

RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 7 May 2019

Present:

Councillor Michael Rutherford (Chairman)
Councillor Suraj Sharma (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Yvonne Bear, Julian Benington, Aisha Cuthbert,
Robert Evans, Josh King and Gary Stevens

Also Present:

Councillors Gareth Allatt, Nicholas Bennett J.P., Mark Brock,
Hannah Gray and Peter Morgan

102 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Angela Page; Councillor Robert Evans attended as substitute.

103 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Cuthbert and Evans declared non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 6 as Members of the Board of Bromley Mytime Active.

104 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

104a QUESTIONS FOR THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER

No questions were received.

104b QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE

No questions were received.

105 HOUSING TRANSFORMATION BOARD: INCREASING AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY

This report provided an update on progress achieved by the Housing Transformation Board in regard to the key work stream areas which focused on options to increase supply and speed up the rate of delivery for cost effective temporary accommodation and affordable housing supply as a direct alternative to the current reliance on the use of nightly rate temporary accommodation.

Work stream 2 related to the acquisition of properties. Having explored the potential to extend the existing More homes SPV, it was not possible to confirm that doing so would secure the best value for money. Therefore, it was recommended that the Council proceed to tender for a new SPV partner for the acquisition and management of up to a further 400 additional homes.

Work stream 3 focused on the use of Bromley owned or acquired sites to establish a development programme for new affordable housing supply. In order to progress this, approval was sought to appoint specialist advisors to assist with the completion of a business case for a local housing company (LHC) at a proposed cost of £100k to be allocated from the Growth Fund. Members were advised that if incorrectly set up, an LHC could carry a high financial risk. In this instance, the money set aside would ensure that the LHC was set up correctly and would only be drawn down as and when required.

The LHC would operate as a separate entity to that of the special purpose vehicle (SPV) between Mears Group and the Council. Unlike the SPV, this would not be 'gifted' to the Pension Fund.

As a learning exercise, officers had consulted with other local authorities where LHCs had been established.

In regard to financial implications, it was agreed that future reports containing a breakdown of costs would include the number of 1-4 bed units and the number of people accommodated in them. It was reported that whilst demand was currently stable, the chief need was for 2 bed units.

Members were advised that the Council aimed for the provision of 100% affordable housing when planning proposals were brought forward. In this regard, the Planning Department would actively challenge any non-viability claims.

Flexibility was sought to maximise affordable housing, including the right to buy. Whilst this could prove risky, under legislation there was an ability for change.

In regard to the work streams set out in paragraph 3.11 (page 8) of the report, the provision of 1,250 affordable and temporary housing units over the next three years would be in addition to the 400 units provided by Mears. Overall, against the cost of current temporary provision, this would amount to £10m.

Of the 300 families per month who sought assistance, around 12 were placed in temporary accommodation before moving onto permanent placements with housing associations or via private rental. However, as a result of the welfare reform, demand would rise.

It was anticipated that the Banbury House and Anerley Town Hall sites would accommodate in excess of 57 affordable housing units between them.

As set out in the table at paragraph 3.26 (page 10) of the report, the contract start date for the newly acquired LHC would be September 2020. The proposed procurement timescale and start date would be kept under review.

Should the preferred option to procure an LHC be approved, it would not prevent the Council from working with housing associations etc. on other schemes.

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

106 GATEWAY REPORT: PROVISION OF HOUSING SUPPLY IN ANERLEY AND CHISLEHURST

Report DRR19/025

Members considered recommendations for the approval of a Capital Scheme for the design and construction of up to 60 temporary homes across two sites known as, Banbury House, Bushell Way and Anerley Town Hall overflow car park. In order to achieve this, approval was sought for a further £8.4m to be added to the Capital Programme.

The report also sought approval to proceed to procurement for the provision of a design and build contract for the two sites and that the land at both sites be appropriated for housing purposes.

As Ward Member, Councillor Sharma was satisfied with progress achieved so far.

Whilst discussing the preferred authority route (paragraph 4.9.3, page 21), Members were advised that given the increasing pressure on housing, any delay would have a knock-on effect. The Chairman ruled out delegation to officers by reason of the scale and cost involved in the proposal. He requested (and Members agreed), that if the Contract Award was decided by the Executive, Members of the PDS Committee be invited to attend the meeting or may write to the Chairman with their views.

Members agreed to proceed with procurement option (b).

In response to a question from Councillor Bear concerning the proposed range of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments (page 21 of the report), the Strategic Commissioning Manager reported that this would be monitored in terms of need. Whilst 2 bed units were a priority, where construction work on sites could also deliver one bedroom units, these would be included in order to provide optimum residential land value.

Provided the units were properly maintained, they should have a lifespan of around 60 years; this was included in the internal rateable return. In terms of tenure, the accommodation would be for temporary use but structurally they were permanent buildings.

The Chairman referred to the refusal of a previous planning application for four town houses and four flats at the Anerley site and asked if the current proposal was realistic. He suggested that the Planning Department be engaged as early as possible.

Members were informed that the Council were not looking to exceed £140k per unit. This was not a cheaper option but was a quicker option compared to a traditional build. Market testing undertaken had evidenced that the units were energy efficient and often cheaper for occupants to run.

