

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

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 14 March 2024

### **Present:**

Councillor Tony Owen (Chairman)  
Councillor Thomas Turrell (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Jeremy Adams, Josh Coldspring-White,  
Will Connolly, Hannah Gray, Chris Price, Alison Stammers  
and Pauline Tunnicliffe

Tommy Velvick, Bromley Youth Council (Part 1 only)

### **Also Present:**

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

### **59 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Colin Hitchins and Councillor Tony McPartlan and Councillor Hannah Gray and Councillor Jeremy Adams attended as their respective substitutes. Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Christine Harris.

### **60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman declared that he had an acquaintance who was employed by the preferred bidder to deliver Project Management and Employers Agent services for the Bellegrove Housing Development but that he had not been involved in the tender evaluation process.

### **61 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING**

No questions were received.

### **62 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2024**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2024 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

### **63 MATTERS OUTSTANDING AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME Report CSD24042**

The report set out progress against outstanding actions from previous meetings and the forward work programme of the Committee.

The Portfolio Holder advised that it was proposed to convene a special meeting of the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee in April 2024 and further details would be provided to Members shortly.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

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

**A PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S UPDATE**

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

The restoration works at the Crystal Palace Subway had been completed and a grand opening ceremony was being planned for Summer 2024. Work on the two remaining Changing Places facilities was also nearing completion, making a total of six Changing Places facilities in the Borough with two further facilities to be delivered as part of the planned refurbishment works to the Walnuts and West Wickham Leisure Centres. Work was ongoing to secure grant funding for other projects across the Portfolio, with a £300k grant recently awarded by Sport England to fund a more efficient heating system and new pool cover for West Wickham Leisure Centre. For the second year running, the Local Authority had the highest number of book issues in London across its library network with Central Library ranked the eight highest book issuer in the country.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration advised that work to develop the new draft Homelessness Strategy was ongoing and that an update would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee on 19 June 2024. The Member queried whether the remaining £89k Homelessness Reduction Grant (carried forward) for services for young people had now been spent. The Director of Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration confirmed that the full amount would be spent by the end of the 2023/24 financial year and that further details would be circulated to Members following the meeting. Another Member asked about the proposed special meeting of the Committee in April 2024 and the Portfolio Holder explained that this was to consider matters relating to the completion of the York Rise Project and the delivery schedule for the planned refurbishments of the Walnuts and West Wickham Leisure Centres. It was still intended to complete the planned refurbishments of both leisure centres by April 2026 and within the agreed cost envelope; however, the delivery schedule would be revised to bring forward the works at West Wickham Leisure Centre in light of concerns identified with the fabric of the building.

**RESOLVED: That the update be noted.**

## **65 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 FSD24023**

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

A Member asked a question about the rising costs of temporary accommodation. The Director of Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration advised that the average cost of temporary accommodation continued to increase and was currently averaging at just over £10k per household per annum. Robust measures were in place to monitor and, where possible, contain these growth pressures and a projected increase in demand and costs had also been built into the Portfolio's 2024/25 budget.

**RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note the projected net overspend of £3,721k on controllable expenditure based on information as at December 2023**

### **B CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - QUARTER 3 2023/24 Report FSD24026**

The report presented the capital monitoring position for Quarter 3 of the 2023/24 financial year and the revised capital programme for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration explained that much of the Section 106 funds held by the Local Authority were utilised as a contribution towards the housing development programme. Further details on the allocation of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funds would be provided to the Committee following the meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note and acknowledge the changes agreed by the Council's Executive on 7 February 2024.**

**C CONTRACT AWARD EXEMPTION: HOMELESS PREVENTION  
FUNDS CREDIT UNION  
Report HPR2024/006**

The report requested that the Homeless Prevention Contract be awarded to the existing provider of this service, Lewisham Plus Credit Union via an exemption of tendering for a term of 10 years with the option to extend for two further periods of five years. Lewisham Plus Credit Union Ltd was the only Credit Union currently authorised by the Bank of England to operate within Bromley.

A Member asked how the loan facility was communicated to potential service users. The Group Manager: Housing Support and Resettlement advised that a loan from the Lewisham Plus Credit Union Ltd was one of a number of support options considered for clients when they entered the service and that clients were only referred to the Credit Union when it had been determined that a loan would be affordable. Information on the number of clients identified as ineligible for the service was not held but could be recorded in future if this would be useful.

**RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:**

- 1) Award the Homeless Prevention contract to Lewisham Plus Credit Union Ltd via exemption from tendering for a term of 10 years (with the option to extend for two further periods of 5 years each) at an estimated annual value of £4,800 (whole life of £96,000 inclusive of extensions options); and,**
- 2) Delegate authority to the Chief Officer to apply the extensions options in due course, subject to agreement with the Assistant Director: Governance and Contracts, the Director of Corporate Services, the Director of Finance and the Portfolio Holder of Renewal, Recreation and Housing.**

**D BELLEGROVE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - APPROVAL TO  
APPOINT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - PART 1 (PUBLIC)  
REPORT  
Report HPR2024/007A**

The report requested the appointment of professional services for the Bellegrove Housing Development.

**RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:**

- 1) Award a contract to the winning bidder to deliver multi-disciplinary consultancy services for the Bellegrove Housing Development for a whole life value of £865,000; and,**

- 2) **Award a contract to the winner bidder to deliver Project Management and Employers Agent services for the Bellegrave Housing Development for a whole life value of £129,500.**

## **66 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 27 March 2024:

### **A LIBRARY REPAIR WORKS PROGRAMME Report HPR2024/011**

The report provided an update on the library repair works programme and requested authority to both proceed to tender and award contracts for works at Mottingham, Chislehurst, Burnt Ash and Orpington library sites.

In response to a question from a Member, the Project Manager explained that there were separate budgets in place for each library site to ensure that funding was allocated fairly. While this was primarily an essential works programme, additional improvements could be delivered where appropriate, as seen in the recent refurbishment of St Paul's Cray library where the children's library had been extended. A Co-opted Member noted that new procurement legislation was due to be introduced in October 2024 and queried how this would impact the works programme. The Project Manager advised that any new requirements arising from the Procurement Act 2023 were anticipated to be minor but that the deadline for procurement for the Orpington and Mottingham library sites had been moved forward to September to mitigate any potential impact. Another Member asked about a temporary provision when Beckenham library was closed for refurbishment and the Head of Regeneration confirmed that Lewis House would host library services for the duration of the works which were expected to take nine months.

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

- 1) **Agree to proceed to a closed tender for the works contracts for Mottingham Library, Chislehurst Library, Burnt Ash Library and Orpington Library at an estimated total value split across two contracts of £4m; and,**
- 2) **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 two works contracts at estimated values of £1.4m (Burnt Ash and Chislehurst) and £2.6m (Mottingham and Orpington) as long as the winning tenders are affordable within the Operational Property Review library programme budget.**

## **B PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN WEST WICKHAM Report HPR2024/010**

The report recommended the development and funding of the West Wickham Housing Scheme as a fully socially rented housing scheme in an amendment to the previously agreed scheme, which was approved in February 2023 as a mix of affordable and private housing.

A Member welcomed the move to delivering a fully socially rented housing scheme and underlined the need to take a similar approach to other mixed-use developments. The Head of Regeneration confirmed that work was underway to review the viability of all planned development schemes to increase the proportion of social rented housing and that this would be a key priority going forward, particularly as temporary accommodation costs continued to rise. A Member noted the increased capital financing requirement for delivering 26 social rented units and asked about the payback period for the project. The Head of Regeneration explained that as the Local Authority held fewer than 199 properties, it was able to hold its social housing stock in the General Fund via an exemption from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities which allowed for an immediate payback. When there were more than 199 properties, the Local Authority would be required to hold its stock in the Housing Revenue Account which had a significantly longer payback period of 25 years. In light of this significant disparity, the Local Authority and other local authorities in a similar position were actively lobbying the Secretary of State to increase the number of social housing units that could be held in the General Fund.

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

- 1) Approve the Capital Investment for the delivery of 26 new homes, on the basis that all homes will be held for affordable housing, on the assumption the increase of Greater London Authority grant is approved. Noting this requires £4,717k of external borrowing for the Council (as detailed in Section 6 of Report HPR2024/010). If the revised Greater London Authority grant is not received, the scheme will remain as was previously agreed;**
- 2) Approve an additional revenue contribution of £244k to part-finance the capital costs of the Library element of scheme, as detailed in Section 6 of Report HPR2024/010. Provision for this sum will be identified in central contingency as part of the 2023/24 revenue budget outturn;**
- 3) Approve required changes to be submitted via a planning variation; and,**
- 4) Accept any additional grants in relation to this scheme.**

**67 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER ITEMS**

**A LOCAL LONDON ANNUAL UPDATE  
Report HPR2024/009**

The report provided an update on the Local Authority's membership of the Local London sub-regional partnership.

A Member welcomed the funding that had been awarded to the Local Authority to roll out dark-fibre infrastructure across parts of the Borough, including for a number of libraries. Another Member noted that the Local Authority and its partner, Local London, had secured a total allocation of £734k funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to be used in the delivery of employment and skills projects in Bromley. The programme had officially launched on 23 January 2024 and would operate until March 2025 with the aim of supporting over 200 economically inactive people to engage with key worker support and over 30 individuals into employment, including self-employment.

**RESOLVED: That the update be noted.**

**B CONTRACT REGISTER  
Report HPR2024/008**

The report provided an extract from the Contracts Register detailing contracts with a whole life value of £50k or higher as at 15 January 2024.

**RESOLVED: That the Contracts Register be noted.**

**PART 2 (CLOSED) AGENDA**

**68 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**

**69 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND  
HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2024**

The Part 2 (Exempt) minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2024 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

**70 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF PART 2 (EXEMPT) RENEWAL,  
RECREATION AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER  
REPORTS**

The Committee considered the following Part 2 (Exempt) report for which the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing was recommended to take a decision:

**A BELLEGROVE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - APPROVAL TO  
APPOINT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - PART 2 EXEMPT)  
REPORT**

The Part 2 (Exempt) report sought to appoint professional services for the Bellegrove Housing Development.

The Meeting ended at 7.49 pm

Chairman