

EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 6 September 2012

Present:

Councillor Eric Bosshard (Chairman)
Councillors Douglas Auld, Nicholas Bennett J.P.,
Ruth Bennett, Judi Ellis, Will Harmer, Brian Humphrys,
William Huntington-Thresher, Russell Mellor (Vice-
Chairman), Nick Milner, Ernest Noad, Sarah Phillips,
John Getgood, Tom Papworth and Ellie Harmer

Also Present:

Councillor Graham Arthur

220 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Carr, and from Councillor William Huntington-Thresher who arrived late due to another meeting.

221 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

222 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received.

223 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18TH JULY 2012 (EXCLUDING EXEMPT ITEMS)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2012 (excluding exempt information) be confirmed.

224 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Committee received an update on matters outstanding from previous meetings – it was noted that further details on changes to Council tax support would be circulated later in the month, and that there was a report later in the agenda on Section 106 which would include an update on the Blue Circle site.

Councillors Nicholas Bennett and Ellie Harmer reported that there still had not been a meeting of the Working Group on Transport Policy – the Chairman urged them to raise this with the Environment PDS Committee Chairman.

225 FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Committee received the Forward Plan of Key Decisions as published in August 2012.

226 CORPORATE CONTRACTS REGISTER

The Committee received the new format Contracts Register for the Chief Executive's and Resources Departments (contracts over £50,000) and the Corporate Contracts Register (contracts over £200,000.) Members raised questions about the following contracts –

- Stationery and Paper (Office Depot UK Ltd): It was confirmed that spend on paper was reducing.
- SEN Transport: It was explained that contacts were now run jointly with Bexley, and were amongst the lowest costs in London.
- Bromley Welcare: It was noted that the contract was now run through Southwark. Although care services for adults and children had been united in one new department there were still two sets of budget lines.
- Library Book Supply: Members pointed out that the contract end date was 31st March 2012 – officer would check the position, but most Library contracts had been extended to align with the new shared service.
- Energy Supply Contracts: These were now delegated to Chief Officers.

Members welcomed the new format, but Councillor Nicholas Bennett suggested an additional column to show when a PDS Committee had scrutinised each contract. Officers undertook to consider the best way to do this, possibly through adding information about dates of consideration by PDS Committees on the agenda front-sheet. Councillor Judi Ellis added that PDS Chairmen could flag up the issues relating to their Committees.

227 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received.

228 RESOURCES PORTFOLIO - PREVIOUS DECISIONS

The Committee noted four decisions taken by the Resources Portfolio Holder since the last meeting.

229 RESOURCES PORTFOLIO - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the following report for pre-decision scrutiny on a matter where the Resources Portfolio Holder was minded to take a decision.

229.1 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

Report RES12148

At its meeting on 25th July 2012 the Executive had received the first quarterly capital monitoring report for 2012/13 and agreed a new Capital Programme for the four year period 2012/13 to 2015/16. The changes affecting the Resources Portfolio were reported and the revised programme was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED that the recommendation be supported.

230 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered reports on the agenda for the Executive's meeting on 12th September 2012.

(4) Active Citizens Working Group Report Report RES12145

The Committee noted the report which it had endorsed at its previous meeting.

(5) Business Improvement District Proposals for Orpington Report DRR12/106

The report set out proposals to hold a ballot in February 2013 on the establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Orpington town centre. The Council had worked hard to support the initiative from businesses to set up a BID and Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee were very supportive of the proposals.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that Tesco had been supportive and that the new BID company would need to make its own arrangements for collecting contributions from businesses. The BID would enable the Council to reduce its revenue costs for town centre management in Orpington, but the Council would not be reducing other general services in the area, and the BID company could not fetter the Council's decisions on the services it provided.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

(6) Budget Monitoring 2012/13

Report DES12141

The Committee considered the second budget monitoring report for 2012/13 based on expenditure and activity levels up to the end of July 2012. It was noted that changes were proposed to the types of waste that were subject to landfill tax, but the precise details were not yet available.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

