

RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30 pm on 5 July 2011

Present:

Councillor Sarah Phillips (Chairman)
Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Councillor Michael Tickner, Councillor John Ince, Councillor Ian F. Payne, Councillor John Getgood, Councillor Julian Benington, Councillor Paul Lynch, Councillor Alexa Michael and Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA

Also Present:

Councillor Stephen Carr, Councillor Robert Evans, Councillor Peter Fookes, Councillor Mrs Anne Manning and Councillor Peter Morgan

73 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ALTERNATE MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence.

74 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Payne declared an interest in item 7c in his capacity as a member of the British bids Board and also as a member of the Association of Town Centre Managers.

75 QUESTIONS FOR THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

76 QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE

There were no questions from Councillors or members of the public attending the meeting.

77 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5th JULY 2011

The minutes of meeting of the meeting held on 12th April 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

RESOLVED that minutes of the meeting held on 12th April 2011 are approved.

78 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND UPDATES

The committee noted 3 matters arising:

The report on Penge Town Centre would be brought to a future meeting.

The variable messaging system for Bromley Town Centre would be reported to the Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee meeting in October.

The report on the shared library service was being considered on this agenda.

RESOLVED that the report is noted.

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

There were no questions from Councillors or members of the public attending the meeting.

80 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO - PREVIOUS DECISIONS

The decisions taken by the Portfolio Holder on 12th April were noted.

RESOLVED that the decisions taken on 12th April 2011 are noted.

81 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO REPORTS

81.a LIBRARIES - SHARED SERVICES

On 12 April 2011 the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee recommended that the Portfolio Holder:

- a) note the position on shared services and in particular the benefits including the levels of potential savings that have been identified; and
- b) agree that the Director of Renewal and Recreation continues with the detailed negotiations with the London Borough of Bexley and that a further report be brought to this meeting outlining the available options and the outcome of negotiations and staff consultation.

Members were provided with an update and were informed that a petition against library closures had been considered by full Council on 4th July.

The Chairman felt that, in order to consider the report fully, they should look at each option separately.

Hours

Members considered the suggestion for a reduction in operational hours across a number of Branch libraries, in some cases to about 14 hours a week and late opening would also be reduced. The closing and opening times corresponded across all the libraries.

There was a consensus of opinion amongst members that these reductions would result in a very limited service at some branches. They considered public usage would as a consequence be adversely affected. In addition the fact that all the libraries would be closed at the same time would prevent the public having access at alternative locations.

Concern was also raised about having only one late night opening for the Central Library. One member felt that officers should look at the library buildings and consider whether they could also serve another revenue generating use. Whilst appreciating the costs involved they highlighted the success of the new Biggin Hill Library and Swimming Pool as a good example of this.

Another suggestion was the use of volunteers, which would allow libraries to remain open but also making savings.

One Councillor expressed concern at the assumed linkage between the location of a library and a shopping centre. She considered the library could still be a community hub without this. She also said that the selection of books would be an important consideration in the attractiveness of a library.

Shared Service Governance Model

Members then considered the shared services governance model between Bromley and Bexley. There were currently 36 back office staff in Bromley and 35 in Bexley. The new service would have 35 staff, so there would be a 50% reduction in staff numbers.

Members asked about the issue of redundancy and officers reported that some staff had expressed an interest in voluntary redundancy. They also sought clarification on the decision making powers of the proposed Joint Councils Library Board. Officers pointed out that the Board would consider strategic matters but the responsibility for buildings etc would still remain with the individual local authorities.

Members were also keen to ensure that a shared service for back office functions would not have a detrimental effect on the Library Service.

Trust Option

Officers explained that due to the re-localisation of business rates any new trust would need to be set up by 1st April 2012. To set up a new trust would entail a considerable amount of work which would be difficult within in the timescale. In addition any savings made could be lost in set up costs.

One way to expedite selection of a suitable trust would be to market test existing trusts.

Members were reminded that in contrast to the leisure services trust there was no significant market or income stream. Officers confirmed that Member representation on the trust Board would depend on the model used.

Closure Options

Members noted examples of potential Library closures and were generally reluctant to see libraries close but appreciated the need for savings to be made and noted that any proposals for closure would be subject to full consultation. To carry out full and thorough consultation would take 6 months to complete.

Officers indicated that one option would be the consolidation of one or more libraries but providing an enhanced service at a new library. One member stressed the need to consider wider use of library premises for retail or use by voluntary or other organisations. However officers repeated that in their view opportunities to generate significant revenue from such activities were limited.

