

**EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES
POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 8 October 2015

Present:

Councillor Simon Fawthrop (Chairman)
Councillor Stephen Wells (Vice-Chairman),
Councillors Mary Cooke, Ian Dunn, William Huntington-
Thresher, David Livett, Keith Onslow, Tony Owen,
Ian F. Payne, Neil Reddin FCCA and Angela Wilkins

Also Present:

Councillor Graham Arthur

**208 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF
SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nicholas Bennett, Nicky Dykes, Judi Ellis, Ellie Harmer, Alexa Michael, Russell Mellor and also from Councillor Stephen Carr. Councillor Neil Reddin replaced Councillor Bennett, and Councillor Mary Cooke replaced Councillor Mellor. Councillor William Huntington-Thresher apologised for missing part of the meeting as he was also sitting on the Plans 3 meeting.

209 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Simon Fawthrop declared in relation to a report on the Executive's agenda that he was employed by British Telecom, and he left the room during consideration of this item.

Councillor Keith Onslow declared in relation to the reports on insurance Renewals and the Insurance Fund Annual Report that he was an ex-employee and pensioner of Zurich Municipal Insurance and employed by the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

**210 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE
PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING**

No questions had been received for the Committee Chairman.

**211 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES PDS
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3RD SEPTEMBER 2015
(EXCLUDING EXEMPT ITEMS)**

Members raised questions about the following minutes -

Minute 193 - The Customer Services Health Checks were not yet available – Members asked for an update at the next meeting.

Minute 198 – There was no further progress with the Waste4fuel site – the issue was still with the Department for Environment who were responsible for enforcing the license.

Minute 199 (A) - the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that flood risk was beyond the scope of a normal local land search.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2015 (excluding exempt information) be confirmed.

212 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
Report CSD15105

The Committee received and noted a report on matters arising from previous meetings.

213 FORWARD PLAN OF PRIVATE AND KEY DECISIONS

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Key and Private Executive Decisions as published on 15th September 2015.

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

Two questions had been received, from Mr Richard Gibbons and from Councillor Ian Dunn. These are set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

215 RESOURCES PORTFOLIO - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

215.1 THE PRIORY AND FORMER LIBRARY, CHURCH HILL, ORPINGTON
Report DRR15/092

At its meeting on 10th June 2015 the Executive had decided to cease the use of the Priory for the museum service and to declare it surplus to requirements, subject to further work being undertaken by the Strategic Property Service to establish whether the building could be used by other Council services. Following this decision a feasibility study had been undertaken into the possibility of relocating the Registrars' Service and Electoral Services from the Civic Centre to the Priory. In addition, all Council services were requested to advise whether they had a property requirement which could be met at the Priory, but none was identified.

The conclusion of the study was that considerable internal modifications and an extension would be needed to accommodate Council services. Feasibility

work already carried out on the building as part of the Council's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and subsequent review by an English Heritage consultant had identified the need for expenditure of approximately £1.7m and annual running costs of £120k. The study concluded that the facilities would not meet the current needs of these services and relocation would add to the costs of service provision and almost certainly reduce the revenue earned by the Registrars' Services.

Councillor William Huntington-Thresher, who was a ward member for Orpington, stated that the Council had a duty of care to this grade 2* listed building, the oldest secular building in the borough. He urged the Committee to consider allowing a temporary occupation by community groups such as Save the Orpington Priory (STOP) which would protect the building and allow them a practical opportunity to develop their business plan.

Councillor Ian Payne, as Chairman of Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee, commented that very substantial investment was needed in the building and the Council had to be sure that whoever took on the building would have the resources to look after it. This would be more likely if a suitable commercial operator could be found. Officers confirmed that there were no covenants restricting future uses.

The Committee concluded that officers should investigate all options for keeping the building secure in the short term, including occupation by a community group or a commercial organisation.

RESOLVED that the outcome of the feasibility study undertaken to establish whether the Priory and former Library is suitable for Council use be noted, and the Resources Portfolio Holder be recommended to reaffirm the Executive's decision that the property be offered for sale on a long lease on the open market and to consider all options for keeping the building secure, including a short term occupation with suitable conditions.

215.2 LAND ADJACENT TO 41 BROW CRESCENT, ORPINGTON Report DRR15/080

The building on this site was in poor condition and not suitable for letting to a third party. Because of its age and construction, it was not worthy of refurbishment, and so a decision needed to be made on its future. The report recommended that the building be demolished and the fence along the northern boundary be removed allowing the land to be incorporated into Grassmeade Recreation Ground.

The Committee discussed whether a buyer might be found for the site, which had no vehicular access. The adjoining social landlord had already been approached and was not interested, but Members considered that there was potential for a sale and this should be attempted.

RESOLVED that the Resources Portfolio Holder be recommended to declare the land surplus to council requirements and offer it for sale on the open market.

215.3 FORMAL CONSULTATION ON OUTLINE SERVICE PROPOSALS AND PROCUREMENT STRATEGY - INSURANCE RENEWALS 2016/17
Report FSD15060

The Council's casualty insurance (comprising public liability, employers' liability, officials' indemnity and professional indemnity) was tendered in 2014 and a contract was awarded to Zurich Municipal (ZM) from 17th June 2014 on a three year long-term agreement (LTA) with an option to extend for a further two years (delegated to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Resources Portfolio Holder). All other Council insurance policies (property, motor, fidelity guarantee, personal accident, school journey, minibuses, engineering, shops blanket and mortgaged properties were due to expire on 30th April 2016 and it was proposed to tender for all these through the Crown Commercial Services Framework with a start date of 1st May 2016. It was also proposed that a two year extension on the casualty insurance contract be approved. This would mean that all insurances would end on 30th April 2019, enabling the entire package to be tendered from 1st May 2019. A joint tender from 2017 had been considered, but this would have required a short contract which would not have generated a range of good value tenders.

A Member commented that the level of claims in recent years could point to deficiencies elsewhere in the Council's services.

RESOLVED that the Resources Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the proposals to take tender action through the Crown Commercial Services Framework for all Council insurances except casualty and to agree an extension of two years (from 1st May 2017 to 30th April 2019 to the long-term agreement in place with Zurich Municipal for casualty insurance.

215.4 INSURANCE FUND - ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15
Report RES15061

The report advised the Committee of the position of the Insurance Fund as at 31st March 2015 and presented statistics relating to insurance claims for the last two years. In 2014/15, the total Fund value reduced slightly from £2,981k to £2,888k. A mid-year review of the Fund had been carried out and, at this stage, it was estimated that the final Fund value as at 31st March 2016 was likely to remain at around £2.9m. The position would continue to be monitored throughout the year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

216 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee noted the Executive's agenda for the meeting on 14th October but did not comment on any of the reports as they had been considered or were due to be considered by other PDS Committees.

217 WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16
Report CSD15105

The Committee considered its work programme for 2015/16, and in particular how it could scrutinise the budget process. Officers were currently looking at all options for the 2016/17 budget to close the remaining gap and detailed savings would be presented to the Executive's meeting in December before being circulated to PDS Committees for their input.

Some Members considered that the programme of baseline reviews was still very silo-based and not sufficiently radical and called for proper zero based budgeting. Officers responded that budgets were not determined in silos, and the Chief Executive had established a challenge group to ensure that all proposals were thoroughly tested.

The Resources Portfolio Holder commented that up to half of Councils were expecting to be unable to balance their budgets for 2016/17. Despite starting from a lower base as a low spending Council, Bromley would not be in that position. The budget was built on a baseline of the bare legal minimum, and the easy savings had already been taken. Much progress had already been made – investments were earning the Council an extra £8m pa, and staff numbers had been reduced from 2,400 to about 1,490. Private enterprise and the third sector were increasingly providing services that they were better placed to deliver. Frontline services had been protected, staff redundancies had not been enforced and staff involved in outsourcing had felt that they were treated fairly. The role of Members would need to change to focus more on reviewing and monitoring contracts and acting as the “eyes and ears” of residents – this might involve training and development for Members. He concluded by saying that the Committee's whole-Council view combined with the detailed scrutiny of individual PDS Committees was where the expertise lay to ensure that budgets were reduced. However, he suggested that small, targeted working groups of just two or three Members looking at specific issues might be an effective innovation.

