

APPENDIX 1: Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee Annual Report 2012/13

Chairman: Cllr. Sarah Phillips

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA

1. 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. Monitoring performance against the Renewal and Recreation Department's Building a Better Bromley priorities has been central to the committee's work. One Member working group has been operating throughout the year, namely the Beckenham and West Wickham Town Centre Working Party, and in July an additional joint Working Group – focussed on Housing Need – was established with members of the R&R and Care Services PDS Committees. Alongside the elected Members on the PDS Committee we were also pleased to welcome a co-opted member from the Bromley Youth Council, Mr Ross Stanford. We would like to thank Mr Stanford for his contributions to the Committee meetings throughout the year.

2. Employment and Skills

2.2 Following the Executive Committee's decision to allocate £500,000 to support sustainable employment opportunities for young unemployed people living in Bromley, it was proposed to establish a three year project to create jobs for young residents aged 18-24. In July Members were informed of the development of this programme and provided with further details on the scope of the project and how the services would be procured – using a competitive tendering exercise. The award of contract was expected following the January E&R PDS meeting, and Members of the R&R PDS will be updated on the outcome of this procurement process at the final Committee meeting of the municipal year in February.

2.3 At the Executive's meeting in 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. In the event that no suitable tender returns were received the Portfolio Holder was asked to agree to the two Centres closing from 1st April 2013.

However, in January 2013, given recognition of the valuable services provided through the Cotmandene and Mottingham Centres, the Executive considered that further work needed to be done to ensure that similar services might be offered by other providers in the longer term. It was therefore announced that the centres would remain open for at least another year for which funding would continue. Members of the PDS were informed that the tendering process had already commenced, with a total of 21 expressions of interest received from which a shortlist of 8-10 companies would be drawn up. Although the services provided would not replicate those of the Council, a similar range would be offered. The Job Centre Referral Service was externally funded and would, therefore, continue.

3. Town Centre Development and Planning

BROMLEY

3.1 In July it was reported that the Outer London Fund Round 2 bid had been successful resulting in an award of nearly £2m for Bromley Town Centre of which £150k would be set aside for a shop front improvement scheme.

An application for development of Opportunity Site K of the AAP - Westmoreland Road Car Park, had been granted and vacant possession of the site would be taken by the developers in due course. In October, work had commenced to provide the area with additional car parking spaces. A variable messaging system to provide real time information to drivers about car park capacity was to be installed to assist with managing increased load on remaining car parks in the town. Members were informed that all car parks (with the exception of supermarket car parks) would have the variable messaging system installed.

Members requested that sufficient and timely information was provided to them and to the public (for example via the Council website) to help keep residents and businesses informed about changes to parking. The Council's aim was to focus on user groups and to send a plan (including a map), to season ticket holders informing them of the additional car parking spaces some six weeks before the serving of a notice and closure of the car park.

In January it was reported that due to various technical issues the timetable for the implementation of the Variable Messaging Service had not been adhered to and the Chairman highlighted the lack of communication with regard to this. It was agreed that Members concerns be brought to the attention of the Director of Environmental Services.

3.2 Subsequent to the High Court decision to quash the Policy on Opportunity Site A - Bromley North Station, it was intended that a new policy will be taken through the Local Plan and submitted for consideration by Members. However in January, because of the possible DLR extension (see paragraph 3.4) - which could have a fundamental impact on the proposed development - Members were informed that the policy for Site A would not be updated in the immediate future as the extension

3.3 With regard to Opportunity Site G - West of the High Street - the Executive had agreed that a developer partner be sought and subject to market testing, the preferred developer would be confirmed in spring 2013. In October it was reported that the procurement stage to find a developer had been completed and a report was prepared for consideration at a meeting of the Executive in October. Officers subsequently met with three prospective development partners who shared the Council's vision. A development brief had been revised and a series of workshops were arranged during February which prospective partners would attend to meet Portfolio Holders and Members.