(7) Outcome of Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children

Report ED12032

The report provided a summary of the unannounced inspection by Ofsted of arrangements for the protection of children carried out on 9th to 18th July 2012. Bromley was the first authority in London, and only the third in the country, to be inspected under Ofsted's new framework. Bromley had been judged to be adequate in all four areas inspected.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

(8) Supporting People Joint Framework Agreement

Report CS12031

The report outlined a proposal to join a Joint Framework Agreement with Southwark, Lewisham and Lambeth to be established with effect from 1st April 2014. It was confirmed that Bromley would not be obliged to use the Framework for particular contracts if better arrangements could be made elsewhere.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

(9) Office Accommodation Strategy

Report DRR12/107

The report outlined a request for a supplementary capital allocation of £400,000 to ensure the successful completion of the refurbishment of the North Block at the Civic Centre following underestimation of the costs of the project. Internal Audit had been involved in examining the project and their report would be considered by the Audit Sub-Committee.

Members were critical of the failure to manage the costs of the project and to alert Members at an earlier stage. The project was managed before he left the Council by the former Chief Property Officer. The Director of Renewal and Recreation reported that a project board had subsequently been set up to oversee all property matters. The Property Board became aware of the full extent of the cost pressures in April 2012 and following Member briefing action was taken to seek to reduce costs wherever possible and a project audit report was commissioned.

The Committee accepted that the additional expenditure would have to be authorised.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

231 HOLDING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT

The Chief Executive attended the meeting to update the Committee on the headline issues that he was working on and to be questioned by Members. The main issues that he covered were –

- **Future strategic planning for the organisation.** This related primarily to finances, and he explained the concept of a commissioning Council with a minimal staff which provided the majority of services through outsourcing to the private or voluntary sectors. Baseline reviews had been carried out of all services, using zero-based budgeting principles, and all senior managers had been asked to provide an assessment of the statutory minimum service and a statutory service with mitigating measures. This work was still on-going but would come before Members soon.
- **Staffing.** The Council was currently consulting its staff on moving them out of national terms and conditions. Inbucon had recommended a 0.5% pay increase for staff on management grades (less than 200), half of which would be subject to performance assessment. Pay would still be frozen for staff on national terms and conditions. The Council was also reviewing essential car user allowances and introducing car parking charges for members and officers from 1st November. At a time when staff were being made redundant, it was important that the remaining staff were the best available and were well-motivated. Dr Tessa Moore had now taken up her post as Assistant Director for Education, and Terry Parkin would start as Director of Education and Care Services on 29th October. The refurbishment of the North Block was now complete and staff were moving back in. The building could now accommodate 500 staff – twice as many as before. The project had allowed the Joseph Lancaster and Ann Springman blocks and the Old Town Hall to be closed. Problems with the project were dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.
- **Integrating social care and health.** The financial problems at the South London Healthcare Trust had potential consequences for the Council's social care services.
- **Shared Services.** The proposals for shared regulatory services with Croydon and Bexley were progressing and there would be reports to Members in mid to late October.

Responding to questions from members, the Chief Executive made the following comments –

- Although moving the Council away from the Civic Centre site was a possibility, this would probably be at least five years away.
- The size of the member body was not defined in statute.
- Officers were addressing possibilities for encouraging growth, such as developments in Bromley town centre and leveraging in money from other sources.
- Much had been done to train managers and raise awareness about contracting procedures, but there was still a need for project management skills.
- The demands on senior managers were changing, and the Council would need managers with different skills in future.
- The Council was not actively encouraging schools to remain under local authority control rather than turn into academies.
- Members would be fully informed about proposals for budget savings, but the information was not ready at present. Proposals would go to the cabinet first, then extended cabinet and then PDS Committees and public meetings in November.
- The Council had been successful in outsourcing many services, and there were experienced providers in the market. He accepted that some parts of the voluntary sector were not ready to take on Council contracts, but many were. There were still opportunities for shared services.

