

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

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 6 January 2016

Present:

Councillor Simon Fawthrop (Chairman)
Stephen Wells (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Douglas Auld, Nicholas Bennett J.P.,
Ian Dunn, Nicky Dykes, Judi Ellis, Ellie Harmer,
William Huntington-Thresher, David Livett, Russell Mellor,
Alexa Michael, Keith Onslow, Ian F. Payne and
Angela Wilkins

Also Present:

Councillor Graham Arthur and Councillor Stephen Carr

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tony Owen.

243 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made during the course of the meeting –

Councillor Simon Fawthrop declared that he was employed by British Telecom in connection with the Exchequer Services Monitoring Report.

Councillor Stephen Wells declared that he was a member of Langley Park Golf Club in connection with the reports on land at the rear of 4-22 Long Meadow Close, West Wickham.

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

No questions had been received.

**245 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES PDS
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26th NOVEMBER 2015
(EXCLUDING EXEMPT ITEMS)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2015 (excluding exempt information) be confirmed.

246 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
Report CSD16007

The Committee noted matters arising since the last meeting.

247 FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of private and key executive Decisions as published on 15th December 2015.

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

Two questions had been received from Councillor Ian Dunn. The questions and replies are set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

249 RESOURCES PORTFOLIO - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the following reports for pre-decision scrutiny where the Resources Portfolio Holder was minded to take decisions.

249.1 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 2ND QUARTER 2015/16
Report FSD15073

At its meeting on 2nd December 2015 the Executive received the second quarterly monitoring report for 2015/16 and agreed a revised Capital Programme for the four year period from 2015/16 to 2018/19, including changes to the Resources Capital Programme.

RESOLVED that the Resources Portfolio Holder be recommended to confirm the changes to the Resources Capital Programme agreed by the Executive on 2nd December 2015.

249.2 LAND REAR OF 4 - 22 LONGMEADOW CLOSE, WEST WICKHAM
Report DRR16/001

A request had been received from the residents of 4 – 22 Long Meadow Close, West Wickham to purchase land at the rear of their gardens, which formed part of Langley Park Golf Club, to create extensions to their existing rear gardens. The land was owned by the Council and leased to the Golf Club, but was not needed as part of the golf course. Confidential details relating to the proposals were contained in a Part 2 report.

Councillor Nicholas Bennett, speaking as one of the ward Councillors, requested that his thanks to the Leader and the Resources Portfolio Holder for making the proposals possible be placed on record.

During consideration of this item Councillor Stephen Wells declared that he was a member of Langley Park Golf Club.

RESOLVED that the Resources Portfolio Holder be recommended to declare the parcels of land at the rear of 4 – 22 Long Meadow Close surplus to Council requirements to enable their sale to the neighbouring householders as recommended.

249.3 GARAGE AT GODDINGTON PARK, GODDINGTON LANE, ORPINGTON
Report DRR16/004

The garage at Goddington Park was previously used by Orpington Football Club for storage purposes, but they had now moved their equipment to their newly refurbished pavilion. The Council had no other use for the building and the owner of the Lodge at the Park entrance had requested to purchase the garage. It was confirmed that the Council's position would be safeguarded by appropriate conditions. Confidential details relating to the proposals were contained in a Part 2 report.

RESOLVED that the Resources Portfolio Holder be recommended to declare the garage at Goddington Park, Goddington Lane, Orpington, surplus to Council requirements and to agree that it be sold to the owner of the adjacent property.

249.4 FORMER PUBLIC TOILETS, BROMLEY HILL CEMETERY
Report DRR16/006

The Lodge at Bromley Hill Cemetery had been sold in 1994. The adjoining public toilets, which shared a cesspool with the Lodge, had now been closed, and, following negotiations about transferring responsibility for the cesspool, the owner had requested to purchase the toilets.

RESOLVED that the Resources Portfolio Holder be recommended to declare the former public toilets at Bromley Hill cemetery surplus to Council requirements.

250 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS
Report CSD16008

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 1 agenda for the Executive's meeting on 13th January 2016.

