

STATEMENT MADE BY THE LEADER AT THE STRATEGY AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 29 AUGUST 2002.**In respect of the implications of the decision for the future vitality of the town and leisure facilities for residents:**

- The decision taken by the Cabinet on July 30th was not concerned with leisure facilities for residents or the future vitality of the town.
- Rather, the Cabinet looked in some detail at the transaction proposed with Dawnay Day, progress in achieving the Council's objectives, the current viability of the scheme and future factors likely to impact on the viability of the scheme. The Cabinet concluded that it wished to terminate negotiations with Dawnay Day on the grounds that the scheme was currently of doubtful viability and a lack of certainty that it would be possible to reach agreement on acceptable commercial terms.
- At this stage, the Council's policy for the Twickenham Riverside site (in its land owning capacity) remains the final revised development brief agreed in February 2001 by the Resources Committee.
- The meeting of the Cabinet on September 17th will receive a report setting out potential options for the site and to the extent that Cabinet revises that policy "away" from the current development brief there may be implications for the future vitality of the town and leisure facilities for residents. However, it is not a matter which can be discussed in the absence of a revision to the policy.
- It is important to reiterate that having considered the evidence made available (including the material submitted by Dawnay Day in the last several months in response to requests by Officers), the Cabinet took its decision to terminate negotiations since it was of the view that viability and reaching agreement on acceptable commercial terms were major obstacles to the successful implementation of the scheme.

As to why the decision was made without public consultation:

- A significant volume of the material which informed the Cabinet's decision is strictly confidential. It would not have been appropriate to disclose this information to the public.
- The previous administration undertook public consultation at various points when it was seeking to redevelop Twickenham Riverside – this related largely to the elements which might be included in a development brief for the site.
- Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that there is a legitimate public expectation that were there to be any revisions to the development brief that this would involve public consultation. This is covered in some detail in the report to Cabinet on 30th July.
- However, the Cabinet decision in July did not result in a revision to the development brief. The September 17th report to Cabinet setting out options may result in a revised development brief and, were this to occur, this would involve public consultation.
- The Cabinet also holds the view that it has a strong election mandate to scrutinise this matter in some detail to see whether the scheme proposed was likely to succeed.

In respect of the costs and financial risks associated with the decision

- Since the Cabinet has not yet decided to pursue any alternative scheme, it is not possible at this stage to provide detail of the project operating costs for the future scheme – however, a clear possibility is to pursue a scheme with lower transaction costs.
- To a large degree, the financial risks of the decision (save to the extent that costs might need to be written off) are potential rather than actual.

