

RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 18 March 2015

Present:

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

Also Present:

Councillor David Cartwright

74 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nicky Dykes and Co-opted Member, Miss Precious Adewunmi.

75 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Payne declared personal interests in Item 7d (Town Centre Management Update Report), Item 8 (Town Centres Development Programme Update) and Item 14 (Site G - Revised Development Options), as he was:-

- an Advisory Board Member of the Association of Town and City Managers; and
- an Executive Member of The Salvation Army.

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

77 QUESTIONS FOR THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Written questions were received from Susan Sulis, Secretary, Community Care Protection Group, relating to the Orpington Priory Museum and Gardens. A copy of the questions together with the Portfolio Holder's responses can be viewed at Appendix 1 to these Minutes.

78 QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE

No questions were received.

79 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2015

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

80 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND UPDATES

There were no matters arising from previous meetings.

81 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (JUNE 2015-MAY 2016)

Report CSD15040

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their commitment throughout the Municipal year.

Members were informed that a number of reports relating to the Library Review would be submitted for consideration during the new cycle of meetings.

It was anticipated that the outcome of the further three month consultation in relation to the Priory Museum would be reported to the June meeting of the R&R PDS Committee before a decision was made by the Executive in July.

To tie-in with the proposals for public realm works in Bromley Town Centre, a Bromley Town Market report would be submitted in September 2015.

RESOLVED that, subject to the addition of the reports set out above, the work programme for the new Municipal Year (June 2015-May 2016) be agreed.

82 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO REPORTS

82a BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15

Report FSD15026

Members considered the latest budget monitoring position for 2014/15 based on expenditure and activity levels up to 31 January 2015. The total portfolio budget showed a projected underspend of £135k.

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

The further savings identified to ensure that the culture budget would be balanced from April 2015 onwards (para. 3.4, page 37), referred to those identified in the proposals for the Priory Museum. However, it may become necessary to find alternative savings should these not be achieved throughout the year.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:-

- 1) endorse the latest 2014/15 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.**

82b CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 3RD QUARTER 2014/15 & ANNUAL CAPITAL REVIEW 2014 TO 2018

Report FSD15018

On 11 February 2015, the Executive considered a report which summarised the current position on capital expenditure and receipts following the 3rd quarter of 2014/15 and presented for approval the new capital schemes supported by Council Directors in the annual capital review process. The Executive agreed a revised Capital Programme for the five year period 2014/15 to 2018/19.

Members of this Committee were requested to consider the revised Capital Programme for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio which included detailed comments on individual schemes and new schemes approved for the R&R Portfolio.

It was reported that although a public networking system had been procured and provided at Anerley Town Hall Library, officers were continuing to pursue the Council's IT service who had yet to connect this to the new library system. The Council would provide the necessary cables for all 8 computers at the library to be connected to Anerley Town Hall's multi-functional printer.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the changes agreed by the Executive in February 2014.

82c LIBRARY SERVICE STRATEGY - UPDATE

Report DRR15/024

Following a meeting of the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee on 18 November 2014, the Portfolio Holder agreed the strategic approach in relation

to proposals for the development of community managed libraries and agreed that market testing of the core library offer be carried out. Officers were also authorised to undertake formal consultation with library users and staff on the agreed proposals.

The current report updated Members on the outcome of the completed formal consultation and provided further recommendations for the implementation of the Library Strategy.

The Chairman emphasised to members of the public that at the present time there was no proposal to close any of the libraries. Legally, the Council was fulfilling its obligation to provide library services. The current proposal related to the development of six community managed libraries and to identifying ways in which the buildings could be saved and the facilities improved.

In response to correspondence received from Bromley Unite, the Chairman read out a statement which can be viewed at Appendix 2 to these Minutes.

The Chairman reported that libraries were community hubs which did more than just lend books and this was something the Council wished to continue by working in partnership with community groups and organisations.

Referring to the vulnerability of the public sector equality duty at Mottingham, St Paul's Cray and Southborough, (para.6.6.2, page 78), one Member asked if these three libraries could be transferred into the core library service if the current proposals were not achieved and volunteers were not forthcoming. The Head of Culture confirmed that the preferred option was for the Council to continue to provide a degree of support whilst allowing access to community management provision. Sufficient time would be spent with groups to develop business plans for the long-term running of the libraries.

Counsel had advised there was no court guidance pertaining to a limit on travelling distance to libraries; this was a matter for the Council to decide.

Members were provided with a copy of an advertisement placed in local newspapers by the London Borough of Bexley seeking to procure community groups and organisations to manage libraries. Bromley Council proposed to do the same. A report on the outcome of this would be submitted for consideration in June (as opposed to July as stated in the report).

Visiting Ward Member for Mottingham, Councillor David Cartwright, thanked officers for providing a comprehensive report and for clarification of certain aspects in which he had concerns. Councillor Cartwright stated that whilst this was not an easy situation, he understood that the Council was in a difficult financial situation. Mottingham Library was a community hub which provided an essential service to residents and schoolchildren benefited immensely from the library's IT services. Community events, activities for the elderly and a plethora of other professionally-run activities regularly took place. There was significant doubt locally that a community managed library would work i.e.

difficulty in finding volunteers and concerns around child protection. Many residents felt they were given no alternative choice. Whilst issues could be overcome, Councillor Cartwright emphasised the need for caution and careful consideration. The lack of professional librarians would be a great loss and in this regard Councillor Cartwright urged the Council to ensure that proper staffing support was made available. He was pleased to note that further local consultation would take place. Councillor Cartwright ended his representations by emphasising that the Council still had a statutory responsibility under the Libraries and Museum Act to provide a robust library service to local communities.

The Chairman responded by saying if the Council did not do something then there would be no library. Community libraries were run by professional bodies of people and were supported by the existing library system.

The number of visitors to libraries had not dropped dramatically. There had been no negative reaction to the reduction in the hours of operation. Biggin Hill, Orpington and Penge libraries had improved in terms of performance.

There was a misconception that the consultation paper had not asked whether members of the public were opposed to the proposals however, the question was clearly included and people did have a choice to register their disapproval.

Councillor Cartwright sought clarification as to whether officers had met their counterparts from the London Borough of Greenwich to discuss Greenwich taking on the running of Mottingham Library given that a significant number of users resided in Greenwich. In response the Assistant Director thought this unlikely as all boroughs were in a position of identifying savings and it was therefore unlikely that another borough would seek to take on additional costs.

It was reported that seeking volunteers and deciding what skills were required would be the responsibility of the management companies. Not all members of staff would be volunteers, some would potentially be paid. The Council would continue to seek creative solutions for running library services including the identification of diverse activities to fit the needs of individual communities.

The procurement process would be taken slowly as the Council could potentially be dealing with non-professional services. The required criteria and the process involved would be shared with Ward Members at the time each individual library was developed.

To date, informal expressions of interest had been received for four out of the six libraries however, until the consultation period had ended, no further comment in this regard could be made. Over 100 people, including two Councillors, had indicated a willingness to volunteer to work at libraries.

In discussing Hayes Library, it was reported that when drawn up, the lease may include the top floor of the building in order to provide an opportunity for

the management company to subsidise the ground floor by renting the space for events and activities.

Referring to paragraph 5.2 (page 77), it was reported that if the community libraries were set up as commissioned community library models, there would be less savings as some libraries were energy inefficient and high maintenance buildings. If the Council were to rebuild, they would be modern, energy efficient and secure. It was necessary to wait until the consultation period had ended to ascertain whether or not the stated £250k savings could be achieved.

The general consensus was that the proposals should go ahead. Members were informed that detailed individual business plans would be made available to Members as they were developed. Councillor Tickner moved that the recommendations in the report be supported.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) the Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree that:-**
 - a) the procurement process for the Community Management of the six community libraries as detailed in Section 3.7.3 of the report be commenced;**
 - b) discussions be undertaken with the London Borough of Bexley to develop a joint procurement strategy for the Library Service; and**
 - c) officers undertake a soft market testing exercise for the library service and undertake further consultation on the results of the soft market testing with library staff, library users and residents and bring a further update report back to the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee.**

82d TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE FUND 2015-16

Report DRR15/025

The report contained an update on the activities of the Town Centre Management and Business Support Team and outlined the proposed Town Centre Management events and activities planned for the 2015/16 financial year. Members' approval was sought for utilisation of the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund to support Christmas lights funding and town centre events during the coming financial year.

A formal grant had been agreed with the Bromley BID Working Group. The Group were required to show that each phase of the development of the BID had been completed satisfactorily. An updating report, including a final Business Plan would be submitted to the PDS meeting in June.

An invitation was extended to Members to attend the Open Day for Businesses which would take place at the Churchill Theatre on 25 March 2015.

Councillor Tickner reported residents' disappointment that surrounding roads in Beckenham had not been closed for the switch on of the Christmas lights in 2014 and that the lantern procession had been rather disorganised. This year's switch on would take place on 5 December and the possibility of road closures would be looked into.

In regard to the Local Parades Improvement Initiative Fund (para. 1.2, page 94), it was reported that Keston residents had hoped for a Christmas Tree in 2014 but were given lights instead. Officers had worked with Keston Village Association in this regard but no suitable location could be found in which to plant a tree. This year however, the Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support confirmed a memorial tree (not a Christmas Tree), would be planted along the verge of Heathfield Road in memory of a local resident.

Officers were congratulated on the success of the Bromley North Village public realm improvements which met the Council's aim of a vibrant and thriving night time economy.

