

RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 13 November 2012

Present

Councillor Sarah Phillips (Chairman)
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Kathy Bance, Julian Benington, Nicky Dykes,
John Ince, David McBride, Michael Tickner and
Pauline Tunnicliffe

Also Present

Councillor Peter Morgan

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillors Paul Lynch and Ian Payne. Apologies were also received from Mr Ross Stanford, Bromley Youth Council Co-opted (Non-Voting) Representative.

34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Peter Morgan declared a personal interest as his daughter was a Director of Kier Property. Councillor Julian Benington also declared a personal interest as his daughter was employed by Affinity Sutton and he knew the Director of The Land Group who were involved with the development of Site C (Item 7g - Town Centres Development Programme Update). Councillor Michael Tickner declared a personal interest at item 7f as he was a member of the Federation of Small Businesses.

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

35.A QUESTIONS FOR THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

A question from Mr Mike Fox, Producer, Theatre Music Comedy had been received for oral reply by the Portfolio Holder. Details of the question, supplementary question and replies are at **Appendix A**.

35.B QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE

No questions were received for the Chairman's reply.

**36 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 OCTOBER 2012**

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

The Director also provided an update on certain matters referred to in the minutes.

Minute 27c

- Concerning Capital Shopping Centres' (CSC) desire to purchase land at Queens Gardens for leisure facilities, there was no contract between the Council and CSC and thus no binding agreement; if CSC were successful in obtaining planning permission, the Council would be free to consider its position up to the point of signing contracts.
- A report on a new library service and merger of Penge and Anerley Libraries was not submitted to Executive in October; instead it was hoped that a proposal would be presented to Executive by January 2013 at the latest.

Minute 28

- Issues related to Car Park signage would be picked up in full through variable messaging – for Bromley North Station Car Park, Officers continued to discuss with South Eastern an opening of the car park to all motorists, not solely rail commuters.
- By Christmas, contractors would agree a solution for repairs in Orpington High Street with remedial works being implemented in the New Year.

Concerning Minute 24, Councillor John Ince asked when an updating report on proposals for Cray Valley Gymnastics Centre might be provided noting that the Committee would not meet again in 2012. The Director advised that Ward Members would be briefed on any developments.

Councillor Michael Tickner asked if there was certainty on when Westmoreland Car Park would be closing. The Director indicated that a date would be advised as soon as the developer provided a definite start date. The Chairman asked for Members to be kept informed of progress. Councillor Nicky Dykes asked whether Members could see information material prior to publication. She also enquired whether the Hill Car Park improvement works were on track for completion by December - the Director offered to arrange for her to be provided with a briefing note.

37 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND UPDATES

Report RES12165

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

38 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO - PREVIOUS DECISIONS

In noting the schedule of Portfolio Holder Decisions since the Committee's previous meeting, Councillor Tickner felt that the schedule should also indicate the decision made. This was agreed. As the Decisions made would invariably reflect the report recommendation(s) it was suggested that a further column indicate: *"The following Decisions were agreed as recommended"*.

RESOLVED that future schedules of Decisions indicate Decisions which were agreed as recommended.

39 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO REPORTS

39.A R & R BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2012/13

Report DRR12/124

Members considered the latest budget monitoring position for 2012/13 based on expenditure and activity levels to 30 September 2012. The controllable budget for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio was projected to balance at year end.

Consideration was also given to the progress of three Member Priority Initiatives.

In discussion Councillor Julian Benington highlighted a reported early warning of the possibility that fibre-optic cabling might be required as part of hardware maintenance arrangements associated with Libraries. This could result in one-off expenditure of approximately £160k for which no current budget was provided. The Library Operations and Commissioning Manager was hopeful that it would not be necessary to have fibre-optic arrangements but until testing had taken place it would not be known whether the existing copper cabling could be used. Councillor Benington also highlighted commentary indicating that reducing libraries acquisition expenditure and having fewer items for loan was likely to further impact income hire and fines income; Councillor Benington was concerned that this action would make Libraries less attractive.

Councillor Michael Tickner asked for the current position on reducing library opening hours rather than closing libraries. Members were advised that a range of options continued to be looked at. Councillor Tickner suggested that

residents would prefer a reduction of opening hours. The Director indicated that every opportunity was being explored to meet budget requirements by being creative and doing all possible to maintain front line services.

Councillor David McBride felt that that there was a lot of offsetting with vacant posts. He asked whether all the vacancies had occurred this financial year or whether they were being continuously held open. He asked when vacant posts would be permanently deleted. It was indicated that not so many staff were necessary due to the recession but if activity was to increase the vacant posts would be needed. Referring to posts held vacant in Planning, Councillor McBride suggested that at some point the base budget would have to be reduced and he was concerned that the true savings picture was not coming across. The Director advised that there was a real saving. When a vacancy arose the post was not being filled and a saving was therefore being generated; but increasingly it would be necessary to delete those posts. It was thought that the recession would not last so long. Councillor McBride asked that details be circulated on how long posts had been kept open for.

In response to a question from Councillor Kathy Bance Members were advised that volunteers for the Library service were not replacing paid posts and Libraries were not therefore reliant upon the services of volunteers to remain open. The Portfolio Holder indicated that advertising was underway for Community Groups to run libraries.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Neil Reddin it was also indicated that the level of planning charges was a matter for Government to decide and local authorities were limited to charging fees prescribed by Government; proposals indicated that new charges would be lower than officers preferred.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- (1) endorse the latest 2012/13 budget projection for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio; and**
- (2) note the progress of implementing the Renewal and Recreation projects within the Member Priority Initiatives.**

39.B CAPITAL PROGRAMME-2ND QUARTER MONITORING 2012/13

Report RES12177

On 24 October 2012, the Executive received the 2nd quarterly capital monitoring report for 2012/13 and agreed a revised Capital Programme for the period 2012/13 to 2015/16. Report RES12177 outlined agreed changes in respect of the Capital Programme for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio and highlighted progress to date on schemes in the 2012/13 programme.

The Chairman highlighted the Bromley MyTime Investment Fund and enquired whether there could be more input to Bromley MyTime on the

provision of sports facilities and whether the funding could be directed to Member priorities.

Members were reminded that a report from Bromley MyTime was presented each year referring to the Investment Fund and proposed schemes, generally capital schemes. It was then a Portfolio Holder decision (with pre-scrutiny by the Committee) on what was spent against the Fund. Councillor Reddin enquired whether Members could first see a draft of what was being proposed and the Director indicated that officers could seek to arrange this. A process was followed with MyTime whereby an adjudication process could be brought into play if no agreement could be reached. Nevertheless, the Director indicated that a conversation could be held with MyTime at an early stage to indicate those schemes considered legitimate to put forward.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to confirm the changes agreed by the Executive in October 2012.

39.C RENEWAL & RECREATION BUSINESS PLAN 2012/13 - MONITORING REPORT FOR QUARTER 2

Report DRR12/117

Members considered the Quarter 2 Monitoring Report for the Renewal and Recreation Business Plan 2012/13. This included new actions with milestones and targets related to improving external and internal communications on the Department's work.

In discussion a numbers of comments were made.

Referring to performance on the determination of Planning Applications, Councillor John Ince understood that a couple of applications had been delayed whilst information was awaited from other parts of the Council. The Director indicated that difficulties were sometimes encountered with external bodies providing information. Referring to major planning applications, it was indicated that processing eight major applications was a large workload, often involving other Departments. Councillor Tickner indicated a concern for enforcement and a concern that minor and other applications were not being processed within national targets. He suggested that the Chief Planner be invited to the Committee's next meeting to outline reasons for the performance in these areas.

The Chairman referred to the continuing presence of poorly maintained hoarding at former double glazing premises at Beckenham and she asked when it was likely to be removed. The Director advised that there had been problems reaching agreement and he offered to arrange for an update to be provided on the latest position.

On developing a Business Improvement District (BID) to successful ballot at Orpington and pre-ballot campaign, the Chairman noted that businesses would be offered a 1:1 interview with a Member of the BID Working Group or

Project Team and she asked how many interviews had taken place. Members were advised that the meetings had gone well and further detail could be provided. Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe asked that Ward Members be copied into any update.

Councillor Benington asked when work might start to extend and improve Bromley Museum. Members were advised that the project was currently being worked on and Portfolio Holder authorisation was expected during week beginning 12th November 2012.

Reference was made to GLA's London Office Policy Review 2012 which had recommended that Bromley be downgraded as an office location. A mixed offer was needed and GLA's assessment was counter to Member aspirations. Local agents, Michael Rogers, had been appointed to advise on the office market. It was necessary to be proactive in conveying that Bromley's offer for offices was a key policy aspiration particularly around Bromley South. Councillor Tickner felt it particularly important for Bromley to have offices and he considered Bromley to be a good centre for offices. He sought to understand why the GLA should downgrade Bromley in this regard.

The Director advised that the London Plan gave prominence to Croydon. Officers worked hard to convey that Bromley must maintain its position as a Metropolitan Centre. Officers were now trying other avenues to emphasise this message. The Portfolio Holder felt that it was not possible to have more offices in Bromley unless rents could be elevated and this was obtained from a raised profile on office locations. If the GLA was allowed to continue its approach he suggested that Bromley's office stock would be at risk and offices could be lost to residential purposes.

Referring to the progress update on allocating housing capital funds, Councillor Kathy Bance enquired of the position related to bids from Registered Providers. It was indicated that Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) had been encouraged to submit schemes requiring Council investment but no Registered Provider had tendered for the £896k Payment in Lieu funding. A negotiated tender process would now take place in Quarter 3 and Members were advised of an intention to use the first tranche of RSL funds for Moat Housing Association to come forward with a bid linked to the Westmoreland development. The Chairman requested a report for the Committee's next meeting on the current position of the Portfolio's role in Housing Strategy and privatisation.

Councillor Benington referred to a scheme enabling the provision of loans to those having difficulty paying their mortgage - the homes would then be classified as social housing. The Director advised that details could be included in briefing. Councillor Tunnicliffe referred to the value of such property being reduced by the scheme and she requested that this be included in a report for scrutiny.

Concerning opportunities to improve and modernise the Library offer and plans for a new library service for the Penge/Anerley area, Members were advised that a majority of people wanted a new library offer in Penge.

RESOLVED that:

(1) Report DRR12/117 be noted; and

(2) the Portfolio Holder be recommended to -

- **note progress towards delivering actions agreed in the Renewal and Recreation Business Plan 2012/13 for Quarter 2; and**
- **approve the inclusion of new actions in relation to the improvement of external and internal communications on the work of the department.**

39.D LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - ADJUSTMENTS REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Report DRR12/123

As part of the transition to a new computer system to further streamline joint operations between Bromley and Bexley Libraries, it was necessary for a major data cleansing operation to be undertaken. In this regard, authorisation was sought for all items which had been damaged, lost, stolen or missing for more than six years to be deleted from the stock database. Authorisation was also sought for the rationalisation of media hire charges.

RESOLVED that:-

The Portfolio Holder be recommended to:-

- 1) note the business requirement to cleanse the library database of items outstanding for more than six years and to rationalise media hire charges; and**
- 2) authorise officers to write off/remove the items of stock that have been missing for over six years from the stock database, with an estimated value of £156,086.04 and to create a new simplified charging structure for media items as set out in the table at Paragraph 3.9 of Report DRR12/123.**

39.E COTMANDENE AND MOTTINGHAM CENTRES

Report DRR12/128

At the Executive's meeting on 1st February 2012, Members agreed to savings of £170k in 2013/14 from the Cotmandene Community Resource Centre and Mottingham Community and Learning Shop.

It was proposed to undertake a tendering exercise to seek suitable and appropriately qualified organisations to manage and operate both Centres at no cost to the Council. The proposals would therefore generate savings of £142k to £169k, depending on which option was taken forward.

If no suitable tender returns were received the Portfolio Holder was asked to agree to the two Centres closing from 1st April 2013.

Councillor Ince commended the work of the Cotmandene Centre. He suggested that some outreach centres such as Cotmandene and Mottingham were well placed to support and advise people looking to claim the new Universal Credit (when introduced). It was the services he would like kept. Councillor Ince suggested incorporating them with the proposed new Gymnastics Centre in the Cotmandene area. Closing the Cotmandene Centre would also mean losing another unit in the shopping parade. The Chairman suggested providing the services at a nearby location. Using the nearby Children's Centre was also suggested. Members were advised of an intention to relocate as many services as possible around the two shops in the event of closure. If there were no suitable tender returns Councillor Reddin suggested the matter be referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

Councillor Benington supported comments from Councillors Ince and Reddin. Referring to the procurement timetable (paragraph 3.14 of Report DRR12/128) and noting that an advertisement was to appear in the press week commencing 19th November 2012, he suggested using the Community Links publication. The Head of Cultural Business Development indicated there would be online advertisements. Existing organisations would also be approached and adverts would be publicised in the usual forms.

