

RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 17 January 2013

Present:

Councillor Sarah Phillips (Chairman)
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Julian Benington, Nicky Dykes,
John Ince, Paul Lynch, David McBride and Michael Tickner

Ross Stanford

Also Present:

Councillors Peter Morgan and Tim Stevens J.P.

45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

No apologies for absence were received.

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Julian Benington declared a personal interest in Item 17 as he was a Governor of both Charles Darwin Academy Trust and Bromley College of Further and Higher Education. Councillor Peter Morgan declared a personal interest in Item 9 (Town Centres Development Programme Update), as his daughter was a Director of Kier Property. Visiting Member, Councillor Tim Stevens, declared a personal interest in Item 17 as a Trustee of Bromley Mytime.

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

47 QUESTIONS FOR THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

The following question was received from Orpington resident Mr Colin Willetts:-

'Could the Leader or the Portfolio Holder tell me if Orpington will continue to have a Town Centre Manager?'

The Portfolio Holder responded that should the BID ballot be successful following the ballot on 21st February, the Council would seek to withdraw the Town Centre Management service from Orpington - possibly after a 'bedding

down' period - since the proposed BID would not only include similar functions to those of the Town Centre Manager but would provide an enhanced service for the town. In the event of a No ballot, the Town Centre Management service would remain for the time being (i.e. there were no immediate plans to withdraw the service) but, like any other Council service, would be subject to review in the light of the significant savings to be made across all Council budgets.

Mr Willetts did not attend the meeting and would, therefore, receive a written response.

48 QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE

No questions were received.

Before continuing with the published items on the agenda, the Chairman introduced Mr Steve Price, Mytime Chief Executive and Mr Dennis Barkway, Chairman of Mytime Active who gave a public presentation in relation to Item 17 (an exempt item considered during the private part of the meeting). No confidential or financial matters were discussed during the presentation.

Members were provided with a Mytime Active document entitled 'Delivering Social Value' which outlined the history of Mytime Active and highlighted its achievements to date, together with current and future programmes and activities.

It was reported that the London Olympic Games had not resulted in a significant growth in attendance; although there had been a peak in demand for a short while, this had quickly waned. Statistics for the past year, showed an overall attendance of approximately 3 million people. Mytime Active had helped over 7,000 people to learn to swim, 420,000 children had attended structured activities and many had benefitted from specific activities provided for people aged 60 and over.

Mr Price requested feedback from Members and their constituents in relation to the Pavilion Leisure Centre which was opened by the Duke of Edinburgh in May 2012.

Turning to the social value of activities provided, reference was drawn to the Santa Dash organised by Mytime Leisure which took place in December 2012. This proved to be a great success and as a result of significant positive feedback, it was anticipated that this annual event would continue for the foreseeable future. Other community projects included the launch of a new sports club named 'L J Basketball Club' and an initiative to enable young adults in Kent to gain greater access to golf. It was anticipated that a 'Clubs 4 All' golf club amnesty, would encourage golfers across the area to donate unwanted equipment which could be reconditioned to form golf sets and used

to allow young adults (who were not able to buy their own equipment) to play at Mytime Golf courses.

Mytime Active had received a StreetMark award which was designed to quality assure the provision of community sports activity.

Team Bromley had gained significant success in the London Youth Games and 36 of its members had attended a great day out at the Olympic Games.

Primetime sessions were proving very popular with people aged 60 and over. Among the many activities offered were keep fit, pilates, yoga, line dancing and belly dancing.

Referring to the Apprenticeships scheme delivered by Mytime Active, it was reported that several former apprentices were now employed by Mytime. Currently, 14 out of the 21 people who attended an assessment day had been offered apprenticeships. It was anticipated that next year, Mytime would offer apprenticeships to 24 people. Qualifications were not a mandatory requirement for selection as prospective apprentices were fully assessed before being selected as appropriate candidates for the scheme.

Councillor Tickner congratulated Mr Price for the work carried out to the Pavilion. In response to a question from Councillor Tickner, Mr Price reported that as dual use facilities were subsidised, the income achieved was not greater than expenditure.

Mr Price said he viewed the relationship between Mytime and the Council strictly as a client/contractor arrangement.

Councillor Reddin drew attention to the lack of communication between office staff and referred to an occasion when staff from the Walnuts Leisure Centre in Orpington had been directed to work at the Pavilion which was closed to enable works to be carried out on the pool. Councillor Reddin also reported that when the Pavilion reopened, certain areas of the pool remained dirty.

