

Chairman's Annual Report for the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee

Chairman: Councillor Ian F. Payne
Vice-Chairman: Councillor Michael Rutherford

Introduction

1.1 The Committee have met 4 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, Anna Bagley. Through this past year the R&R PDS Committee has considered the contribution to the savings required in the overall council budget of approx. £60m.

1.2 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

1.3 Areas that the PDS Scrutiny Committee have focused on are:

Bromley Town Centre Housing Zone

The Expression of Interest bid for Housing Zone status has been approved by the Greater London Council (GLA). The Council's bid sought funding of £27.1m, consisting of a mixture of direct grant and soft developer loans, to facilitate the delivery of development schemes in Bromley Town Centre, including Opportunity Site G West of the High Street and Former Opportunity Site A Bromley North Station.

Business Support Programme, A legal grant agreement was currently being drawn up to cover a period of two years for the delivery by the Business Improvement District (Orpington 1st) of the New Homes Bonus scheme. Payment would only be made upon delivery of the agreed milestones.

Business Growth Corridors A number of posts had been recruited to develop the business investment and development plans for Biggin Hill and the Cray Business Corridor.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), The additional income expected from the Bromley CIL was not quantifiable as payment would be driven by applications of size and scale. As with Section 106 Agreements, CIL reports would be submitted for consideration by E&R PDS Members.

Planning Regulatory Functions – The pre-application process required applicants to submit information in accordance with a detailed checklist. In some cases, the requested information was omitted or officers required clarification and amendments which led to delays in determination. Other applications related to the determination of

applications such as advertising, prior notifications, Certificates of Law and change of use etc. It was agreed that whilst the report indicated the percentage of applications determined on target, future reports should also include response times for the remaining 40%. It was also agreed that targets and achieved percentage rates for responding to TPO requests, Listed Building Orders and general enquiries be included in the Business Plan report.

Enhance the Borough's Leisure Facilities, – A 25 year management contract for the operation and management of the Churchill Theatre had been awarded to Qdos with a saving of £340kPA from previous contract.

1.4 Town Centre Management Update Reports were presented at each of the committee meetings giving a full and comprehensive report of the ongoing work and results of the towns in the borough.

Library Service

1.5 The Renewal & Recreation Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee and Portfolio Holder agreed that officers should commence a procurement exercise to identify community management arrangements for the borough's six community libraries:

- Burnt Ash Library
- Hayes Library
- Mottingham Library
- Shortlands Library
- Southborough Library
- St Paul's Cray Library

1.6 Community management may offer a way of retaining library services in these community locations whilst reducing operating costs to avoid making closures. As community libraries are the smallest in the borough, make the lowest number of issues and have the lowest number of visits, it was agreed that there was an opportunity to try and secure community management arrangements that make these libraries work more effectively for the very communities that they serve

Site G: West of the High Street

1.7 Feedback from the soft market testing exercise to assess the market appetite for a revised residential led first phase redevelopment of Opportunity Site G has been positive. Officers are now preparing the necessary marketing documentation required to procure a development partner.

Site A: Bromley North Station

1.8 A revised planning policy for Opportunity Site A is currently being consulted on via the Local Plan review. In support of this review the Council is currently undertaking a massing and viability assessment of the development site. It is proposed that this assessment will include a development workshop with stakeholders including site owners, transport providers. The result of this work will be used to inform the emerging policy review.

Site C: The Old Town Hall

1.9 Planning permission has been granted for the Old Town Hall and adjacent residential scheme.

Bromley Central Area High Street Improvements

1.10 The following design principles have been developed in consultation with stakeholders:

- Introduce a hierarchy of public spaces where people can dwell.
- Green the High Street.
- Create shelter within the High Street for year round enjoyment.
- Create better links to Bromley's greenspace.
- Encourage street activity & enhance pedestrian experience.

1.11 A key feature of the emerging design is the reordering of spaces in the High Street to create a new public square in the southern pedestrianised area. It is also proposed that the existing market is reorganised and relocated along the High Street.

Site A: Bromley North

1.12 Ongoing working with 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 Local Plan, as it is at an appropriate stage of development. Work had now been completed on the planned public realm improvements to Bromley North Village.

Site B: Tweedy Rd

1.13 This prominent plot of land was a designated residential site for up to 70 units and would be marketed as such. A development brief would be drafted outlining what would be acceptable and appropriate to build. Members agreed that the site was an important gateway into Bromley and in this regard, recommended that the AAP stipulate the requirement for the design to be of good architectural merit.

Site C: Town Hall

1.14 Site allocated for a development comprising Hotel. Planning has now been submitted with the Council based on their proposal to convert the Town Hall to a hotel, conference centre and associated restaurants. They aim to open the hotel and conference centre in the Spring of 2016.

Site G: West of High Street

1.15 Major site in the AAP, officers are continuing to work with Developments on agreeing a viable scheme proposal and partnering arrangements that will deliver the Council's objectives.

Site K: Westmoreland Road car park

1.16 The development that is well under construction includes a multiscreen cinema, 200 residential units, 130 bedroom hotel, restaurants and cafes, plus associated parking and public realm enhancements.

Site L: Former DHSS

1.17 Telereal Trillium, the owners of the Crown Buildings have sold the site to the Education Funding Agency.

Economic Development

1.18 With the Government 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 has aimed both at creating employment and economic growth in three growth areas are **Bromley Town Centre, Biggin Hill and the Cray Business Corridor**. The Homes Bonus for 2014/15 would total £1.74m for the Borough and would be used to fund projects for Penge Town Centre/Crystal Palace, place making at the Walnuts Centre and Orpington business enabling and support, Biggin Hill Aviation Technology and Enterprise Centre, and Lagoon Road Industrial Estate redevelopment.

Orpington Town Centre

1.19 The owners of the Walnuts are on track to implement a comprehensive improvement programme for the Walnuts Shopping Centre which will see Crown Buildings redeveloped for additional retail floorspace and a cinema, which recently opened.

The Priory

1.20 After a number of development work undertaken , 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. 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.

Beckenham Town Centre

1.21 Transport for London(TfL) had approved the Beckenham Initial Scheme Design bid and funding was allocated to cover Design and Development costs. This funding was to be used to cover the costs of undertaking survey work and producing and consulting on an outline scheme design. This initial funding allocation also included the costs of working up a detailed design to contract stage drawings.

Bromley Business Improvement District

1.22 A Business Improvement District (BID) was successful by ballot within Bromley Town Centre and will commence in the spring of 2016.

1.23 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 F. Payne
Chairman, Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee