

Report from Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee

Chairman: Cllr. Michael Rutherford

Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Julian Benington

1.1 The Committee met four 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. Nicolas Weaks. 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 2017 meeting.

1.3 Topics the PDS Committee have focused on include:

Town Centres

1.4 *Bromley:* The R&R PDS Committee scrutinised proposed Bromley High Street public realm improvements and the relocation of the market. It expressed concerns about the consultation being performed on the proposals and asked for further engagement with market. The Portfolio Holder took these comments and additional consultation led to changes to market layout, an increase in the number of stalls and an additional focus on stall branding and advertising the market. The Committee also scrutinised proposals for Site G. Following its scrutiny a proposed land swap in Library Gardens was withdrawn.

1.5 *Beckenham:* Through its Sub-Committee, the Beckenham Town Centre Working Group, it supported an architectural student competition to design the Beckenham Green Canopy. The working group was also crucial in enabling Beckenham to get its Purple Flag status for a safe night-time economy. The PDS Committee strongly supported the proposed Beckenham Business Improvement District and is pleased that traders voted in favour of it.

1.6 *Orpington:* At the Committee's final meeting of the civic year, it will review development opportunities for Orpington town centre. It will hear and challenge the potential opportunity sites in the town for sustaining and improving the local economy and for new homes. Earlier in the civic year it gave its input to the second Orpington BID term and its comments were taken into account in the Executive meeting.

1.7 *Penge:* The Committee discussed updates throughout the year on the scheme to improve Penge town centre. The PDS Committee strongly supported the proposed Penge Business Improvement District and is pleased that traders voted in favour of it.

Leisure and Culture

1.8 *Library Service:* In the July 2017 meeting, the Committee gave its support for Greenwich Leisure Limited being awarded a contract to run the library service for 10 years. It was assured that the number of libraries and opening times would not reduce and that savings would be achieved for the Bromley taxpayer in every year of the contract.

1.9 *Cultural Activities*: Continued support was given to the Biggin Hill Memorial Museum, and progress on the scheme was tracked throughout the year. It thanked officers for their excellent work on the museum for their work on the proposals and fundraising support.

1.10 *Crystal Palace Park*: The Committee was pleased to support plans for the regeneration of Crystal Palace Park. It considered both the proposals and the business case and considered that the proposals would both improve the park and deliver an appropriate number of new homes.

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.

1.12. The Committee succeeded in bringing about a change of approach to ensuring tall buildings in the borough are safe. Following the Grenfell Tower disaster the committee wanted reassurance that Bromley did not have tall buildings that contained similarly flammable cladding. It was satisfied with the council's proactive approach with public sector providers and housing associations, but wanted a similarly rigorous approach with private sector tall buildings. As a result of the Committee's scrutiny, the Council has confirmation from landlords that there is no such cladding in Bromley's tall buildings.

Scrutiny of the Portfolio Holder

1.13 The Committee scrutinised the portfolio budget, requesting that officers and the Portfolio Holder explained areas where spending was increasing. Particular attention was given to ensure that where third parties run Council services, the quality remains unchanged or better and that cost reduces throughout the contract.

1.14 The Committee also analysed the contract register twice throughout the year, challenging on specific contracts to ensure that contracts avoid being managed effectively and there is suitable foresight of where new contracts are required.

Presentations

1.15 The Committee is grateful to MyTime and GLL 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