

IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30 pm on 6 July 2011

Present:

Councillor Graham Arthur (Chairman)
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Julian Benington, Nicholas Bennett J.P.,
Eric Bosshard, Stephen Carr, Robert Evans and Russell Mellor

Also Present:

Councillors Douglas Auld

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor Graham Arthur be appointed Chairman and Councillor Neil Reddin be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2011/12 municipal year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Judi Ellis.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Julian Benington declared that his daughter worked in a senior management position for Affinity Sutton.

4 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received from members of the public.

5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20th APRIL 2011

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2011 be agreed.

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Report RES11048

In response to a question around the development of energy reduction and renewable energy schemes, Members were informed that consideration of these schemes was being undertaken by Executive and Resources PDS Committee and progress would be reported back to Improvement and Efficiency Sub Committee in due course.

Following the referral of a request by Improvement and Efficiency Sub Committee on 20th April 2011 to consider the inclusion of energy efficiency and renewable energy generation measures in future developments across the Borough as part of the Local Development Framework, the minutes of the Development Control Committee on 30th June 2011 were circulated to Members for information. The Development Control Committee noted the report and the Chief Planner confirmed that work had already been undertaken to promote the measures outlined in the report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7 ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report CEO1179

The Sub-Committee received a report updating Members on progress made on the projects within the Organisational Improvement Programme.

The Records and Retention Policy was now being implemented and, where the criteria was met, files were being boxed and moved into storage with TNT. Over 3,000 boxes of files had been securely disposed of, and scanners were being procured to support a move to electronic file storage. In response to a query from the Chairman, the Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement confirmed that Yeoman House was currently vacant and could be used for storage, however it was hoped that the Council would be able to re-let this high cost space to a partner agency or obtain a release from the tenancy agreement which would generate more substantial savings. The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement underlined that TNT offered cost effective secure storage and would support ongoing management of the files held, retrieving them as needed and providing notification when the time to legally retain files had expired. Councillor Nicholas Bennett noted that information of historic interest to the Borough should be retained. The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement confirmed that archivists had been involved in the review process and were working to ensure information of historic interest was not lost.

The Shared Services project with the London Boroughs of Bexley and Croydon was progressing. The next meeting of the Shared Services Board made up of Borough Chief Executives and key Chief Officers would be held on 8th July 2011,

where a shortlist of projects offering the greatest level of opportunity would be presented. A Member noted that it was important to ensure that boroughs had similar priorities when developing shared services.

The Chairman queried the workshop on Property that had recently been hosted by Bromley's Finance Director for representatives of the three boroughs to scope out opportunities around Facilities Management and Asset Management. The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement confirmed that a comprehensive list of planned activities had been developed to investigate whether a move to shared services would be feasible. The potential to share the Occupational Health Physician post across the three boroughs had been identified and could realise savings of between £20-£25k per annum.

Work on the Regulatory Services shared services work stream was currently being undertaken by the Organisational Improvement Team. The agreed project plan set out a list of regulatory services comprising Building Control, Planning Enforcement, Land Charges, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Pollution Control, Community Safety, Emergency Planning, Travellers Site Management and Housing Services. A range of information had now been collated from Lead Officers across the three boroughs in relation to these services, and a report setting out the findings would be presented at the Leaders and Chief Executives' meeting on 8th July 2011.

The Chief Executive provided Members with an outline of the Corporate Financial Strategic Approach which had been developed to support the delivery of future budget savings through ten key areas, including aligning policy and finance work, organisational redesign and procurement contract spend. Governance was a key aspect, and a Members' Star Chamber consisting of the Leader, the Deputy Leader and the Resources Portfolio Holder had been established to direct the corporate approach to savings. A Member highlighted the need to manage the expectations of Bromley residents as future budget savings were determined.

Members discussed the role of Improvement and Efficiency Sub Committee in contributing to the delivery of the Corporate Financial Strategic Approach and would continue to consider how it might be further developed. The Sub-Committee had a wide ranging membership which enabled strong cross-Portfolio working and would be well-placed to support the work of the Members' Star Chamber.

With regard to potential income streams, the Chief Executive had recently led two workshops involving all three boroughs around opportunities for sold services to schools which had been granted academy status. The Council had an obligation to continue to provide services to those schools that were not academies. However there was also an opportunity to develop a package of services to sell to academies, and work was currently being undertaken to develop accurate costings of service provision, as any services offered by the Council must be charged on a full cost recovery basis. A Member highlighted the importance of 'selling' sold services in the marketplace, as there would be significant competition from the private sector. Another Member suggested that schools would seek services to meet their specialist needs rather than a general package.

In considering Appendix 1: the list of Organisational Improvement Programme Projects, a Member highlighted the use of traffic light indicators to rate progress against project delivery, and noted that the Members' Star Chamber should undertake a review on these projects to provide a corporate perspective on the status of a range of projects.

RESOLVED that the progress made to date on projects led by the Organisational Improvement Programme be noted.

8 ACCOMMODATION PRESENTATION

The Sub-Committee received a presentation on the Civic Centre site accommodation review from the Head of Improvement, Efficiency and Effectiveness. 250 staff had been relocated from North Block to alternate accommodation across the Civic Centre Site, and the refurbishment work had now begun.

Work to amalgamate Reception areas had also been initiated. Planning Reception was now based in Main Reception, and Housing Reception would be relocated to ground floor, North Block where 13 meeting booths and 3 'secure' interview rooms would be made available. There would be an increased emphasis on self-service for payments and accessing information via the Bromley Council website in the redesigned reception areas, supported by staff acting as 'floorwalkers' to help customers as they arrived.

Following completion of the refurbishment of North Block in January 2012, Children and Young People Department staff would relocate into alternate accommodation on the Civic Centre Site, vacating the Old Town Hall and Ann Springman and Joseph Lancaster Buildings which would then be available for rental or disposal.

The Chairman highlighted the need to manage security issues related to the relocation of Housing Reception to ground floor, North Block. The Head of Improvement, Efficiency and Effectiveness confirmed a number of security measures had been developed, including an appointments system, enhanced reception facilities and CCTV. An appointments system was also now in place for Planning Reception and the Chairman underlined the need to communicate this to those using the service.

A Member queried whether the refurbished offices would be able to accommodate services following any organisational change. The Head of Improvement, Efficiency and Effectiveness confirmed that a key aim of the refurbishment was to design office space in a generic way to more easily absorb changes to staffing structures and the office space needs of staff. This including shared work stations, touch down spaces, meeting rooms and general facilities provision including ICT and telephony services as well as wireless internet access.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

9 ALIGNING POLICY AND FINANCE REVIEWS

Report CEO1179

The Sub-Committee received a report updating Members on work undertaken on the Aligning Policy and Finance reviews. The areas identified for review in the initial work programme were Finance and Procurement, Public Protection and Transport and Highways.

Councillor Nicholas Bennett highlighted the importance of developing robust measures of performance when undertaking service reviews.

RESOLVED that the work being commissioned by Extended Cabinet as part of the wider process in place for supporting Members' future decisions on the next round of savings be noted.

The Meeting ended at 9.05 pm

Chairman