idea first put forward by the Conservative Government, what was the leader's view of Capping?

Councillor Ellar commented that he was unsure of the effect that population figures would have in the future Government settlements. He did know that he had managed to gain a further increase of £30,000 from the Government, following the recent meeting with Ministers.

With regard to Capping, the subject was not an easy one. There were obviously tensions between national spending priorities and local priorities. Hounslow had been very careful to avoid the triggering of the Government's powers to cap our spending. There would have to be cuts; which would be outlined in the Budget-Setting meeting on the 7th March.

Councillor Ellar refused to be drawn with regard to the detail of the proposed cuts.

Councillor Fincher noted that the financial relationship between central and local government funding was a complex and distant process. The distance, from a Liberal Democrat perspective, was the problem, it was always possible to blame the Government. It seemed a better solution to move to an element of local taxation.

Councillor Fincher noted that schools had not historically received funding directly from the Government. There had been an underspend with regard to education in Hounslow.

Councillor Ellar acknowledged that there were problems with the current Council Tax system, however the majority of funding for local services came from central government. A study had been undertaken by Michael Lyons, who was expected to report later this year.

Council Tax was a visible tax, more so than perhaps Income Tax. Councillor Ellar did not discount the usefulness of a local income tax. Hounslow's spending on education was comparable with other boroughs.

Councillor Bowen referred to the Housing Act 2004. He noted that Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) were a problem.

Councillor Bowen noted that it was a matter of regret that the number of public present was so low; the meeting had not received sufficient publicity.

With regard to the Gershon efficiency savings, of the £31.5m Councillor Bowen asked of that total what proportion was derived from the Housing Revenue Account ? He asked for confirmation of the other London Boroughs had gained three stars.

Councillor Ellar was not able to confirm the proportion of savings from the HRA.

Councillor Ellar noted that Bexley, Wandsworth and Westminster certainly had gained three stars, but there were others.

With regard to comments about the government and its responsiveness to lobbying, Councillor Ellar commented that Tessa Jowell had met local government half way on the costs of taking on the licensing process.

Councillor Howliston asked about the history of the £53m savings that had been made since 1993.

Councillor Ellar noted that the amount had been cumulative. Some years the Council had been required to make more savings than in others. For example, last year the Council had not been required to make large savings.

The additional £20,000 spent on Community Safety was for a Community Outreach Team Officer. A 30,000 contribution had been made by the West Area Committee towards a Domehawk camera.

Councillor Jacks commented that there were elements of local government spending which were difficult to control and predict. Looked After Children, care of the elderly, heating, insurance, pension costs for example.

Councillor Ellar noted that £ 300,000 had been spent upon the needs of young people last year; within the Youth Service; a drop-in centre called "The Attic" had been established. At any one time there were on average 330 children were in care, and most cost £100,000 per annum if there were in residential care.

Councillor Cooper thanked Councillor's Ellar and Sharma for their presentation.

180. Thanks to Tony Searle

The Committee thanked the Caretaker, Tony Searle, for stepping in at short notice to set the meeting up.

The meeting finished at 9:35pm

