

RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 6 September 2023

Present:

Councillor Tony Owen (Chairman)
Councillors Will Connolly, Hannah Gray, Colin Hitchins,
Tony McPartlan, Alexa Michael, Chris Price,
Will Rowlands, Alison Stammers and Pauline Tunnicliffe

Tommy Velvick, Bromley Youth Council (Part 1 only)

Also Present:

Councillor Yvonne Bear, Portfolio Holder for Renewal,
Recreation and Housing

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Christine Harris and Thomas Turrell (Vice-Chairman), and Councillors Hannah Gray and Alexa Michael attended as their respective substitutes.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no additional declarations of interest.

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

No questions were received.

24 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 AUGUST 2023

In considering Minute 17b: Changing Places Facilities Round 2 Funding, the Chairman reported that feedback had been provided to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to the effect that offering grant funding for revenue costs as part of any future funding rounds could result in a larger number of Changing Places Facilities being delivered.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 August 2023 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

**25 MATTERS OUTSTANDING AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
Report CSD23118**

The report set out progress against outstanding actions from previous meetings and the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

The Chairman proposed that Network Rail be invited to attend the next meeting of the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee on 15 November 2023 to explore the future development potential of railway stations and this was supported by the Committee.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

**26 HOLDING THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING
PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO ACCOUNT**

The Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing provided an update to the Committee on her activities.

The majority of projects being delivered across the Portfolio were on schedule with the exception of the York Rise Housing Project which had experienced a number of delays but was now on track for delivery by the revised deadline. Other key updates included work underway to secure additional funding to develop the Borough's dark-fibre broadband network and the transfer of the Crystal Palace Park lease to the Crystal Palace Park Trust in September 2023.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

**A HOUSING, PLANNING AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO
PLAN UPDATE - 2023/24 Q1
Report HPR2023/003**

The report presented the 2023/24 Quarter 1 update to the Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Plan.

In response to a question from a Member, the Portfolio Holder advised that a wide range of work was being undertaken to tackle the increasing demand for temporary accommodation, including supporting those in temporary accommodation to move on. A Member queried whether bringing the growing number of 'void' housing association properties in the Borough back into use could assist with this and the Portfolio Holder explained that housing association properties offered permanent placements rather than temporary accommodation. Whilst there had been an issue with void properties in recent months, turnaround times were now improving which was supported by early advertisement of upcoming vacancies. The Assistant Director of Housing added that Clarion Housing Association had been particularly affected by the issue of void properties due to delays in undertaking regeneration works and

current turnaround times would be provided to Members following the meeting.

A Member asked how a time-limited Government grant of £37,500,000 to deliver more affordable homes in Bromley was being monitored. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that a full business case would be developed for all viable schemes with five potential sites identified to date. Delivery would be monitored closely by Members, including the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Committee and within the Local Authority's overall capital programme, and the grant funding would also need to be signed off at every stage by the Government. Another Member was concerned that the Local Authority had been unsuccessful in a bid for additional funding for the Crystal Palace Park development and the Assistant Director: Culture and Regeneration advised that Ellie Reeves MP had contacted the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to request the grant decision be reviewed and that the phased approach to the development would allow for additional grant applications to be made to future funding rounds. The Greater London Authority was taking forward its own repair and refurbishment scheme for the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre and was working closely with the Local Authority to ensure that there was no conflict between the parallel development works.

A Member welcomed the update on Planning Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which confirmed that major and minor applications were now being processed within set timescales and that the backlog of planning applications had been cleared. The Member requested that Planning KPIs be reported to future meetings of the Development Control Committee.

RESOLVED: That the progress on the actions associated with the Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Plan for Quarter 1 of the 2023/24 financial year be noted.

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

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

A BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24 Report FSD23050

The report provided the second revenue budget monitoring position for 2023/24 for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio based on expenditure and activity levels for Quarter 1 of the 2023/24 financial year.

In response to a question from a Co-opted Member, the Head of Finance (Adult Social Care, Health and Housing) confirmed that a Homelessness Reduction Grant totalling £89k had been carried forward from the 2022/23 financial year and would fund work preventing and relieving homelessness for

young people. A Member asked whether people who had previously been rough sleepers were placed in Houses of Multiple Occupancy and the Assistant Director: Housing explained that a full range of housing options were used by the Local Authority. Every accommodation placement was underpinned by a robust due diligence process to ensure that placements were appropriate and that the individual support needs of the tenant were being met.

A Member noted the current average cost of £8,268 per household per annum of temporary accommodation and queried the level of savings that could be generated from moving households into permanent housing. The Head of Finance (Adult Social Care, Health and Housing) clarified that the level of savings varied across placements as permanent housing had its own cost implications, including ongoing maintenance costs. A Member asked whether there was any guidance for Members on borrowing to fund new housing schemes and was advised that the viability of borrowing to fund housing schemes was considered on a scheme-by-scheme basis. The Portfolio Holder further reported that consideration was being given to the viability of seeking external funding for new housing schemes moving forward where appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- **Note the projected net overspend of £2,479k on controllable expenditure based on information as at December 2022; and,**
- **Agree the release of amounts carried forward from the 2022/23 as set out in Section 3.5 to Report FSD23050.**

**B CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - QUARTER 1
2023/24
Report FSD23055**

On 20 September 2023, the Council's Executive would receive a report summarising the current position on capital expenditure and receipts following Quarter 1 of 2023/24 and would be asked to agree a revised capital programme for the five-year period 2023/24 to 2027/28. This report highlighted changes to be put to the Council's Executive in respect of the capital programme for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note and acknowledge the changes to be put to the Council's Executive on 20 September 2023.

**C LIBRARY WORKS PROGRESS AND CROFTON ROMAN
VILLA
Report HPR2023/050**

The report provided an update on the library works programme and repairs to Crofton Roman Villa.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director: Culture and Regeneration advised that the budget of £1.4M for repair works to Beckenham Library did not include the cost of providing a temporary library facility. Temporary library facilities would be put in place for Beckenham, Orpington and Chislehurst libraries due the significant works required, and Ward Councillors would be approached to help identify suitable venues in their area, such as vacant shop units. A specific budget had been allocated to each library within the library works programme and should any library require works costing more than the funds allocated, additional funding would be sought so that other libraries were not disadvantaged. Another Member queried whether a current and future needs analysis had been undertaken to inform the library works and the Assistant Director: Culture and Regeneration clarified that this was not a development scheme but was focused on repairs and minor alterations. In response to a query from a Committee and Ward Member, the Assistant Director: Culture and Regeneration was pleased to announce that the works on St Paul's Cray Library had been delivered on time and under budget and further details of costings would be provided to the Committee following the meeting.

In relation to the plans for Crofton Roman Villa, the Assistant Director: Culture and Regeneration explained that whilst the monument itself was in good condition, the building that housed it was in a poor state of repair. Crofton Roman Villa was the only Roman villa open to the public in the London area and was a popular visitor attraction with schools. It was proposed to use the existing budget for the Crofton Roman Villa site as match-funding to apply for grants to further enhance the on-site facilities and visitor experience at no additional cost to the Local Authority, and a further report would be presented to the Committee for consideration prior to any works commencing on-site.

A Member asked whether reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) had been used in the construction of Bromley libraries. The Assistant Director: Culture and Regeneration advised that recent condition surveys had found no evidence of RAAC but that specific RAAC surveys were being commissioned.

RESOLVED: that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- **Delegate authority to the Director of Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration to award the library works multi-disciplinary consultancy contract at an estimated value of £800k;**

- **Agree that the works at Southborough Library proceed to tender at an estimated value of £490k;**
- **Delegate authority to the Director of Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration to award the works contract for Southborough Library, given how close the estimated value is to the £500k threshold, as long as the winning tender is affordable within the Operational Property Review budget; and,**
- **Recommend the Council's Executive:**
 - **Agree to proceed to tender for the works contract for Beckenham Library at an estimated value of £1.4m;**
 - **Delegate authority to the Director of Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing to award the works contract for Beckenham Library at an estimated value of £1.4m, as long as the winning tender is affordable within the Operational Property Review library programme budget;**
 - **Note the information on works to Crofton Roman Villa and the request as set out in Paragraph 3.19 of Report HPR2023/050 to utilise the Operational Property Review budget for this site as match-funding towards bids for grants to improve the information on site and improve visitor experience; and,**
 - **Delegate authority to the Director of Corporate Services to enter into and manage legal matters relating to these works to allow them to progress.**

D LOCAL PARADES UPDATE
Report HPR2023/030

The report provided an update on the Local Parades Improvement Initiative – Round 2.

In response to a question from a Member, the Regeneration Manager confirmed that whilst all Ward Members were invited to apply for the remaining funding, priority would be given to applications from shopping parades and wards that had not previously been successful in securing funding.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- **Note the works completed to date; and,**

- **Confirm that unutilised funding of £50k to date be retained as Local Parades initiative funding for which Ward Members are invited to apply for as set out in Paragraph 3.18 of Report HPR 2023/030.**

28 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 1 agenda for the meeting of the Council's Executive on 20 September 2023.

