



THE LONDON BOROUGH

***RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE***

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

As considered by E&R PDS Committee on 27 March 2014

Submission to Full Council on 14 April 2014

9. Report from Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee

Chairman: Councillor Ian F Payne
Vice-Chairman: Councillor Julian Bennington

- 9.1 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. 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.
- 9.2 The committee have monitored performance against the Renewal and Recreation Department's Building a Better Bromley priorities, namely
- Vibrant, thriving town centres
 - Protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment
 - Enhanced opportunities for leisure, recreation and the arts, and employment and skills
 - Supply good quality affordable housing that best meets local statutory and priority housing needs.

Economic Development

- 9.3 The Government has provided new financial incentives impacting on the way Local Government will be funded in the future. It has introduced reforms to the collection and spending of business rates, with a focus on local retention (30%) to incentivise local authorities to financially bolster their economy and business rates base. In response to this and wider Planning issues, the council commissioned a study by G L Hearn Ltd (GLH) into the potential land use options for stimulating the economy in Bromley. This was aimed both at creating employment and economic growth and with increasing business rates through commercial development.
- 9.4 The main preferred option for the three growth areas suggested and agreed were Bromley Town Centre, Biggin Hill and the Cray Business Corridor.

Town Centre Developing and Planning Site A: Bromley North

- 9.5 The Council has received the judgement with regards the Statutory Challenge to Policy OSA. An Order was issued that quashes Policy OSA in its entirety. It requires the Council to prepare, publish, consult upon and promote a new policy for the OSA site. It is proposed that this be dealt with in the forthcoming Local Plan, as it is at an appropriate stage of development.

Site B: Tweedy Rd

- 9.6 The site is currently being used as a (temporary) compound for storing materials and plant relating to Bromley North Village for a two year period.

Site C: Town Hall

- 9.7 Site allocated for mixed use development comprising Hotel and/or offices. Contracts have now been exchanged with the Cathedral Group based on their proposal to convert the Town Hall to a hotel, conference centre and associated restaurants. Cathedral aim to submit their planning application within 6 months of entering into the conditional contract. They aim to open the hotel and conference centre in the Spring of 2016.

Site F: Civic Centre

- 9.8 Following a review of the options, it has been agreed that in the short term, up to 2015, the Council will concentrate on meeting its accommodation needs through the more efficient use of the campus site, undertaking limited investment in maintenance. A report on options for the short term use of Ann Springman and Joseph Lancaster blocks is being prepared.

Site G: West of High Street

- 9.9 Major site in the AAP, allocated for mixed use development incorporating residential, retail and community and health facilities. AAP Inspector recommended that a Masterplan should be prepared for the site and adopted by the Council as supplementary planning guidance. Officers are continuing to work with Muse Developments on agreeing a viable scheme proposal and partnering arrangements that will deliver the Council's objectives. Muse are amending their original scheme design following the commencement of the Crest Nicolson residential scheme in Ringers Road.

Site J: Bromley South

- 9.10 Network Rail have improved the station, in particular; access, drop off facilities, disabled access, internal layout, repairs and refurbishment of the building. A permanent kiss and drop off point on the Waitrose access road has been completed as part of the Outer London Fund round 2 allocations. The development potential of the station site is being reconsidered as part of the Local Plan review, which will include supporting massing and viability assessments. The results of which will form part of the Local Plan draft policy development.

Site K: Westmoreland Road car park

- 9.11 Mixed use development site comprising cinema, A3/4/5 uses, residential, hotel and re-provision of public car parking. Cathedral Group selected as the Council's development partner in December 2008 after a competitive process. The proposal includes a multi-screen cinema, 200 residential units, 130 bedroom hotel, restaurants and cafes, plus associated parking and public realm enhancements. Work is progressing in accordance with the programme plan and is due for completion by Autumn 2015.

Site L: Former DHSS

- 9.12 Planning Permission for the redevelopment of the site for a mixed use residential and office scheme was, (subject to a Planning Agreement and GLA referral) approved by the Development Control Committee on 6th October 2013. Telereal Trillium, the owners of the Crown Buildings have sold the site to the Education Funding Agency. The EFA are proposing to use the site to house a 3 form entry bi-lingual (French) primary school commencing in September 2014.

Bromley North Village

- 9.13 In support of transformational public realm improvements an Area Based bid to the Transport for London, as part of the Mayor's 'Great Spaces' initiative, has been successful in providing access to £3.3M . £1.5m has been allocated in the Council's Capital Programme 2012/13 in support of this project and a further £800k has allocated from round 2 of the Outer London Fund. Works are underway and on-schedule in East Street and Market Square. However, the issue with the water main in the High Street has caused some programming issues. Thames Water will commence replacing the main from 13th January 2014, which is scheduled to take 3 months. The remaining works are being reprogrammed to 'catch up' and to reduce the impact of road closures.

Orpington Town Centre

- 9.14 The new owner of the Walnuts are seeking to implement a comprehensive improvement programme for the Walnuts Shopping Centre which will see Crown Buildings redeveloped for additional retail floorspace and a cinema. At the ballot of Business Rate payers to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) for Orpington town centre had been successful.

The Priory

- 9.15 The development work undertaken to date, which included a number of surveys and investigations (including a full condition survey) revealed that there were a number of backlog maintenance issues affecting the total project cost of the work. After reporting the increased project costs to the Executive Committee, officers have been asked to review the business case for the project. As a result, project work has been delayed to enable a full range of options for the future of the Priory site to be considered and the business case for each of these to be reviewed so that a fully informed decision may be given full and proper consideration. Officers continue to have regular discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund on the future of the project

Beckenham

- 9.16 It was reported at 18th September 2013 Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee that a revised Beckenham Town Centre Step 1 scheme bid had been submitted to Transport for London's Area Based Programme. The Council received notification on 16 December that the Initial Scheme Design bid had been successful and that TfL had allocated funding to complete the initial scheme design commencing in April 2014.

9.17 Officers have been working on implementation of short term improvements to Beckenham Town Centre following the recommendations agreed by the Beckenham & West Wickham PDS Working Group – including the launch of a new town heritage trail. The Town Centre Manager has also supported the launch of the new Beckenham Town Centre Team which first met and agreed its constitution and terms of reference on 26 September

Business Support Programme

9.18 The Bromley Town Business Growth Club continues to be delivered in partnership with ActionCOACH Business Coaching and is supported by the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund – with a planning workshops and a webinar during the autumn. In addition to the Business Growth Club, officers have also been working closely with other organisations to organise and host joint support events - such as a Start Up Loans evening in November (co-hosted with Prospects Business Services) and a networking event in December (co-hosted with Metrobank and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales (ICAEW)).

9.20 Also in the past year congratulations are due to Alison Stammers, Chairman of the Chislehurst Town Team, who was given the Mary Portas High Street Champion Award for 2013.

Business Improvement District

9.21 A Business Improvement District (BID) is now a tried and tested model to deliver sustainable investment, through a levy of rateable properties based on typically 1-2% of rateable values. There are now over 160 formal BIDs in operation in the UK and Republic of Ireland – Given the successful establishment of Orpington 1st, Members have asked Officers to explore the business case for establishment of BIDs in other town centres.

Penge

9.22 Plans were developed for the provision of a new library service to serve the Penge/Anerley area. Work on the detailed design for the new Library at 46 Green Lane has now been completed. The design of the Library fit out has also been finalised. It is anticipated that the new library will open at the end of May or early June 2014 subject to the contractors programme.

Leisure & Culture

9.23 Support communities, voluntary clubs and individuals in the development and planning of sports and physical activities and initiatives to raise the levels of participation and to contribute to healthy lifestyles. Officers have applied to Pro Active South London for funding a capacity building officer and have been advised they have been successful in achieving £20k. Pro Active Bromley meetings are taking place regularly, facilitated by Council officers.

9.24 Procurement of a management contractor to manage and operate the athletics track at Norman Park has been carried out and the contract was awarded to Norman Park Track Management Limited following the R&R Committee on 18th September.

Crystal Palace Park

- 9.25 Although the application to English Heritage for funds to undertake survey work to identify appropriate remedial work was successful, the appointment of specialists is currently under consideration as the area is now covered by an Exclusivity Agreement with the ZhongRong Group who are developing plans for a Crystal Palace at the park.
- 9.24 The Executive Group of the Management Board met on 20th November and discussions focussed on the ZhongRong Group's proposals for the park. In particular, the design selection process to identify an appropriate design team was discussed, and ARUP, the ZhongRong Group's appointed advisors, set out their planned community engagement activity. The Heritage & Environment Stakeholder Group met on 5th December, the Community Stakeholder Group met on 24th October and 21st November and the Site Management Stakeholder Group met on 9th December. All groups were given an update on the ZhongRong Group's investment proposals.

Housing

- 9.25 Produce and maintain the new London Borough of Bromley Housing Strategy. An initial Member Group meeting was held in July to consider the type and content of the forthcoming Housing Strategy. A draft Housing Strategy formulated by Strategic Housing in consultation with a corporate officer team. A further Member Group meeting was undertaken in October to consider proposed draft Strategy in detail. The final draft Strategy and action plan is currently being reviewed by officers in light of the publication of the Mayor's draft Housing Strategy in December 2013.
- 9.26 A corporate Property Acquisitions Project Group has been established to drive delivery. To date, three suitable properties have been identified and offers have been accepted by vendors. Of the offers accepted, one purchase is expected to complete by late January 2014. The conveyancing progress is progressing for the other two properties with exchange/completion expected estimated for February 2014.
- 9.27 Finally I wish to thank all the members of the Committee for an excellent year, a lot of work has been carried out, including lot of conversation and passion within this area of the Council. Also I would like to thank all the officers in the R&R Department, for not just their tireless work at the committee meetings, but the ongoing day to day work being carried out at a time of great pressure and economic challenge - you are all to be congratulated.

Councillor Ian Payne
Chairman, Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee