

Report from Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee

Chairman: Cllr. Michael Rutherford
Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Julian Benington

1.1 The committee met six times this municipal year. Each meeting has scrutinised the reports for decision by the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Holder and considered policy development for key areas across 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, Mr. Andrew Wolckenhaar. Through this past year, the R&R PDS Committee has scrutinised a range of proposals and performance metrics and added further scrutiny to the planning service.

1.2 The committee have monitored performance against the Renewal and Recreation strategic outcomes for the municipal year, which it agreed to support in the July 2016 meeting:

- Economic development
- Protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment
- Enhanced opportunities for leisure, cultural activities and community led services.

1.3 Topics the PDS Committee have focused on include:

Town Centres

1.4 *Beckenham:* The committee scrutinised proposals for public realm improvements in Beckenham Town Centre; particularly around timelines, funding from Transport for London and learning lessons from the Bromley North Village works (both its successes and challenges). These were approved by Executive in October 2016. It also worked with the Beckenham Town Centre Working Group to develop proposals for the David Bowie Memorial and options for funding it.

1.5 *Orpington:* Proposals for public realm improvements to Walnut Square were supported by the committee and have since commenced. Particular focus was given to the usability of the square and improving the face of the library and leisure centre. The committee also scrutinised the disposal of The Priory, ensuring that the winning proposal was viable and provided community benefit and a capital receipt.

1.6 *Penge:* Support was given to Penge Town Centre improvements, namely Penge High Street (which have now commenced) and Empire and Arpley Square (which are now undergoing detailed design). The proposals will declutter the area and provide more attractive streets and shop signs.

1.7 *Bromley:* The R&R PDS Committee input to the procurement process for a development partner for Site G; ensuring that the proposals will deliver new homes (including substantial numbers of affordable homes) to meet the local plan, while making a positive impact to the town centre. The committee also input to policy development for the Bromley High Street public realm improvements and the relocation of the market.

Leisure and Culture

1.8 *Library Service:* In the April 2017 meeting, the committee is due to consider proposals for the management of libraries. Earlier in the year, it heard that the proposed community management of the borough's smaller libraries would not be taken forward.

1.9 *Enhanced Leisure Opportunities:* The committee supported schemes that provided leisure opportunities for residents of the borough. It advised Executive to support development proposals on Chipperfield Road in St Paul's Cray for a new gymnastics facility, linear park and library and community resource centre. It also gave strong support to proposals for Blackheath and Bromley Harriers Athletics Club to upgrade Norman Park Athletics Track.

1.10 *Cultural Activities:* Continued support was given to the Biggin Hill Memorial Museum, and progress on the scheme was tracked throughout the year.

Planning

1.11 The performance of the planning service was assessed, with a particular focus on the performance of planning enforcement. The committee also scrutinised planning appeals, considering those appeals received and decided and the costs incurred by the council. This will become an annual agenda item for the committee.

Scrutiny of the Portfolio Holder

1.12 The committee scrutinised consultant spend and the portfolio's contracts, challenging when contract end dates are close and where regular extensions are applied. It also challenged the Portfolio Holder on recovering fees involved in the Biggin Hill Airport proposal.

Members Visits

1.13 The Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee has performed two member visits throughout the year. It visited the Biggin Hill Memorial Chapel to discuss the museum proposals, and went on a tour of the airport and West Camp. It also visited the Churchill Theatre to meet the new operators, HQ Theatres, and discuss their plans.

Presentations

1.14 The committee is grateful to MyTime, Ms. Sharon Baldwin from Orpington BID and Ms. Frances Forrest from Bromley BID for visiting and presenting to it.

Thanks

I would like to thank all the members of the committee for their diligence and hard work throughout the year. A lot of work has been carried out, which has covered a very broad range of subjects. I would also like to thank the officers in the R&R department and Mrs. Lisa Thornley for their tireless work at the committee meetings and the ongoing day to day running of the department.

Councillor Michael Rutherford
Chairman, Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee