

RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 1 April 2014

Present:

Councillor Ian F. Payne (Chairman)
Councillor Julian Benington (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Nicky Dykes, John Ince,
David McBride, Alexa Michael, Sarah Phillips, Michael Tickner
and Michael Turner

Also Present:

Councillor Peter Morgan - Portfolio Holder
Councillor Will Harmer

67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Co-opted member Ross Stanford, Bromley Youth Council.

68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Payne declared a personal interest in item 6f (Town Centre Management Initiative Fund 2014-15) and Item 8 (Town Centres Development Programme Update) as he was:-

- Manager of the Bexleyheath Business Improvement District (BID);
- a member of the British BIDS;
- an Advisory Board Member of the Association of Town and City Managers;
and
- an Executive Member of The Salvation Army Bromley (located within site G of the Area Action Plan).

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

70 QUESTIONS FOR THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

The following oral question was received from Ms Davina Misroch on behalf of the Friends of Community G:-

'What consultation has been done with the local community who live/work in and near Site G following the BTCAAP Inspector's decision in summer 2010 that a separate masterplan be created to guide the future development of this area; and is the CPO of residential properties still being considered?'

The Portfolio Holder responded as follows:-

- Development Site G, inclusive of Ethelbert Close, has been part of the early iterations of the AAP from 2008 onwards.
- The Council took the decision to produce the masterplan in co-operation with a potential development partner. This was explained in a letter to residents dated **16 February 2011**.
- The procurement of a development partner commenced in the summer of 2012. The Council provided an update in a letter dated **10 July 2012**. In the Autumn of 2012 a part 2 report was considered by the Council Executive which highlighted that the initial procurement round 3 bidders had expressed an interest in developing Opportunity Site G.
- In July 2013, the Council Executive resolved to grant Muse Development Ltd preferred developer status and enter into an exclusivity period of 12 months to allow for further negotiations, including the production of a viable masterplan. A letter was sent to all residents and interested parties on **8 July 2013** with an update and invitation to a meeting with Councillors (including Ward Councillors) and Council Officers on the evening of 25 July 2013 at Bromley Town Church. The event on **25 July 2013** was attended by over 100 residents, adjoining occupiers and interested parties. The aim of this meeting was to provide a forum for members of the community to discuss progress and outline next steps.
- A follow up letter was sent to residents on **13 August 2013** clarifying questions raised at the meeting on 25 July 2013. Highlighted in this letter was the fact that the Council would be working with Muse Development to develop plans and make detailed assessments about the viability of any scheme. Work currently continues with Muse on finalising a viable scheme for land north of Ringers Road and south of Churchill Theatre.

- A commitment was made to residents whose properties may be affected to contact the Head of Renewal to discuss their individual circumstances. Approximately **30 residents/owners** from Ethelbert Close and Ringers Road have been in contact directly since August 2013.

NB:

1. Progress and update are reported to every Renewal and Recreation Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee, **17 since February 2011**.
2. The current database of residents currently stands at over 1,200 names and addresses (regularly monitored)
3. A webpage on this scheme exists on the Council's website which includes details of the scheme as well as major Council decisions on the project.
4. Land Charges records clearly indicate the development on land searches.

Ms Misroch had attended the meeting held on 25 July 2013 and along with many attendees had considered the proposals to be a fait accompli. As a supplementary question, she asked why more in-depth consultation with the community as a whole had not been undertaken.

Ms Misroch was informed that the event held on 25 July 2013 was held to highlight the Council's aspirations for the site and as soon as Muse developed a solid scheme worth discussing, then a full public consultation would be carried out.

It was reported that a letter had been received from Liz Keable, Chair of Mottingham Residents' Association who raised concerns in regard to the current proposals set out in Item 6d - Bromley Library Service - Proposal for Reorganisation. A written response would be sent to Ms Keable.

71 QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE

No questions were received.

72 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2014

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2014 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

**73 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND
 UPDATES**

Report CSD14036

Members noted the position with regard to matters arising from previous meetings.