A ADOPTION OF THE BROMLEY TOWN CENTRE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT Report HPR2023/053

The report proposed the adoption of the Bromley Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document which provided guidance to assist with the determination of planning applications in the Bromley Town Centre area, including on design requirements. The final draft SPD included a number of amendments made as a result of a public consultation undertaken between 28 October 2022 to 27 January 2023. This report would also be considered by the Development Control Committee at its meeting on 5 October 2023.

A Member who was also the Chairman of Development Control Committee underlined that this document was not planning policy but had been designed to inform planning policy. The Member expressed broad satisfaction with the final draft SPD but emphasised the importance of acknowledging Bromley Town Centre's distinctive character as a retail, business and residential area and suggested an amendment referencing the role that new residential units played in increasing footfall. Another suggestion was to make reference to the role of planning policy in designing out crime; however, the Head of Planning Policy and Strategy reassured Members that this particular aspect of planning was already explored in detail within the Urban Design Guide.

Note: Following the meeting the Head of Planning Policy and Strategy confirmed that Paragraph 5.41 of the Bromley Town Centre SPD had previously been amended to state that loss of retail units could mean that the projected increase in demand for retail services from new town centre residents would not be met.

In responding to questions from another Member, the Head of Planning Policy and Strategy clarified that references to Churchill Theatre in the final draft SPD related to the cultural contribution it made to Bromley Town Centre. The Member highlighted the need to consider how the town centre would evolve over time and stressed the importance of fostering mixed-use and residential development alongside a vibrant cultural and retail offer, particularly in light of the changing working practices in the post-COVID period. The Member also queried why the Civic Centre site was described as having medium development potential and it was explained that this was due to site

restrictions that would limit development, including the Listed building and public park.

A Member spoke on behalf of Ward Members for Bromley Town who were concerned that aspects of their consultation submission had not been adopted, including the height of buildings in Bromley North, West and South and the overall quality of housing. The Head of Planning Policy and Strategy advised that the Bromley Town Ward Councillors had been consulted on an early version of the draft SPD prior to public consultation and that as far as he was aware, a further response had not been received to the draft SPD consultation. The issues previously raised had aligned with other representations and the Local Authority's response to these representations was set out in the SPD consultation statement. The Chairman noted that any specific changes could be put to the Council's Executive which would be considering the final draft SPD for approval at its meeting on 18 October 2023.

RESOLVED: That the Council's Executive be recommended to:

- **Adopt the Bromley Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document as a local development document, subject to any further minor changes (e.g. – related to formatting or mapping) prior to adoption; and,**
- **Authorise officers to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to request that the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan is revoked, as per the provisions of section 25 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**

**B HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME AND CHOICE BASED LETTINGS (APPROVAL TO PROCEED TO STATUTORY CONSULTATION)
Report HPR2023/049**

The report presented the draft Housing Allocation Scheme and sought approval to proceed to a statutory eight-week public consultation. The draft Housing Allocation Scheme was designed to enable the Local Authority to consider the individual needs of those applying for housing while making best use of the limited housing resources available to it.

The Assistant Director: Housing advised that as part of the implementation process, all applicants on the Housing Register would be reassessed against the new policy which would be supported by the recruitment of temporary staff. In considering Section 4.9.4: Priority on Health Grounds, a Member queried the use of the word 'severe' and whether people with less severe long-term limiting illnesses or quality of life should also be prioritised to prevent escalation of need. The Assistant Director: Housing confirmed that whilst those seeking housing priority on health grounds would need to demonstrate their level of need, all housing applications were considered on an individual

basis and took a range of information into account, including medical advice. The Local Authority could also allocate housing placements outside of the Housing Allocation Scheme where appropriate. With regard to Section 2.3: Other Housing Options, a Member suggested that the option of living with family be added to the list of possible alternatives and following discussion, it was agreed to update the Housing Allocation Scheme to state 'We discuss all suitable housing options with those who approach us' which would include living with family where this was a viable option. The Member requested a definition of statutory over-crowding, and this would be provided to the Committee following the meeting. A Co-opted Member also requested that the number of lettings and average waiting times be regularly reported to the Committee, and this would be included in Key Performance Indicators moving forward.

RESOLVED: That the Council's Executive be recommended to:

- **Approve the draft Housing Allocation Scheme for a statutory eight-week public consultation; and,**
- **Note that the results of the consultation together with any suggested amendments would be reported back to the Council's Executive for final approval and adoption of the Housing Allocation Scheme.**

**C FEASIBILITY FUNDING FOR REGENERATION OF STAR
LANE TRAVELLER SITE
Report HPR2023/052**

The report provided an update on the Operational Property Review with respect to the Star Lane Traveller Site and requested £500k be utilised from the Operational Property Review capital budget to undertake feasibility and engagement works necessary to develop a detailed works programme.