Councillor Russell Mellor requested a copy of the Inbucon report on management staff pay.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Executive for his presentation.

232 SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS: UPDATE

Report DRR12/104

The Committee received its regular update on Section 106 agreements. The Chief Planner gave an update on the Blue Circle site at Bromley Common, explaining that it was considered that as units were now being sold on the plot nearest to the Crown lane roundabout the education payments had been triggered. A letter had been sent to the developers requesting the first payment of £250,000. It was confirmed that the Council had refused previous

offers from the developer for lower amounts, and nothing further had been heard from them.

Councillor William Huntington-Thresher asked whether there were any restrictions on the highway works listed on page 52 of the report – the Chief Planner would check the position. It was confirmed that anyone with a material interest could potentially be included in a section 106 agreement, including TfL as a highway authority. Councillor John Getgood asked for clarification on the circumstances where the Council would retain nomination rights for affordable housing units – the Chief Planner offered to check this with housing colleagues.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

233 UPDATES FROM PDS CHAIRMEN

PDS Committee Chairmen reported on the work of their Committees as follows –

Care Services PDS Committee – Councillor Judi Ellis had produced some notes for circulation on items from her Committee’s meeting on 4th September and in particular on Healthwatch, which was to replace the Local Improvement Network (LiNK). The Committee had referred the issue of the allocation of section 106 affordable housing payments to the newly formed Strategic Housing Working Group. In considering the Older People Commissioning Strategy the committee had commented on the need to ensure that people did not withdraw from day centre care due to cost, and on the draft Mental Health Strategy had suggested that final target bullet points be clearly defined so that resources were targeted to priorities and expectations were not raised too high.

Public Protection and Safety PDS Committee – Councillor Douglas Auld reported that his committee had been disappointed at the lack of a Police presence at their last meeting, with no explanation. The Portfolio Holder had received a letter from the South London and Maudsley Trust stating that they would not be implementing any of the Committee’s recommendations – a meeting was being arranged with the Trust’s new Chief Executive in October. A budget deficit of £100,000 was expected as savings from shared services would not be achieved.

Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee – Councillor Sarah Phillips reported that the Beckenham and West Wickham Town Centres Working Group had been meeting over the summer and had been involved in the preparation of a funding bid to TfL which was to be submitted the following day. She also mentioned the transfer of Bromley Adult Education college to the Education and Care Services Department.

234 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the latest version of its work programme. It was noted that the Leader would now be attending at the next meeting on 18th October, and consideration of the update on the Communications Working Group report was delayed until the meeting on 21st November.

RESOLVED that the work programme as amended be noted.

235 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business referred to below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**The following summaries
refer to matters
involving exempt information**

236 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18TH JULY 2012

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2012 were confirmed.

237 RESOURCES PORTFOLIO - PREVIOUS EXEMPT DECISION

The Committee noted an exempt decision concerning the Oakfield Centre taken by the Resources Portfolio Holder since the last meeting and decided that it was no longer necessary for these decisions to be included on the agenda.

238 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORTS

The Committee considered three exempt reports concerning proposed decisions by the Resources Portfolio Holder submitted for pre-decision scrutiny as follows -

238.1 LAND AT THE WALNUTS, ORPINGTON

Report DRR12/105

The Committee supported proposals for the sale of land at The Walnuts.

238.2 THE LAURELS, NORHEADS LANE, BIGGIN HILL

Report DRR12/099

The Committee supported proposals for the sale of the site.

238.3 BROMLEY INDOOR BOWLS CENTRE - RENT REVIEW

Report DRR12/098

The Committee supported proposals for the forthcoming rent review.

239 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered an exempt report on the agenda for the Executive's meeting on 12th September 2012 concerning the contract for Mental Health Flexible Support Service, and supported the recommendations for awarding a new contract.

The Meeting ended at 9.52 pm

Chairman