3.4 In November Members were advised that a decision on the Bromley North DLR extension would probably be made in early 2013, based on an economic appraisal, although much thought was also needed on the engineering options. If no economic appraisal was provided by TfL Members 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 lobbying of MPs to support this request was also encouraged. In January it was subsequently reported that a meeting had taken place between TfL, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Colin Smith, Bob Neil MP (Bromley and Chislehurst) and the Deputy Mayor for London. It was reported that appraisal work would be undertaken

and all costs would be met by TfL. This would be implemented by June 2013 and depending on the results, a time line would be set to undertake the work.

3.5 In January it was Members were informed that work had progressed on Bromley North Village public realm improvements. A scheme had been drawn up for approval by members at a meeting of the Executive in February 2013. It was reported that Officers met with TfL in January when a final approval for their funding, in principle, had been obtained subject to the result of a bus consultation. Officers were also seeking approval for re-profiling of funding from the GLA. Members were also informed that Conways (the term contractor) would undertake the works and an Implementation Plan would be submitted to a future meeting of the PDS for Member approval. It would take approximately 18 months for a programme to be implemented. The Portfolio Holder was recommended to endorse the detailed design of the Bromley North Village Public Realm Improvements. Alongside the Bromley North Village implementation are other planned public realm improvements funded by the Outer London Fund. In January Members of the PDS approved of the extension of the consultancy commission for the completion of the public realm scheme designs throughout Bromley town centre – to provide a consistency of approach.

ORPINGTON

3.6 With regard to the improvement of the Walnuts Shopping Centre in Orpington, a planning application was submitted for the development of a 7 screen multiplex cinema with ancillary retail facilities and restaurants. The market would be relocated to College Square. Members were advised that Planning permission for the development of the Walnuts was subsequently granted in October.

BECKENHAM

3.7 In March 2012 the Council set aside £250k to support improvements for Beckenham, from the funds allocated for Member initiatives. £50k of this was to support the development of a funding bid to Transport for London's (TfL) Major Schemes initiative and £200k was for shorter term improvements. In July Members considered the progress achieved by Urban Design Consultants, East Architecture and Urban Design, on the concept design for Beckenham Town Centre, which eventually informed the submission to TfL which took place in September 2012. Members also considered a list of short-term improvements which could be carried out.

Councillor Tickner, Chairman of the Beckenham and West Wickham Town Centre Working Party (BWWTCWP), reported that the group met once a month at Beckenham Library and were well attended by local residents and local associations.

In January it was reported that the Area Based Bid to Transport for London had unfortunately not been successful. However, an additional sum of £200k had been allocated in the 2013/14 LIP settlement (from TfL funds) for improvements to the Rectory Road / Southend / Beckenham Road junction. Members were informed that the bid could be submitted to TfL again in the autumn of 2013.

It was suggested that once the BWWTCWP had completed its work a more permanent Town Team could be formed to include many of the current members and to promote and coordinate ongoing improvements to the town centre.

3.8 In January it was reported that TfL had agreed, in principle, to the erection of light columns and other public realm improvements in West Wickham. This project would be discussed in more detail through the agenda of the BWWTCWP.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ISSUES

3.9 In January, following a request by Members of the PDS, a report outlined planning performance on minor applications, other applications and planning enforcement was presented. The report also included information on the amount of income received from planning applications, outlined the objectives and actions needed to improve the planning service and reported on the number of formal enforcement, contravention and breach of condition notices served during 2011/12.

The Deputy Chief Planner outlined the main points of the report and highlighted that changes had been introduced to improve the assessment of first stage applications and validation. Staff are now required to deal with all stages of the validation of applications rather than specific aspects. Problems concerning the invalidity rate were being addressed and the process had been speeded-up by the use of electronic consultation as opposed to paper. Since September 2012, the number of outstanding applications requiring assessment had been significantly reduced from 1,200 to 700. Further improvements would be implemented to ensure the planning service ran more efficiently. Planning enforcement was also part of the improvement plan. Approximately 750-900 enforcement complaints were received each year of which many were resolved quickly. About 20% of complaints required further investigation. Members requested that planning statistics are to be provided on a regular basis to future meetings of the PDS.