Members' attention was drawn to the development of the Purple Flag project which promoted improvements to safety in the evening economy in partnership with colleagues in Public Protection, licensed premises and other partners.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:-

- 1) note the range of activities which took place during the last quarter of 2014/15;**
- (2) note the amendments to the current Christmas lights policy;**
- (3) agree that up to £27k be set aside from the Town Centre Initiatives Fund 2015/16 for use on Town Centre Christmas Lights schemes as set out in the report; and**
- (4) agree the schedule of Town Centre Management events and activities for 2015/16 with a total net cost of £33k being funded from the Town Centre Initiative Fund.**

83 TOWN CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report DRR15/028

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

Councillor Rutherford reported that the public meeting in relation to Site G held on 26 February 2015 was well attended and information was received positively by those in attendance. People felt like they had been listened to. Representations from the Bromley Civic Society as well as Marc Hume and the Portfolio Holder were given. Smaller group meetings would take place as time progressed and local working parties would be set up alongside officer working parties.

The Chairman referred to the growth work resources for Biggin Hill and Cray Corridor (para. 3.23, page 105) and stated it was good to see that two development planners had been secured to take the project forward.

An updating report would be submitted to this Committee prior to being considered by Members of the Executive.

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

84 PLANNING PERFORMANCE

Report DRR15/027

Members were provided with an update on the progress achieved in planning application processing, planning appeals and other issues previously raised by this Committee. The report focussed mainly on the planning service for telephone customers, planning application performance and planning appeal performance.

It was noted that the determination of minor applications had improved but was still under target by 14%. Fortunately, there was no direct financial impact from this.

Figures quoted in the report were based on performance activity up to the mid-end of February. The 44% of planning appeals allowed, continued steadily throughout the year however, the Chief Planner's aim was to reduce this to at least 34%. He confirmed that Bromley had a higher rate of application refusals due to proposed developments in conservation areas and on Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land.

RESOLVED that the progress achieved in planning application processing and appeal performance be noted.

85 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

Members considered the Chairman's Annual Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee report for the year 2014/15. This was previously provided to the

Executive and Resources PDS Committee on 12 March 2015 and would subsequently be considered at a meeting of Full Council on 20 April 2015.

RESOLVED that the Chairman's Annual Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee report for the year 2014/15 be approved.

86 CRYSTAL PALACE PARK

Report DRR15/020

As a result of the expiry of the Exclusivity Agreement with ZhongRong International Group in relation to the development of a capital scheme on the top site of Crystal Palace Park, Members were asked to consider proposals for setting up a new form of governance and delivery plan for the park, bringing to fruition aspects of the Masterplan, realising capital receipts and creating revenue generating activity to enable a sustainable business model for a new form of governance.

In July 2014, Members agreed to contribute £160k capital receipts towards the Crystal Palace Park Improvement Scheme. Following the completion of feasibility works, Members were updated on which projects would be delivered and it was confirmed that a £1.84m balance of funding from the GLA had been secured.

The Chairman acknowledged the importance of continuing with the Council's commitment to the restoration of Crystal Palace Park.

One Member was disappointed to note that conservation of the dinosaurs would cost £400k whilst works to restore the concert platform were considered to be unviable. Members were informed that in terms of achieving the most from the budget, it had become necessary to reduce the proposed projects from nine to six. It would cost approximately £100m to restore the park completely.

The current lease on the café would be terminated and a lease for the new premises would be tendered on the open market. The new lessee would be responsible for future works to the café.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) the expiry of the Exclusivity Agreement with ZhongRong International Group be noted;**

- 2) the exploration and development of a sustainable business plan for the establishment of an alternative management option for Crystal Palace Park be approved. Progress made on the business planning work should be reported back to Members in the autumn of 2015, with an expected request to Members to proceed with the formation of a Trust or other not-for-profit management option;
- 3) a contribution of up to £495k capital receipts and an addition to the capital programme for the development of an alternative management option and a capital scheme for the improvement of the park in line with the Masterplan, be agreed;
- 4) it be approved in principal that capital receipts generated through the implementation of the Masterplan will be reinvested in the park, contributing to the development of a sustainable business plan for the park;
- 5) the delivery of the six Crystal Palace Park Improvement Scheme projects at a total cost of £2.16m, subject to any necessary statutory consents, be approved;
- 6) the confirmation of the £1.84m from the GLA (subject to formal confirmation on 10 March 2015), be noted;
- 7) it be agreed that the £1.84m balance of funding from the GLA will not directly lead to a reduction in revenue funding for the park and that additional income from the café will be ring-fenced for the park; and
- 8) the marketing of a new café lease be approved. The lease for the new premises will be tendered on the open market.

87 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.

88 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2015

RESOLVED that the exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

89 HOUSING ZONE BID

Report DRR15/029

The report contained an update in relation to the Council's proposed draft Housing Zone bid.

Members noted the report and supported the recommendations.

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90 SITE G - REVISED DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Report DRR15/023

Members considered a report on the revised development options for Opportunity Site G, West of Bromley High Street.

Members considered and noted the report.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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 9.20 pm

Chairman