

RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 29 January 2015

Present:

Councillor Ian F. Payne (Chairman)
Councillor Peter Dean (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Douglas Auld, Nicky Dykes, Alexa Michael,
Neil Reddin FCCA, Michael Rutherford, Michael Tickner
and Angela Wilkins

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Also Present:

Councillors William Huntington-Thresher and Peter Morgan

57 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Rutherford.

58 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

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

60 QUESTIONS FOR THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Prior to hearing the oral questions, the Portfolio Holder made a statement which he hoped would allay some of the concerns shared by members of the public. He commented that the art collection at the Museum comprised 1,600 paintings, prints and drawings, most of which were not currently displayed. After rationalisation, the remaining pieces would be displayed around the Council, other Council-owned buildings and at Central Library. The important Lubbock collection would be exhibited in Central Library and funds would be provided to change parts of the display bi-annually. Temporary space would also be made available at the Library to accommodate exhibitions for special events such as the Battle of Britain celebration or for school projects.

The Council had an obligation to continue caring for and maintaining the building until it was newly occupied. In this respect the building would be properly guarded, protected and maintained.

The Portfolio Holder responded to 17 oral questions and 14 written questions. These can be viewed at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

In summing up, the Chairman reported that having to find £60m in the next four years was a serious challenge for the Council. However, this matter was not being taken lightly and great importance was placed on liaising with all interested organisations and volunteers. He urged members of the public to write to him with any further questions they may have.

61 QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE

No questions were received.

62 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2014 AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

63 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (MARCH 2015)

Report CSD15/018

Members considered the Committee's work programme for the final meeting of the Municipal Year (March 2015).

RESOLVED that the work programme for the final meeting of the Municipal Year (March 2015) be agreed.

64 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO REPORTS

64a BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15

Report FSD15004

Members considered the latest budget monitoring position for 2014/15 based on expenditure and activity levels up to 30 November 2014. The total portfolio budget showed a projected underspend of £9k.

Members also considered the level of expenditure and progress with the implementation of the selected projects within the Member Priority Initiatives.

Referring to the Summary of Major Variations (para. 5.6, page 27), the Head of Finance agreed to obtain further details and update Members on the subject matter of the public inquiry to which the legal expenses related.

It was reported that the projected surplus for income from major planning applications indicated that the number of planning applications being submitted had increased. Additional staff had been employed to manage the workload.

The underspend on staffing referred to in paragraph 5.3 (page 26) was linked to culture staff and reduced the overall deficit. The savings from the closure of the Bromley Museum would ensure that the budget would be balanced from 2015/16.

RESOVLED that:-

- 1) the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the latest 2014/15 projection for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio; and**
- 2) the progress of the implementation of the Renewal and Recreation projects within the Member Priority Initiatives be noted.**

64b CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 2ND QUARTER 2014/15

Report FSD14085

On 26 November 2014, the Executive received the 2nd quarterly capital monitoring report for 2014/15 and agreed a revised Capital Programme for the four year period 2014/15 to 2017/18. The report highlighted changes agreed by the Executive in respect of the Capital Programme for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio and outlined progress achieved as at the end of the first half of 2014/15.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to confirm the changes agreed by the Executive in November 2014.

64c A NEW APPROACH FOR BROMLEY MUSEUM

Report DRR14/116

As part of the £60 million savings required to be made within the next four years, the Executive Committee at its meeting on 14 January 2015, had identified the museum service as a budget cut for 2015/16. In this respect, R&R PDS Members considered a new approach to providing an improved quality heritage offer for residents, without an ongoing revenue requirement.

One Member commented that the necessity to find savings had led to the unfortunate consideration of this matter. However, accommodating the Museum at Central Library which was situated in a good central location and

provided disabled access, would attract more footfall to Bromley town centre. After rationalisation, it was important to ensure that as many items as possible were accessible to view. One possible solution was to display some artefacts and paintings in houses and buildings open to the public, as well as in schools and other libraries.

The Chairman confirmed that the Lubbock Gallery would display more artefacts from the Lubbock collection than are currently on display in the Avebury Gallery at the Priory.

