

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

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 16 March 2022

Present:

Councillor Yvonne Bear (Chairman)
Councillor Gary Stevens (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Vanessa Allen, Julian Benington,
Aisha Cuthbert, Christine Harris, Charles Joel,
Will Rowlands and Richard Scoates

Also Present:

Councillor William Huntington-Thresher and
Councillor Peter Morgan

78 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

All Members were present – there were no apologies for absence.

79 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr William Huntington-Thresher declared an interest as an advisor to the Orpington BID Board in relation to minute 83(b) – Orpington BID Renewal 2023-28.

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

Three questions for oral reply were received at the meeting, and there were five questions for written reply. A copy of those questions, together with the Portfolio Holder's responses can be viewed as Appendix A to these Minutes.

81 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26TH JANUARY 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

82 MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND WORK PROGRAMME

Report CSD22044

The report set out progress against outstanding actions from previous meetings. The Chairman commented that the Design Guide report should come to the June meeting if possible.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

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

The Committee considered the following reports where the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio Holder was recommended to take a decision.

A CONTRACT AWARD FOR STATUTORY HOMELESSNESS REVIEWS
Report HPR2022/008

The Committee considered a part 1 summary of a more detailed part 2 report providing an overview of the tendering process for the Statutory Homelessness Reviews Service in accordance with the Council's financial and contractual procedure rules. It was confirmed that the service would remain the same under the new contract.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to award this contract, via direct award, to the suggested provider for a four year contract commencing June 2022 with an option to extend for up to two years.

B ORPINGTON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) RENEWAL 2023-2028
Report HPR2022/009

The Orpington First BID was launched in 2013 for a term of 5 years until 2018. Following a successful first term, its business community voted for a second term of 5 years which expired in March 2023. Businesses in the Orpington First BID area had now expressed a desire for another term of 5 years from 2023 to 2028 and the report sought authority for a renewal ballot.

It was confirmed that there were no substantial changes proposed to the Operating Agreement other than some changes to deal with unforeseen issues (which had arisen as some businesses had not been able to make their contributions due to the adverse impact of covid.) A Member asked whether Areli were members of the Orpington First BID – officers would check the current position.

Councillor William Huntington-Thresher attended the meeting as a ward member and advisor to the BID Board. He stated that the BID was making a positive difference in Orpington and urged the Committee and the Portfolio Holder to support the recommendations. He also commented that there was a concern that the fees paid to Liberata for administering the ballot were higher than for other BIDs and urged the Portfolio Holder to carry out some benchmarking and ensure that Orpington First was not paying more than it

should. The Portfolio Holder responded that he would ensure that this was done.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the recommendations in the report to -

(1) Note the headline BID levy rules and emerging key priorities of the Orpington First BID for its third term.

(2) Agree to delegate authority to the Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration that upon -

- **being notified that the BID proposer wishes to put proposals for a Renewal BID to a ballot, to review the final version of the BID Renewal Proposal which is expected to be delivered to the Authority by 24th April 2022, and**
- **being satisfied that the BID Renewal Proposal has been submitted in accordance with Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 (Regulations) and does not conflict with any of the Council's priorities and plans, and that its geographic scope is within the boundaries of the London Boroughs scope is within the boundaries of the London Borough of Bromley, to instruct the Ballot Holder to hold the BID ballot in July 2022 in accordance with the regulations.**

(3) Agree to delegate authority to the Director for Housing, Planning and Regeneration that upon review the final version of the BID Proposal to vote on behalf of the Council for eligible Council-occupied hereditaments which fall within the proposed BID area (these are listed in Table 1, paragraph 3.20 of the report).

(4) Note the potential for additional costs to the Council in the event of a no vote and that a further report setting out options will be submitted for members consideration in that event.

