

**EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES
POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.10 pm on 5 June 2013

Present:

Councillor Eric Bosshard (Chairman)
Russell Mellor (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Nicholas Bennett J.P., Peter Fookes,
Brian Humphrys, Samaris Huntington-Thresher,
Kate Lymer, Nick Milner, Ellie Harmer, David Hastings,
Tony Owen, Ian F. Payne, Neil Reddin FCCA and
Pauline Tunnicliffe

Also Present:

Councillor Graham Arthur, Councillor Stephen Carr,
Councillor Robert Evans, Councillor Richard Scoates and
Councillor Stephen Wells

**329 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF
SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Douglas Auld and William Huntington-Thresher; Councillors Kate Lymer and Samaris Huntington-Thresher attended as their substitutes.

330 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to minute 338 (London Councils), Councillor Nicholas Bennett and several other Councillors declared that they held Freedom Passes, while Councillor Stephen Carr declared that he was a member of the London Councils Executive.

**331 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE
PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING**

No questions had been received.

**332 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES PDS
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27th MARCH 2013
(EXCLUDING EXEMPT ITEMS)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2013 (excluding exempt information) be confirmed.

333 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
Report RES13094

The Committee received an update on matters arising from previous meetings. At the meeting on 27th March advice had been sought on when Internal Audit reports could be published. A note from the Director of Corporate Services and Head of Internal Audit was tabled, but Members needed time to read it so it was decided that it should be considered at the next meeting. A Member asked for advice on whether the Porcupine Pub in Mottingham could be covered by the Community Right to Bid under the Localism Act 2011.

334 FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Committee received the latest version of the Forward Plan of private and key executive decisions.

335 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received.

336 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS
Report 13096

The Committee considered the following reports on the agenda for the meeting of the Executive on 12th June 2013.

(5) Provisional Final Accounts
Report RES13103

The report set out the provisional outturns for the 2012/13 financial year and the earmarked balances on the General Fund as at 31st March 2013, and considered the potential implications for the Council's financial position in 2013/14. Councillor Tony Owen asked whether there was an improvement in the position regarding assets held for sale, which the Council's external auditors had flagged in 2011/12. Officers undertook to investigate and respond.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

(6) Growth and Delivery Plans for Bromley Town Centre, Biggin Hill and Cray Corridor Employment Growth Areas

The Council was proposing to designate three primary employment growth areas – Bromley Town Centre, Biggin Hill and the Cray Business Corridor, with a Growth and Delivery Plan for each one. The report set out the draft project plan for this work including the resources available

and the partnering arrangements. It was intended to work within existing partnership arrangements wherever possible.

A Member asked whether there was any reassurance that there would continue to be demand for office space; soundings had been taken from local agents who were confident that there was robust demand. Considerations at Biggin Hill would include the transport infrastructure and the balance of airport/non-airport development. A Member asked whether other areas such as Penge and Anerley could become part of this initiative, and it was acknowledged that the employment potential in the Penge area had been recognised in the Local Government Finance report.

The Chairman inquired about the cost of the potential DLR link from Lewisham to Bromley North. This was currently estimated to cost in the region of £800m. It was pointed out that the benefits of such a project would be felt along the whole route, and not just in Bromley town centre. A study was being carried out and a draft report was expected by the end of July, although work would continue for the rest of the year. Another Member commented that this was a very expensive option and using the existing rail network to provide a link to Canary Wharf from Bromley North via Lewisham would be a better solution. It was confirmed that the possibility of a link to the Overground network at New Cross was raised at a recent meeting with Transport for London and that connections to Canary Wharf was the key objective. The Chairman urged that more information be provided for all the options, and that there should not be too much focus on any one option too soon.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

(7) Capital Programme Outturn 2012/13
Report RES13108

The Committee noted the final outturn on capital expenditure and receipts for 2012/13. Capital expenditure in the year was £28.4m, compared to the final approved budget of £34m – this underspend was due to slippage on capital schemes which would be re-phased into 2013/14.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(8) Adoption Grant Drawdown
Report CS13003

In January 2013 the Department for Education announced grant funding for local authorities as part of its strategy for adoption reform and tackling the chronic shortage of adopters. The grant was provided in two parts and the report provided details of the proposals for the funding that was ring-fenced for the recruitment of adopters.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

(9) Change of Management Arrangements for Council Owned LD Homes – Update

Report CS12101

At its meeting on 25th July 2012 the Executive had approved proposals to de-register two registered care homes for adults with learning disabilities, resulting in improved choice and opportunities for their residents and ongoing financial savings. Subsequent surveys had shown that remedial works would cost £120k rather than the £50k originally proposed. These works were necessary to secure the revenue savings, but the increase in costs did not imply that the buildings were not previously below statutory standards.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

(10) Release of Government Funding and Procurement Strategy to Support the Step Up to Social Work Programme

Report RES 13106

The Committee considered a report seeking authority for the release of ring fenced funding for cohorts 2 and 3 of the Step Up to Social Work Programme. The partnership for cohort 3 had expanded to six authorities. A separate report was in preparation about recruitment and retention of social workers.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

(11) Report of the Local Government Finance PDS Working Group

Report RES13092

The Committee noted two minor corrections in the text of the report – in the fourth paragraph in section 2.1 the report should refer to “GDP growth” and in section 6.3 it was understood that there were peak-time rail connections from Orpington to Canary Wharf via Lewisham.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(12) Winter Health Project – Department of Health Funding

Report CS12102

As part of the Department of Health’s Cold Weather Plan, a grant of £75k had been allocated to Bromley to assist with efforts to reduce excess winter deaths and illness in the borough, which were higher than in the rest of London; it was proposed to use the £11k underspend from the project to complete the planned activities by June 2013. The report described the activities undertaken and highlighted the key outcomes achieved by the partners involved.

A Member commented that the report contained outputs but no outcomes from the activities and that there was no baseline to measure against. He considered the project to be a waste of public money and too focussed on telling people what was obvious already rather than on identifying what home improvements were needed.

The project was designed to deliver certain objectives and had to meet strict Department of Health criteria; no funding had been provided to establish a London-wide or Bromley baseline. Outcomes were being independently assessed, but it was too soon to draw final conclusions which needed to be assessed over several years. Across the country many approaches were being taken to combat excess winter deaths. All the projects involved raising public awareness and informing volunteers and professionals of support and services available and how to refer vulnerable people, so that people in need were correctly identified and offered appropriate support packages. In Bromley, 42 volunteer Winter Health Champions had been trained who would provide support to vulnerable people in years to come.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources recognised that there was a different culture and approach between the health service and local government, and both sides would have to adapt their terminology as services were increasingly brought together.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported and an update be requested for a year's time.

337 SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS: UPDATE

The Committee received an update on Section 106 agreements – details of all Section 106 agreements were included in the three appendices, illustrating where money was spent and where there was a risk that it might have to be returned to the developer. It was noted that the Council and the developers were in mediation about the agreement relating to the Blue Circle site – an outcome was expected in the next few weeks. In relation to 86-94 High Street, Beckenham it was confirmed that although the developer could decide to provide more affordable units than the minimum required it was not possible to use this to reduce the other benefits of the agreement.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

338 LONDON COUNCILS Report RES13051

At its meeting on 3rd January 2013 the Committee had requested a report on Bromley's membership of London Councils and in particular the costs of membership. The report summarised the range of services provided by London Councils and Bromley's contribution to its budget, which was £10,348,899 in 2013/14. The Leader pointed out that the costs of London

Councils had been substantially reduced in recent years, and the senior staffing structure had been streamlined with fewer directors.

The Committee noted that most of the cost to the Council was related to concessionary fares; it was not possible to charge for Freedom Passes without a change in primary legislation and the Leader explained that changing the means of re-charging to Councils to a system based on usage had reduced Bromley's contribution substantially. Councillor Nicholas Bennett queried whether Councils were being charged too much as Freedom Pass holders did not always have to use their passes when station gates were open. The Leader undertook to obtain an answer. Councillor Neil Reddin requested that officers find out how the charges for parking appeals were established.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

339 UPDATES FROM PDS CHAIRMEN
Report RES13097

Councillor Nicholas Bennett reported on the joint Care Services/Education PDS meeting on 7th May 2013. Two issues had been identified in particular – the role of doctors in providing timely reports for case conferences and Bromley not being informed quickly about children in care placed in the borough by other authorities.

Councillor Neil Reddin informed the Committee that the Education Budget PDS Sub-Committee had requested a report for this Committee on the project management of building works across the Council.

The Chairman clarified that written updates should be provided by PDS Chairmen for future meetings.

340 WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14
Report 13098

The Committee considered its work programme for 2013/14 and the working groups set up by all the PDS Committees. Councillor Peter Fookes suggested that working groups should be considered for a number of areas such as welfare reform, housing and employment. Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe reported that the Care Services PDS Committee would be receiving an update on Tackling Troubled Families at its next meeting on 18th June. The Chairman invited Members to submit proposals for working groups to him.

Councillor Tony Owen commented that contracts were still being reviewed too late; where this was the case he wanted the officers responsible to have to explain to this Committee.

341 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**

342 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27th MARCH 2013

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2013 were confirmed.

343 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee scrutinised the following reports on the part 2 agenda for the meeting of the Executive on 12th June 2013 concerning (16) The Kingswood Site and Primary Expansion Needs, (17) Procurement Strategy for Support Services in Refuges, (18) Public Health – Administration of Contracts, and (19) Bromley High Street Acquisitions.

The Meeting ended at 9.01 pm

Chairman