

Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee Annual Report 2011/12

Chairman: Cllr. Sarah Phillips
Vice-Chairman: Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe

Introduction

The Committee will have met 5 times this municipal year. Each meeting has scrutinised the reports for decision by the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Holder and considered policy development of key areas of the Portfolio, with the exception of the January 2011 meeting which considered the draft Council budget for 2012/13. Monitoring performance against the Renewal and Recreation Department's Building a Better Bromley priorities has been central to the committee's work. One working group was re-convened during the year, namely the Beckenham and West Wickham Working Group.

Employment and Skills

In October the Committee considered an interim report on a review of the Bromley Adult Education College, and considered various options for the future including possible merger with the Bromley College of Further and Higher Education. The report set out the role and membership of the review board. A further report on the review came before the Committee in December. Of six options considered, two were escalated for further detailed analysis: a) remaining as a core, scaled down directly provided adult education service and b) merging with Bromley College of Further and Higher Education. Following discussion of the merits of the options, Members recommended that the Director of Renewal and Recreation commences consultation with staff at Bromley Adult Education College and their representatives on the review, both in the short and medium term and its potential implications for staff and to continue with detailed discussions with the Bromley College of Further and Higher Education on the potential opportunities for adult learning in the longer term. Results of this more detailed work on the merger option were reported to the March PDS meeting alongside a report on fees and charges at the College during 2012/13 financial year.

Town Centres

Reports providing updates to members on developments in the Town Centres were considered at the Committee's October and December meetings. In October the report outlined the detail and funding timetable for the Outer London Fund Round 2 and the feedback on the 'Invest Bromley' conference (which took place in September). Members agreed the content of the Round 2 funding bid to the Outer London Fund, noting that it was anticipated that Round 2 would be over subscribed and very competitive with only the most robust and high quality bids likely to be supported. The bid was finalised in consultation with the Chairman of the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee and the Leader of the Council, to meet the extended submission deadline of mid November. Members agreed that Executive approval be sought for agreement for any necessary matched funding that may be required, prior to submitting a bid to TfL for Area Based funding towards the Beckenham Public Realm project. Members also agreed that further consideration be given to the creation of amenity and parking space at the Stables Town Green at rear of 86-132 High Street Beckenham. Other Town Centre issues under discussion in October were a report updating Members on progress in developing the Bromley North Village Public Realm Improvement Project - seeking authority to undertake public consultation on the draft plans prior to submission to the Transport for London (TfL) approval process – and a report seeking to inform the Committee of the scope of the

proposed Penge Town Centre Renewal Strategy and the proposed timetable for production of the strategy document.

Also considered in October was a report seeking Council support in principal for the establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Orpington town centre, along with authorisation for officers to work alongside the Orpington Business Forum (OBF) on the BID project, and for the release of £44,310 from Section 106 funds to support this process, which would be matched to £10,000 allocated from the Outer London Fund round 1. Members supported in principal the formation of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Orpington Town Centre and approved the use of officer time to work towards the establishment of the BID. They also agreed the draw down of £44,310 from the Section 106 funding from the Nugent development, which added to the Outer London Fund money would be available to cover the costs of the BID project. It is expected that as a result of this work a draft BID Proposal will be provided to Members for their consideration at the first Committee meeting of the new municipal year.

At the December meeting Members considered a report which outlined progress in delivering the Town Centres Development Programme and provided an update on the detail of the Outer London Fund (OLF) Round 2 bid submissions. An update was also provided on the six week period of public consultation on the outline designs for improvements to the public realm in Bromley North Village. As a result of discussions around this report Members agreed that the Beckenham and West Wickham Town Centres Working Party be reconvened to review the OLF Round 2 proposals for Beckenham Town Centre and to recommend new proposals for the Town Centre to form the basis of an area based bid to TfL in 2012. The membership of the Working Party comprises Councillors Sarah Phillips and Michael Tickner, Nicholas Bennett, Stephen Wells and Peter Fookes, along with invited representatives of residents and business groups. The outcome of the Working Party's considerations will be reported back to the Committee in summer 2012, with an interim report considered at the March meeting.

Also at the December meeting Members considered a report referred from the Environmental Portfolio Holder regarding the release of funds for the installation of a Variable Messaging System for Bromley town centre – as a way of providing the information drivers needed (in real time) and help efficiently redistribute parking demand to car parks with spare capacity. Members were advised that the VMS system was considered an essential requirement to support the successful implementation of Phase 1 of the Bromley Area Action Plan. Members resolved that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree implementation of the VMS given that the proposed scheme provides value for money and will contribute positively to Bromley Town Centre's economy.