The Pavilion was performing well with the highest ever level of attendance being achieved during the Christmas period. Peak times for attendance were evenings and weekends when full capacity was achieved. Small construction issues still remained and there were ongoing problems with the air conditioning. However, the car barrier was now operating correctly.

Compared to other leisure centres within the Borough, Mytime's membership fee was favourable at £44.95.

Councillor McBride was pleased to see the report encompassed all programmes and activities provided by Mytime and congratulated staff for the fantastic charity and volunteer work they undertook in the community outside of their normal working hours.

The Chairman thought it would be useful to learn a little more about where income was generated from and suggested that as attendance at leisure centres regularly reached full capacity, more attention should be given to areas in need of assistance from the Council.

Discussion then turned to the relationship between the Council and Mytime. Mr Price commented that as the Council reduced its funding, Mytime would need to grow and diversify outside of Bromley. Members were in agreement that whilst Mytime were independent, it should work closely in partnership with the Council to ensure the continuation of social and community activities.

Ross Stanford complimented Mytime on its activities and programmes aimed at young people.

Finally, Mr Price extended an invitation to any Member who wished to visit the Pavilion.

49 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2012

The following updates were provided on matters referred to in the previous Minutes:-

Minute 28 (page 6) - Further work was being progressed.

Minute 38 (page 7) - The schedule of Portfolio Holder Decisions had been amended as requested.

Minute 39A (page 8) - A presentation by Mytime had been received at this meeting.

Minute 39C (page 9, para. 3) - A planning report on enforcement, minor and other applications had been submitted to this meeting for consideration.

Minute 39C (page 9, para. 4) - Action had been taken with regard to the poorly maintained hoarding at former double glazing premises in Beckenham.

Minute 39C (page 10), penultimate paragraph - A report outlining the current position of the Portfolio's role in Housing Strategy and privatisation would be submitted for Member consideration at the R&R PDS meeting on 26 February 2013.

Minute 39E (pages 12 and 13) - The Cotmandene and Mottingham Centres would remain open for at least another year for which funding would continue. As a result of this, the tendering exercise had slowed down. A total of 21 expressions of interest had been received from which a shortlist of 8-10 companies would be drawn up. Although the services provided would not replicate those of the Council, a similar range would be offered. The Job Centre Referral Service was externally funded and would, therefore, continue.

With regard to the Community Toilet Scheme, the Head of Culture would report a non-payment matter to officers in Environmental Services.

Minute 39G (page 14) - In relation to the possible extension of the DLR into Bromley, a meeting had taken place between TfL, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Colin Smith, Bob Neil MP (Bromley and Chislehurst) and the Deputy Mayor for London. It was reported that appraisal work would be undertaken and all costs would be met by TfL. This would be implemented by June and depending on the results, a time line would be set to undertake the work. Members were informed that the policy for Site A (Bromley North) would not be updated in the immediate future as the extension could have a fundamental impact on the proposed development.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2012 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

50 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND UPDATES

With regard to Minute 39c, Councillor Tickner congratulated the Beckenham Town Centre Manager and the owner of the premises at Beckenham, for addressing the problem of a poorly maintained shop front and resolving the issue to a very high standard.

Members noted the position with regard to matters arising from previous meetings.

51 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO - PREVIOUS DECISIONS

RESOLVED that the decisions taken by the Portfolio Holder at the previous meeting held on 13 November 2012 be noted.

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO REPORTS

52 BUDGET MONITORING (R&R) 2012/13

Report DRR13/006

Members considered the latest budget monitoring position for 2012/13 based on expenditure and activity levels to 30 November 2012. The total Portfolio budget showed a projected underspend of £10k.

Consideration was also given to the level of expenditure and progress achieved with regard to the implementation of three Member Priority Initiatives.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 3.3 on page 27 and reported that funding was still available if Members wished to submit bids to improve shopping parades within their Wards.

Councillor Tickner noted that the budget was under control which indicated good management.

In response to a question from Councillor Tickner, the Head of Finance reported that underspend from one year could not be carried forward to the following year unless agreed by the Executive in June. Most of the underspends shown in the budget monitoring report were as a direct result of management action to ensure that there was a balanced budget at year end. These savings have been used to offset the shortfall of income from planning applications. Any other savings would be looked at individually to consider whether there was a potential for offering up budget savings for the following year.