**74 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION
 PORTFOLIO REPORTS**

74A BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14

Report FSD14025

Members considered the latest budget monitoring position for 2013/14 based on expenditure and activity levels up to 31 January 2014. The total portfolio budget showed a projected underspend of £212k.

Consideration was also given to the level of expenditure and progress achieved in regard to the implementation of the Renewal and Recreation projects within the Member Priority Initiatives.

Referring to the provision of £90k set aside to meet the costs of a potential claim against the Council for repairs in respect of an application to fell a protected tree where permission was refused (page 24, paragraph 5.5), Councillor Tickner reported that the tree was being underpinned and it was, therefore, extremely unlikely that a claim would be forthcoming. Members were informed that the sum of £90k was set aside at the request of legal officers.

With regard to Appendix 2, page 30, it was confirmed that only one application for investment in small shopping parades had been declined; the remainder had been approved.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:-

- 1) endorse the latest 2013/14 budget projection for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio; and**
- 2) note the progress of the implementation of the Renewal and Recreation projects within the Member Priority Initiatives.**

**74B CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING Q3 2013/14 & ANNUAL
CAPITAL REVIEW 2014 TO 2018**

Report FSD14030

On 12 February 2014, the Executive received the 3rd quarterly capital monitoring report for 2013/14 and agreed a revised Capital Programme for the five year period 2013/14 to 2017/18.

This report highlighted the changes agreed by the Executive in respect of the Capital Programme for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio.

It was confirmed that issues regarding the ownership/lease of the Newstead Wood Tennis Centre (page 33, paragraph 3.4), had been resolved. Newstead Wood School was now responsible for running and operating the Centre.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to confirm the changes agreed by the Executive on 12 February 2014.

**74C AMENDMENT TO CAPITAL PROGRAMME - CRYSTAL PALACE
PARK**

Report DRR14/044

Members were provided with an update on proposals for improvement projects at Crystal Palace Park and the Portfolio Holder was asked to support the reallocation of £29k from the £50k held in the capital programme for pre-application (feasibility) support for Crystal Palace Park, to fund the feasibility works for the Crystal Palace Park Subway project.

As English Heritage had agreed to provide grant funding of £29k to support the work, this would result in the return of £21k of capital monies from the £50k originally allocated for Crystal Palace Park.

It was confirmed that the Crystal Palace Park Subway project was an entirely separate scheme to that proposed for the development of Crystal Palace Park.

With reference to page 41, paragraph 3.6, Members were informed that the Council would continue to address some interim projects despite the unsuccessful Heritage Lottery Fund bid which was declined due to the proposed plans by the ZhongRong Group to rebuild Crystal Palace Park.

The Greater London Authority's investment of £2m did not include the Crystal Palace Subway project; a separate sum of money had been set aside for this purpose.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:-

- 1) support the reallocation of £29k towards the feasibility works specifically for the Crystal Palace Park Subway project;**
- 2) request that the Executive Committee agree the revised scheme in the capital programme totalling £58k, part funded by a grant of £29k from English Heritage.**

74D BROMLEY LIBRARY SERVICE - PROPOSAL FOR REORGANISATION

Report DRR14/024

The Executive Committee had formally agreed budget reductions identified for 2014/15 which included a proposal to reduce the Library Service budget by £300k.

The report outlined the scope of the proposed changes to the Library Service to achieve the budget saving and sought Members' views on the proposals.

The Chairman invited Staff Side Secretary, Mr Glenn Kelly to address the Committee. Speaking on behalf of staff across the Borough, Mr Kelly reminded Members that two years ago a similar proposed scheme was rejected as being unviable for the community. The current proposed £300k reduction in the Library Service budget was in addition to the £340k already lost through the introduction of shared services in libraries. The loss of 414 working hours per week would have a significant impact on staff and this did not include the closure of Penge/Anerley Library and the opening of a new one.

If the proposals were accepted, this would result in libraries being closed more hours than they were open. The proposed cuts were more severe than those considered by Members two years ago. As the Council was being forced to make so many reductions, Mr Kelly was concerned that the final objective could be for the closure of libraries.

