

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

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 26 November 2015

**Present:**

Councillor Simon Fawthrop (Chairman)  
Councillor Stephen Wells (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Nicholas Bennett J.P., Ian Dunn, Nicky Dykes,  
Judi Ellis, William Huntington-Thresher, David Livett,  
Russell Mellor, Alexa Michael, Ian F. Payne and  
Angela Wilkins

**Also Present:**

Councillor Graham Arthur, Councillor Julian Benington,  
Councillor Stephen Carr, Councillor Richard Scoates and  
Councillor Melanie Stevens

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ellie Harmer, Keith Onslow and Tony Owen. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Russell Mellor.

**225 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Simon Fawthrop declared an interest as an employee of British Telecom, and as his wife was an employee of Bromley Adult Education College, as these were mentioned in the Executive's Budget Monitoring report.

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

No questions had been received.

**227 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES PDS  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8TH OCTOBER 2015  
(EXCLUDING EXEMPT ITEMS)**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015 (excluding exempt information) be confirmed.

**228 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**  
Report CSD15129

The Committee considered matters arising from previous meetings.

Updates from the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and the Public Protection and Safety PDS Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015 had been circulated – these are attached as Appendix B to these minutes.

The Chairman of the Education PDS Committee, Cllr Nicholas Bennett, reported on the following issues from his Committee which had met on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015 –

- A new interim head of service was in place for the Youth Offending Service following the poor Ofsted report;
- GCSE results had improved in 2015;
- The outsourcing of Education services was not proceeding.

**229 FORWARD PLAN OF PRIVATE AND KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of key and private executive decisions as published on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015.

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

One question had been received from Councillor Ian Dunn. The question and reply are set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

**231 SCRUTINY OF THE RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

The Resources Portfolio Holder, Cllr Graham Arthur, addressed the Committee, beginning by highlighting some key issues concerning Council staff. He particularly praised the Registrars Service which generated income for the Council and where staff were innovative in improving their service, and also the Attendants Service for their support for Civic functions and major events such as the special Council and Executive meetings held the previous evening. It was important that the efforts of staff were recognised through the Bromley Stars awards and the Merit Payments scheme, and the Council's sickness levels were superior to other Councils and comparable with the private sector. The Council was leading the "Step Up to Social Work" scheme on behalf of six boroughs to train social workers, and twelve new Departmental Representatives were being trained to enhance consultation with staff. A transition manager had recently been appointed by the new IT Support contractor, and a new Contracts lawyer was in post.

The Portfolio holder mentioned other issues affecting his portfolio. On property management, options for repairing the external tiles at the Churchill Theatre were being considered. On the budget, only one portfolio was currently projected to be over budget, and interest income from property investment was rising. However, it was clear that the Council had to take advantage of the New Homes Bonus and move towards self-sufficiency. Lobbying of MPs was on-going for fairer treatment for the borough and the ring-fencing of education and health was leading to budget pressures in other services.

Responding to questions, the Portfolio Holder commented on the following issues –

- The ratio of permanent to agency social workers was improving.
- The 2% precept for social care announced by the Chancellor was in addition to any general increase in Council Tax that would be allowed. However the exact details were not known – it was anticipated that these would be provided in the local government budget settlement which would have to be announced by 17<sup>th</sup> December when Parliament adjourned.
- With the repairs to the exterior of the Churchill theatre, one of the options was cladding over the tiles, which would be cheaper than replacing them.
- A report was being produced on the Council's retail properties. Cllr Judi Ellis requested a list of vacant shops in her ward – she suggested that the Council could follow the example of Bromley College at its Orpington campus and let office space by the hour to local businesses.
- A Member stated that London's population was forecast to grow to around ten million by 2030, and the Council needed to plan for the increased pressure on services. The Portfolio Holder reminded Members of the "Bromley 2020" vision and suggested that it might be time to prepare a similar vision for 2030.

## **232 RESOURCES PORTFOLIO - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The Committee considered the following report for pre-decision scrutiny where the Resources Portfolio Holder was minded to take a decision.

### **232.1 TREASURY MANAGEMENT - PERFORMANCE Q2 2015/16 & MID-YEAR REVIEW**

Report CSD15129

The report summarised treasury management activity during the quarter ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and the period 1st April 2015 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015. It also updated Members on the Council's investment with Heritable Bank and included a Mid-Year Review of the Treasury Management Strategy

Statement and Annual Investment Strategy. The report ensured that the Council was implementing best practice in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management. Investments as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 totalled £282.6m (excluding the balance of the Heritable investment) and there was no outstanding external borrowing. It was still anticipated that the Council would receive all of its investment back from Heritable Bank.

Cllr David Livett suggested that, in view of the difficulty in finding suitable investments, the range of investments considered should be extended to include all investment grade funds. The Director of Finance confirmed that this issue was reviewed every year and would be looked at again. Cllr Livett also asked whether the figures given in the report for external cash management were before fees. This would be confirmed.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted and the Portfolio Holder and full Council be recommended to approve the changes to the 2015/16 prudential indicators as set out in Appendix B1 to the report.**

**233            PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS**  
Report CSD15130

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 1 agenda for the Executive's meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015.