Councillor David McBride felt it essential the Cotmandene services continue to be used if tendering was unsuccessful. He suggested the services be provided from the Duke Youth Centre building in the day; by that means the services could be kept local to the area. The Portfolio Holder indicated that the services could be provided elsewhere provided volunteers could be found to run the services.

Referring to current attendances at the two Centres (paragraph 3.9 of report DRR12/128), Councillor Tunnicliffe asked for the number of people represented by the attendances. In response it was thought that this was not currently measured but the shops could be approached to monitor this.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree that:

1) Officers undertake a tendering exercise for both Cotmandene and Mottingham Centres for a period of five years, noting that a break clause would need to be included in the Mottingham Centre as the current lease expires on 5th November 2014;

2) subject to the Council receiving suitable returns, Members would either (a) agree to convene a special PDS meeting in March 2013 to consider recommending an award to the Portfolio Holder, or (b) recommend delegation of the award to the Director of Renewal and Recreation in consultation with the Director of Resources and Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation; and

3) if the Council failed to receive any suitable tender returns, Members would review the proposed closure of the Centres from 1st April 2013.

39.F PROVISIONS TO ENCOURAGE USE OF LOCAL/SME SERVICE PROVIDERS IN BROMLEY

Report RES12176

The Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy provided for the adoption of arrangements aimed at promoting and stimulating the local economy, based on a principle of realising economic, social and environmental benefits for the community through its contracting activity.

In line with the Strategy, Members considered a proposed protocol for including local small and medium sized enterprises (SME's) when sourcing and selecting organisations to provide quotations to the Council for works, services and supplies where the estimated value was less than £50k.

The Head of Corporate Procurement indicated there would be reference to the Protocol on the Council website and a Press Release about the Protocol.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree that the Council adopts use of the protocol for the inclusion of local small and medium sized enterprise (SME) contractors when sourcing and selecting organisations to provide quotations to the Council for works, services and supplies where the estimated value is less than £50k.

39.G TOWN CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report DRR12/129

Members considered progress in delivering the Town Centres Development Programme.

Councillor Nicky Dykes enquired of the position on extending DLR into Bromley. Members were advised that the TfL Business Plan was due to be ratified in January 2013. Although a pre-feasibility report on a DLR extension had been received, there had been no economic appraisal from TfL. TfL had highlighted three options in their pre-feasibility report subject to economic appraisal.

Councillor McBride suspected a worrying trend and was concerned that Bromley was being downgraded in the eyes of the Mayor and GLA in favour of Croydon. Members were advised that there were indications the GLA would invest in developing hubs/nodes which could be expected to be a focus for public transport. Other metropolitan centres were in a similar position to L B Bromley. Councillor McBride was concerned that there would be an effect if there was no DLR extension or a negative impact for office development (see Minute 39c)

If a DLR extension was being considered as a commuter route, Councillor Benington suggested there were a number of routes into London. If the preference was for people to come to Bromley he felt that Option 1 (Bromley North via Catford and Downham) in the pre-feasibility report was needed – there were heavily populated areas along this route. Councillor Reddin suggested that MPs are lobbied even though a DLR extension was a GLA matter. Councillor Reddin also highlighted Option 1 which appeared to offer less tunnelling - even with viaduct/surface transit to just outside of Bellingham trains could then speed through bored tunnel and cut and covered tunnel to between Burnt Ash and Sundridge Park.

Members were advised that a decision on the Bromley North extension would probably be made in January. A pre-feasibility report was all that officers had. Much thought was also needed on the engineering options. A High Street link to the DLR (bored tunnel) was highlighted with a station possibly under Queens Gardens. Offices were also intended at Bromley South.

The Chairman asked what action could be taken if no economic appraisal was provided by TfL. In response it was proposed that the Leader of the Council write to the most senior GLA politician covering transport investment requesting that L B Bromley be given an opportunity to provide considered comment and that an economic appraisal was needed for this. The Chairman and Councillor Tunnicliffe encouraged the lobbying of MPs to support this request. It was highlighted that Opposition Group Leaders at the Council could also write in support.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the report be noted; and**
- (2) the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note progress achieved to date on the Town Centres Development Programme.**

40 TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT UPDATE NOVEMBER 2012

Report DRR12/125

An update was provided on Town Centre Management activities during the third quarter, 2012/13 with a particular focus on Christmas lights and events in the Borough.

In discussion, the involvement of partnerships was highlighted and such working was encouraged when funds are short. The work of the new Town Centre Manager in her area was also commended.

RESOLVED that the Town Centre Management activities undertaken and planned for the third quarter be noted.