A Member welcomed the proposals for Star Lane Traveller Site and underlined the importance of placing community engagement at the heart of the works programme. The Member raised a concern regarding the pace of previous site works and Portfolio Holder advised that this was primarily in relation to external parties, including utility companies. The Local Authority was intending to engage closely with the residents of Star Lane Traveller Site and an internal project board had been established to drive forward the works in a timely manner. The Local Authority was also working to engage with other stakeholders who had already built strong relationships with the Star Lane community.

RESOLVED: That the Council's Executive be recommended to:

- **Approve the utilisation of £500k from the assigned Operational Property Review budget for feasibility works at the Star Lane Traveller site;**

- **Note the intent to allocate resources for the delivery of the programme as set out in Paragraphs 3.10-11 to Report HPR2023/052, including procurement of necessary works and services to deliver the programme;**
- **Approve an engagement programme with the residents of Star Lane to support a timetable for a works programme;**
- **Approve the initiation of a planning application to make temporary use of the adjacent site to Star Lane for temporary pitches during a works programme;**
- **Approve Road Adoption of a road into the site, and delegate Authority to the Director of Corporate Resources for any necessary legal arrangements of Road Adoptions; and,**
- **Note the corporate risk of the current condition of the site.**

D HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE

This report was withdrawn.

The Head of Regeneration advised that due to tight timescales for decision making on this matter, scrutiny would be undertaken by the Committee via e-mail circulation as well as by the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee prior to decision by Council's Executive on 20 September 2023.

E HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONTRACT (APPROVAL TO PROCEED TO TENDER) Report HPR2023/048

The report sought approval to proceed to procurement for housing management services for the Local Authority-owned housing portfolio.

A Member queried whether consideration had been given to running this service in-house. The Head of Housing Schemes advised that all options had been explored but that in-house provision would not be appropriate due to the small number of properties, lack of existing in-house expertise and ramifications for existing tenancy arrangements. Should the tender process fail to attract bids, further consideration would be given to how this service could best be provided which could include a hybrid delivery model.

RESOLVED: That the Council's Executive be recommended to:

- **Agree to proceed to procurement for housing management services for the Local Authority-owned housing portfolio via a compliant open tender. The estimated annual value being £2M**

with the contract to commence from 1 April 2024 for a ten-year term (with the option to extend for a further five years) at an estimated whole life value of £30m;

- **Note that resource requirements will be built up as part of the 2024/25 budget process in order to meet the Council's statutory obligations in relation to stock ownership and affordable housing management; and,**
- **Note specialist legal and financial advice received with respect to the Beehive Scheme and agree to proceed with the future management of the portfolio as set out in Paragraphs 3.11-17 to Report HPR2023/048.**

29 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER ITEMS

A PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PROGRESS AND MONITORING REPORT APRIL 2022 TO MARCH 2023 Report HPR2023/055

The report provided an update on the progress of current enforcement cases.

In response to a question from a Member, the Development Control Manager confirmed that operational development as a reason for planning enforcement related to the conducting of building works where not permitted. This differed from plans not built according to permission which applied to cases where planning permission had been agreed but works were outside the approved plans. The Member queried when it was appropriate to issue a stop notice and the Development Control Manager advised that these were only issued to halt works that were likely to irreparably damage a listed building or a protected tree. There were a range of powers in place to halt inappropriate works and legal advice was sought on all such cases. Another Member observed that a number of ongoing enforcement cases were marked as located in wards that no longer existed following a boundary change in May 2022. The Development Control Manager explained that these details were correct at the time of first reporting and that once the new Planning Software system had been introduced it would be possible to update ward details for existing enforcement cases. The Chairman underlined the need to ensure enforcement matters could be reported quickly to the Development Control team and the Development Control Manager clarified that Members should receive an auto-response acknowledging receipt of all enforcement matters.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

B THEMATIC SESSION: DEEP DIVE ON LETTINGS

The Committee welcomed Philip Dodd, Head of Allocations and Accommodation who gave a presentation on Lettings.

The Committee thanked Philip Dodd for his excellent presentation, a copy of which can be viewed at Appendix A to these minutes.

RESOLVED: That the thematic session be noted.

30 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**

31 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PROGRESS AND MONITORING REPORT APRIL 2022 TO MARCH 2023 - APPENDIX 1

As the Committee agreed there were no adequate grounds to consider Appendix 1: Current Cases as a Part 2 (Exempt) item, this was considered in Part 1 (Public) as part of the discussions on Item 9a: Planning Enforcement Progress and Monitoring Report April 2022 to March 2023.

The Meeting ended at 9.02 pm

Chairman