Members were informed that some of the 20,000 objects and paintings should not have been acquisitioned as they were irrelevant to the local history of the Borough and in this respect, a rationalisation process would be undertaken. Many options existed for exhibiting the artwork; 50 pieces were currently on display in the Princess Royal University Hospital in Farnborough. Artefacts identified for disposal could be offered back to the donor, offered to other museums, given to schools or other not-for-profit community organisations and as a last resort sold. The procedure for rationalisation would be properly carried out following Museum Association guidelines.

Visiting Ward Member Councillor William Huntington-Thresher iterated Members' disappointment that Members were required to consider this matter due to the Council's current financial position. He stated that clear consideration must be given to the future use of the building bearing in mind the Council's policy of creating a vibrant, thriving town centre; in this respect, employment or community use of the building would be beneficial. Planning permission for a change of use would be required.

Councillor Huntington-Thresher suggested that a working group comprising the Council and volunteers from local history organisations be formalised, to liaise on setting up mini displays for the new Museum.

As the Priory car park was the only off-street parking at that end of Orpington High Street, Councillor Huntington-Thresher considered it imperative that the current car park remain available for public use during the evenings to support the restaurant trade.

Members shared the Ward Member's views and concerns. It was agreed that a formal group of volunteers to work with the Council, be established as soon as possible.

A top firm of agents would be instructed to sell the building and it was hoped that it would not remain boarded up for a long period of time.

Members agreed that Central Library was a more suitable location for the Museum and due to a lack of funds, the Priory building deserved more care and maintenance than the Council could provide. Concerns around access to schools and the curation of items would be properly dealt with. The proposals considered by Members were the start of a brand new and exciting chapter for Bromley Museum.

RESOLVED that a working group comprising the Council and volunteers from local history organisations be formalised, to liaise on setting up mini displays for the new Museum.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Portfolio Holder be requested to recommend that the Executive Committee agree to the following approach as set out in the report:-

- (1) The Priory be declared surplus to operational requirements with effect from 1 April 2015 and authority be given to offer the property for sale on the open market.**
- (2) Members to comment on the outcome of the consultation at the Executive meeting to be held on 11 February 2015 and subject to any issues that may arise during consultation, endorse the proposal to close the museum service.**
- (3) The Executive approve the allocation of £395k from capital receipts for the relocation of exhibitions and to add the scheme to the capital programme.**

65 DRAFT 2015/16 BUDGET

Report FSD15005

Members considered a draft 2015/16 Budget for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio incorporating future cost pressures and initial draft budget saving options as reported to the Executive on 14 January 2015.

The Executive requested individual PDS Committees to consider the proposed initial draft budget savings and cost pressures for their Portfolio and requested that Member comments be reported back to the next meeting of the Executive prior to Members making recommendations to Council on 2015/16 Council Tax levels.

During consideration of the variations compared with the 2014/15 budget (page 61), it was confirmed that the inflation figures were based on a 2% increase per annum.

The words 'impact of 2.0% Council Tax Increase' (page 61), pertained to a 2% Council Tax increase per annum.

The New Homes Bonus was created as an Investment Fund to generate income and was treated as a one-off payment as future funding may be dependent on the outcome of the General Election in May 2015. This would be a decision for the Executive or Full Council to take.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the financial forecast for 2016/17 to 2018/19 be noted;**
- (2) the initial draft savings options proposed by the Executive for 2015/16 be noted;**
- (3) the initial draft 2015/16 Budget be considered as a basis for setting the 2015/16 Budget; and**
- (4) Member comments on the initial draft 2015/16 Budget be provided to the February meeting of the Executive.**

66 ARTS IN BROMLEY

Report DRR14/117

Members considered a report which provided an overview of the arts provision within Bromley that was supported by the Council along with other key organisations involved in delivering arts across the Borough.

Whilst it was acknowledged that organisations such as the Beckenham Theatre and Bromley Little Theatre also contributed to the provision of arts, those listed in paragraph 3.3 (page 73) were the key organisations with whom the Council liaised to provide such provision.

One Member praised the Bromley Youth Music Trust as being a very dynamic service and one which was much appreciated. A significant amount of funding had been granted to set up a music centre at Langley Park Boys School and it would be disappointing if services of this kind were terminated due to budget cuts. Members were informed that a fundraising person had been taken on in an attempt to boost the organisation.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

67 THE FUTURE OF ANERLEY TOWN HALL

Report DRR15/002

Members considered a report which outlined the current position at Anerley Town Hall and identified options for its future.

A short video about the activities and events offered at Anerley Town Hall (ATH) was shown to Members.

The Chairman thanked the CPCDT for submitting the video and commented that as a community hub, the high percentage of activities carried out was fantastic.

Ward Member Councillor Wilkins commented that ATH was a beautiful and unique building. She stated that the business aspect at the centre was not currently vibrant with occupancy in late November being recorded at 64%. Two rooms were unrentable due to underpinning issues and there were problems in resolving the subsidence issues. No wi-fi was installed (a must for modern-day business). There had been no rent increase since 2008. If funding could be obtained, there was huge potential to build a bigger and better business centre. With so many young people in the Borough, it made sense for the Council to consider this matter further.

Members were informed that the installation of a new telephone system was now an urgent requirement.

Advertising for the Business Centre was undertaken via an internet advertising agency.

In considering the options put forward, it was noted that if a 40 year lease was granted (Option B), it would be the responsibility of the Trust to market and develop the Centre and would give it time and opportunity to expand and grow.

It was agreed that neither retaining the existing site nor demolishing it were viable options. Whilst it was possible for Option C to be given some serious consideration, Members agreed that Option B was the way forward.

RESOLVED to recommend to Members of the Executive that Option B be adopted.

68 TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT JANUARY 2015

Report DRR15/003

Members considered an update on Town Centre Management and business support activities which had taken place since the previous update in November 2014. The report also summarised priorities for the period up to the end of March 2014.

Referring to the Local Parades Improvement Initiative Fund (page 114), it was agreed that officers would look into a Member request for a Christmas tree to be provided at Heathfield Road, Keston for the duration of the 2015 Christmas period.

In regard to the Bromley Town Centre market, it was reported that both a market research agency and a specialist markets consultancy had been appointed and work was due to begin shortly. Progress would be reported back to Members.

Members were pleased with the completion of the Bromley North Village improvement works. The Bromley Town Ward Member reported an significant

increase of vibrancy and life in the area. An astonishing 20,000 people had attended Christmas events in the Town Centre.

Whilst the good news of a decrease in vacant units in Bromley was noted (page 114), the downward trend for Beckenham and Penge was disappointing as was the figure for Orpington which remained at 15%. It was reported that some charity shops were struggling to pay rent as well as paying staff who were not all volunteer workers.

RESOLVED that the key developments and activities within the Town Centre Management and Business Support Team be noted.

69 TOWN CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report DRR15/005

Members considered the progress achieved in delivering the Town Centres Development Programme.

With regard to Site C: Town Hall (page 125), it was reported that Cathedral Group had submitted an application which was currently going through the Council's planning process.

Councillor Dykes thanked officers for discussing the upcoming meeting on the proposals for Site G with herself and Councillor Rutherford. The Chairman requested a pre-meeting with Councillors and officers before the next residents meeting took place.

As Chairman of the Town Centre Member Working Party for Beckenham, Councillor Tickner reported that a lot of progress had been made at meetings in regard to the Beckenham Major Scheme. However, a problem existed with works to realign the traffic at Beckenham Junction due to the reluctance of BT to move cables. It was vital that improvements were made to enable the better flow of traffic for heavy goods vehicles. Consultations with interested parties were due to be held shortly. The Director of Environment and Community Services agreed to look into this matter and report back to Members.

Officers reported that cables were currently being moved and implementation of the programme was imminent.

A report on budget, timetable and consultation would be submitted to the Beckenham Town Centre Member Working Group.

Tenders had been received for the commissioning of a design team to prepare outline designs for the Bromley town centre improvements to the pedestrian High Street (paragraph 3.6, page 125). The selection process would take approximately 12-16 weeks, following which a start date would be finalised.

RESOLVED that progress on the delivery of the Town Centres Development Programme be noted.

70 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.

71 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2014

RESOLVED that the exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

72 A NEW APPROACH FOR BROMLEY MUSEUM

DRR14/118

In addition to Item 6c - A New Approach for Bromley Museum (page 39), Members were requested to consider the financial implications in regard to the future of the Priory.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

73 THE FUTURE OF ANERLEY TOWN HALL

DRR15/002

In addition to Item 9 (page 77), Members were requested to consider the financial implications in regard to the future of Anerley Town Hall.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chairman

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APPENDIX 1

ORAL QUESTIONS TO THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Questions from Ms Gillian Hughes, lead petitioner

Q1. What provision are you making for continuing the education and outreach services currently offered to the young people of Bromley by Bromley Museum?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Considerable thought has been given to how the Council can best provide access to the museum collections without a revenue budget to support them, which is why the recommendation includes the allocation of £395k of capital receipts which will pay for the installation of two high quality exhibitions in Central Library, the digitisation of the collection, a refurbished community exhibition space, online independent learning material, and promotional material for the borough's whole heritage offer. It is anticipated that by moving the museum exhibitions to central library, visits will increase from 19k per annum to over 200k per annum. School parties will be welcome to visit the new exhibitions in the Central library, although, it will not be possible to provide a dedicated member of staff to support visits to the exhibitions. The Central Library and Local Studies have a schools programme in place, so the exhibitions will become part of this offer.

Supplementary Question

Many schools benefit from a service which sees museum artefacts brought into schools for educational purposes. Will the educational aspect be taken into consideration?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Unfortunately, the Council's present budgetary position does not allow for such a service in the future. Maybe this is something which could be undertaken by volunteers.

Q2. If the Council had pursued the HLF funding, would the criticisms referred to in 3.5 of the Report (Report No DRR14/116) have been addressed?'

Portfolio Holder's Response

Yes, if funding had been pursued.

Supplementary Question

Raising the lack of HLF funding as an argument to close the museum is rather disingenuous wouldn't you agree?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Yes.

Questions from Mr Phil Waller, Orpington History Organisation and Chair of the Bromley Heritage and Arts Forum

Q1. Does the Council consider that every avenue has been explored and exhausted in providing a credible Museum Service, potentially reduced but not shoehorned into the Central Library with no Curator or Museum Specialist to look after what is an extensive and important large collection of important artefacts?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Yes the Council has explored all avenues for keeping a museum service at the Priory with a reduced revenue budget. The business planning work carried out as part of the HLF bid showed that even if the Priory is refurbished and additional income streams are created, such as a café, the revenue costs of managing and maintaining the museum in the Priory building cannot be covered. Additionally a successful community interest company who declared an interest in the Priory during the recent stakeholder consultation determined after scrutinising the figures, that the cost of the capital works required to bring the Priory to a standard that allowed a range of activity to take place and increased access, prohibited the development of a community facility in this building. Central Library has been identified as the best place for the museum exhibitions given it is the home of Local Studies and Archives and the museum exhibitions can benefit from the library's resources without ongoing costs.

Q2. It is all of our duty, residents and Authority alike, to protect the Priory Buildings. What could happen now will be irreversible. Can the Council absolutely ensure that the Priory as a building will be protected in transition IF the plans proposed are taken ahead?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Part of the reason that only a part year revenue saving will be achieved in 2015/16 is because there will be security costs incurred to protect the building in the interim period, until the building is sold. Additionally staff from the Leisure and Culture team will regularly visit the Priory and the store, and there will be other activity on site such as contractors digitising the collection which will contribute to its security. The Council recognises the importance

of keeping the building secure and protected during the transition period and has allowed for this in its budgets. The Property team would use English Heritage's best practice guidance for safeguarding vacant buildings to inform how this transition is managed.

Supplementary Question

Does the Council have a preference or criteria as to who could buy the Priory?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The Priority will not necessarily be offered to the highest bidder. All bids would be considered on their own individual merits.

Q3. If proposals proceed could I have some assurance that a conversation will be had with BHAF in considering resourcing some of the activities within the constitution of the Forum because without BHAF you will have no formal Heritage and Arts Network in the Borough.

Portfolio Holder's Response

BHAF is recognised by the Council as an important representative body. A member of staff from the Leisure and Culture team would like to attend your meetings going forward if BHAF is amenable to this. Monies have been allowed in the £395 capital budget requested to promote and publicise BHAF, local interest groups and other heritage activity in the borough, so that more residents access heritage events and are aware of the groups they can become a part of. The Council anticipates working with BHAF to ensure the publicity produced best achieves these aims.

Question from Ms Christine Hellicar, Bromley Borough Local History Society

Q. What assurances can the Council give that it values Bromley's rich heritage and will provide funding for a museum service of 21st century standard that does not consist merely of unchanging displays but is professionally curated, properly managed and engaged with the community to benefit present and future generations?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The Council recognises Bromley's rich heritage and that it is valued by residents. This is why the recommendation includes the allocation of £395 capital receipts which will largely pay for the installation of two high quality exhibitions in Central Library. These new exhibitions will be professionally

designed and curated, with the exhibition artefacts chosen and themes developed with input from local interest groups and residents. The results will be exhibitions of a far higher standard than currently exist at Bromley Museum for the benefit of all. These exhibitions will be permanent. The whole collection will be digitised so that the public can access information about the wider collection which will not be on display. If possible we would like to enable special interest groups to access the store based collection if they wish to put temporary exhibitions on for example in the community exhibition space at Central Library which will be refurbished as part of this project. This will only be able to happen if these groups work with us.

Supplementary Question

Will the Council consider providing sufficient funds to enable the museum service to continue for one year thus retaining its officially recognised status and set up a working group of Councillors, officials and members of the Bromley heritage and arts voluntary sector to explore ways and means of maintaining a viable, cost-effective service including investigating the imaginative solutions implemented by other councils facing similar problems.

Portfolio Holder's Response

We will look at that.

Questions from Claire Madge

Q1. *Who will rationalise the Bromley Museum Collection if you make all staff redundant (point 3.21)?*

Portfolio Holder's Response

The report sets out the approach to rationalising the current collection, and in doing so identifies as part of the capital costs the costs of achieving this. Rationalisation is required to make space to properly store the rest of the collection. There are artefacts within the collection that are not relevant to Bromley and should not have been acquisitioned.

Q2. *Who will carry out environmental monitoring of the store which houses the collection?*

Portfolio Holder's Response

The store will be monitored by staff from the Local Studies and Archives.

Supplementary Statement

Skills and expertise for dealing with paper archives are not the same as those needed for handling artefacts.

Questions from Ms Janet Clayton, Chairman, Orpington and District Archaeological Society

Q1. Following any closure of the Priory, the museum store - in an isolated building which has already experienced water leaks - will not be monitored by curatorial staff; how will the Council ensure that the collection is not damaged or vandalised, and is accessible in future to researchers/the public?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The museum store will be monitored by the Head of Local Studies and Archives, liaison over access will be via the Local Studies and Archives team and will be dependent on available resources at a given time.

Supplementary Question

Will the Council ensure that sufficient resources are available to keep the building safe and secure?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Yes.

Q2. The Grade-2 Priory building is of national significance; it has already suffered vandalism (lead stripped from roof, water leaks); if closed, how will the Council ensure it is protected so that key features (including irreplaceable timber-framing, ornamental plasterwork, parquet flooring, fireplaces etc) are not damaged or destroyed?*

Portfolio Holder's Response

Consideration has already been given to protection of the building when the museum closes. There will be activity for a period of time as the museum is emptied, but the Council's Property Team are aware of the issues and will take steps to protect the building during the same period. English Heritage guidance on safeguarding historic buildings when not in use will be followed.

Supplementary Question

Is the Council satisfied that sufficient resources are available?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Yes.

Q3. Why not retain at least one curatorial post to provide professional care and interpretation of both displayed and stored items, including the important Lubbock collection, since without such input the benefits of Bromley's rich heritage cannot be maximised and is at risk for the future?'

Given the continuing economic pressure placed on the Council and the requirement to reduce expenditure by around £60m over the next four years, the Council is faced with taking a significant number of difficult decisions, as such and the Council is unable to commit revenue budgets going forward to support this service area.

Supplementary Question

Is this something that can be considered again in the future?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Yes, if the Council's financial position improves.

Questions from Mr Michael Meekums, Volunteer Co-ordinator for Bromley Museum

Q1. Will there be the opportunity for volunteers to help out at the new museum?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The Council recognises the importance and the role that volunteers play and is keen to utilise volunteers across a broad range of services and the use in this particular area is something that will be taken up with the Head of Local Studies and Archives and new volunteering opportunities explored further.

Supplementary Question

Would it be possible to design exhibitions to enable them to be changed?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Part of the Lubbock exhibitions will be changed twice a year. With advice from historic organisations and the use of volunteers, it may be possible to change other parts of the exhibitions however, the narrative for the local history exhibition will limit the extent to which artefacts can be rotated. The temporary exhibition space will allow more objects to be displayed.

Q2. How will the children of the borough be able to undertake the national and local History curriculum if there is no museum education officer?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The current service has not provided a local history curriculum service to all schools in the borough and it may be that by having a more central location that the museum exhibitions and local history collection is utilised by more schools in the future.

Q3. Will the Council consider keeping the museum at the Priory until a purchaser has been found to take on the Priory building?

Portfolio Holder's Response

No.

Supplementary Question

Who will be responsible for maintaining the building once the exhibits have been moved?

Portfolio Holder's Response

This is the duty of the Council and we will do whatever is necessary.

Questions from Ms Juliet Wood

Q1. Has the Council sought professional guidance from those with experience in selling unusual, listed buildings as regards the time it will take to sell and the likely price?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The Council has provided professional advice to Members on the implications of disposing of the Priory on the open market and has provided a range of indicative values. This is set out in the Part 2 paper on the agenda as it is deemed to be commercially sensitive. English Heritage guidance on selling historic buildings will be utilised by the Property team.

Q2. Have the school teachers who petitioned and wrote letters expressing concern over access to an ongoing education service been consulted as to whether the proposed museum facility will adequately replace the interactive and tailored education service currently offered?

Portfolio Holder's Response

No they have not been consulted, but we are aware from correspondence that they do not believe that the proposals will adequately replace the current service they receive. However, it is not all schools that benefit from this service.

Supplementary Question

Two exhibitions per year will not reflect the current school curriculum. How will the new offer bring more educational value?

Portfolio Holder's Response

It won't be any worse, in fact there will be better temporary exhibition space available which could be used for education purposes.

Q3. Has an opinion been sought from practicing museum professionals (who are independent of the proposal before Council) as to the impact on engagement levels of an online collection and a static '10 star object display?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The proposals arise out of the original museum design and exhibition work that was undertaken by an independent museum exhibition specialist to support the original lottery application. There will be far more than 10 artefacts on display. The Lubbock Gallery will display more Lubbock collection artefacts than are currently on display at the Priory. The specialists contracted to develop the new exhibitions will work with the community to ensure the chosen objects and the exhibition interpretation attracts a wide audience. In addition to the two permanent exhibitions monies from the £395k will be used to create a new refurbished community exhibition space which will hold temporary exhibitions at Central Library.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Questions from Councillor William Huntington-Thresher

Q1. What steps will be taken to protect the Priory, both inside and out, from 1 April 2015?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The Council's property team are aware of the proposals to declare the Priory surplus to operational requirements and for the building to be disposed of on the open market. They will as part of this process determine what additional security measures will be required to protect the building during this process. A budget has been identified to ensure that any additional security measures can be funded. English Heritage best practice guidance will be utilised.

