

RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.30 pm on 30 March 2021

Present:

Councillor Michael Rutherford (Chairman)
Councillor Suraj Sharma (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Gareth Allatt, Julian Benington,
Kim Botting FRSA, Josh King, Alexa Michael and
Gary Stevens

Also Present:

Councillor Yvonne Bear Executive Assistant for the
Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio
Councillor Peter Morgan, Portfolio Holder for Renewal,
Recreation and Housing

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no additional declarations of interest.

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

Two written questions had been received and the questions and responses are attached at Appendix A.

19 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2021 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

HOLDING THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO ACCOUNT

20 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO REPORTS

The Committee considered the following report where the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio Holder was recommended to take a decision:

A BUDGET MONITORING 2020/21

Report FSD20038

The report provided an update of the latest revenue budget monitoring position for 2020/21 for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio based on activity to 31 December 2020.

The Committee noted that specific costs relating to the Covid pandemic were detailed in the separate budget monitoring report to the Executive and that further details would be provided in the Portfolio Budget Closedown report that would be presented to the next meeting.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Head of Finance (Adult Social Care, Health and Housing) confirmed that the fixed contracts relating to the Supporting People budget were due to be retendered and further reports would follow later in the year which may result in a slight increase in spend in this budget head. Some of reported underspend in this specific budget also related to a credit for prior year accruals.

The Interim Assistant Director for Culture and Regeneration agreed to provide details of the budget for Furniture Storage following the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the latest 2020/21 budget monitoring for the Renewal, Recreation & Housing Portfolio.

B CAPITAL PROGRAMME REPORT Report FSD21019

On 10th February 2021, the Executive received a report summarising the current position on capital expenditure and receipts following the 3rd quarter of 2020/21 and presenting for approval the new capital schemes in the annual capital review process. The Executive agreed a revised capital programme for the five year period 2020/21 to 2024/25. The report before the Committee highlighted changes agreed by the Executive in respect of the Capital Programme for the Renewal, Recreation & Housing Portfolio.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note and acknowledge the changes agreed by the Executive on 10th February 2021.

21 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 1 agenda for the meeting of the Executive on 31 March 2021:

A PROPERTY ACQUISITION SCHEME PROPOSAL: BEEHIVE PHASE 2

The report advised on the option to lease an additional 31 former Hyde social housing properties from Beehive for use as accommodation to help reduce the current pressures in relation to homelessness and temporary accommodation.

In response to a question, the Head of Finance (Adult Social Care, Health and Housing) confirmed that there was a defined set of standards for the properties which would need to be refurbished, and any failing to meet these standards would need to be remedied or substituted.

The Committee noted that the difference between the original acquisition and the second stage acquisition was mainly around financing. For the first scheme, the lease payments the Council made to Beehive equated to 69% of local housing allowance rent. For the second scheme it would be set at 74% and the main reason for that was that there had been a significant increase in market interest rates in the last few months. In addition, some prudent assumptions had been made as further information from Hyde was still outstanding in respect of service charges.

Members noted that of the 31 properties, 10 were within Bromley, 5 were in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, 9 were in the London Borough of Lewisham, 4 were in the London Borough of Southwark, 2 were in the London Borough of Croydon, and 1 was in the London Borough of Merton.

The Head of Finance (Adult Social Care, Health and Housing) explained that for the time being the properties would sit outside the HRA as they would be leased to Orchard and Shipman but in the longer term all options would be explored.

Given the urgency, Members agreed that the decision proceed to Executive despite the item not being published on the Forward Plan

RESOLVED: That it Executive be recommended to

- 1. Agree to enter into an agreement for lease for the acquisition of the leasehold properties identified in this Report and to delegate authority to the Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration to agree final terms with Beehive for the acquisition of the leases in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Finance and to enter into the leases on the dates specified in the agreement.**
- 2. Approve the allocation of £50k budget for the survey work funded from the Housing Investment Fund earmarked reserve.**
- 3. Approve the allocation of £50k budget for the survey work funded from the Housing Investment Fund earmarked reserve.**

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- 4. Delegate authority to the Director of Housing Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Finance to agree final terms for the disposal of the properties identified in this Report by way of the grant of underleases to Orchard & Shipman for terms expiring on the 31st March 2024 and at the rental levels identified herein, with management arrangements for the properties to be included within the existing contract held with Orchard & Shipman.**

22 PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES - CONTRACT PERFORMANCE REPORT Report HPR2021/019

The report provided an update on the Provision of Library Services contract with Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) over the last six months of operation. The value of the contract over a ten-year period was £40,908,465. Members received an update on the performance of the Contractor since the last report was presented in September 2020 and the report demonstrated how the Contractor had delivered the service in line with the contract, specification, and Key Performance Indicators.