C CONFIRMATION OF ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS TO REMOVE PART 1, CLASS B AND C PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS IN PETTS WOOD ASRC AND CHISLEHURST ROAD CONSERVATION AREA
Report HPR2022/012

This report recommended that the Council confirm two non-immediate Article 4 Directions to withdraw permitted development (PD) rights which allowed various alterations to the roof of a dwellinghouse without planning permission. These Directions would withdraw Part 1, Class B and C PD rights in the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character as shown in the Bromley Local Plan (January 2019); and withdraw Part 1, Class C PD rights in the

Chislehurst Road Conservation Area (based on the boundary prior to recent changes).

The Direction would replace an existing Direction which removed these PD rights on front roof-slopes only.

In line with the requirements of legislation, representations on the proposed Directions had been sought. The Council had to take into account any representations made before it confirmed the Article 4 Directions, but no representations had been received. If confirmed, the Directions would come into force on 19 July 2022. The proposals had already been considered and supported by the Development Control Committee.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to -

(1) Confirm the two non-immediate Article 4 Directions to withdraw Part 1, Class B and C PD rights in the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character; and withdraw Part 1, Class C PD rights in the Chislehurst Road Conservation Area. These PD rights are currently granted by the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) - the areas covered by the Directions are shown on the maps at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to the report.

(2) Make a direction to cancel the existing Article 4 Direction which removes Part 1, Class B and C PD rights on front roof-slopes in the Petts Wood ASRC. The timing of this cancellation will be aligned with the date when the new direction comes into force, so as to avoid any gap in coverage of the directions.

D CONFIRMATION OF SIX ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS TO REMOVE PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR USE CLASS E TO RESIDENTIAL USE
Report HPR2022/011

The report recommended that the Council confirm six non-immediate Article 4 Directions to withdraw permitted development (PD) rights which allowed premises in Use Class E to change to residential use. These Directions applied to three Business Improvement Areas and three Office Clusters as set out in the Bromley Local Plan. The Directions would replace existing Directions which removed office to residential PD rights in these areas; these existing Directions would lapse on 31 July 2022.

In line with the requirements of legislation, representations on the proposed Directions were sought. The Council had to take into account any representations made before it confirmed the Article 4 Directions, but no representations were received on the six proposed Directions. If confirmed, the Directions would come into force on 27 July 2022.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to confirm the of six non-immediate Article 4 Directions to withdraw Part 3, Class MA PD

rights in Bromley’s Business Improvement Areas and Office Clusters, as designated in the Bromley Local Plan and shown at Appendix 1 to the report to come into force on 27 July 2022; these PD rights are currently granted by the GPDO.

E BUDGET MONITORING 2021/22
Report FSD22024

The report provided an update on the latest revenue budget monitoring position for 2021/22 for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio based on expenditure and activity levels up to the end of December 2021. An overspend of £102k was now projected – while this was an improvement on the previous £614k previously reported, this was largely due to an increase of £445k in allocated Covid-19 grants. The underlying position of savings from housing developments not being realised as quickly as had been anticipated was unchanged.

Officers undertook to provide details of the Historic England Hydro works grant (page 91 of the report.)

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the 2021/22 revenue budget monitoring for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio.

F CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 3RD QUARTER 2021/2
Report FSD22030

On 9th February 2022, the Executive had received a report summarising the current position on capital expenditure and receipts following the 3rd quarter of 2021/22. The Executive agreed a revised Capital Programme and an updated Capital Strategy for the five-year period 2021/22 to 2025/26. The report highlighted changes agreed by the Executive in respect of the Capital Programme for the Renewal, Recreation & Housing Portfolio. The current programme for this portfolio was set out in Appendix A and detailed comments on individual schemes were shown in Appendix B.

Officers confirmed that the housing scheme at the Beckenham Spa car park had not yet been approved for addition to the capital programme, but a report was expected soon.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note and acknowledge the second quarter capital monitoring position, as agreed by the Executive on 9th February 2022.

84 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 1 agenda for the meeting of the Executive on 30th March 2022.

85 AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF VARIOUS TENANCY AGREEMENTS FOR BROMLEY OWNED HOUSING

Report HPR2022/017

As a result of the Council owning its own Housing Stock, Officers were seeking formal approval for the Council to adopt the use of a variety of Tenancy Agreements for Bromley-owned housing. New tenants would be offered an introductory twelve month tenancy. If this was successful the tenants would be moved to a secure tenancy, but if problems were encountered a fixed term tenancy could be offered for up to four years to enable the Council and its partners to support the long-term sustainability of the tenancy. In response to questions, officers explained that although fixed term tenancies had been promoted a few years ago, the benefits of long-term tenancies were now recognised.

The Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing explained that the Council had taken a decision about two years previously to re-open its Housing Revenue Account in view of the lack of suitable accommodation and the cost of providing unsatisfactory overnight accommodation.

A Member referred to a complaint about a rat infestation at Manorfields. Officers were aware of this issue, and were satisfied that the contractor was performing satisfactorily.

RESOLVED that the Executive be recommended to -

(1) Agree that Housing Officers grant Tenancy Agreements to Bromley Residents residing in Bromley owned housing as set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report.

(2) Delegate Authority to the Director of Housing, Planning & Regeneration in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services and Governance to finalise the Tenancy Agreements and implement and issue to individual tenants.

(3) Note that Officers are working with Campbell Tickell to produce a full suite of amended and/or new Policies and procedures that will come back to the Executive In June or July 2022 that will support the Council's statutory obligations with regard to its own housing.

86 GATEWAY FOR PROCEEDING TO PROCUREMENT FOR ACCOMMODATION, SUPPORT AND TENANCY SUSTAINMENT SERVICES

Report HPR2022/019

The Council currently provided floating support and specialist accommodation-based support for ex-offenders. This specialist accommodation service had been provided by Hestia since 1 October 2016,

offering supported accommodation for up to 9 ex-offenders and floating support for (up to) 100 tenants.

The 3 year contract at the value of £195k per annum was due to expire on 30 September 2019. However, the Council had extended the contract with the Provider for a further year, with an expiry date of 30 September 2020. The total contract value for the 4 years equated to approximately £780k.

In January 2020, a 6 month extension beyond term to 31 March 2021 was authorised for the Hestia contract, via exemption from competitive tendering, to enable the services to be amalgamated with Evolve Housing and put out to tender. However, due to service pressures because of Covid, the tender was delayed. In September 2021 it had been agreed that the Hestia contract would be extended for a further 12 months and, with Hestia's agreement, the contract was extended to September 2022. The total contract value for the 5.5 years equates to £1,072K.

A counter proposal in respect of the Evolve Housing contract was incidentally received and accepted by the Council in August 2021. Therefore the plan to amalgamate the respective Evolve and Hestia service contracts was curtailed.

This report requested authorisation to proceed to tender for the Accommodation, Support and Tenancy Sustainment Service.

RESOLVED that the Executive be recommended to

(1) Approve proceeding to a competitive tender, via a single stage, open procurement process, for the provision of accommodation, support, and tenancy sustainment services to vulnerable people; it is proposed the contract will be for a period of five years, with the option to extend for a further two periods, of two years each.

(2) The estimated cost will be £234k per annum with a total contract value of £ 1,170k for the initial five year contract period and £2,106k for the full nine year period; the initial costs will be fixed for 5 years, but any further extensions will be subject to additional costs with an annual inflation rise in line with CPI, for the maximum period of 4 years.

(3) Approve the extension of the current contract for a further period of up to 6 months, should it be required, in the event that it is not possible to conclude award of contract and any mobilisation required prior to the end of the current contract; an extension of up to 6 months would be at an estimated value of £95.5k, a cumulative whole life value of £1,170k.

87 ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee noted the Chairman's report for the annual Scrutiny report summarising the Committee's work during 2021/22.

88 THEMATIC SESSION: HOUSING

The Committee received a presentation from Lynnette Chamielec, Assistant Director, Housing. The homelessness figures continued to be challenging across London and underlined the importance of prevention and intervention at an early stage. The reasons for homelessness in Bromley in 2021/22 were evicted/asked to leave (30%), nowhere to live (19%), violence/harassment (11%), relationship breakdown (8%), overcrowding (4%) and other (28%). The violence/harassment figure was a reduction from 16% in 2020/21. The numbers of people in temporary accommodation had reduced due to the More Homes Bromley scheme, with 26% placed in the borough and 74% placed out of borough.

The presentation outlined a number of areas of concern, including the rising cost of living, additional pressure of the housing market with demand increasing, increased rent arrears and evictions, lack of housing association move-on, particularly from larger units, lack of adapted or adaptable homes, clients with complex needs falling between services and tenancy sustainment. There were also numbers of Afghan refugees seeking assistance. Nevertheless, the service was taking action including early intervention and prevention, enhanced services for single people and rough sleepers, partnership working, tendering for new contracts and enhanced services, trialling new schemes and initiatives such as the beam crowd-sourcing scheme and a review of the Allocation Scheme. A number of schemes were making more homes available, such as working with the private rented sector, More Homes Bromley, Meadowship Homes and the Council's own building programme (where several schemes were largely complete but awaiting connection of utilities).

89 PRESENTATION FROM HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

The Committee received two presentations.

(A) Susan Clinton, Head of Operations, Clarion Housing Group

Ms Clinton outlined that new build handovers were at a low level, contributing to a reduction in general needs lettings in the last two years already impacted by covid-19. Clarion was close to its targets for voids and occupancy. Customer satisfaction on repairs, which was independently measured, was at 88.44%, exceeding the target of 85%. 383 Member inquiries had been received in the last year; 107 (28%) had been resolved within 10 working days, and 254 (74%) within 20 working days. A Member commented that her correspondence reflected numerous cases where repairs were not carried out despite repeat visits. The Chairman considered that by the time that councillors were involved situations had often reached crisis point, and that often the problem was communication.

Turning to planned investment, Ms Clinton listed a number of new schemes being developed, including the Blenheim Centre in Penge and at Homefield

Rise, Orpington. A number of major schemes were at feasibility study stage, including Blacksmiths Lane and Spring Lodge, Swanscombe House and Cotmandene Crescent, and Bertha James Court. Refurbishment of existing blocks led to large bills for leaseholders, so Clarion were always looking for opportunities to invest in new homes. They did not buy back former social housing stock – their assessment was that it was always more worthwhile to put money into new development.

Community Impact days were being run focussed on four main areas – Cray Valley East, Cray Valley West, Mottingham and Crystal Palace and Penge. These covered anti-social behaviour, fire safety, environmental visual audits and safeguarding issues. Clarion had granted Clarion Futures funding for over twenty projects to address issues affecting Bromley residents and was delivering the Love London Working programme in Bromley – this had supported over 1,800 residents, achieved over 900 training outcomes and helped over 500 customers into employment.

(B) Angela George, Chislehurst and Sidcup Housing Association and Chair, Bromley Federation of Housing Associations

Angela George explained that the Federation brought together Housing Associations working in Bromley. Although there were 5 large housing associations in the borough, the largest being Clarion, there were 49 in total.

She commented that the key to effective performance for housing associations was repairing homes. Housing associations needed to be more open, to communicate effectively and to have a personal touch in dealing with their tenants. She offered to provide further performance information on repairs turnaround after the meeting and invited members to approach her directly where there were problems.

The Chairman thanked Ms Clinton and Ms George for their very helpful briefings.

90 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 referred to below as it is 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.

**The following summaries
refer to matters involving exempt information**

91 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 26TH JANUARY 2022

The exempt minutes of the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee meeting held on 26th January 2022 were confirmed.

**92 PART 2 CONTRACT AWARD FOR STATUTORY HOMELESSNESS
REVIEWS**

The Committee considered part 2 information in relation to the proposed award of contract.

The Meeting ended at 9.58 pm

Chairman