

**RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 2 July 2019

Present:

Councillor Michael Rutherford (Chairman)
Councillor Suraj Sharma (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Gareth Allatt, Vanessa Allen, Yvonne Bear,
Julian Benington, Kim Botting FRSA, Alexa Michael and
Gary Stevens

Also Present:

Councillors Hannah Gray and Councillor Peter Morgan

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Josh King; Councillor Vanessa Allen attended as substitute.

2 APPOINTMENT OF NON-VOTING, CO-OPTED MEMBER FOR 2019/20

Report CSD19091

Members considered a nomination put forward by Bromley Youth Council for one of its members, Tajana Reeves, to attend Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS meetings as a non-voting co-opted member for the consideration of public reports only.

RESOLVED that Tajana Reeves be appointed to the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee for the current 2019/20 Municipal Year, as a non-voting, co-opted Member for the consideration of public reports only.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

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

4A QUESTIONS FOR THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER

No questions were received.

4B QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE

No questions were received.

5 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2019 AND THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 7 MAY 2019

Minute 92 – Provision of Library Services – Contract Performance Report

The following statement was submitted by Councillor Allen:-

“The minutes refer on page 18 to libraries not opening due to lack of staff – current strike action is partly due to non-filling of vacant posts. GLL comment about union negotiations taking too long, but there is no evidence of any negotiations on anything.

Clear statements were made at the 6 March meeting and others, since privatisation in 2017 – e.g. no loss of professional staff as a result of the contract. Issues now include:

- *unqualified people being brought in to temporarily cover vacancies;*
- *temporary upgrading of staff with no accompanying pay uplift;*
- *lack of consultation on reorganisation;*
- *additional duties being imposed without regard to overloading staff, suitable training or remuneration;*
- *staff I have spoken to know nothing of the 13 week training courses mentioned on page 19;*
- *training courses are mainly leisure oriented;*
- *training courses expect people on zero hours contracts to travel e.g. to east London;*
- *zero hours and casual workers are moved from place to place, staff and management do not know who will turn up, some of the infill people are unable or unwilling to do library work incl. read to or talk to children;*
- *librarians are being brought from other parts of London e.g. a prisons library manager turned up at Beckenham, or GLL is using leisure centre managers not library people; and*
- *library users value their local team and like to see the same staff regularly.*

The report at the 6 March meeting seems to have again glossed over many issues which have now been exposed.

On page 19 at the top of the page, GLL’s ‘formulaic’ approach (a strange word to use), includes attractive building and staff training. The new signage on all the libraries and other GLL facilities is poorly designed and looks

distinctly tacky and the staff training does not seem to be assisting operations.

GLL should be receiving default notices for lack of service due to their actions. LBB should be fining GLL for non-working self-service machines, late opening and early closing of libraries, all of which were happening well before the current industrial action.

GLL performance and library operations should be rigorously reviewed as a matter of urgency. The contract does I assume have break clauses, we should consider whether and when to invoke these.”

In response to this statement, the Director of Regeneration reported that the key principle of the current strike was the demand for a 6% pay rise for staff. Not one library had closed during the action so far and participating staff were receiving pay via the Union. GLL continued to perform well and a general increase in visitors was reported. Regular users had observed no difference in service since management transferred to GLL. Should the strike continue into September, there may be a need for localised closures but discussions about this would take place with GLL. In regard to monitoring performance, Members were advised that to date, aside from the fact that two libraries had opened slightly later than the advertised time, the level of standards remained high.

Councillor Allen agreed to send her written points to the Principal Client, Libraries for him to respond via e-mail (paying particular attention to the concerns relating to staff training and employees' inability/unwillingness to interact with children).

Minute 94 – Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee Work Programme (May 2019-April 2020)

The requested Mears Ltd Contract Performance Report was omitted from the current agenda and will be submitted to the scheduled meeting in September 2019.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2019 and the Special meeting held on 7 May 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

6 MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Report CSD19088

The Committee considered matters outstanding from previous meetings.

RESOLVED to note that all outstanding actions from previous Minutes had been completed.

7 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO REPORTS

7A BUDGET MONITORING 2019/20

Report FSD19057

The Committee considered an update on the latest budget monitoring position for 2019/20 for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio based on expenditure and activity levels up to 31 May 2019 which showed a projected underspend of £181k for the total portfolio budget.

Members joined the Chairman in expressing his gratitude to the Head of Finance for her tireless work on behalf of the Local Authority. He wished her a full and happy retirement.

The Head of Finance confirmed that the underspend in Building Control related to staff vacancies. The Enforcement and Appeals Manager explained that due to a national shortage of qualified officers, it had been difficult to fill vacancies.

The Director of Housing reported all staff vacancies within the Renewal Section were either under offer or in the process of being advertised.

It was agreed that the Chief Planner be contacted to explain (via e-mail), the reasons why the projected income deficit of £278k within Building Control was so vastly different to that of the £164k reported the previous year).

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the latest 2019/20 budget projection for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio.

7B PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2018/19

Report FSD19056

Members considered the 2018/19 provisional outturn position for the Renewal, Recreation Housing Portfolio which showed an overspend of £79k for 2018/19.

Consideration was also given to the release of the carry forward sums from 2018/19 held in the Central Contingency.

In response to a question from Councillor Benington, the Director of Housing reported that the majority of the additional costs in Housing Needs was attributed to the installation of a new water supply at a Travellers site. The reported deficit was also due, in part, to rent arrears.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:-

- 1) endorse the 2018/19 provisional outturn position for the Renewal and Recreation portfolio; and**
- 2) approve the release of the carry forward sums from 2018/19 held in the Central Contingency.**

8 DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2019-2029

Members considered the new draft housing strategy, developed to take account of major changes in the housing sector and wider demographic and economic changes. The strategy addressed the key challenges of increased housing demand, rising cost pressures in relation to homelessness and provision of temporary accommodation, growth and regeneration in the borough.

It was noted that at a meeting to be held on 10 July 2019, Members of the Executive would be asked to approve the draft Housing Strategy for public consultation for a period of six weeks.

It was reported that of the 3,457 households on the Housing Register, some had been accepted as homeless and others needed to be moved either for medical reasons or because they required larger accommodation.

Whilst Members supported the Strategy, they were concerned as to how it would be fully achieved. The Head of Compliance and Strategy advised that an action plan would be developed to ensure delivery of the priorities set out in the Housing Strategy.

Should the priorities be agreed by Members, the draft Strategy would be released for consultation to obtain public feedback on those priorities.

The following points and/or amendments were made by Members:-

- 1) The first bullet point on page 1 of the Draft Housing Strategy (agenda page 67), should be amended to read:- 'Bromley is experiencing severe affordable housing pressures.'
- 2) In regard to the 8th bullet point on page 3 of the Draft Strategy (page 69 of the agenda): clarify what was meant by the words 'Bromley-led developments'.

The Chairman was advised that of the three targets for new homes listed under the heading 'Building and Development' on page 2 of the Draft Strategy (page 68 of the agenda), Bromley's aim was 641 new homes per year until 2030, as set out in the Bromley Local Plan (2019).

RESOLVED that the report be noted and Member comments be provided to the Executive meeting on 10 July 2019 for consideration.

9 YORK RISE CONTRACT AWARD

REPORT ECHS 19061

Members were provided with details of tenders received for the delivery and management of modular build accommodation at the York Rise site in Orpington. The report also included officer recommendations for the award of contract and supporting finance arrangements.

Councillor Allen asked what would happen to the accommodation at the end of the contract period considering the units had a minimum lifespan of 60 years and yet the contract period was just 15 years with the option to extend by five years. Members were advised that the units were capable of being relocated or disposed of should it become necessary to do so. Alternatively, they could remain on site and utilised into the future if necessary. This would depend on whether the Council decided to lease the units or purchase them at the start of the contract.

Further confidential information relating to this report was considered under part 2 of the published agenda (Item 24).

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

10 RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO PLAN - QUARTER 4 UPDATE

Report DRR19/036

Members considered a report which summarised the aims and objectives of the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio for 2018/19. The report was accompanied by an update for Quarter 4 of 2019.

The Chairman informed Members that the newly designed new year Portfolio Plan would be submitted to the scheduled PDS meeting in September 2019.

Councillor Michael enquired about the present position regarding the planning application by Countryside for Phase 1 of Opportunity Site G. It was reported that the application was currently progressing through the planning process but should there be a need for drastic changes to be made, then once again, the revised proposals would need to be submitted for scrutiny by the Committee.

It was confirmed that the Measure of Success percentage rates of 60% and 70% of major and minor applications determined (Priority 2, item 4, page 85 of the agenda), related to national targets.

In regard to the Chislehurst Library site (Priority 3, page 89 of the agenda), Members were advised that the Milngate developer agreement was still being prepared for signature by the legal team and a long-standing issue was now close to being resolved.

Officers were currently exploring opportunities with the developer of the Chipperfield Road site to progress work to create a community hub, housing (of up to 200 units), public realm work and a new gymnastics centre together with a purpose built library. If successful, a detailed report will be submitted to the next meeting of the PDS Committee.

It was reported that the total number of housing units to be provided at York Rise, Anerley Town Hall, Bushell Way, Burnt Ash car park was approximately 125-130 units.

Officers agreed that updates on the 1000 properties situated on Council-owned land together with the insertion of success measures on homelessness prevention would be included in future reports.

Councillor Botting asked if any consideration had been given in the Key Strategy Plans for affordable accommodation for key workers. Members were advised that talks around the provision of shared ownership for people on low incomes were taking place.

Members then discussed the lack of funding for keyworkers and the fact that most affordable housing was not actually affordable. It was reported that Section 106 funding had brought rents down to an affordable level.

Members were informed that the AAP Review had ceased at the present time due to a current judicial review; it was anticipated that the review would resume in the summer.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and Members' comments be provided to the Portfolio Holder.

11 HOUSING SCHEMES (CAR PARKS)

Prior to the meeting, this report was withdrawn from the agenda.

12 WEST WICKHAM LEISURE AND LIBRARY REDEVELOPMENT

Prior to the meeting, this report was withdrawn from the agenda.

13 UPDATE ON THE PURPLE FLAG ACCREDITATION IN BECKENHAM TOWN CENTRE

Report DRR19/034

Members were provided with an update on progress to date of the Purple Flag accreditation for Beckenham Town Centre. Ongoing Member support in regard to further applications to renew the accreditation was sought.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) progress to date of the Purple Flag accreditation for Beckenham Town Centre be noted; and**
- 2) Member support be given to further applications to renew the Purple Flag accreditation.**

**14 TOWN CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE
REPORT**

Report DRR19/035

The report updated Members on progress achieved in delivering the Town Centres Development Programme.

In reference to the Bromley Town Centre High Street Public Realm Improvements, Members were advised that FM Conways would replace and pay for any dead trees in addition to the repair/replacement of pedestrian footways. It was reported that Conways was contracted for the schemes in Bromley, Orpington and Penge. Aside from a few defects in Bromley and Penge, they had operated in accordance with the contract.

A number of attempts had been made to obtain costings for the design and delivery options for the mirrored canopies in Bromley Town Centre. However, due to the fact that this was not included within the budget, it would be prudent to postpone this matter until the scheme was completed.

Revenue costs would need to be identified for the provision of a pavement scrubbing machine in Beckenham Town Centre. Likewise for the maintenance and upkeep of Beckenham Green. Councillor Allen considered these requirements should have been included in the contract but was advised that contracts were awarded on a 'like for like' basis.

It was reported that the Orpington Masterplan would provide a coherent vision for the future transformation of the Town Centre from Priory Gardens through to Orpington Railway Station. The primary focus would be on The Walnuts area and the wasteland around the leisure centre. The Council had worked with the Orpington BID and an application for Government funding was submitted by the due date. Should the application prove successful, a detailed report on how to progress the scheme would be submitted to the PDS meeting in September.

RESOLVED that progress on the delivery of the Town Centres Development Programme be noted.

15 PLANNING APPEALS COSTS - MARCH 2018 TO APRIL 2019

Report DRR19/031

Members received an update on the award of costs from planning appeals made in the financial year 2018/2019. The report also contained an update on cost claims paid in the same year.

Detailed information of individual appeal cases were considered under the confidential part 2 section of the agenda.

Members considered this item in conjunction with agenda Item 16 under the Part 2 Section.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

16 PLANNING APPEALS MONITORING REPORT - APRIL 2018 TO MARCH 2019

Report DRR19/032

Members considered an update on planning appeals received and decided for the year 2018/2019.

Detailed information relating to this item was considered under the confidential part 2 section of the agenda.

Members considered this item in conjunction with agenda Item 15 under the Part 2 Section.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

17 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PROGRESS AND MONITORING REPORT 2018-2019

Report DRR19/033

Members received an update on the progress of cases:-

- currently under investigation/pending consideration;
- at the appeal stage;
- awaiting compliance period;
- where enforcement action had been instigated;
- awaiting prosecution action;
- where enforcement action had been authorised; and
- currently with the legal department awaiting further action.

The report also included a full breakdown on the range of current complaints. As this contained confidential information, it was considered under the part 2 (not for publication) section of the agenda (Item 23).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**18 RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME SEPTEMBER 2019 - MARCH 2020**

Report CSD19089

Members considered the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee Work Programme for the period September 2019-March 2020.

At a meeting of the Council on 8 April 2019, Councillors Bance and King put forward a motion calling on the Local Authority to urge the Government to abolish Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988. The motion was deferred for consideration by the RR&H PDS Committee. This report will be submitted to the PDS meeting in September 2019.

A special meeting of the RR&H PDS Committee will be held for Members to consider the following items which were withdrawn from the current agenda:-

- Housing Schemes (Car Parks); and
- West Wickham Leisure and Library Redevelopment.

It was suggested that both Bromley Mytime and representatives from GLL be invited to attend future meetings to give presentations to Members. It was also suggested that Member visits to various libraries be arranged.

RESOLVED that subject to the addition of the above reports, the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee Work Programme for the period September 2019-March 2020 be noted.

**19 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 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.

20 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 MAY 2019

RESOLVED that the exempt Minutes of the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee held on 6 March, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

21 PLANNING APPEALS - COSTS 2018-2019

Members considered confidential Part 2 information relating to Agenda Item 15.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

22 PLANNING APPEALS MONITORING REPORT - APRIL 2018 TO MARCH 2019

Members considered confidential Part 2 information relating to Agenda Item 16.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

23 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PROGRESS AND MONITORING REPORT 2018-2019

REPORT DRR19/032

Members considered confidential Part 2 information relating to Agenda Item 17.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

24 YORK RISE CONTRACT AWARD

REPORT ECHS 19061

Further confidential information relating to the York Rise Contract Award (Item 9), was considered by Members.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

Chairman