

## **RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 20 September 2016

### **Present:**

Councillor Michael Rutherford (Chairman)  
Councillor Julian Benington (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Vanessa Allen, Douglas Auld, David Jefferys,  
Alexa Michael and Michael Tickner

### **Also Present:**

Councillor Judi Ellis, Councillor William Huntington-Thresher  
and Councillor Peter Morgan

### **11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Peter Dean.

### **12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The standard declarations of Councillors Peter Morgan and Julian Benington were noted as previously reported at the R&R PDS meeting held on 5 July 2016.

Councillor Auld declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 16. Councillor Auld left the room during consideration of the item and did not take part in the discussion or vote.

### **13 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING**

#### **13a QUESTIONS FOR THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

No questions were received.

#### **13b QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE**

No questions were received.

### **14 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 JULY 2016**

Minute 7, page 6 – It was noted that the Bromley North Village Post Completion Review would be submitted to the November meeting of the R&R PDS Committee.

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

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

There were no matters arising from previous meetings.

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

**16a CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 1ST QUARTER 2016/17**

**Report FSD16059**

On 20 July 2015, the Executive received the 1<sup>st</sup> quarterly capital monitoring report for 2016/17 and agreed a revised Capital Programme for the four year period 2016/17 to 2019/20. The report also covered any detailed issues relating to the 2015/16 Capital Programme outturn which were reported in summary form to the June meeting of the Executive.

Members also considered changes agreed by the Executive in respect of the Capital Programme for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio.

The second sentence of the Responsible Officer Comments relating to Penge Town Centre (page 22) was amended to read:- 'The scheme is to be implemented alongside planned TfL bus route and carriageway improvements which will only be undertaken in *winter* 16/17.'

**RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to confirm the changes agreed by the Executive on 20 July 2016.**

**17 COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY LIBRARIES: OUTCOME OF TENDER**

**Report DRR16/071**

Community Links Bromley had decided to withdraw their tender for community management of the Borough's six community libraries. As a result there were no proposals for community management to be considered.

Members were therefore requested to consider the alternative option presented to them in November 2015 which recommended that community libraries should be included in the commissioning of the core Library Service. The report contained an update on the Council's current engagement in a joint tender for core library services with the London Borough of Bexley.

The Project Manager outlined the background to this report leading up to the current position. Ward Councillors had been consulted and it was reported that Councillor Colin Smith strongly supported the proposals put forward and had commended officers for their innovative approach to this project.

Members were disappointed to note Community Links' withdrawal of tender resulting in the projected £250k savings not being achieved. Assurance was given that a joint tender process of the core Library Service was already underway which included the commissioning of all six community libraries. It was however, too early at this stage to speculate the impact on staff.

In regard to the outcome of the tender process (paragraph 3.16), the equalities impact assessment had demonstrated that some existing services would not be provided for the first three years as capacity was built.

Whilst the St Paul's Cray Library was included in the current tender, the proposed development of land to the east and west of Chipperfield Road (including relocation of the Library) would be subject to Members' decision.

During soft market testing of the core library service, some respondents suggested they could deliver direct management of community libraries to the same specification required for the core libraries and still achieve the £250k per annum projected level of saving identified at the commencement of the tender for community management.

The decrease of 12.5% on the current number of active users compared with that recorded in 2014/15 (page 27) did not capture wi-fi users or public internet use that had previously been counted. Southborough Library was open for longer hours and Burnt Ash Library held more activities than others. These were contributing factors in the variance between visits and issues reported for each library. The need for an improved system to account for all categories of use was acknowledged by officers.

Noting the 6-7 month time period between formal consultation on the proposals and the decision-making on contract award, Members requested that this be monitored. The Project Manager confirmed that every effort would be made to minimise this length of time.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted and Members' comments be provided to the Executive for consideration.**

## **18 RENEWAL AND RECREATION UPDATE 2015/16 AND UPDATED CONTRACTS REGISTER**

### **Report DRR16/071**

Members were requested to review the following:-

- (i) the achievements of the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio in 2015/16 against the aims of the portfolio for the same year;
- (ii) an update to the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Plan for 2016/17; and

- (iii) the current status of all contracts for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio with a life value greater than £50,000 was summarised.