In March Members considered the planned expenditure on the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund – including consideration of the town centre events programme and the expected expenditure on Christmas lights for 2012/13 financial year; A report providing an update on the Bromley North Village Public Realm Improvement Scheme, including an assessment of the situation with regards to Area Action Plan Site A and a report on the plans for the Queens Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

Leisure and Culture

At the July meeting of the Committee, Members considered a number of reports dealing with Leisure and Culture, including Bromley MyTime Contract Options (which

was a Part 2 report), Library Shared Services, the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics and the proposed Norman Park Multi Hub Site, and also considered membership of the Arts and Sports Consultative Panel – to which Councillors Ruth Bennett, Alexa Michael, Peter Fortune, Nicholas Milner and John Getgood were appointed.

Following a discussion of the Library Shared Service report, updating Members on the options to be considered for the future management of the Library Service including a “shared services” arrangement with the London Borough of Bexley. Members concluded that there should be no reduction in operating hours of the service without further consultation with staff representatives, ward Councillors and library users, but agreed that opportunities to generate income should be investigated and a further report be submitted to Members on the outcome. Members did not support the option to implement charges for the People’s Network. Members further asked that the option of transferring a shared service into a trust be investigated further urgently in order to achieve possible savings on business rates.

The Committee considered a report providing 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 dealt with the proposed Host Borough Co-operation and Licence Agreement; City Look and Feel grant funding and the Olympic Torch Relay.

At the July meeting Members also considered a report detailing proposals for the development of a multisport hub site at Norman Park. This outlined proposals to seek a 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. Following discussion of the report Members recommended that officers be asked to continue to develop proposals for a multi hub site at Norman Park and bring a further report back to the Committee on the outcome of the tender process and the details of the proposals received.

At the October meeting of the Committee considered a report examining different options for the future governance of Crystal Palace Park and recommending that management of the park in the form of a ‘not-for-profit’ organisation be further investigated. The report also suggested pursuing discussions with established and experienced organisations such as the National Trust, English Heritage and other industry sectors with a history and reputation for managing green spaces. The Committee considered the Community Organisations that would be represented on the Executive Board.

At the December meeting Members considered the Mytime Active draft Service Delivery Plan for 2012/13 and received a presentation from Mr Dennis Barkway and Mr Steve Price of Mytime Active. Following a question and answer session, Members approved the Delivery Plan and the Investment Fund programme of works for 2012/13.

Members were provided with an update on the outcome of the first stage application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for financial support to extend the borough’s museum service into part of the vacated library building at the Priory, Orpington. This highlighted the HLF’s decision not to offer a first round pass and therefore financial support. At a regional level the HLF had indicated that they viewed the application as

a priority and would wish to see it re-submitted with a reduced grant request so enabling a decision to be taken at regional rather than national level. The Committee supported the recommendation to the Executive that re-submission of the first stage application to the Heritage Lottery Fund be approved with a further report provided to a future Executive meeting on the outcome of the application.

At the December meeting Members also received a report providing an update on the 'Trust Option' for Libraries. The report identified that as a consequence of the Government determining the baseline for rateable values earlier than predicted, it would not be possible to establish a joint Libraries Trust with Bromley and Bexley within the necessary timescales.

The March meeting agenda included reports for consideration by Members on the Orpington Leisure Centre Roof (a post-completion report) and on the Biggin Hill Leisure Centre (again a post completion report).

Finance and Performance Monitoring

Throughout the year the Committee has received regular performance monitoring and budget monitoring reports, including quarterly updates on the Capital Programme.

In January 2012 Members considered a draft 2012/13 Budget for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio incorporating cost pressures and initial draft budget saving options as reported to the Executive on 11 January 2011. Expenditure pressures on services within the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio were identified in relation to the Adult Education Centre, income from planning applications and income from building control. Savings options across the Portfolio were also detailed for the consideration of Members. Members' attention was drawn to the summary table in the report which outlined savings options relating to the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio. The Head of Finance reported that the quoted £276k for 2012/13 was in addition to savings already achieved of just over £1m making an overall saving of £1.3m for 2012/13 followed by an additional £943k in 2013/14.

Conclusion

In conclusion it has been a very busy and exciting year for the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee and I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their input and support. I would also like to thank all Officers in the Renewal and Recreation Department with whom I have enjoyed working.

Cllr. Sarah Phillips
Chairman, Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee