

**LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE AND
STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE
21 JULY 1998**

Present: Councillor North (Chairman)
Councillors Angell, Mrs Ballin, Bettison, Birch,
Blatchford, Egan, Fawcett, Flood, Good, Grayson,
Miss Haydon, Mrs Hayes, Jones, Mrs Keene,
McCormack, Mills, North, Sargeant, Mrs Shillcock,
Taylor, Thompson, Ward and Wheaton

Substitute Members: Councillors Mrs Pile and Worrall

Apologies for Absence were received from:
Councillors Bayle, Finnie and Wade

191. Chairman's Announcement

The Chairman made a procedural announcement stating that although proper due notice of the meeting had been given, the agenda had not been open to inspection by the public for a full three clear days as required under Standing Order 7 reflecting the requirements in place by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, although Councillors had received their papers with due notice. The Chairman considered however that the agenda business was of considerable urgency to be dealt with at the meeting as permitted under Standing Order 7 and the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 under the following grounds of urgency:

- (i) to delay consideration of the revised application would be likely to have a detrimental affect on the application by South Hill Park; and
- (ii) there will be no convenient opportunity to convene a further meeting of the two Committees within the timescale required.

192. South Hill Park – Lottery Bid

The Director of Leisure Services introduced a detailed report regarding the request from South Hill Park Trust for grant aid of up to £1 million towards a major capital development at the site. At the Special Policy & Resources/Leisure Committee of 14 January 1997 it had been agreed that a grant of up to £1.5 million be offered to South Hill Park Trust for a major development at The Mansion. The remainder of the project was to be found from South Hill Park and Lottery funding from the Arts Council for England. Since that time, the Arts Council for England had seen a reduction in its allocation from the National Lottery and its focus had re-directed towards revenue and activity funding rather than towards provision of funding for capital works. Consequently it was unable to support the original concept and had requested that a smaller scheme be prepared. This meeting had been called to consider this revised project.

The Committee considered that it would be necessary to receive the business plan for the new project in order to assess the details of the project and also the officer advice on that report which was not available for the meeting. In light of the fact that the business plan had not been available at the time of agenda distribution, no officer recommendations had been made on the project.

193. Presentation of Capital Project by South Hill Park Trust

David Elford, Chairman of the Trustees, introduced the team from South Hill Park that had been working on developing the application for the revised project:

He outlined the progress of the application starting with the original application and giving details of its downsizing to its current format. He gave an outline of the funding required for the project which in total would reach up to £4.9 million and that the partnership funding element which would include the £1 million support funding was being sought from the Borough Council. The partnership funding had originally included £200,000 to be raised by South Hill Park. Mr Elford considered that the budget presented covered all possible contingencies and requirements in order to avoid disruption to the work of the Park by the capital project. The Arts Council for England funding for the project had been reduced and the overall cost of the project had been reduced in line with this. However, the original brief had still been followed in developing the scheme. The scheme provided new elements to the Park's work as well as developing current activities.

Tim Brinkman, Director of South Hill Park, gave a detailed presentation regarding the detailed elements of the scheme including the works to all parts of the original building. Scientific analysis had been undertaken to assess the scheme's needs and a detailed list of expectations required by the scheme had been developed via this process. He highlighted that the scheme sought to achieve three main elements namely; (i) a high quality of facilities, (ii) the type of facility able to adapt to new requirements over a duration of time and (iii) provide a high standard of access to all facilities for all members of the community. He gave details of the new facilities it was proposed to provide under the new scheme which included a new cafeteria, lift, atrium, new potteries and a new reception area for The Ark. An increase in seating levels had been provided in the studios and it was proposed that through careful programming of activities the numbers of people attending those activities could be increased.

David Elford presented details of the bid for Lottery funding to the Committee. He stated that it was hoped to recover a large amount of the VAT and that information was awaited on this issue. Access consultants had been employed to develop access facilities for the disabled which included better access to the Wilde Theatre.

Following these presentations, the Committees undertook a tour of the facilities at South Hill Park.

194. Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 members of the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of business involving the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:-

(7) Information relating to financial affairs of a particular organisation

195. **Presentation of Business Plan**

Mr D Elford gave a presentation containing exempt information in relation to financial issues faced through the development of this capital project. He outlined the funding required to cover the closure costs and interruption to services at the Park while the project was underway and the effect that a downgrading of available funding would have. Tim Brinkman outlined of the areas that the business plan covered including better co-ordination, targeting audiences, inclusion of higher profile work and arts education. Following questions to Mr Elford and Mr Brinkman they withdrew from the meeting.

The Committee considered the presentations and then accordingly moved and voted on three separate recommendations as follows:-

The Strategy & Policy Committee **RESOLVED** that it delegate its determination on the grant application to a special Strategy & Policy Sub Committee comprised of five members in the ratio of 3 : 2.

The Leisure Services Committee **RESOLVED** that it delegate its determination on the grant application to a special Leisure Services Sub Committee comprised of five members in the ratio of 3: 2.

The Strategy & Policy Committee and Leisure Services Committee **RESOLVED** that a meeting of the Special Sub Committees, referred to in the preceding resolutions, be convened before the end of July 1998.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 11.25pm.

CHAIRMAN