

RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 15 November 2023

Present:

Councillor Tony Owen (Chairman)
Councillor Thomas Turrell (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Will Connolly, Christine Harris,
Tony McPartlan, 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
Councillor Jeremy Adams (observing)

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Colin Hitchins.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Jeremy Adams who was attending the meeting as an observer.

34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no additional declarations of interest.

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

No questions were received.

36 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2023

The minutes were agreed subject to the first sentence of the third paragraph of Minute 26a: HPR Portfolio Plan Update being amended to read:

“A Member asked how a time-limited Mayor of London grant of £37,500,000 to deliver more affordable homes in Bromley was being monitored.”

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2023 be agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to the above amendment.

37 MATTERS OUTSTANDING AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
Report CSD23135

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

The Chairman reported that the Thematic Session on Railway Station Development had been deferred to the next meeting of the Committee on 31 January 2024 to allow additional time to secure attendance from Network Rail. Another Member queried the review of parks buildings and was advised that whilst this was a joint workstream with Environment and Community Services PDS Committee, decision making responsibility was held by the Portfolio Holder for Environment.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

38 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, the completion of which had been further delayed by the developer going into administration. Key milestones had been reached for the development of Bromley North Station Car Park which had secured planning permission and Crystal Palace Park which had been handed over to the new Trust. Other events of note included the successful delivery of the Light-Up Bromley event on 25 October 2023 that had attracted a high number of visitors to Bromley Town Centre as well as the adoption of the Bromley Supplementary Planning Document.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

A HOUSING, PLANNING AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO
PLAN UPDATE – 2023/24 Q2 UPDATE
Report HPR2023/003

The report presented the 2023/24 Quarter 2 update to the Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Plan.

In considering the update, Members noted the ongoing pressures on housing in the Borough. Temporary accommodation costs continued to rise and a complete non-supply of homelessness accommodation alongside a reduction in the availability of privately rented accommodation had required the Local

Authority to make placements in hotel accommodation. Work was underway to mitigate costs arising from these placements, including block-booking, and a new key performance indicator would track the average cost of temporary accommodation placements going forward. A Member queried whether the Local Authority delivered satellite support services to those accommodated in hotels and was advised that a rolling visiting programme was in place for all those in temporary accommodation. There was also a well-established Council outreach programme at venues across the Borough and dedicated outreach surgeries could be arranged at any hotel where there was a quantum of residents in temporary accommodation. Another Member asked about support for those with complex needs and the Director: Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration advised that the accommodation pathway brought together key partners to provide a wraparound service for vulnerable individuals and families and that this was further supported by a casework system. The Local Authority would continue to encourage housing providers and developers to increase the amount of adapted accommodation available for those with complex needs.

A Member asked whether the Government's 'Rent a Room' scheme was being promoted to Bromley residents and was advised that the Local Authority's website gave basic advice about this and similar opportunities and that this type of accommodation would also be considered for inclusion in the Local Authority's Homeless Strategy in future. Another Member asked about Government plans to address the ongoing housing pressures and the Portfolio Holder explained that whilst she could not speak for the Government, the Local Authority was working closely with other local authorities, including via London Councils, to share best practice, maximise funding opportunities and lobby for change in particular areas of policy. Housing and temporary accommodation pressures and concerns were widely acknowledged and shared at every level of government, and it was evident that there were no easy answers. In response to a question from another Member, the Director: Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration listed some of the schemes that the Local Authority had in place to support and sustain private tenancies, including a scheme in which the Local Authority leased properties directly from the landlord.

In response to a question from Member on Key Performance Indicator (KPI) H2, the Director: Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration was pleased to report that the Housing Options team was now fully staffed and that specialist HR packages would encourage future retention and future recruitment. Another Member observed that KP1 H5 showed that over 75% of the Local Authority's temporary accommodation was located outside the Borough and the Director: Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration confirmed that whilst every effort was made to identify temporary accommodation within the Borough, this was increasingly difficult for reasons of cost. The Member raised a further concern regarding KPI P12 which showed that the market share of the Building Control Service remained consistent with 2022 and the Director: Housing, Planning, Property and

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Regeneration explained that this was highly competitive market but that the Local Authority was working to increase its market share.

RESOLVED: That the progress on the actions associated with the Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Plan for Quarter 2 of the 2023/24 financial year be noted.

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

The Committee considered the following Part 1 (Public) reports where the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing was recommended to take a decision:

A BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24 Report FSD23070

The report provided the revenue budget monitoring position for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio for 2023/24 based on expenditure and activity levels as at September 2023.

A Member expressed concern at the increase in the average cost of temporary accommodation. The Director: Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration outlined a range of work being undertaken to mitigate these costs, including block booking, and clarified that the current cost of temporary accommodation as stated in the report was for new entrants only with many existing service users on lower rates.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note the projected net overspend of £2,881k on controllable expenditure based on information as at September 2023.

B CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - QUARTER 2 2023/24 Report FSD23077

On 29 November 2023, the Council's Executive would receive a report summarising the current position on capital expenditure and receipts following Quarter 2 of the 2023/24 financial year 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 29 November 2023.

40 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 1 (Public) agenda for the meeting of the Council's Executive on 29 November 2023:

A CASTLECOMBE YOUTH CENTRE AND MOTTINGHAM COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE Report HPR2023/064

The report sought approval from the Council's Executive to co-locate the Mottingham Community Support Centre with the Castlecombe Youth Centre and to proceed to procurement for the planned refurbishment of this site to make it fit for purpose for both services.

A Member and Ward Member for Mottingham spoke on behalf of himself and his ward colleague in strongly supporting the proposed co-location of the Mottingham Community Support Centre with the Castlecombe Youth Centre which would relocate a much-valued service to the heart of the community. In response to a question by a Member who also supported the proposed co-location, the Assistant Director: Culture and Regeneration advised that it was hoped to utilise the existing building for both services prior to the refurbishment works. There would be a period of closure whilst works were undertaken and discussions were underway with the Youth Service around service continuity during this period.

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

- 1) Agree to the relocation of the Mottingham Community Support Centre to be co-located with Castlecombe Youth Centre;**
- 2) Note that up to £1.153m of the Operational Property Review budget be used for the repair and remodelling works for Castlecombe Youth Centre to make the site fit for purpose for both services;**
- 3) Agree to proceed to procurement for the works contract at an estimated value of £1.038m as set out in paragraphs 3.18 to 3.21 of Report HPR2023/064, with delegated authority to the Director: Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration to determine the detailed procurement strategy; and,**
- 4) Delegate authority to the Director of Corporate Services and Governance to enter into and manage legal matters relating to these works to allow works to progress.**

**B HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONTRACT (AWARD REPORT)
PART 1 (PUBLIC) REPORT**

This report was withdrawn.

41 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER ITEMS

**A DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORK PLAN UPDATE
Report HPR2023/057**

The report presented an update on progress in delivering the Digital Infrastructure Work Plan across the Borough.

In response to a question from a Member, the Economic Development Manager explained that Cellnex UK was finalising negotiations with landowners in order to install two masts in the Anerley/Penge area as part of a wider scheme to improve 4G/5G connectivity on Network Rail mainline trains from London to Brighton as well as for residents and business in the surrounding area. Further improvements to mobile network coverage and capacity in the Borough were being delivered via a scheme which encouraged mobile network operators to install mobile small cells on existing lamp columns which also generated rental income for the Local Authority.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

**B REGENERATION STRATEGY 2020-2030 UPDATE REPORT
Report 2023/063**

The report provided an update on the Regeneration Strategy 2020-2030.

The Assistant Director: Culture and Regeneration advised that five parks had been selected for a study by the Parks Department on how the current composition, condition and facilities within open spaces could help to facilitate growth in local economies and town centres and further details would be provided to Committee Members following the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

**C CRYSTAL PALACE PARK REGENERATION PLAN UPDATE
Report 2023/060**

The report provided an update on the delivery of the Crystal Palace Park Regeneration Plan, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund works, disposal of the residential sites and the Crystal Palace Subway restoration project, which was being delivered outside of the Regeneration Plan capital works programme.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director: Culture and Regeneration confirmed that National Lottery Heritage Funding totalling £5M

had been secured for Crystal Palace Park. A portion of this funding had already been released but the remainder would be held in a ring-fenced fund until development works at the park had been completed. On a related note, the Chairman advised that he had requested a Member visit be arranged to the Crystal Palace Subway once restoration works had been completed.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

**D CONTRACT REGISTER REPORT
Report HPR2023/059**

The report presented an extract from the Contracts Register detailing contracts with a whole life value of £50k or higher as at 30 August 2023.

RESOLVED: That the Contracts Register be noted.

**42 RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING INFORMATION
BRIEFING**

The items comprised:

- Provision of Library Service - Contract Performance Report

RESOLVED: That the Information Briefing be noted.

PART 2 (CLOSED) AGENDA

**43 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**

**44 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF PART 2 (EXEMPT) EXECUTIVE
REPORTS**

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 2 (Exempt) agenda for the meeting of the Council's Executive on 29 November 2023:

**A HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONTRACT (AWARD REPORT)
PART 2 (EXEMPT) REPORT**

This Part 2 (Exempt) report was withdrawn.

45 PART 2 (EXEMPT) POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER ITEMS

A PART 2 (EXEMPT) CONTRACTS REGISTER APPENDIX

The Committee considered a Part 2 (Exempt) appendix for Item 9d: Contract Register Report.

The Meeting ended at 7.57 pm

Chairman