**(5)            Budget Monitoring 2015/16**  
Report FSD15071

The Committee considered the second budget monitoring report for 2015/16 based on general expenditure and activity levels up to the end of August 2015. The current projected outturn was a total net underspend of £2,052k. However, an overspend of £529k was projected for the Education Portfolio due mainly to the Adult Education Service, SEN Transport and the Youth Service. A Member suggested that with a large underspend expected on the Direct Schools Grant (DSG) more should be done to persuade the Schools Forum of the benefit of schemes such as Beacon House.

The Resources Portfolio Holder reported that in difficult and uncertain times it was important to make financial plans well in advance and to take savings early whenever possible. The Committee discussed the role of the Central Contingency in promoting good financial management – it was noted that it was proposed to move £6.5m from underspends and the Central Contingency into the Growth Fund, and some Members questioned whether the contingency should be reduced. Members were assured that the Prior Year Adjustments set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report were carried out in line with CIPFA guidance and did not constitute use of reserves to support revenue spending.

The Leader reported that he and other Executive Members were lobbying central government to secure the removal of ring-fencing restrictions. He was also working with Surrey County Council to explore new ways of working.

**RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.**

**(6) Capital Programme Monitoring – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2015/16**  
Report 15067

The report summarised the current position on capital expenditure and receipts following the second quarter of 2015/16 and sought approval for a revised Capital Programme.

**RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.**

**(7) Council Tax Support/Reduction**  
Report FSD15066

A public consultation exercise had been carried out on proposals for the Council Tax Support/Reduction scheme for 2015/16 – it was proposed that entitlement for working age claimants would be based on 75% of the household's Council Tax liability. The proposals needed to be approved by full Council by the end of January 2016.

The Committee considered whether claimants should be required to pay a higher proportion of their bills and discussed the impact of this. It was pointed out that there had been a reduction in working age claimants which would reduce the cost of the scheme. A Member suggested that the proposal should be reviewed in the light of the Chancellor's Autumn budget statement that week – taking into account the totality of the impact on claimants, and a supplementary paper would be circulated on this.

**RESOLVED that the Executive be recommended to consider all options.**

**(12) Bromley Town Centre Public Realm Improvements Detailed Design**  
Report DRR15/103

The report presented outline designs for the next phase of the Bromley Town Centre Public Realm Improvement Scheme. Officers emphasised that the scheme took a holistic approach to the High Street and took into account future developments such as Site G, the new restaurants at Intu, the hotel at Bromley North and the Bromley South development.

The Committee scrutinised the need for revenue funding for the scheme which would be for an enhanced street cleaning regime. It was noted that there was potential for contributions from the BID Company, but only for work above the baseline. There was also the possibility of income generation from the proposed kiosks.

Committee members commented on the need to ensure that the scheme overcame the sterile impression given by the pedestrianised area once the shops were closed, and suggested that the consultants needed to give this

more thought. In particular, members mentioned achieving a more even spread of restaurants in the pedestrianised area and the importance of ensuring that the lighting aspect of the scheme was right, eliminating shadows and dark spaces wherever possible. A Member suggested that small office space, available in the evenings, would help. Some members commented that more time was needed to assess the success of the Bromley North Village improvements before the same principles were extended to the central part of the High Street. Members also commented on the need to ensure access for emergency vehicles, which would be accommodated in the design.

**RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported subject to further scrutiny by Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee and to the expenditure being funded from the Growth Fund rather than the Investment Fund.**

**(13) Beckenham Public Realm Improvements**  
Report DRR15/104

Proposals for the Public Realm Improvements in Beckenham had been scrutinised by Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015. It was noted that the overall cost had risen to £4.679m reflecting the increased scope of the scheme.

Councillor Nicholas Bennett reminded Members that there had also been an aspiration to secure improvements for West Wickham High Street.

**RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.**

**234 BROMLEY YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROJECT - PROGRESS UPDATE**  
Report ED15127

The Committee received a progress update on performance against the Bromley Youth Employment Project (Phase 2) Delivery Plan activities and outputs for the period July to September 2015. Since commencing the project, the majority of performance indicators had been met and in most cases exceeded. By the end of September 2015, 54 young people had been placed into contracted employment with, to date, only one young person dropping out within the first six months. Now into the second year of delivery, the Project was well on course to achieve the key outcome of one hundred placements into contracted employment over the two year life of the project.

Members noted that there had also been good progress on other key activities, notably working with Council departments, contractors and suppliers to develop job placements and developing work experience opportunities for Looked after Children. Another aspect of the Project was the programme of door knocking to contact young people who were not known to be in employment or training. It was confirmed that up to three visits were made, in addition to phone calls and correspondence, and cards were left where no

response was made. 156 doors had been knocked, and 45% had been answered.

**RESOLVED that progress made in the delivery of the Bromley Youth Employment Project be noted.**

**235 WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**  
Report CSD15131

The Committee noted its work programme for 2015/16. With regard to Appendix 2 to the report, it was noted that Cllr Nicholas Bennett had replaced Cllr Mary Cooke as chairman of the School Improvement Panel.

**236 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**

**237 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8TH OCTOBER 2015**

The Committee confirmed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

**238 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT EXECUTIVE REPORTS**

The Committee scrutinised the following reports on the Executive's agenda for the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 –

- (19) Residential Property Acquisitions
- (20) Investment Proposal
- (23) Award of Contract for Capital Works at Edgebury School
- (24) Biggin Hill Memorial Museum
- (25) Bromley North Village Improvements
- (26) Chislehurst library, Red Hill, Chislehurst

The Meeting ended at 10.00 pm

Chairman