The Director of Renewal and Recreation explained there was external pressure arising from the Council's obligation to collect the Mayor's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on behalf of the Mayor. Although initial set-up costs had been incurred, a recovery was anticipated in the next 2/3 years. The Council took 4% of income obtained through each CIL charged to cover administration costs.

Councillor Morgan commented that if there was an underspend in one area which could manage quite well without a post then it should do so however, each area of activity should be reviewed on its own merits.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:-

- (1) endorse the latest 2012/13 budget projection for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio; and**
- (2) note the progress of the implementation of the Renewal and Recreation projects within the Member Priority Initiatives.**

53 TOWN CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report DRR13/0010

Members considered a report outlining the progress made in delivering the Town Centres Development Programme.

The Head of Town Centre Planning Projects outlined the report and updated Members as follows:-

Site G (West of High Street)

Officers had met with three prospective development partners who shared the Council's vision. A development brief had been revised and a series of

workshops would be arranged for February which prospective partners would attend to meet Portfolio Holders and Members. It was anticipated that the preferred developer would be selected in the Spring of 2013.

Site A (Bromley North)

Work had progressed and a scheme drawn up for approval by members at a meeting of the Executive on 9 February 2013. Officers met with TfL on 14 January when a final approval, in principle, had been obtained subject to the result of a bus consultation. Officers were currently waiting to hear back from the OLF on a refiling request. Conways (the term contractor) would undertake the works and an Implementation Plan would be submitted to a future meeting of the PDS for Member approval. It would take approximately 18 months for a programme to be implemented.

In response to a question from Councillor Benington, Members were informed that the Council had appointed a dedicated project engineer from existing staff, who had been working on the project for the last two months.

Beckenham Town Centre Public Realm Improvements

It was reported that the Area Based Bid to Transport for London had not been successful. However, the sum of £200k had been allocated in the 2013/14 LIP settlement for improvements to Rectory Road/Southend Beckenham Road junction. Councillor Morgan commented that he could see no reason why the Area Based Bid could not be submitted again in the Autumn.

It was suggested that a Town Team be formed to include members of the Beckenham and West Wickham Working Group (B&WWWG). It was reported that TfL had agreed, in principle, to the erection of light columns in West Wickham. This would be discussed in further detail at the next WG meeting which would take place on 7 February.

Councillor Morgan commented that due to the Improvement Scheme in Croydon and the subsequent closure of shops, there had been a significant increase in footfall to Bromley. With this in mind, now would be a good opportunity to progress work on Site G as quickly as possible.

The timetable for the implementation of the Variable Messaging Service had not been adhered to and the Chairman highlighted the lack of communication with regard to this. It was agreed that Members concerns be brought to the attention of the Director of Environmental Services.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the detailed design of the Bromley North Village Public Realm Improvements.

54 DRAFT 2013/14 BUDGET (R&R)

Report DRR13/007

Members considered a draft 2013/14 Budget for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio incorporating cost pressures and initial draft budget saving options as reported to the Executive on 9 January 2013.

The Executive requested individual PDS Committees to consider the initial proposals outlined in the report, including the additional savings options and asked for Member comments to be reported to the February meeting of the Executive.

Expenditure pressures on services within the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio were identified in relation to the income received from planning applications and building control. Savings options across the Portfolio were also detailed for Member consideration.

The Head of Finance confirmed to Councillor Benington that the deletion of the two career graded planning posts referred to on page 61 of the report were currently vacant posts.

In response to a question from Councillor McBride, Members were informed that vacant library posts may be deleted in order to balance the budget.

With regard to the amalgamation of Penge and Anerley Libraries (page 62), it was noted that the information was out-of-date and that further progress had been achieved. An updating report would be submitted to a meeting of the Executive on 6 February 2013.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the financial forecast for 2013/14 to 2015/16 be noted;**
- (2) Members' comments on the initial draft savings options proposed by the Executive for 2013/14 be noted; and**
- (3) Members' comments on the initial draft 2013/14 Budget be provided to the meeting of the Executive on 6 February 2013.**

**55 PLANNING APPLICATION AND PLANNING ENFORCEMENT
PERFORMANCE**

Report DRR 13/004

As requested by Members at a PDS meeting in November 2012, the report outlined planning performance on minor applications, other applications and planning enforcement. The report also included information on the amount of income received from planning applications, outlined the objectives and actions needed to improve the planning service and reported on the number of formal enforcement, contravention and breach of condition notices served during 2011/12.