An example of a one bed unit built in the UK and called a 'Zed pod', would be available for inspection at the Civic Centre, St Blaise Car Park from 20 May. The unit was erected on stilts with parking facilities available underneath. It was structurally sound and the architects of Zed Pod had confirmed as part of the market research, that the units would remain fully stable should a car accidentally strike the building.

The LHC framework used several providers including Caledonian, Rollalong and F1 Modular.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that Members of the Executive are recommended to:-

- 1 request that Council approve the addition of £8.4m to the Capital Programme for the provision of up to 60 residential units for the provision of housing for the purposes of temporary accommodation on sites known as Bushell Way and Anerley Town Hall Overflow Car Park; with £7.5m funded from the Housing Investment Fund earmarked reserve, and £0.9m identified in the 2018/19 Provisional Final Outturn report being submitted to the Executive on 21st may 2019;**
- 2 approve a mini competition tender using the LHC, NH1 Framework for a design and build of housing at the identified sites, as set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report and the approval process for contract award as set out in paragraph 4.9.3; and**
- 3 approve the appropriation of land at sites known as Bushell Way and Anerley Town Hall overflow carpark from their current purpose to the purpose of housing land held under the general fund in accordance with section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972;**

It was further RESOLVED that approval for the award of contract be considered by the Executive on condition that Members of the RR&H PDS Committee be invited to the meeting or may write to the Chairman with their views.

107 WEST WICKHAM LEISURE AND LIBRARY REDEVELOPMENT

Report DRR19/027

Members considered the progress of the West Wickham Leisure and Library Development and the feasibility study.

Approval was sought for the recommended design concept, as set out in the report together with approval to undertake soft market engagement with developers and housing providers to fully determine the extent of interest in the scheme.

The Strategic Commissioning Manager outlined the options set out in the report which were the result of feasibility work undertaken by Perfect Circle, a built environment consultancy. Initial feedback included the views obtained from Ward Member briefings and engagement meetings with stakeholders. Wider public engagement was still to be undertaken.

Visiting Ward Member Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP expressed his gratitude to the Director of Regeneration and the Strategic Commissioning Manager for consulting with him and Ward Member colleagues throughout the initial process.

Councillor Bennett reported that the existing leisure centre was not fit for purpose and too costly to maintain; a new leisure centre was therefore required. In this regard, it was prudent to keep the public purse to a minimum and this could be achieved with the inclusion of housing. Situated close to the mainline station, the site offered a brilliant opportunity for residential accommodation. Although the proposed height of the building may cause concern, conditions to camouflage the development could be imposed via existing planning policies.

Retaining the library was essential and officers should ensure that the book provision remained the same as that provided by the existing library. The current facility would close just one week before handover. The site was suitable for the inclusion of residential accommodation.

Councillor Bennett urged Members to recommend Option 2c as the preferred way forward.

Visiting Ward Members Councillors Gray and Brock reiterated Councillor Bennett's comments.

Councillor Evans raised concern in regard to the proposed mixed tenure of housing. Referring to the current need for affordable housing, the Authority should lead by example and include affordable units when developing Council-owned sites. A definite commitment for 35% permanent affordable housing should be applied in this case.

The Director of Regeneration confirmed that final costing for the schemes would be undertaken and all models were being assessed for the inclusion of affordable housing.

Councillor Stevens agreed that option 2c was preferable. The scheme maintained a good balance with minimum space lost and included the correct mix of residential accommodation. The Council had engaged with local residents who appeared to support the scheme as did users of the leisure facility.

A report outlining the value of the site would be submitted to the Committee in July 2019.

Discussions had taken place with the GLA in relation to grant funding.

In response to a question from Councillor Benington, the Director of Regeneration could not guarantee that the new library would operate in the same way as the Biggin Hill facility – Mytime did not have any rights regarding Group 2 facilities.

With option 2c, there was scope to expand facilities in addition to the current café and meeting rooms. As the scheme developed, the Council would work in conjunction with the successful operator on the new library design. Retention of the current footprint was subject to debate moving forward.

Councillor Benington supported the inclusion of 35% affordable housing.

The proposed 25m lane main pool was accepted as standard. Discussions had been held with the Diving Club who confirmed that this complied with their requirements although they were used to the existing 33m lane pool. Discussions would continue. As the proposed pool maintained a 2m depth throughout, a meeting with Sport England was suggested to discuss the option for a graduated pool. Members were informed that Sport England would not be contributing funds.

The Director of Regeneration advised that further consultation would be put forward and feedback submitted to a future meeting of the Committee. The Planning Department had been engaged to look at issues concerning trees which were not protected by TPOs and appropriate screening and treatments to soften the appearance of the proposed buildings.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1 the report be noted and the Committee's comments be provided to Members of the Executive for consideration;**
- 2 the Executive be recommended to approve option 2c on condition that at least 35% affordable housing was included.**

108 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 item 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.

**109 GATEWAY REPORT: PROVISION OF HOUSING SUPPLY IN
ANERLEY AND CHISLEHURST**

Members considered confidential information relating to Item 8 – Gateway Report: Provision of Housing Supply in Anerley and Chislehurst.

RESOLVED that the confidential information be noted.

As this was the final meeting of the 2018/19 Municipal Year, the Chairman thanked Members and officers for their tireless efforts throughout the year.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm

Chairman