(5) Draft Budget and Update on the Council's Financial Strategy 2017/18 to 2019/20
Report FSD16001

The Director of Finance presented the initial draft 2016/17 budget, including additional savings for 2016/17 and 2017/18 and actions to reduce the

Council's medium term budget gap. He emphasised that the grant settlement was not favourable for Bromley, although there were still details awaited. The government's attitude towards the use of reserves by local authorities had shifted, and there was now an emphasis on using reserves for strategic purposes to achieve transformation and change. Business Rates and the New Homes Bonus would not be enough to support the Council's budgets, and longer term thinking was needed. It was important to keep lobbying government to secure fairer funding for the borough.

A Member commented that the Council had to be forward-thinking on planning decisions. The Council's Growth Fund would be increasingly important not just to increase income from business rates but to reduce unemployment and dependency on public services.

The Committee also discussed schools funding, and were concerned about the rules around Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), particularly in the light of the Council's remaining statutory responsibilities for education and the introduction of a national funding formula for schools in 2017/18. It was intended that senior members and officers would, with the assistance of local MPs, seek to meet with the Education Minister.

The Committee thanked the Director for providing such a thorough and well-written report and suggested that paper copies should be circulated to all other Members of the Council.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

(7) Crystal Palace Park – Regeneration Plan
Report DRR16/009

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

251 SCRUTINY OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive, Doug Patterson, updated Members on his work and answered questions on current issues. The financial pressures continued to be a focus, and he had met with the Rt. Hon. Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, that morning with the Leader and Director of Finance, to lobby for a fairer grant settlement for Bromley. He welcomed the potential 2% precept for adult social care announced by the government. A plan for integrating health and social care had to be developed by 2017/18 – this was an exciting opportunity. Major decisions were coming up on public sector spending in the borough affecting not just the Council but the Police, Health, the DWP and others. Other issues were work supporting counter terrorism, the Adult Education service, the Youth Offending Service, Waste4fuel, the Mytime contract and preparation for the GLA elections and a potential referendum on Europe.

The Chief Executive responded to questions on the following issues –

- New working practices: The digital office and associated changes in working practices were still a challenge, but progress was being made and the number of desks available was reducing.
- The budget gap: The Chief Executive was confident that an effective budget for 2016/17 could be achieved, but hard decisions were needed around economic development, streamlining of services and income generation for future years. A member commented that already in some areas officers were under pressure with excessive workloads and response times were increasing.
- New Homes Bonus: There was still no clarity about the rules, but this meant that there was still an opportunity to influence what the rules would be.
- Counter Terrorism Training: The Chief Executive was confident that the Council was as prepared as it could be. A major emergency planning training exercise was planned for February. He was unsure whether any training was available for members but would check on this.
- Policing: A Member suggested developing closer links with the British Transport Police on issues such as Safer Neighbourhoods, as they might have less budget pressure than the Metropolitan Police.
- Office to residential conversions: A member regretted the loss of office and commercial space to residential conversion, which meant fewer opportunities for entrepreneurs and new businesses. The Chief Executive commented that the rules were set by Government.

252 CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING REPORT
Report CSD16006

The Committee received a report on performance of the customer Service Contract provided by Liberata for the period from 1st June to 30th November 2015. A letter from Liberata's Contract Director, Amanda Inwood-Field, was included with the report, and she attended the meeting with other senior managers from Liberata.

The contract was performing well overall – there had been increased contact volumes in the summer due to changes in the domestic waste collection service, but Liberata had deployed additional staff to address this, and arranged for some calls to be transferred to their Barrow centre. The performance of the Reception was 69% over the reporting period against a target of 80%; changes had been implemented and performance for December had exceeded the target.

The customer portal now had over 14,000 registered users, of which about 26% were regular users (logging in at least once a week.) Functionality was

limited at present, but more services would be provided as part of the digital by default approach.

Ms Inwood Field informed the Committee that she would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Council the possibilities for taking on additional services, and officers confirmed that these issues were being addressed.

