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NORTH WEST (INNER) AREA COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held at Hawkswood Children's Centre on
Thursday, 28th June, 2007 at 7.00 pm

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

M Hamilton	-	Headingley
J Monaghan (Chair)	-	Headingley
D Morton	-	Headingley
P Ewens	-	Hyde Park and Woodhouse
K Hussain	-	Hyde Park and Woodhouse
L Rhodes-Clayton	-	Hyde Park and Woodhouse
B Atha	-	Kirkstall
J Illingworth	-	Kirkstall
E Minkin	-	Kirkstall
S Bentley	-	Weetwood
J Chapman	-	Weetwood
B Jennings	-	Weetwood

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A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF COUNCIL FUNCTIONS AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

There are certain functions that are defined by regulations which can only be carried out at a meeting of the Full Council or under a Scheme of Delegation approved by the Full Council. Everything else is an Executive Function and, therefore, is carried out by the Council's Executive Board or under a Scheme of Delegation agreed by the Executive Board.

The Area Committee has some functions which are delegated from full Council and some Functions which are delegated from the Executive Board. Both functions are kept separately in order to make it clear where the authority has come from so that if there are decisions that the Area Committee decides not to make they know which body the decision should be referred back to.

AGENDA

Item No	Ward	Item Not Open		Page No
20			<p>LEEDS GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL (EXECUTIVE FUNCTION)</p> <p>To consider a report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods which provides a basic overview of the current situation in relation to Leeds Girls' High School and the disposal of its sites for redevelopment.</p>	1 - 4

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Originator: Dayle Lynch

Tel: 0113 3952825

Report of the Director of Environment and Neighborhoods

Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 28th June 2007

Subject: Leeds Girls' High School

<p>Electoral Wards Affected:</p> <p>Headingley Hyde Park & Woodhouse</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)</p>	<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disabled People <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Council Function <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/></p>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a basic overview of the current situation in relation to Leeds Girls' High School and the disposal of its sites for redevelopment. The report is not intended as a comprehensive update on proposals but as an aid to initiate debate on the subject, with a view to the Area Committee deciding on whether to submit a formal response to the current draft planning brief.

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report provides Members with information on the current issues in relation to the redevelopment of land presently occupied and owned by Leeds Girls' High School.

2.0 Background

2.1 In January 2004 it was announced that the Girls' High School and Grammar School were to merge to form The Grammar School at Leeds. The merger will see the Girls' High co-located with the Grammar School at Alwoodley Gate. The physical merger is proposed for completion by September 2008.

2.2 The school plans to dispose of the main school site, Ford House Garden, the Elinor Lupton Centre and the Victoria Road site (swimming pool, gymnasium and sports pitch to the rear). The only element planned for retention by the school is the Ford House building (Buckingham Road/Headingley Lane).

2.3 The Elinor Lupton Centre will be considered separately to the other sites, and will be subject to submissions of proposals for reuse, given the listed status of the building and difficulties anticipated with conversion for alternative use.

3.0 Planning Brief

3.1 A draft planning brief has been published by the school, outlining the potential scope for reuse and redevelopment of all the sites for disposal, excluding the Elinor Lupton Centre.

3.2 The brief was published in mid May 2007 following Planning Board approval for public consultation. The expiration of the consultation period was Wednesday 27th June.

3.3 Although there are a number of listed buildings across the sites, the brief points out that this does not preclude the opportunity for new buildings elsewhere.

3.4 The majority of the redevelopment proposals included in the brief are for residential provision. The main school site would see the most housing provision, but there is also a proposal to develop housing on the Victoria Road playing field (to the rear of the gymnasium/swimming pool building). This is being off-set against the proposed retention of Ford House Garden and the gymnasium/swimming pool.

3.5 A Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan is to be prepared as part of the planning application process.

4.0 Community Activity

4.1 In response to plans to redevelop sites within the school's ownership, an action group has been formed by the coalition of a number of local community groups.

4.2 A number of public meetings have been held which have been very well attended, where the planned disposal and redevelopment of the sites have been debated. At the most recent meeting an agreement was reached to reject the draft planning brief in full.

4.3 There is a strong feeling amongst community members that the greenspace within the sites must be retained and not lost to development. Attached at appendix 1 is a draft letter produced by the Chair of the Area Committee, which is intended to be finalised and sent to City Development as a formal Inner North West Area Committee response to the draft planning brief consultation.

4.4 Suggestion has been made that a working group be formed, with direct links to the Area Committee. The group would comprise ward Members, Leeds City Council officers and representatives from Leeds Girls' High School Action Group.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Area Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of the report;
- b) Decide upon any formal response it wishes to give; and
- c) Decide whether it wishes to support the formation of a working group.

Dear Paul,

Re. Draft Planning and Development Brief - Leeds Girls High School

I write on behalf of the Inner North West Area Committee to express our concerns and comments with regard to the Draft Planning and Development Brief.

The potential loss of the protected playing pitches (hockey pitch to the south of the swimming pool and the tennis courts on the main site) is of great concern to the Area Committee and local residents. The committee are not convinced that the creation of a new community park and public access to the swimming pool are sufficient benefits that outweigh the loss of these protected pitches. Furthermore, the provision of sports facilities with community access at the Alwoodley site are of little benefit to those who live in Headingley and Hyde Park. It is therefore felt to be imperative that we safeguard these valuable greenspaces for the local community. This is particularly the case given that a significant area adjacent to the sites is designated in the UDP as an area where priority will be given to the improvement of greenspace provision.

Whilst the retention of the main school building has been seen as a positive in the past, the Committee feels that, if a compromise had to be made, it would be better to allow more comprehensive re-development, but only if all of the protected playing pitch areas are safeguarded. This may allow the school to obtain a greater value from the site, without development taking place on the greenspaces.

In relation to the acquisition of the pool by a third party, possibly Leeds Metropolitan University, the Committee would like to re-affirm its position that we would wish to see good levels of community access, both in terms of hours of availability and also reasonable price.

It is concerning to read that the Brief states 'a reduction in the affordable housing requirement may be acceptable.' The Committee feels strongly that affordable housing will be a key component in the provision of residential uses and will aid diversification of the housing mix locally as well as providing access to the housing market for first time buyers.

The Committee welcomes the statement in the Brief about creating a mixed community by providing non-student housing. However, it is considered that the Brief should perhaps refer specifically to Policy H15 and the 'Area of Housing Mix', explaining why student accommodation would be inappropriate on this site.

I hope that the Planning Board will give serious consideration to the above issues before approving the final Brief.

Yours sincerely

Cllr James Monaghan
Chair, Inner North West Area Committee

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