The Committee noted that plans were in place to initially reopen libraries from 12 April 2020 between 10am and 5pm. There were ongoing issues with Orpington Library which meant that it would not be reopening on 12 April, although options for contingency planning around temporary hot water and heating supplies were being explored which would enable services to run with a minimum of disruption.

Members noted that it had been possible to offer virtual school visits during the period of lockdown and going forward it was hoped that it would be possible to offer both in-person and virtual school visits in recognition of the benefits of both approaches.

It was noted that the libraries hoped to work more closely with Children and Family Centres and meetings had been scheduled to facilitate this going forward

The Committee further noted that it was hoped that the initial Start Up Bromley project would commence on 4 May 2021, and Members would be provided with further details nearer the time.

With respect to levels of borrowing, the Committee noted that there had been increases in the use of e-resources and efforts were being made to encourage those who used the wide range of services available at the libraries to become members.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked representatives from GLL for the high level of services that had been provided throughout the pandemic.

RESOLVED: That the performance of the service provider in the last six months of the contract be noted.

**23 HOUSING, REGENERATION AND PLANNING PORTFOLIO PLAN
Report RRH21-0**

The report presented the Quarter 3 update for the Portfolio Plan 2020-21.

A Member suggested that the Portfolio Plan should be updated in respect of the Planning Service to reflect that improvements were ongoing and the majority of recommendations from the Planning Advisory Service report had been implemented.

In respect of the Chipperfield Way development, the Committee noted that work on the cost viability for the project was ongoing and the government had recently announced the funding for renewal and regeneration programmes. It was agreed that an update to the Ward Councillors would be provided as soon as possible.

Members noted that the Portfolio Plan would be updated to reflect that Bushell Way, Anerley, Burnt Ash Lane and York Rise were not all temporary accommodation site and that some were for discharge of duty.

In respect of Site G, the Committee noted that there was a development agreement with Countryside and discussions were ongoing. The action had been rated 'red' due to the timescales involved in relation to when the development agreement expired.

The Chairman suggested that, whilst recognising the challenges present throughout much of the past year, the actions relating to delivering leisure activities should be rated 'red' as two of the leisure centres had been closed for much of the year. There was a similar position for proactive Bromley where work had paused due to Covid although the Chairman understood that work was now underway to restart proactive Bromley and it was hoped that by the end of the year the position would improve.

The Committee noted that the Community Fund for Small Shopping Parades would roll over to the next year and continue after the programme was paused this year.

In relation to the enhanced use of community facilities, the Committee noted that Children and Families Centres would be included in the project.

The Portfolio Holder reported that planning consent had recently been granted for Crystal Palace Park and the hope was that the project could now continue apace.

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RESOLVED: that the progress on the actions associated with the Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Plan for Quarter 2 of 2020/21 be noted.

24 UPDATE ON MORE HOMES BROMLEY SPV PROPERTY ACQUISITION PROGRAMME

The report provided the annual update on the More Homes Bromley SPV for the provision of affordable housing.

The Committee noted that there were a large number of properties outside the Borough and this decision had been taken for affordability reasons.

Where a tenant had been housed in another local authority area and became homeless as a result of a failure to maintain payments in relation to rent and other liabilities, the Executive Assistant queried which local authority would be required to assume responsibility. Officers agreed to provide a response following the meeting.

In response to a question from the Portfolio Holder, the Head of Finance (Adult Social Care, Health and Housing) confirmed there was a limited amount of capital remaining to purchase some more properties but the target of 400 homes was unlikely to be met.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

**25 HOUSING DEMAND AND SUPPLY UPDATE
Report HPR2021/020**

The report provided an update on the impact of Covid-19 on the Housing service and the Council's housing delivery plans to support those in housing need.

The Chairman noted that the individual street properties related to the Orchard and Shipman contract which had previously been reviewed by the Council.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director for Culture and Regeneration confirmed that Officers were confident that the completion dates cited in the report would be met and that the projects were within timescale.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

**26 BROMLEY BOROUGH COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - APPROVAL OF CIL CHARGING SCHEDULE
Report HPR2021/011**

The report sought Full Council approval of the Bromley Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule. The levy would be charged on

planning applications approved from 15 June 2021 (the date of effect). Once approved, the Community Infrastructure Levy will provide financial contributions from certain types of development to help fund new or improved strategic infrastructure required to support the growth identified in the Bromley Local Plan.