4. Town Centre Management and Business Support

4.1 In July Members of the PDS were reminded that the Council had approved the setting aside of £250k for the R&R Portfolio Holder for one-off spending on schemes designed to improve the attractiveness, quality of life and economic viability of small shopping parades. A report was presented which outlined the proposed methodology for implementing the local parades initiative. The report also set out the application process and provided 'ground rules' to be followed upon receipt of applications from local parades wishing to be considered for funding. Members were informed that schemes which did not involve a revenue tail i.e. the provision of hanging baskets or litter bins etc, would be funded by the Council for year 1 with the proviso that local traders would be expected to fund the scheme in the years that followed. Members were invited to submit ideas to improve local trade for which officers would provide a breakdown of costs. Members approved the scheme and agreed that for individual schemes with a maximum estimated cost of up to £25k the decision on spending could be taken by the Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Chairman of the PDS Committee. Any schemes of greater value than this would need to be presented to a future R&R PDS Committee for approval. An update on spending against the budget for this scheme was provided to Members as part of budget monitoring reports at subsequent meetings and a detailed report on the project is expected for the final meeting of the Committee in February.

4.2 Throughout the year Members received update reports on activities undertaken by the Council's Town Centre Management and Business Support Team.

In July Councillor Tickner reported concerns raised about the lack of a Town Centre Manager for Beckenham. Members were informed that two candidates had been identified for the position and had been invited for an interview. It had proven difficult to find successful candidates as the position was only for a fixed term of 9 months. Subsequently, in August, a new TCM to cover Beckenham and Penge town centres was appointed.

4.3 Members considered the Orpington BID proposal in July, which was a Part 2 item due to possible personnel implications. In October Members supported a recommendation to reallocate £7.2k from an earmarked S.106 fund to assist with the

Orpington BID project and were informed on the progress with the BID – including results of business consultations and the development of the draft BID proposal document.

4.4 With regard to the provision of Christmas lights, it was reported that all towns which had received them in previous years would receive them in 2012. In November the update on Town Centre Management activities during the third quarter had a particular focus on Christmas lights and events planned across the borough. The involvement of partnerships was highlighted and such working was encouraged when funds are short. The work of the new Town Centre Manager for Beckenham and Penge was also commended. In January it was noted that the same TCM had addressed the problem of a poorly maintained shop front in Beckenham and had resolved the issue to a very high standard.

4.5 In January Members considered an update on the BID campaign for Orpington which suggested that approximately 79% of those providing a voting intention, indicated an intention to vote 'yes', however there were still a lot of unknowns. Members were informed that BID Ballot papers had been issued on 17 January and that voting would end on 21 February 2013. Members were also provided with feedback on the successful events which had been delivered in a number of town centres over the Christmas season, including a very well patronised Santa Dash event in Bromley, delivered in partnership with MyTime Active. Members were informed that a number of willing sponsors had come forward and the Town Centre Management Team were currently in talks with them to provide a similar but bigger event in 2013.

4.6 In November Members of the PDS were informed that 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. Members recommended that the Portfolio Holder agreed 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.

5. Housing

In June 2012, Members of the Council approved the setting-up of a working group to consider housing needs within the Borough. The group was to comprise Members of both the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee and the Care Services PDS Committee. Members were in favour of the establishment of such a working group. Although responsible for setting its own terms of reference, it was suggested that the group restrict itself to the consideration of housing policies and strategies.

Councillors Ince, Bance and Dykes were nominated to serve as Members of the Working Group. A report on Housing Strategy and Privatisation is expected to be considered the final meeting of the year in February.

6. Leisure and Culture

6.1 In July a report informed Members of the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken across the borough's libraries. Survey questionnaires had been adapted to suit individual libraries with regard to their usage, opening hours and the range of services they provided. The consultation process involved surveys conducted with library visitors, face-to-face exit surveys and telephone surveys. The Assistant Director Renewal and Recreation

reported that as usage of Orpington Library had exceeded expectations, this library together with Central and Biggin Hill Libraries were unlikely to be included in any decision to reduce hours of operation. Survey results showed that people were not too concerned about borrowing CDs and DVDs; they would much prefer to see book stocks replenished. The Portfolio Holder was requested to authorise that work be carried forward to pursue the option of reducing the operating hours of libraries and diminish stocks of CDs and DVDs with the resulting savings being redirected to the book fund in order that more books could be purchased. In November Members were advised that a range of options continued to be looked at regarding reduced opening hours. Members were also 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.

6.2 Concerning plans for the provision of a new library service it was reported that at a meeting of the Executive in October, a decision was taken to proceed with the merge of Penge and Anerley Libraries – and Officers were pushing for the acquisition of a suitable building in Penge.

6.3 Members considered an update on preparations for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Consideration was also given to the finalised arrangements in respect of the anticipated impact that the Games would have on Bromley. The Torch Relay would pass through Bromley, Beckenham and Penge. All three town centres held additional organised music and dance events and were very well attended by members of the public.

6.4 Also in July Members considered lease of the TrEE centre and the acquisition of 46 Green Lane Penge as Part 2 items.

6.5 In July Members were provided with an update on bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the Priory Museum and noted it was the Council's intention to rent out the vacant office space in that building.

6.6 In November Members were informed that 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. The recommendations were supported by the Members of the Committee.

6.7 Members also considered the outcome of a tendering process in relation to a new multi sport hub site at Norman Park (as a Part 2 item).

6.8 In January before continuing with the published items on the agenda, Mr Steve Price, Mytime Chief Executive and Mr Dennis Barkway, Chairman of Mytime Active gave a public presentation on the MyTime Active annual report. Members were provided with a Mytime Active document entitled 'Delivering Social Value' which outlined the history of Mytime Active and highlighted its achievements to date, together with current and future programmes and activities. Statistics for the past year, showed an overall attendance of approximately 3 million people. Mr Price commented that as the Council reduced its funding, Mytime would need to grow and diversify outside of Bromley. Members were in agreement that whilst Mytime was independent, it should work closely in partnership with the Council to ensure the continuation of beneficial social and community activities. More detailed discussion of the MyTime annual report and its financial aspects continued as a Part 2 item.

7. Finance and Performance Monitoring

FINANCE

7.1 In July Members considered the 2011/12 provisional outturn for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio which showed an underspend of £131k and represented a 1.28% variation against the controllable budget of £10.23m. The variation of £131k included £100k of carry forward requests which related to the Local Development Framework and libraries.

At each meeting of the PDS Committee Members also considered the latest budget monitoring position for 2012/13. The controllable budget for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio was projected to be balanced at the year end. In January it was reported that the total Portfolio budget showed a projected underspend of £10k (based on figure to end of November).

7.2 In October and November Members considered and supported the changes agreed by the Executive in respect of the Capital Programme for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Programme for the period 2012/13 to 2015/16.

7.3 In January Members considered a draft 2013/14 Budget for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio incorporating cost pressures and initial draft budget saving options as reported to the Executive on 9 January 2013. PDS Committees had been asked to consider the initial proposals outlined in the report, including the additional savings options and asked for Member comments to be reported to the February meeting of the Executive. Expenditure pressures on services within the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio were identified in relation to the income received from planning applications and building control. Savings options across the Portfolio were also detailed for Member consideration.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

7.4 In July Members considered the Renewal and Recreation Business Plan 2011/12 Monitoring Report for Quarter 4 which included a summary report of the delivery of actions for 2011/12. The report also outlined the draft Renewal and Recreation Business Plan for 2012/13 which reflected departmental changes that had occurred for 2012/13 and accordingly revised the department's priorities for the Council's property assets, incorporating new priorities to include functions around housing and public health. Each subsequent meeting of the PDS reviewed the Business Plan and progress to date on the agreed actions and milestones.

7.5 When considering an update report on the R&R Business Plan in October, Members noted that due to restructuring, the College would, in future, be reporting to the Education and Care Services Portfolio. Further Member comments and questions concerning adult education would be passed onto Education and Care Services under whose remit adult education now rested.

8. 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