Q2. What insurance or other arrangements will be put in place to reinstate the Priory should it deteriorate after 1 April 2015?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The building will remain on the Council's insurance until the point of disposal.

Questions from Ms Cassie Moran

Q1. How would Bromley Council explain their decision to sell the Grade 2 listed Priory to future generations who, having weathered short term economic constraints, will be deprived in the long term of public access to the borough's prime heritage asset?*

Portfolio Holder's Response

Given the continuing economic pressure placed on the Council and the requirement to reduce expenditure by around £60m over the next four years the Council is faced with taking a significant number of difficult decisions. As such the Council is unable to commit revenue budgets going forward to maintain and conserve the Priory building and therefore the building does not benefit from being in local authority ownership. Any proposals by a purchaser to change the building will require Listed Building Consent and its important historic features should therefore be safeguarded. The importance

of the Priory is recognised, and how the building is marketed will be given due consideration.

Q2. As results from the Council's 'Our Budget, Your Views' survey showed heritage to be a high priority for residents, and the public response to the Priory Revisited HLF bid consultation showed that residents feel strongly that the borough should provide a good quality heritage and cultural offer, how will Bromley Council ensure that it will continue to provide good and facilitated access to the museum collection and provide good quality learning about local history?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Considerable thought has been given to how the Council can best provide access to the museum collections without a revenue budget to support them, which is why the recommendation includes the allocation of £395 capital receipts which will pay for the installation of two high quality exhibitions in Central Library, the digitisation of the collection, a refurbished community exhibition space, online independent learning material, and promotional material for the borough's whole heritage offer. It is anticipated that by moving the museum exhibitions to central library visits will increase from 19k per annum to over 200k per annum.

Q3. How will Bromley Council protect and enhance the nationally significant Lubbock collection, as well as the museum's collection of almost 20,000 artefacts?

Portfolio Holder's Response

One of the new exhibitions will be dedicated to the Lubbock collection, and there will be more artefacts from the collection on display in the new exhibition than there are currently at the Priory. The second exhibition space will showcase the most important and interesting artefacts from the rest of the local history collection. These new exhibitions will be professionally designed and curated, with the exhibition artefacts chosen and themes developed with input from local interest groups and residents, and interpreted to a higher standard than at Bromley Museum now. Artefacts not on display will remain secure in the stores in Priory gardens.

Questions from Mr Stewart Vassie, Joint Chair of The Friends of the Priory and Gardens, Orpington

Q1. Will Cllr Morgan explain how if, as he states, the Council is too poor to be able to undertake a 25 year Heritage Fund commitment. How will it afford to maintain the other heritage sites in Orpington?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The Council recognises Bromley's rich heritage and that it is valued by residents, but, a significant part of our duty is also to balance the public purse and hence take difficult decisions. This is why the recommendation includes the allocation of £395 capital receipts which will largely pay for the installation of two high quality exhibitions in Central Library. These new exhibitions will be professionally designed and curated, with the exhibition artefacts chosen and themes developed with input from local interest groups and residents. The results will be exhibitions of a far higher standard than currently exist at Bromley Museum for the benefit of all. These exhibitions will be permanent. The whole collection will be digitised so that the public can access information about the wider collection which will not be on display. We will be continuing to support the Crofton Roman Villa in Orpington.

Q2. If the Council is too poor to be able to fund a professional curator for Bromley museum, who is qualified to handle and maintain the artefacts it presently owns?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The Head of Local Studies and Archives who has considerable experience in managing the Local Studies archives in the Central Library.

Q3. As there is no qualified heritage official on the Council staff or on the Council, how does the R&R Committee evaluate its heritage priorities?

The Council will continue to work with all of the Heritage Groups in the borough as well as statutory bodies such as English Heritage. There is a Conservation Officer at The Council based within the Planning Section.

Questions from Mr Lyulph Lubbock

Q1. I have made representations (e-mail, 23/1/15) to Cllr Carr, Cllr Morgan and Colin Brand about the implications - generally and specifically for the Lubbock collection and look forward to their detailed response; can I also be assured my e-mail has been made available to Committee members before the meeting?