Mr Kelly emphasised the importance of the library service for the residents of the Borough and urged Members to reject the proposals.

The Chairman outlined the recommendations in the report currently before Members and assured Mr Kelly that no libraries would close. He commented on the necessity for the Council to look at how well resources were being used and suggested that the introduction of more community hubs was a possible way forward.

Councillor Bance shared Mr Kelly's concerns and pointed out that since the closure of Anerley Library had been approved, no discussions had taken place with regard to the introduction of a much needed community hub in

Anerley. Councillor Bance was informed that due to the current condition of Anerley Town Hall, it was necessary for a structural survey to be carried out. Discussions concerning a viable offer were currently being held and the project was continuing.

Councillor McBride asked what efforts were being made to attract community use in St Pauls Cray, Mottingham and Southborough libraries. These areas in particular had a high rate of young children and elderly residents. As two of the most socially deprived areas in the Borough, the Council should be looking to extend library services within Mottingham and St Pauls Cray as opposed to reducing them.

The Assistant Director of Leisure and Culture reported that proposals for the future were being consulted upon. Officers were engaging with library visitors and seeking their views and a number of staff comments had been received concerning the day to day use of libraries. The targeted survey had been carried out on different days during different periods of opening hours and on a broad section of users.

Councillor Tickner emphasised the need to look at the broader picture including the current UK economic situation. The Local Authority had to deal with cuts in grants across the board and the library service was not exempt from this. He therefore considered that the proposal to reduce opening hours was preferable to library closures.

Councillor Ince pointed out that St Pauls Cray Library was open at the same time as Cotmandene Resource Centre and commented on the importance of having at least one of these services available to residents on a daily basis.

Councillor Michael commented that unlike many other local authorities, Bromley had not closed a single library and this was something to be proud of. Whilst sharing other Members' concerns with regard to the reduction in opening hours, if the proposals were unfeasible, this would be shown in the result of the consultation. Councillor Michael supported the idea of transforming libraries into community hubs.

It was anticipated that reports relating to the combining of services to create activity hubs would be submitted to Members in the new Municipal Year.

Councillor Phillips commented on the necessity to ensure that neighbouring libraries were not closed at the same time and suggested that adequate provision be made for people with difficulties to be able to travel to their nearest alternative library when their local one was closed.

With regard to the discontinuation of the Mobile Library Service, it was reported that aside from school visits, the service was rarely used. It was necessary to ensure that library facilities remained available to housebound people and nursing home residents. The Assistant Director for Leisure and

Culture suggested that the current Home Library Service could be expanded to cover a wider range of people ie. those with mobility difficulties.

Councillor Bance did not support the discontinuation of the mobile service. She also rejected the suggestion that volunteers be used to cover staff during periods of sickness and annual leave as they were not contracted staff and were therefore not obliged to turn up.

It was reported that although the Council had been in discussion with library staff since early December 2013, it was too early to say what impact the proposals would have on staff and whether redundancy/voluntary redundancy would be an option. A new staffing structure would need to be created to enable the introduction of new working hours. There were currently a number of staff vacancies and the monies set aside for those posts was currently being used to pay extra staff when necessary.

At this point, Councillor McBride proposed a motion that the report and a decision concerning operating hours be deferred until such time as full individual library assessments had been carried out and submitted. There was also not enough information at hand to consider the discontinuation of the Mobile Library Service. Councillor Bance seconded the motion.

Following a vote of 2-5, the motion to defer the report and a decision concerning operating hours fell.

It was reported that no further changes were proposed which would affect back-office services. The merger of back-office services with Bexley Borough Council had been extremely successful and had resulted in libraries remaining open.

The Chairman urged library staff to write to him or their Ward Members with their views on the proposals.

Councillor Morgan confirmed that the Council's Cabinet had agreed that proposals for a community use hub at Anerley would be continued.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:-

- 1) confirm the basis of the proposed changes subject to the outcome of consultation with regard to the following:-**
 - (i) the proposed changes to operating hours;**
 - (ii) the deletion of the mobile library service; and**
 - (iii) the market testing of some functions relating to site management for library buildings.**

- 2) **request that the outcome of staff, library users' and site officers' consultation be reported back to Members at the next Renewal and Recreation PDS meeting on 24 June 2014 for decision by the Portfolio Holder.**

74E BROMLEY BID PROJECT UPDATE

DRR14/029

In January 2014, the Executive agreed to set aside a sum of £110k from the Economic Development and Investment Fund to assist with the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Bromley town centre. The report before Members outlined the means for achieving the introduction of a Bromley BID and sought authorisation from the Portfolio Holder for a grant to be made to a business group, led by Mr Marc Myers and established specifically for the purpose of promoting the proposed BID.

Mr Myers, Centre Manager (Intu) and Member of the British BIDs Board was in attendance. The Chairman thanked Mr Myers for his support and vast knowledge which was of great value to the town centre and to the Council.

Councillor Dykes was pleased to note that the Grant Agreement would set a clause requiring the BID Task Group to maintain a membership which was fully representative of all parts of the town.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:-

- 1) **note the proposed methodology for promoting a Business Improvement District (BID) in Bromley town centre and the establishment of a business-led group (named the Bromley BID Task Group) to lead on the project;**
- 2) **authorise a grant of up to £90k, staged over a period of up to 18 months, to the Bromley BID Task Group to assist with the promotion and establishment of the BID; and**
- 3) **authorise the Director of Environment and Community Services to enter into a grant agreement with the Bromley BID Task Group, which will set out the purposes of the grant and the conditions attached to the grant.**

74F TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE FUND 2014-15

Report DRR14/030

Members considered an update on the activities of the Town Centre Management and Business Support Team, together with proposed Town Centre Management events and activities for the 2014/15 financial year.

Attention was drawn to the outcome of a review of the Council's Christmas lights policy and Member approval was sought to utilise the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund to support Christmas lights funding and town centre events during the coming financial year.

Members were reminded that the Council was not obligated to provide funding for Christmas lights and shop owners should be encouraged to take responsibility for funding their own light schemes. It was confirmed that as from 2014, no funding would be available for small town schemes.

Referring to the Orpington High Street vacancy rate of 13.7% (page 102, paragraph 1.3), Councillor Benington enquired why there were so many empty units in The Walnuts and was informed that this was the result of current market conditions. The Chairman was interested to find out what action was being done to fill vacant units.

When reporting on empty vacancies in future, Councillor Benington requested that a distinction be made between units in The Walnuts and those in Orpington High Street. It was also suggested that statistics for Intu Bromley be included alongside those for Bromley High Street.

Councillor McBride commended the Orpington 1st BID Manager for letting an empty unit to organisers of the Cray Festival; he was pleased that the unit would be put to good entrepreneurial use. The Head of Town Centre Management suggested that Members may like to see historical data of lettings to learn how trends had changed over time and would provide some indication of which units were subject to frequent short-term lets.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:-

- 1) note the range of activities which have taken place during Q4 2013/14;**
- 2) note the outcome of an officer review of Christmas lights policy and agree that up to £25k be set aside from the Town Centre Initiatives Fund 2014/15 for use on town Centre Christmas Lights schemes; and**
- 3) agree the schedule of Town centre management events and activities for 2014/15 which will have a total net cost of £14k funded from the Town Centre Initiative Fund.**

75 RENEWAL AND RECREATION INFORMATION BRIEFING

The Portfolio Holder Information Briefing comprised:-

- Update on the Production of London Borough of Bromley's Housing Strategy

The Portfolio Holder Information Briefing was noted.

76 TOWN CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report DRR14/042

Members considered the progress achieved in delivering the Town Centres Development Programme.

The following updates were given:-

Site A: Bromley North (page 109) - Members were informed that a scheduled officer meeting with TfL had been cancelled and would need to be rearranged. Once the results were to hand, these would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee. The Portfolio Holder clarified that this related to options for the DLR.

Site C: Town Hall (page 110) - With regard to the planning application to develop a hotel and conference centre at the site, the Head of Renewal would request that Cathedral Group provide a revised timetable and an artistic impression of the proposed development which would be submitted to the next R&R PDS meeting.

Site G: West of High Street (page 110) - An alternative scheme design option was being developed and would be submitted to a future meeting for consideration.

Site L: Former DHSS (page 112) - Councillor Michael commented that this location was totally unsuitable as a school site. As this site was included in the Area Action Plan, Councillor Michael wondered if the Council had any recourse by applying for a judicial review. Councillor Benington stated that the school had been approved by the Secretary of State and it was expected to open some time in September 2014. The school would be a privately-run business and whilst Councillor Benington had no problem with the school itself, this was an inappropriate location for it. He agreed with Councillor Michael's suggestion concerning the option for a judicial review and requested that a formal report on taking such steps be provided by the Director of Corporate Services.

Bromley North Village

A traders' meeting had been held on 25 March 2014 where discussion took place on the re-routing of buses and the relocation of bus stops in the Bromley North area. The newly established scheme would be monitored for any adverse impacts on customers or traders.

Orpington Town Centre (page 113) - The Head of Renewal agreed to circulate the pre-application letter to Members for their information. Unfortunately this letter is not a public document at this stage. Further details on the scheme content would therefore be updated to the next meeting of the R&R PDS Committee.

Beckenham

Councillor Tickner commented that at the last Beckenham Town Centre Working Group meeting, there had been nothing to report since the previous meeting held six weeks before. As the Working Group was set up to drive things forward, he required evidence that work had been carried out. The Head of Renewal responded by informing Members that although at times there may be nothing specific to report, work was continually progressing.

Representatives from consultants involved would be attending the next meeting of the Working Group and feedback of this meeting would be reported to Members of the Committee in June 2014.

West Wickham (page 115) - An update on consultations for possible improvements to the town centre would be obtained and circulated to Members.

As the Council did not install heritage lighting in any area of the Borough, Councillor Benington suggested that it could be possible to install the heritage lighting if residents were willing to pay the costs themselves. It was agreed that a report concerning this and setting out costs for replacements be submitted to a future meeting of the Environment PDS.

With regard to the map on page 117, the Head of Renewal confirmed that all works were on target and those taking place in Phase 5c - High Street were expected to be completed by 6 July 2014.

RESOLVED that the progress on the delivery of the town Centres Development Programme be noted.

**77 PLANNING APPEALS MONITORING REPORT
(APRIL 2013 TO MARCH 2014)**

Report DRR14/034

Members considered an update on planning appeals received and decided for the year 2013/2014.

Councillor Michael noted the sharp decrease in the number of appeals submitted between the previous and current year and queried the reason for this. The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure agreed to look into this and revert to Members.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**78 ENFORCEMENT MONITORING REPORT
(JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2013)**

Report DRR14/038

Members considered an update of enforcement activity from January to December 2013.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

79 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

Members considered the Chairman's Annual PDS Committee report for the year 2013/14. This was previously considered by the Executive and Resources PDS Committee on 27 March 2014 and would be submitted to a meeting of the Full Council on 14 April 2014.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**80 DEVELOPMENT OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS
COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (JUNE 2014-MAY 2015)**

Report CSD14037

Members considered the Committee's work programme for the new Municipal Year June 2014-May 2015.

Councillor Bance stated that during the forthcoming Municipal Year, Members should make a commitment to ensure that all World War I Memorials and their surrounding areas be cleaned and tidied. The Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture agreed that assessments for the work would be carried out on

each Memorial and an updating report showing the results of the assessments would be submitted to the next meeting of the PDS Committee.

RESOLVED that the work programme for the new Municipal year June 2014-May 2015, be agreed.

As this was the final meeting of the current Municipal Year, the Chairman thanked all Members and officers for their support and attendance throughout the year.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm

Chairman