

RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 29 January 2015

Present:

Councillor Ian F. Payne (Chairman)
Councillor Peter Dean (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Douglas Auld, Nicky Dykes, Alexa Michael,
Neil Reddin FCCA, Michael Rutherford, Michael Tickner
and Angela Wilkins

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Also Present:

Councillors William Huntington-Thresher and Peter Morgan

57 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Rutherford.

58 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

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

60 QUESTIONS FOR THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Prior to hearing the oral questions, the Portfolio Holder made a statement which he hoped would allay some of the concerns shared by members of the public. He commented that the art collection at the Museum comprised 1,600 paintings, prints and drawings, most of which were not currently displayed. After rationalisation, the remaining pieces would be displayed around the Council, other Council-owned buildings and at Central Library. The important Lubbock collection would be exhibited in Central Library and funds would be provided to change parts of the display bi-annually. Temporary space would also be made available at the Library to accommodate exhibitions for special events such as the Battle of Britain celebration or for school projects.

The Council had an obligation to continue caring for and maintaining the building until it was newly occupied. In this respect the building would be properly guarded, protected and maintained.

The Portfolio Holder responded to 17 oral questions and 14 written questions. These can be viewed at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

In summing up, the Chairman reported that having to find £60m in the next four years was a serious challenge for the Council. However, this matter was not being taken lightly and great importance was placed on liaising with all interested organisations and volunteers. He urged members of the public to write to him with any further questions they may have.

61 QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE

No questions were received.

62 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2014 AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

63 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (MARCH 2015)

Report CSD15/018

Members considered the Committee's work programme for the final meeting of the Municipal Year (March 2015).

RESOLVED that the work programme for the final meeting of the Municipal Year (March 2015) be agreed.

64 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO REPORTS

64a BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15

Report FSD15004

Members considered the latest budget monitoring position for 2014/15 based on expenditure and activity levels up to 30 November 2014. The total portfolio budget showed a projected underspend of £9k.

Members also considered the level of expenditure and progress with the implementation of the selected projects within the Member Priority Initiatives.

Referring to the Summary of Major Variations (para. 5.6, page 27), the Head of Finance agreed to obtain further details and update Members on the subject matter of the public inquiry to which the legal expenses related.

It was reported that the projected surplus for income from major planning applications indicated that the number of planning applications being submitted had increased. Additional staff had been employed to manage the workload.

The underspend on staffing referred to in paragraph 5.3 (page 26) was linked to culture staff and reduced the overall deficit. The savings from the closure of the Bromley Museum would ensure that the budget would be balanced from 2015/16.

RESOVLED that:-

- 1) the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the latest 2014/15 projection for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio; and**
- 2) the progress of the implementation of the Renewal and Recreation projects within the Member Priority Initiatives be noted.**

64b CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 2ND QUARTER 2014/15

Report FSD14085

On 26 November 2014, the Executive received the 2nd quarterly capital monitoring report for 2014/15 and agreed a revised Capital Programme for the four year period 2014/15 to 2017/18. The report highlighted changes agreed by the Executive in respect of the Capital Programme for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio and outlined progress achieved as at the end of the first half of 2014/15.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to confirm the changes agreed by the Executive in November 2014.

64c A NEW APPROACH FOR BROMLEY MUSEUM

Report DRR14/116

As part of the £60 million savings required to be made within the next four years, the Executive Committee at its meeting on 14 January 2015, had identified the museum service as a budget cut for 2015/16. In this respect, R&R PDS Members considered a new approach to providing an improved quality heritage offer for residents, without an ongoing revenue requirement.

One Member commented that the necessity to find savings had led to the unfortunate consideration of this matter. However, accommodating the Museum at Central Library which was situated in a good central location and

provided disabled access, would attract more footfall to Bromley town centre. After rationalisation, it was important to ensure that as many items as possible were accessible to view. One possible solution was to display some artefacts and paintings in houses and buildings open to the public, as well as in schools and other libraries.

The Chairman confirmed that the Lubbock Gallery would display more artefacts from the Lubbock collection than are currently on display in the Avebury Gallery at the Priory.

Members were informed that some of the 20,000 objects and paintings should not have been acquisitioned as they were irrelevant to the local history of the Borough and in this respect, a rationalisation process would be undertaken. Many options existed for exhibiting the artwork; 50 pieces were currently on display in the Princess Royal University Hospital in Farnborough. Artefacts identified for disposal could be offered back to the donor, offered to other museums, given to schools or other not-for-profit community organisations and as a last resort sold. The procedure for rationalisation would be properly carried out following Museum Association guidelines.

Visiting Ward Member Councillor William Huntington-Thresher iterated Members' disappointment that Members were required to consider this matter due to the Council's current financial position. He stated that clear consideration must be given to the future use of the building bearing in mind the Council's policy of creating a vibrant, thriving town centre; in this respect, employment or community use of the building would be beneficial. Planning permission for a change of use would be required.

Councillor Huntington-Thresher suggested that a working group comprising the Council and volunteers from local history organisations be formalised, to liaise on setting up mini displays for the new Museum.

As the Priory car park was the only off-street parking at that end of Orpington High Street, Councillor Huntington-Thresher considered it imperative that the current car park remain available for public use during the evenings to support the restaurant trade.

Members shared the Ward Member's views and concerns. It was agreed that a formal group of volunteers to work with the Council, be established as soon as possible.

A top firm of agents would be instructed to sell the building and it was hoped that it would not remain boarded up for a long period of time.

Members agreed that Central Library was a more suitable location for the Museum and due to a lack of funds, the Priory building deserved more care and maintenance than the Council could provide. Concerns around access to schools and the curation of items would be properly dealt with. The proposals considered by Members were the start of a brand new and exciting chapter for Bromley Museum.

RESOLVED that a working group comprising the Council and volunteers from local history organisations be formalised, to liaise on setting up mini displays for the new Museum.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Portfolio Holder be requested to recommend that the Executive Committee agree to the following approach as set out in the report:-

- (1) The Priory be declared surplus to operational requirements with effect from 1 April 2015 and authority be given to offer the property for sale on the open market.**
- (2) Members to comment on the outcome of the consultation at the Executive meeting to be held on 11 February 2015 and subject to any issues that may arise during consultation, endorse the proposal to close the museum service.**
- (3) The Executive approve the allocation of £395k from capital receipts for the relocation of exhibitions and to add the scheme to the capital programme.**

65 DRAFT 2015/16 BUDGET

Report FSD15005

Members considered a draft 2015/16 Budget for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio incorporating future cost pressures and initial draft budget saving options as reported to the Executive on 14 January 2015.

The Executive requested individual PDS Committees to consider the proposed initial draft budget savings and cost pressures for their Portfolio and requested that Member comments be reported back to the next meeting of the Executive prior to Members making recommendations to Council on 2015/16 Council Tax levels.

During consideration of the variations compared with the 2014/15 budget (page 61), it was confirmed that the inflation figures were based on a 2% increase per annum.

The words 'impact of 2.0% Council Tax Increase' (page 61), pertained to a 2% Council Tax increase per annum.

The New Homes Bonus was created as an Investment Fund to generate income and was treated as a one-off payment as future funding may be dependent on the outcome of the General Election in May 2015. This would be a decision for the Executive or Full Council to take.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the financial forecast for 2016/17 to 2018/19 be noted;**
- (2) the initial draft savings options proposed by the Executive for 2015/16 be noted;**
- (3) the initial draft 2015/16 Budget be considered as a basis for setting the 2015/16 Budget; and**
- (4) Member comments on the initial draft 2015/16 Budget be provided to the February meeting of the Executive.**

66 ARTS IN BROMLEY

Report DRR14/117

Members considered a report which provided an overview of the arts provision within Bromley that was supported by the Council along with other key organisations involved in delivering arts across the Borough.

Whilst it was acknowledged that organisations such as the Beckenham Theatre and Bromley Little Theatre also contributed to the provision of arts, those listed in paragraph 3.3 (page 73) were the key organisations with whom the Council liaised to provide such provision.

One Member praised the Bromley Youth Music Trust as being a very dynamic service and one which was much appreciated. A significant amount of funding had been granted to set up a music centre at Langley Park Boys School and it would be disappointing if services of this kind were terminated due to budget cuts. Members were informed that a fundraising person had been taken on in an attempt to boost the organisation.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

67 THE FUTURE OF ANERLEY TOWN HALL

Report DRR15/002

Members considered a report which outlined the current position at Anerley Town Hall and identified options for its future.