Cllr Ian Dunn requested information on what percentage of time call-centre staff actually spent talking to customers on the phone, and also asked for actual numbers of transactions for the services listed in appendix 4.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

253 EXCHEQUER SERVICE MONITORING REPORT
Report FSD16002

The Committee received a report on Liberata's performance in the provision of Exchequer Services in the period from 1st April to 30th September 2015. At the request of the Chairman, additional information was tabled about outstanding Care Services debt. A letter from Liberata's Contract Director, Amanda Inwood-Field, was included with the report, and she attended the meeting with other senior managers from Liberata.

Officers reported that efforts had been made to reduce the amounts of aged debts and disputed invoices. Utility debt had reduced to £359k, and the collection rate for in-year debt was 88.13% as at the end of September; it was anticipated that the target of 90% would be met at the end of the year. The overall debt position had improved considerably. A debt management system was being procured to bring together data concerning an individual's debt to be extracted from different systems and displayed on a single screen.

(Councillor Simon Fawthrop declared that he was employed by British Telecom in connection with this report.)

RESOLVED that the information in the report be noted.

254 REVENUES SERVICE MONITORING REPORT
Report FSD16006

The Committee received a report on the performance of the Revenues Service provided by Liberata for the period 1st April to 30th September 2015. A letter from Liberata's Contract Director, Amanda Inwood-Field, was included with the report, and she attended the meeting with other senior managers from Liberata.

The Committee discussed whether payments by credit card should attract a charge to reflect the higher commission charges. Some Members were concerned that this placed an additional burden on the poor, but it was accepted that the charge was necessary to cover the Council's costs and would drive some people to switch to paying by cheaper methods.

RESOLVED that

(1) The information contained in the report be noted.

(2) The Resources Portfolio Holder be recommended -

- (i) to introduce charges on payments made corporately via credit card with effect from 1st April 2016, with authority delegated to the Director of Finance to vary the rate from an initial rate of 2.25%;**
- (ii) to agree in principle that charges be introduced on credit card payments made via the Parking and Adult Education systems, with the final decision delegated to the relevant Chief Officers following a cost/benefit appraisal; and**
- (iii) to consider the introduction of a £70 Council Tax penalty for failure to notify the Authority or to supply information as described in section 3.7 of the report and bring forward proposals at the earliest opportunity.**

255 BENEFITS SERVICE MONITORING REPORT
Report FSD16005

The Committee received a report on the performance of the Benefits Service provided by Liberata covering the period from 1st April to 30th September 2015. A letter from Liberata's Contract Director, Amanda Inwood-Field, was included with the report, and she attended the meeting with other senior managers from Liberata. Speed of claim processing was within the 13 day target, and performance on error rates had improved since 2014/15, with only one month outside the 5% tolerance level within this reporting period.

At the request of Councillor Ian Dunn, an Internal Audit report on a review of the contract issued on 12th November 2015 had been circulated.

Members requested that, for the next report, DWP information on speed of processing for Outer London authorities be included. Another Member commented that the KPIs in the contract did not appear to be monitored in the report, and suggested that the construction of the report should be reviewed.

Universal Credit was due to start to be rolled out in Bromley on 18th January 2016, initially just for new claims from some single people. It was confirmed that Library staff were receiving training, and it was hoped that a Member seminar could be arranged with the DWP.

Members noted that government funding for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) had reduced to £563,127 for 2015/16. A Member commented that the wording in the report that the level of certain awards would have to be "restricted" was misleading, as each case was looked at on its merits.

It was confirmed that the authority had not lost any DWP subsidy due to overpayments.

RESOLVED that the information contained in the report be noted.

256 WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16
Report CSD16009

The Committee considered its work programme for the remainder of 2015/16. It was noted that the School Improvement Panel had not met on 24th November as stated in the report and that a report on the Growth Fund was expected for the March cycle.

**257 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**

**258 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26th
NOVEMBER 2015**

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2015 were confirmed.

**259 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT RESOURCES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORTS**

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

**259.1 LAND REAR OF 4 - 22 LONG MEADOW CLOSE, WEST
WICKHAM**

Councillor Stephen Wells declared that he was a member of Langley Park Golf Club in connection with the reports on land at the rear of 4-22 Longmeadow Close, West Wickham.