Peoples Network

Members considered a proposal to charge for using the People's network. They were unanimous that the service should remain free. In addition there would be costs in collecting the fees which would outweigh the revenue income.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the Executive be recommended to agree that there be no reduction in the hours of operation of the Borough's library service without further consultation with staff, their representatives, ward Councillors and library users and the opportunities to generate income also be investigated and a further report be submitted back to Members on the outcome;**
- 2. it be noted that the options regarding closure of any library will be the subject of further consultation with staff, their representatives, ward Councillors and library users and the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment prior to a further report on this option being submitted to Members;**

3. the Executive be recommended that the option as set out in the report to implement charges for the People's Network is not supported and should not proceed; and
4. the responses received from staff and their representatives to date regarding entering into a "shared services" arrangement with the London Borough of Bexley be noted and the Executive be recommended to agree that the option of transferring a shared service into a trust as set out in the report be investigated further recognising the urgency involved in order to achieve savings on business rates.

82 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2011/12

Members considered a report which gave an update of the latest budget monitoring position for 2011/12 for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio based on expenditure and activity levels up to 31st May 2011. This showed a balanced budget.

Although the budget would be balanced there were some variations:

- *Reduced activity in building control was continuing due to the on-going effect of the recession. Income was expected to be £190k below budget and was being offset by £190k savings as a result of sustained management action such as holding 3.5fte vacant.*
- *Income for planning applications was below budget especially for the major applications. A shortfall of £180k was projected. In addition to this, the income received from the new fees introduced as a budget option (pre-application meetings for non-major applications) was also well below the budget for April and May. A further shortfall in income is therefore projected of £20k, making a total of £200k. This was being offset by savings from management action including holding the equivalent of 8fte posts vacant.*

RESOLVED that the budget position is noted.

83 BUSINESS PLAN 2011-2012

The draft Renewal & Recreation Business Plan 2011/12 was presented to the Renewal & Recreation PDS Committee for comment and to the Portfolio Holder for review and endorsement.

The draft plan outlined how the department would deliver the departments key priorities: vibrant thriving town centres. Six strategic outcomes focussed efforts in supporting the key priorities:

- ii) Vibrant, thriving town centres
- iii) Protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural built environment
- iv) Enhancing opportunities for leisure, recreation and the arts
- v) Developing opportunities for residents to improve skills, learning and employment prospects
- vi) Managing property assets to support the delivery of the Council's key objectives
- vii) An effective and efficient department that provides value for money

The Renewal & Recreation PDS Committee will receive monitoring reports on the implementation of the Business Plan and quarterly performance management information will be included in the Council-wide 'Are We on Track' (AWOT) reports.

In relation to the Aim 2a target "Grant Planning permission to 80% of applications received (to be monitored quarterly). Councillor Michael felt that this was not achievable and proposed a motion, which was seconded by Councillor Tickner, that this target should be removed. After a majority vote the motion was carried.

With regard to vacant shops members asked if the planning regulations for change of use could be relaxed. The Portfolio Holder said that he was in discussion with the Chairman of Development Control.

It was also noted that Beckenham Town centre did not feature in the plan. It was agreed that this should be included in the plan.

RESOLVED THAT the report is noted and the above comments are considered by the Portfolio Holder.

83.a LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC UPDATE

This report provides Members with an update regarding the ongoing developments in respect to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (the 2012 Games), and outlines the current arrangements that are in place within Bromley in respect to the anticipated impact the 2012 Games may have. In particular this report deals with the following key aspects:

- Host Borough Co-operation and Licence Agreement
- City Look and Feel
- Olympic Torch Relay

The Host Borough co-operation and licence agreement would sign the council up to a large number of commitments, the implications of which were not fully understood and which may require significant council resources to monitor and implement. Therefore officer recommended that members did not enter into this agreement.

For the City look and feel the GLA would grant each local authority up to £50,000 as a contribution towards supporting “Your London 2012” during the period of the games. The grant could be used to purchase items from the LOCOG “Look Book” to support street dressing. It was not yet known how much each item would cost. Officers advised members that as this was at no cost to Bromley it should be pursued.

The Olympic Torch relay

In order to keep costs down officers had said that this should take place at Crystal Palace Park. However LOCOG’s view was that it should go through Bromley, Beckenham and then up to Crystal Palace Park.

Members felt that this option should be pursued provided it was at no cost to the Council.

RESOLVED THAT the Portfolio Holder is recommended:

- i) Not to sign up to the Host Borough Agreement**
- ii) Sign up to the Grant Funding in respect of the application of the “Look and Feel” agreement to “dress” the borough.**
- iii) Sign up to the Olympic Torch relay visiting the borough provided that it was at no cost to the Borough.**

83.b NORMAN PARK: MULTI SPORTS HUB

Members considered a report detailing proposals for the development of a multisport hub site at Norman Park.

The report outlined proposals to seek a suitable and appropriately qualified leisure investment and management company to design, construct, manage, fund and operate a new multi sport hub site at Norman Park, which would incorporate the current athletics track and playing pitches within the park.

Officers outlined the case for seeking future investment in Norman Park, setting this against the future financial pressures facing the authority in terms of maintaining the track to a suitable standard and meeting the grant to the track management company.

Members asked if any development would include housing and were assured that this would not be the case. The development was aimed at maintaining

all existing users such as Blackheath Harriers. Members noted that all ward councillors had been fully consulted on the proposals as set out in the report.

RESOLVED THAT

- i) **The report is noted.**
- ii) **That the Portfolio Holder recommends to the Executive to agree for officers to continue to develop proposals for a multi hub site at Norman Park in line with the project timetable detailed within the report, and that officers bring a further report back to the Recreation and Renewal Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee and the Portfolio Holder, the Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee and Portfolio Holder, and the executive, updating, Members on the outcome of the tender process, and the details of the proposals received.**

84 MEMBERSHIP OF THE LOCAL JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TUTORS IN ADULT EDUCATION, 2011-12

As nominations had not been received this item was deferred to the October meeting.

84.a APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND PARTNERSHIP BODIES - TOWN CENTRE STEERING GROUPS

Members considered a reference from the General Purposes and Licensing Committee made at their meeting on 24th May 2011; concerns were raised at that meeting regarding the changes to the former Town centre working Groups which meant that no formal appointments were needed for Beckenham and Bromley.

The Committee considered the report and supported the view that consideration was needed for the arrangements for co-ordination and consultation in Beckenham and Bromley town centres and that Councillors should be appointed to these Steering Groups.

RESOLVED that the views expressed above be reported back to the General Purposes and Licensing Committee.

85 MEMBERSHIP OF THE ART CONSULTATIVE PANEL 2011-12

Members were reminded that there were three Consultative Panels, one of which was within the remit of the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio namely the Arts Consultative Panel.

It was necessary to confirm the appointment of Members to this Panel for 2011/12. The nominations were for Councillors Ruth Bennett, Alexa Michael, Peter Fortune, Nicholas Milner and John Getgood.

RESOLVED that Councillors Ruth Bennett, Alexa Michael, Peter Fortune, Nicholas Milner and John Getgood be appointed to serve on the Arts Consultative Panel for 2011/12.

86 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2010/11

The 2010/11 provisional outturn for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio was an overspend of £2,471k. This included variations for capital charges and inter-committee recharges of £2,607k, leaving a variance of Cr £136k against the controllable budget of £11,006k representing a 1.24% variation. This compared with a projected Cr £172k variation previously reported to the April meeting of the PDS committee.

RESOLVED THAT the Portfolio Holder is recommended to endorse the Provisional outcome.

87 TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Members were updated on the delivery of the Town Centres Development Programme. They also noted the funding timetable for the Outer London Fund and the “Invest Bromley”.

The Mayor of London was keen that the Outer London Funding round one projects delivered tangible results by March 2012. The guidance was that the funding projects should give support local retailers in the 2011 Christmas trading period. Round one projects had to be submitted by 18th July 2011.

The “Invest Bromley” was a one day conference about development, investment and economic renewal in Bromley. It was organised by the 3F-oxinternational group and was financed by a mix of sponsorship and delegates fees. The council supported the event and made contributions in kind such as providing the venue and programme development.

Members considered the sort of projects that could be funded such as the ice rink. However they were keen that any project that would be useful beyond the Christmas period. They also wanted to ensure that they were “cost neutral” to the council.

It was agreed that members should make any suggestions to himself or Kevin Munnely and email these through by 8th July. It was suggested that the Chairman of the Recreation and Renewal Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Leader, have delegated authority to agree the content of the round one funding bid.

RESOLVED that:

1. the comments outlined above are reported to the Member Town Centre Working group at its meeting on 6th July.
2. the Chairman of the Recreation and Renewal Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee , in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Leader, have delegated authority to agree the content of the round one funding bid.

88 SCRUTINY OF THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING OF BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP ON 12TH JULY 2011

Members noted the agenda for the forthcoming Partnership meeting on 12th July.

89 DEVELOPMENT OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2011-12

The Committee considered its Work Programme for the forthcoming year, including reference to Working Groups commissioned by the Committee.

It was agreed that two additional items would be added to the work programme:

- Bromley Charter Markets – Officers reported that there was a review of all the boroughs markets but that the feedback may not be available for the October meeting.
- Feedback from the Royal visit would be given at the meeting in October.

RESOLVED that the Committee's Work Programme be agreed subject to the inclusion of the issues outlined above.

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

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

91.a BROMLEY MYTIME - CONTRACT OPTIONS

Members were advised that a report had been taken to the Executive on the 6th April 2011 in which a strategy had been set out to remove the management fee paid to Bromley Mytime.

The Director advised the Committee that it was considered that these issues would be resolved in time to report to the Executive meeting on the 20th July 2011.

RESOLVED that the Performance, Development and Scrutiny Committee notes and endorses the progress being made with respect to renegotiating the Council's financial contribution to Bromley Mytime.

The Meeting ended at 9.30 pm

Chairman