Portfolio Holder's Response

It is recognised by the Council that the Lubbock collection is of national importance and that it is not currently being exhibited to its best advantage, limiting public access and understanding. The proposal as set out in the report will allow more of the Lubbock collection to be on permanent public display than at present and for the collection to be more accessible and engaging, through new interpretation and a high quality exhibition.

Q2. Would the Committee please respond to my representations about the care and security of items (including those in the Lubbock Collection) which will remain in store, particularly the Griset paintings; will satisfactory curatorial and conservation provisions be made?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The museum store will continue to be maintained and will be overseen by the Head of Archives and Local Studies.

Q3. Would the committee please respond to my representations about the proposed new exhibition, namely the lack of future outreach, lack of future professional input and static nature leading to diminishing public interest?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Significant thought has been given to how the Council can best provide access to the museum collections without a revenue budget to support them. The report includes a recommendation on the allocation of £395k of capital receipts which will, in addition to funding the exhibition, will also fund on line independent learning material, the digitisation of the collection which will be publicly accessible, and promotional material for the borough's whole heritage offer. In addition to the permanent exhibitions there will be a refurbished community exhibition space for temporary exhibitions, and consideration is being given to display more of the art collection at Council owned buildings across the borough. Furthermore, it is anticipated that by moving the museum offer, the displays will potentially be viewed by in excess of 200,000 people against the 19,000 that currently visit the museum.

Questions from Ms Carol Pitman

Q1. If the Council does sell the Priory Building, can it ensure that it would continue to be accessible to the public, delaying sale (if necessary) until an appropriate buyer is found, with Council reserves covering interim costs, if this could reasonably provide better financial ,and non-financial, value for council taxpayers?

Portfolio Holder's Response

If the decision is taken to move the exhibition to the Central Library, it is envisaged that the museum will close by the 1st April 2015. During the interim period between closure and the opening of the new exhibition, there is a substantial amount of work to do in terms of the emptying the museum and rationalising the collection in preparation for the new exhibition which will take place at the Priory site.

Q2. The sale of the Priory building would prioritise short term budgetary requirements over long term benefits to the community. In its cost-benefit analysis of the sale of the building, what non-financial costs were identified, and how does the Council intend to mitigate the effect of those costs and social effects?

Portfolio Holder's Response

The proposal set out in the report seeks to contribute to addressing the long term financial pressures facing the Council which are likely to continue for some time. The proposal also recognises that for some time now there has been an overwhelming dissatisfaction with the quality of the current museum and its offer, with limited visitor numbers. We sought to originally address this via an innovative Heritage Lottery Fund application, but the revenue implications of pursuing this route were prohibitive. The proposal as set out, allows for a high quality exhibition offer, backed by an on line educational resource and promotional material to promote the broader heritage offer in Bromley, whilst simultaneously addressing the need to reduce revenue budgets. , the Council has explored all avenues for keeping a museum service at the Priory with a reduced revenue budget. The business planning work carried out as part of the HLF bid showed that even if the Priory is refurbished and additional income streams are created, such as a café, the revenue costs of managing and maintaining the museum in the Priory building cannot be covered. Additionally a successful community interest company who declared an interest in the Priory during the recent stakeholder consultation determined after scrutinising the figures, that the cost of the capital works required to bring the Priory to a standard that allowed a range of activity to take place and increased access, prohibited the development of a community facility in this building

Q3. In the rationalisation the museum's collection of 20,000 objects and paintings, how much weight will be given to the importance of keeping the items for the benefit of future generations, how much to the ongoing maintenance costs of the collection, and is the rationalisation expected to raise revenue?

Portfolio Holder's Response

Firstly it is important to say that the Council recognises the importance of keeping its current collection for the benefit of future generations. The rationalisation programme is unlikely to generate revenue, if items are considered inappropriate to keep in the collection, they should first be offered back to the original donor and then potentially if this is not successful to another local museum, before any external disposal is considered. There are objects in the collection which are not related to Bromley and should not have been acquisitioned. The Museum Association's guidance on honing collections and disposing of artefacts will be followed.

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