The Committee supported proposals to sell the land.

**259.2 GARAGE AT GODDINGTON PARK, GODDINGTON LANE,
ORPINGTON**

The Committee supported a proposal to sell the property.

259.3 BANBURY HOUSE, BUSHELL WAY, CHISLEHURST

The Committee supported proposals to accept an offer for the purchase of Banbury House.

259.4 LAND ADJOINING PENGE CLINIC

The Committee supported the proposed sale of areas of land adjoining Penge Clinic to enable the NHS to redevelop the clinic as a new medical centre.

**260 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT EXECUTIVE
REPORTS**

The Committee scrutinised the following exempt reports on the Executive's Part 2 agenda for the meeting on 13th January 2016 –

- (14) Extension of the Exchequer Services Contract
- (16) Investment Property Review – Estate Shops

The Meeting ended at 10.02 pm

Chairman

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**EXECUTIVE & RESOURCES
PDS COMMITTEE**

6th January 2016

7. QUESTIONS TO THE RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

1. From Councillor Ian Dunn -

Can the Portfolio Holder provide the number of households and the number of electors entitled to vote in local elections, broken down by ward for the electoral registers published in December 13, December 14 and December 15.

Reply:

A table with the information requested was circulated. It was suggested that this should be sent to all Members.

2. From Cllr Ian Dunn

Can the Portfolio Holder provide a copy of the presentation by Amey and Cushman & Wakefield to the Cabinet referred to in the letter to staff from Mr Brand dated 16 December in order that this committee can better understand the Total Facilities Management Project. (I appreciate that this may be a Part 2 answer.)

Reply:

Discussions are still ongoing with Amey and Cushman and Wakefield and whilst the presentation was intended to provide some information to the cabinet, then proposals in it were very much in draft form . Views are being taken on what aspects if any are acceptable or merit taking forward and I am aiming to bring a full report to the next Executive which can be fully scrutinised here and it may be better to look at the whole issue in the round rather than focus on one small aspect i.e. the presentation.

The Portfolio Holder added that it might be appropriate for the Contracts Working Group to consider the contract.

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Question 1: Electorate and Household Totals

2013 - 2015

	Electorate 1.12.2013*	Households 1.12.2013	Electorate 1.12.2014	Households 1.12.2014	Electorate 1.12.2015**	Households 1.12.2015
Bickley	11754	6292	11728	6312	11419	6328
Biggin Hill	7859	4080	7867	4090	7795	4090
Bromley Common & Keston	12160	6982	12147	7112	12231	7134
Bromley Town	12865	8062	12856	8127	12544	8221
Chelsfield & Pratts Bottom	11362	5947	11368	5956	11118	5956
Chislehurst	11825	6691	11936	6748	11813	6749
Clock House	11809	7284	11804	7299	11506	7376
Copers Cope	12115	8573	11990	8675	11991	8686
Cray Valley East	11033	7042	11116	7182	11148	7182
Cray Valley West	12126	6945	12138	6975	11928	6975
Crystal Palace	8309	6607	8512	6629	8548	6629
Darwin	4036	2151	4075	2159	4075	2159
Farnborough & Crofton	11737	6366	11810	6362	11563	6362
Hayes & Coney Hall	12594	6274	12586	6273	12354	6297
Kelsey & Eden Park	12248	6595	12322	6606	12184	6606
Mottingham & Chislehurst North	7320	4520	7356	4522	7135	4522
Orpington	12033	6594	12013	6602	11791	6614
Penge & Cator	12203	8035	12353	8039	12058	8044
Petts Wood & Knoll	10916	5602	10870	5603	10630	5603
Plaistow & Sundridge	11382	6943	11474	6983	11297	6989
Shortlands	7754	4341	7689	4335	7477	4335
West Wickham	12057	5940	12057	5944	11892	5944
TOTAL	237497	137866	238067	138533	234497	138801

* Due to transition to Individual Electoral Registration (IER) - publication of this register was delayed by legislation to 15/02/2014

** End of transition of IER - any entries for electors who had not either been confirmed or successfully made individual applications to register to vote, were removed from this register before publication in accordance with legislation

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