A short video about the activities and events offered at Anerley Town Hall (ATH) was shown to Members.

The Chairman thanked the CPCDT for submitting the video and commented that as a community hub, the high percentage of activities carried out was fantastic.

Ward Member Councillor Wilkins commented that ATH was a beautiful and unique building. She stated that the business aspect at the centre was not currently vibrant with occupancy in late November being recorded at 64%. Two rooms were unrentable due to underpinning issues and there were problems in resolving the subsidence issues. No wi-fi was installed (a must for modern-day business). There had been no rent increase since 2008. If funding could be obtained, there was huge potential to build a bigger and better business centre. With so many young people in the Borough, it made sense for the Council to consider this matter further.

Members were informed that the installation of a new telephone system was now an urgent requirement.

Advertising for the Business Centre was undertaken via an internet advertising agency.

In considering the options put forward, it was noted that if a 40 year lease was granted (Option B), it would be the responsibility of the Trust to market and develop the Centre and would give it time and opportunity to expand and grow.

It was agreed that neither retaining the existing site nor demolishing it were viable options. Whilst it was possible for Option C to be given some serious consideration, Members agreed that Option B was the way forward.

RESOLVED to recommend to Members of the Executive that Option B be adopted.

68 TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT JANUARY 2015

Report DRR15/003

Members considered an update on Town Centre Management and business support activities which had taken place since the previous update in November 2014. The report also summarised priorities for the period up to the end of March 2014.

Referring to the Local Parades Improvement Initiative Fund (page 114), it was agreed that officers would look into a Member request for a Christmas tree to be provided at Heathfield Road, Keston for the duration of the 2015 Christmas period.

In regard to the Bromley Town Centre market, it was reported that both a market research agency and a specialist markets consultancy had been appointed and work was due to begin shortly. Progress would be reported back to Members.

Members were pleased with the completion of the Bromley North Village improvement works. The Bromley Town Ward Member reported an significant

increase of vibrancy and life in the area. An astonishing 20,000 people had attended Christmas events in the Town Centre.

Whilst the good news of a decrease in vacant units in Bromley was noted (page 114), the downward trend for Beckenham and Penge was disappointing as was the figure for Orpington which remained at 15%. It was reported that some charity shops were struggling to pay rent as well as paying staff who were not all volunteer workers.

RESOLVED that the key developments and activities within the Town Centre Management and Business Support Team be noted.

69 TOWN CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report DRR15/005

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

With regard to Site C: Town Hall (page 125), it was reported that Cathedral Group had submitted an application which was currently going through the Council's planning process.

Councillor Dykes thanked officers for discussing the upcoming meeting on the proposals for Site G with herself and Councillor Rutherford. The Chairman requested a pre-meeting with Councillors and officers before the next residents meeting took place.

As Chairman of the Town Centre Member Working Party for Beckenham, Councillor Tickner reported that a lot of progress had been made at meetings in regard to the Beckenham Major Scheme. However, a problem existed with works to realign the traffic at Beckenham Junction due to the reluctance of BT to move cables. It was vital that improvements were made to enable the better flow of traffic for heavy goods vehicles. Consultations with interested parties were due to be held shortly. The Director of Environment and Community Services agreed to look into this matter and report back to Members.

Officers reported that cables were currently being moved and implementation of the programme was imminent.

A report on budget, timetable and consultation would be submitted to the Beckenham Town Centre Member Working Group.

Tenders had been received for the commissioning of a design team to prepare outline designs for the Bromley town centre improvements to the pedestrian High Street (paragraph 3.6, page 125). The selection process would take approximately 12-16 weeks, following which a start date would be finalised.

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

70 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.

71 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2014

RESOLVED that the exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

72 A NEW APPROACH FOR BROMLEY MUSEUM

DRR14/118

In addition to Item 6c - A New Approach for Bromley Museum (page 39), Members were requested to consider the financial implications in regard to the future of the Priory.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

73 THE FUTURE OF ANERLEY TOWN HALL

DRR15/002

In addition to Item 9 (page 77), Members were requested to consider the financial implications in regard to the future of Anerley Town Hall.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chairman