Aim 10: Crystal Palace Park (page 63) - A new independent Shadow Board (replacing the previous Steering Group), had been formed and its first meeting took place on 14 September 2016. A new business model to manage Crystal Palace Park was not yet completed and officers would work closely with Fourth Street in the development of this. Community Links had fulfilled all parts of their contract to date.

Reporting on the capacity masterplan for Biggin Hill (Aim 5, page 77), the Head of Renewal explained the aim was to provide floor space for an Aviation Training and Enterprise Centre at West Camp. The maximum options for this would be submitted for consideration by Members at a future R&R PDS meeting.

The feasibility of an enterprise centre in Central Library was also being explored. This would provide space from which small businesses could access a work space based on different levels of paid membership. There were already numerous centres like this across London. Updating reports would be submitted to future meetings of this Committee.

Discussions had been held concerning the public arts scheme for Bromley South Central/Westmoreland Road (Site K) however, this had been held up due to issues with the contract. Work with Network Rail to examine future development and capacity options for Bromley South Station (Site J) was still on-going. An update should be available in early 2017.

Members noted the improvement of requests for Tree Preservation Order information due to the introduction of on-line data via the Council website (page 60) and requested hard copy data on the availability of the website and the information contained on it. It was suggested that information such as the number of 'hits' and availability should be monitored.

With regard to the amber status for various library contracts (page 89), Members were informed that on the advice of the Procurement Team, under Rule 23.7, these would be extended by the end of the calendar month to bring them co-terminus with the main library outsourcing start date.

**RESOLVED that the report and appendices be noted.**

## **19 CHIPPERFIELD ROAD, ST PAUL'S CRAY - DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

### **Report DRR16/075**

Members considered options for the future development of land to the east and west of Chipperfield Road, St Paul's Cray, to provide residential units which would release funds for a new Linear Park, a new gymnastics facility and a new Library and Community Resource Centre.

Visiting Ward Member Councillor Judi Ellis acknowledged this was an exciting proposal for Cray Valley West as no investment had been made to this area for a long time. The new gymnastics facility was amazing as it provided much needed additional space. Incorporated with the new library and community resource centre, it would become a real focal hub in a small high street which was highly frequented. Councillor Ellis commended the project and hoped that as many affordable housing units as possible would be provided in the scheme. Schools in the area had sufficiently expanded to meet future need.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Ellis for the work she had undertaken in relation to this proposal.

The onus was on Cushman & Wakefield to conclude viability of the proposed housing scheme. It was anticipated that the provision of affordable housing would fall somewhere between 0% and 35%. It was noted however, that the Council's required housing provision was as set out in the draft Local Plan approved by the Executive in July 2016 and it was clarified that Cushman & Wakefield would consider the full range of options for residential development. Sport England would continue to be part of any future discussions. The issue of grant funding for refitting the gymnasium would be considered at a future date and officers would be looking for input from the Club to support such an approach.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted and the Portfolio Holder be requested to convey Members' support to the Executive.**

## **20 BECKENHAM PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS DESIGN AND BUDGET SIGN OFF**

### **Report DRR16/076**

Members reviewed the detailed design of the Beckenham Town Centre Improvement scheme which had been completed by the Council's term contractor FM Conway together with the finalised budget which included the Council's match funding.

Councillor Tickner referred to the Beckenham Town Centre Working Group (BTCWG) meeting held on 15 September 2016. The meeting was attended by FM Conway, 5-6 Council officers and a good turnout of residents. One issue raised at that meeting was the choice of paving which all appeared to look the same. The Head of Renewal reported that taking into account the conservation area, a selected palette of colours had been chosen to address on-going maintenance problems although it was acknowledged there was the continuing problem of dropped chewing gum. A sample area of paving in Bromley North Village had been coated with a substance designed for easy cleaning but this had proved unsuccessful. A cleaning regime was currently being discussed with Environmental Services officers. In response to a Member suggestion, the Head of Renewal acknowledged this would be an opportune time to consider educating schoolchildren on the proper way to

dispose of gum for both practical and hygiene reasons. The introduction of 'gum boards' was also discussed. It was agreed that options should be considered by the future Beckenham BID.