The Deputy Chief Planner outlined the main points of the report. Income from planning played a significant role in the Council's economy. Although the backlog in dealing with applications was higher than the national average, a reasonable level of staff was available. Changes had been introduced to improve the assessment of first stage applications and validation staff were now required to deal with all stages of the validation of applications rather than specific aspects. Problems concerning the invalidity rate were being addressed and the process had been speeded-up by the use of electronic consultation as opposed to paper. Since September 2012, the number of outstanding applications requiring assessment had been significantly reduced from 1,200 to 700. Further improvements would be implemented to ensure the planning service ran more efficiently.

Planning enforcement was also part of the improvement plan. Approximately 750-900 enforcement complaints were received each year of which many were resolved quickly. About 20% of complaints required further investigation.

In response to a statement from Councillor Bance, the Deputy Chief Planner agreed to provide Members with information on the outcome of on-going enforcement action. He also agreed to consider the suggestion put forward by Councillor Ince that a statement be incorporated in the formal letter of approval sent to applicants, warning them that enforcement action would be taken if planning conditions were breached.

The quality of advice given to applicants was of some concern to Members as most required detailed information appropriate to their application as opposed to the formal advice currently given.

It was reported that the national figure for approval of applications was about 85%; locally, the Council approved approximately 75%. Efforts were made to provide applicants with the correct guidance to ensure their applications were acceptable and information and advice on policy was also given, however, there was still room for improvement.

With regard to enforcements, Councillor McBride asked that quarterly reports be submitted during the next Municipal Year, detailing the following statistics for enforcement cases: a) the date when approval was given to proceed with the issue of notices; (b) the date when notices were issued; and (c) the date when enforcement issues were resolved.

Councillor Tickner said it was imperative that all breaches be addressed and also pointed out that a general boost to staff morale would be necessary if officers were to take a more robust attitude in following-up notices.

Councillor Dykes was concerned with the poor quality of submissions for major applications. The Deputy Chief Planner responded that improvements could be implemented at the pre-application stage.

With regard to Untidy Site Notices, Councillor Morgan would like to see the introduction of Article 4 Directions for untidy buildings in Conservation Areas, banning boards of any kind. The Deputy Chief Planner agreed to consider Councillor Morgan's suggestion.

Turning to general matters, it was agreed that wherever possible a similar number of applications should be considered at each Planning Sub-Committee meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

56 TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT UPDATE JANUARY 2013

Report 13/005

Members considered an updating report on activities undertaken by the Council's Town Centre Management and Business Support Team during Quarter 3 of 2012/13 and on activities planned for Quarter 4.

With regard to the Business Improvement District (BID) campaign for Orpington, it was reported that to date, approximately 78 businesses had provided their voting intentions. Of these, 62 (approximately 79%) indicated an intention to vote 'yes', 15 intended to vote 'no', with 1 abstention. Ballot papers were issued on 17 January and the process was currently at the canvassing stage. Voting would end on 21 February 2013. A Member briefing meeting had been scheduled to take place on 28 January 2013.

Councillor Tickner congratulated the Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support for the work undertaken to date as he was conscious of the difficulties in persuading businesses to pay higher rates.

Members were informed that Mytime received an income from registration fees charged to participants of the Christmas Santa Dash. Following this event, a number of willing sponsors had come forward and the Town Centre Management Team were currently in talks with them to provide a similar but bigger event in 2013.

RESOLVED that the activities undertaken during Quarter 3 of 2012/13 and planned for Quarter 4 in town centres served by the Town Centre Management and Business Support Team be noted.

**57 DEVELOPMENT OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS
COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (JANUARY-FEBRUARY
2013)**

Report RES13007

Members considered the Committee's work programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

A report on the Portfolio's current role in Housing Strategy and Privatisation was added to the Programme.

Councillor Tickner requested that a further report on planning statistics be included on the Programme for 2013/14.

RESOLVED that the work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year be agreed.

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

The Chairman moved that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it was 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.

59 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2012

Following clarification of a point made by Councillor Reddin, Members **RESOLVED that the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2012 be confirmed and signed as a true record.**

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO PART 2 (EXEMPT) REPORTS

60 MYTIME ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12 AND PREVIEWING 2013/14

Members considered the report and supported the recommendations.

61 EXTENSION OF CONSULTANCY COMMISSION FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE PUBLIC REALM SCHEME DESIGN FOR BROMLEY TOWN CENTRE

Report DRR13/011

Members considered the report and supported the recommendations.

The Meeting ended at 10.15 pm

Chairman