**41 DEVELOPMENT OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS
COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13**

Report RES12166

Based on previous discussion at the meeting it was agreed to include the following in the Committee's Work Programme:

- a report for the Committee's next meeting on the current position of the Portfolio's role in Housing Strategy and privatisation (to also include details of a scheme enabling loans to those with difficulty paying their mortgage and the homes being classified as social housing with a consequent reduction in the property's value);
- a briefing report on performance associated with planning enforcement and minor and other planning applications; and
- an opportunity to consider at an early stage proposed schemes to be funded by the Bromley MyTime Investment Fund.

For the Committee's meeting on 26th February 2013 it was also agreed to have:

- a report of the Beckenham and West Wickham Working Group and
- a report on proposals using resources from the Biggin Hill Heritage Fund.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal year be agreed with the addition of the items highlighted above.

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

The Chairman moved that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it was 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.

**43 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION
PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 OCTOBER 2012**

RESOLVED that the exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2012 be agreed.

**44 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION
PORTFOLIO PART 2 (EXEMPT) REPORTS**

44.A NORMAN PARK MULTI HUB SITE

Report DRR12/127

Members considered the outcome of a tendering process in relation to a new multi sport hub site at Norman Park.

APPENDIX A

QUESTION TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MR MIKE FOX, PRODUCER, THEATRE MUSIC COMEDY FOR ORAL REPLY

I understand that the Royal Bell in Bromley High Street is about to be leased to a chain of Chinese Restaurants. Does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that Bromley Town Centre has greater need for an Arts Centre than another Chinese Restaurant? I have a group of supporters and backers wanting to take this on. What help is he able to give me to bring this about?’

Reply

Thank you for your question regarding the development of the Royal Bell and the possibility of using the premises as an arts centre.

I understand that you met Officers, including the Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture, on the 18th September to discuss your ideas and proposals, on bringing the Royal Bell back into use as an arts-based centre. Although the Council would be supportive of the idea in principle, I believe it was outlined to you that the Council could not support this initiative financially, noting that it was a commercial venture being proposed. Officers subsequently provided advice on external funding to you along with a list of potential funding sources. I understand that you have not yet responded back to Officers, who I am sure would be happy to further discuss your ideas should you wish to do so.

Additionally another group of town centre businesses have taken an interest in the building but more as a community arts based centre run by the community for the community. A meeting with interested parties is due to take place on 21st November to discuss the way forward. I understand that you are not part of this group. The group has been advised that the rental for the property would be £70k p.a. and additionally a significant capital injection would be required to convert and turn the building into an arts venue (the cost of which is currently being determined by a surveyor). The Town Centre Manager is currently working and liaising with the group on these proposals, but to date a business plan has not been developed to demonstrate how the proposals may be viable.

The value of having a community arts centre in the Town Centre is appreciated by the Council, noting that we already have the Churchill Theatre, however there are concerns around the capital and revenue costs required to develop and sustain such a facility in such a large building. Whilst there are already a number of restaurants in the Town Centre, an additional Chinese Restaurant that would be bring in additional footfall and income to the Bromley North Village, is perhaps preferable to having the building lying empty, if this is currently what the market will support.

Supplementary Question

In his Supplementary Question Mr Fox explained that he was suggesting a Community Arts Centre involving community and diverse talent and providing a high quality service for the locality. He was proposing a mixture of public, private and philanthropic enterprise and indicated that the proposal was not too dissimilar to that proposed for a community arts centre run by the community for the community. Referring to the building's reference in the classic "Pride and Prejudice" novel, he felt it a shame that the building was being laid to fallow. Mr Fox referred to the Council having been able to secure Outer London funding. He also indicated that a local MP would support a scheme such as his. Mr. Fox indicated that he could bring 75% of what was needed.

Reply

The Portfolio Holder indicated that there was less likelihood of financial support from the Council than might have been the case 12 months previously. Funding had been allocated and the programme for Bromley North Village did not include proposals for the Bell – further Bromley North Village schemes were using TfL funding.

Mr Fox's proposal interested the Portfolio Holder; however revenue funding was unavailable and a return necessary on any capital sum. The Portfolio Holder suggested that discussions continue and he referred to a possible suggestion of the building's ground floor being operated as a commercial venture with an arts centre above. He further indicated the difficulty of financial support but nevertheless expressed a willingness to continue discussions.

The Meeting ended at 9.15 pm

Chairman