Councillor Tickner confirmed that footways from the War Memorial to Beckenham Junction would be widened; as a result, roadways would be slightly narrower. The BTCWG were supportive of having wider pedestrian crossings and residents were pleased to learn that TfL had agreed to fund the enhanced scheme.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted and Members' comments be provided to the Executive.**

## **21 TOWN CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE**

### **Report DRR16/077**

Members received an update on progress achieved in delivering the Town Centres Development and Growth Programme.

#### Beckenham Town Centre Improvements

Details were being drawn up with Environmental colleagues for introducing a seasonal deep clean (including jet washing) for the whole of Beckenham Town Centre. It was suggested that the income derived from letting out the two vacant shops in the town centre could contribute to the cleaning regime which needed to be implemented quickly.

#### Penge Town Centre Improvements

The improvements to Empire Square and Arpley Square and the creation of sociable spaces for cultural events and activity were welcomed. In discussing the hazards caused by wet leaves on pavements, Members were informed that York Stone would be used which was non-slip. It was noted that fallen leaves should not really cause a problem as the high street was swept every day. The tree species was confirmed as Scotts Pine, *Pinus Sylvestris*.

Members also welcomed the Shop Front Improvement and Refurbishment Programme to be commenced in autumn 2016.

#### Orpington Walnut Centre

Of the two suggested market layouts on page 154, Councillor Benington preferred Option 1b. Although an oasis area would result in a reduced number of market stalls, the area would be more attractive and open. Councillor Benington also advised that the main tree in the Centre should, of course, be a walnut tree.

Visiting Ward Member, Councillor Huntington-Thresher raised a number of issues. Further development was needed in relation to market stalls and

there was an underlying issue with regard to further development of the college i.e. an increase and improvement to the outdoor seating area. It was necessary to ensure that the arrangement of stalls did not interfere with this.

The Orpington BID had requested Councillor Huntington-Thresher to inform Members that S106 monies were being put towards improvement of the square and it should, therefore, be maintained on a regular basis. The Head of Renewal reported that full maintenance was carried out by the head leaseholder of the Walnuts Shopping Centre.

The Chairman referred to several trees planted in Bromley North Village which were either in very poor condition or dead. The Head of Renewal acknowledged this but stated that as the trees could not be planted in the ground, they had been planted in containers where there was always a risk that they may perish. Discussions were taking place with Tree Officers to replace the existing trees with a species which was more tolerant and the cost for this would be provided from the existing maintenance contingency fund. The current tree had been maintained and watered by Conways for the first year after which the onus fell to the Council's Tree Team. It was suggested that a specialist tree contract relating to the health of trees could be drawn up for a longer period of time in future. This issue would be further discussed at the PDS meeting in January 2017. It was suggested that this matter also be considered by the Environment PDS.

#### Bromley Central Library Building

Councillor Benington suggested better use could be made of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> floors. The 9<sup>th</sup> floor in particular possessed a brilliant view across Bromley and would benefit from becoming an upmarket restaurant which would make more profit than the current proposal. The Head of Renewal agreed to add this suggestion to the feasibility study. Councillor Tickner opposed this suggestion, referring to the Council's aim of encouraging much needed start-up businesses and providing business space in the Borough. The Chairman encouraged officers to consider possible ways of accommodating both a restaurant and an enterprise centre.

**RESOLVED** that progress achieved on the delivery of the Town Centres Development and Growth Programme be noted.

## **22 PLANNING PERFORMANCE AND PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**

### **Report DRR/16/072**

Members considered a progress report on the processing of planning applications and Planning Enforcement. The report focussed mainly on the following issues previously raised by the PDS Committee:-

- the service by telephone;
- planning application performance;
- planning appeal performance;

- the Building Control process; and
- Planning Enforcement.

The Chief Planner gave a brief outline of the report. The Bromley planning application performance by time taken had improved and was now exceeding national and local targets. The telephone service for customers was one of the highest measured performances in the Council with 73% of calls being answered within 60 seconds. The percentage of planning appeals allowed after refusal by the Council was around 34% in 2015/16 which was around the national average level. The Council's Building Control Service was in open competition with external Building Control providers. Improvements in communication had been made by the Planning Enforcement Team following previous issues that had been raised.

As staffing levels had remained similar in proportion to application volumes, the improvement in performance could mainly be attributed to efficiency of staff, in particular the dedication of managers and staff in the Development Control team. At present, there were several staff working on short-term contracts and two vacant posts, one of which had just been filled.

The national definition for minor and major applications is used in Bromley. Taking residential development as an example, minor applications were for proposals up to 9 dwellings and major applications consisted of schemes containing 10 or more dwellings. Other applications related to residential extensions etc.

There were currently 3 fte Investigation Officer posts within the Enforcement Team and one Manager of Planning Enforcement, Appeals and the Administration Team. Administrative support was available to Enforcement Officers. A temporary post might be filled to assist with the heavy workload subject to further approvals. The Chief Planner agreed to send Members information on the number of outstanding complaints and enforcement cases. Referring to communication issues, Councillor Tickner reported residents often submitted complaints and following receipt of an acknowledgement (which could take anything up to 10 days) heard nothing further at all. In responding to Councillor Tickner's observations, the Chief Planner reported that improvements had been achieved overall as highlighted in the recent compliments quoted in the report and in the evidence of pursuing cases in the Courts again as referred to in the report.

It was noted that of the 594 new cases concerning breaches of planning control, 32 enforcement notices had been issued; this amounted to 5% of the total cases which was not untypical for many Councils.

Councillor Tickner was concerned that officers may have a conflict of interest having taken payment to give pre-application advice but then finding the application is refused at determination stage. The Chief Planner reported that pre-application advice was common practice in most Councils. The majority of applicants already had consultants on board and the feedback from officers did have a cautionary notice attached to it.



**RESOLVED that progress with planning application performance, planning appeal performance, Building Control and Planning Enforcement be noted.**

**23 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME NOVEMBER 2016-APRIL 2017)**

**Report CSD16132**

Members reviewed the R&R PDS work programme for the period November 2016-April 2017.

Updates on Sites A, B, J and K of the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan would be scheduled for future meetings.

Councillor Benington had contacted all Members in regard to a visit to the Biggin Hill Heritage Centre and St George's RAF Chapel at Biggin Hill. He suggested meeting outside the Chapel on Saturday 12 November at 10 am; this would be followed by a tour of Biggin Hill Airport. Unfortunately, however, access to West Camp would not be possible. Councillor Benington agreed to arrange the visit and contact Members with final details. Officers would also be invited to attend. It was reported that the first round bid for Heritage Lottery funding for the Centre had proved successful.

It was noted that the November PDS meeting had been rescheduled and would now take place on Tuesday 22 November at which time a report on St George's Chapel, the Airport and West Camp could be considered.

**RESOLVED that subject to the additions and amendments above, the R&R PDS work programme for the period November 2016-April 2017 be noted.**

**24 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.

**25 SITE G - DEVELOPMENT PARTNER PROGRAMME: SHORTLIST OF BIDDERS' DETAILS**

Members received a verbal update on the shortlist of bidders for the Development Partner Programme for Site G.

**RESOLVED that the information be noted.**

**26 THE PRIORY ORPINGTON - DISPOSAL PROPOSAL**

**Report DRR16/074**

**RESOLVED that the report be noted and the Portfolio Holder be requested to convey Members' support to the Executive.**

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm

Chairman