The Committee noted that the report had been considered at the recent meeting of the Development Control Committee and the recommendations had been endorsed at that meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that Executive and Full Council take on board the Committee's comments.

**27 ADOPTION OF THE KENT DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY MANAGEMENT PLAN
Report HPR2021/014**

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 requires local authorities to produce, adopt and keep under review Management Plans for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Members were requested to endorse the adoption of the latest updated version of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan noting that there may be minor amendments such as design and formatting changes prior to publication.

The Committee noted that at the recent meeting of the Development Control Committee Councillor Scoates had referred to a spot of land in his ward (Darwin) between Cudham Lane South and Buckhurst Road leading up to Cudham Valley which was a spectacular sight with views of the North Downs. He asked if there was a way for this area to be included in the AONB Management Plan. The Head of Planning Policy and Strategy provided an update explaining that there was some potential for AONBs to be amended although the bar was quite high. The intention was to ascertain the exact area and take a view from the AONB Joint Action Committee as to the feasibility of a successful application for amendment being made to Natural England.

RESOLVED: that the Executive be recommended to

- 1. Adopt the updated version of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan at Appendix 1 (noting that there may be minor amendments such as design and formatting changes prior to publication).**
- 2. Agree that reasonable changes made by other local authorities during the adoption process, subsequent to any decision to adopt the updated management plan by Bromley being made, can be accepted by the Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing.**

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**28 UPDATE ON DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS GRANTS
Report HPR2021/021**

The report outlined how the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) had been allocated to date and analysed how it had been utilised to support businesses.

The Council had now received a total payment of £9,598,878 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on behalf of Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). This included the original sum of £6,646,720 in November plus a top up of £2,952,158 in February 2021. This sum forms the Council's ARG which would be used to provide financial support to local businesses through grants and business support functions.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

29 ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee noted the submission for the Annual Scrutiny Report. The submission had also been presented to the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee on 24th March 2021.

The Committee thanked the Chairman for the work he had undertaken on behalf of the Committee throughout the year.

In turn, the Chairman thanked the Committee and Officers for the support that had been provided throughout the year, noting that virtual meetings had meant it had been an interesting and memorable year.

**30 CONTRACT REGISTER
Report HPR2021/016**

The report presented an extract from February 2021's Contracts Register for detailed scrutiny by the PDS Committee. The Contracts Register contained in 'Part 2' of the agenda included a commentary on each contract to inform Members of any issues or developments.

RESOLVED: that the Part 1 and Part 2 Contracts Register as at 21 January 2021 be noted.

**31 RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME**

The Work Programme for the 2021/22 municipal year was noted.

The Committee agreed that a report on Business Lounges be added to either the November or January meetings.

32 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**

33 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2021

The Part 2 (exempt) minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2021 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

34 PART 2 CONTRACTS REGISTER

The Part 2 Contracts Register was noted.

The Meeting ended at 7.29 pm

Chairman

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Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee
30th March 2021

Questions to the Portfolio Holder

Questions from Alisa Igoe

1. **Reference: Land adjacent to properties No 1 and No 2 Broadheath Drive, and Croft Close, Chislehurst**

These two strips of open land on Elmstead Lane were auctioned off in 2020. One has had all grass and trees removed. An emergency immediate Tree Preservation Order 2709 has now been served on threatened trees on the second site. Has Bromley ever owned these sites, ever sold them and, if so, on what dates?

Reply:

These strips of land have never been owned by the Council.

2. **Reference: Bromley website 24 February Statement and Notice "Disposal of Land, Chislehurst Library"**

On 24 February 2021 a formal Notice was published under Section 123(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 stating the intention of the Council to dispose of urban open space at Chislehurst Library and car park. Could you please explain why you have issued this notice?

Reply:

As the existing Chislehurst Library site forms an area of 'Urban Open Space' there is a legal requirement for a notice to be published for a period of two consecutive weeks under Section 123(A) of the Local Government Act stating the intention of the Council to dispose of the land. It is perhaps worth noting that although the land is categorised as 'Urban Open Space' in planning terms, the site the notice relates to is already built on in its entirety, in the form of the library building and hardstanding car park and does not include any of the adjacent green space.

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