Members also discussed the need to look at how other boroughs ran their services to benchmark these against Bromley and look for ideas to improve.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

218 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**

219 The Committee confirmed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2015.

The Committee confirmed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2015.

220 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORTS

The Committee scrutinised the following proposed decisions by the Resources Portfolio Holder.

221 CLEANING AND OUT OF HOURS SECURITY CONTRACT EXTENSIONS

The Committee scrutinised a proposal to extend these contracts.

222 MECHANICAL MTC BUILDING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Committee scrutinised a proposal to extend the current contract.

223 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee scrutinised the following reports on the Executive's agenda for the meeting on 14th October 2015.

The Meeting ended at 8.51 pm

Chairman

EXECUTIVE & RESOURCES PDS COMMITTEE

8th October 2015

QUESTIONS TO THE RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

(1) From Mr Richard Gibbons -

Are all members aware that:

1. The community-led scheme referred to in item 3.18 envisages a sustainable solution for the Priory and former Library building drawing on the highly regarded Priory Revisited HLF bid; reconfiguring internal spaces to service emerging local health, education, business, community and visitor needs, complemented with an arts, culture and heritage offer?

2. The medieval Priory and former Library building designed by Seely & Paget (noted for their work at Eltham Palace and London Churches) are at the heart of the Orpington Priory Conservation Area which includes 6 statutory and 43 locally listed properties, with "many other primary and ancillary buildings ... contributing to its character and appearance"?

3. Support for the Save The Orpington Priory campaign group and its Orpington Priory Regeneration Project to retain the medieval Grade II* listed Priory and former Library building as a community asset within the Grade II listed Arts & Crafts Priory Gardens, including the Theatre Garden designed by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, continues unabated?

Reply:

I believe that the majority of members are aware that there is a developing local campaign to maintain the priory building as an asset of community value. The Council looks forward to receiving a detailed and sustainable business plan that supports this ambition from the Orpington Priory Campaign Group.

The STOP campaign's proposals and business plan will be reported to the Executive with any offers received (should the decision to market be confirmed) to enable Members to make an informed decision based on the options available.

Supplementary Question:

Mr Gibbons asked whether Members would be prepared to consider a temporary lease to the community group to ensure that the property was occupied, and reminded them that the property was an asset of community value.

Reply:

The Portfolio Holder responded that he would look at all options, however, the marketing process had to start and all submissions would receive due and fair consideration. The Council would be looking to find best value, which was not necessarily the lowest price.

Supplementary Question:

A Member asked how it was expected that the £1.7m needed to make the building DDA compliant could be found.

Reply:

The Portfolio Holder responded that he would consider offers where the work was carried out over a longer time period, or where a scheme could be drawn up requiring a lower spend. There was also the possibility of attracting grants.

Supplementary Question:

A Member asked about insurance for the building, and suggested that an empty building would be more likely to suffer from vandalism or deterioration. Another Member commented that it had been hoped to find a long term solution as quickly as possible to avoid this.

Reply:

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he and senior officers would be prepared to listen to all suggestions.

(2) From Councillor Ian Dunn -

Your response to a question for written reply at the June Council meeting included the statement "Gateway report outlining options for Total Facilities Management would be prepared for Executive September 2015". This gateway report is not on the agenda for the October 2015 Executive meeting. Can you please explain what has delayed the production of this report and provide a forecast of when the report will be coming to the Executive. Also, can you inform the committee of any changes to the scope of the TFM?

Reply:

The TFM gateway report has been rescheduled for the Executive meeting on the 2nd December. The delay in bringing this report to members' attention was in the main due to the fact that a TFM feasibility study that was required to inform the report was itself delayed due to the need to update the Council's property data base.

The scope of the TFM project remains in line with the original scope, i.e. five key services, Strategic Property, Operational property, FM, Planning and Public Protection. Opportunities have been explored to bring three of these services, Strategic Property, Operational Property and FM to market earlier than originally advised through a Framework Agreement. The proposed Gateway report will address all of these issues.

Supplementary Question:

The Chairman asked whether there would be any cost to the Council arising from the delay.

Reply:

Councillor Arthur agreed that if the proposal did save money, it could not start doing this until it commenced. This was frustrating for Members, the public and staff in particular.