

RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2010

Present:

Councillor Sarah Phillips (Chairman)
Councillors Councillor Michael Tickner (Vice-Chairman),
Councillor Brian Humphrys, Councillor John Ince,
Councillor Ian F. Payne, Councillor Russell Jackson,
Councillor Pauline Tunncliffe, Councillor John Getgood
and Councillor John Canvin

Also Present:

Councillor Julian Benington, Councillor Gordon Norrie and
Councillor William Huntington-Thresher

30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Tom Papworth and Councillor John Canvin attended as Councillor Papworth's alternate.

31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman declared a personal interest as a Governor of the Bromley Adult Education College. Councillor Julian Benington declared a personal interest as his daughter worked for Affinity Sutton. Councillor John Getgood declared a personal interest as his wife was a voluntary teacher at the Bromley Adult Education College. Councillor Brian Humphrys declared a personal interest in item 8c as a member of the High Elms Golf Club. Councillor William Huntington-Thresher also declared a personal interest in item 10a as a Council appointed Director of Broomleigh.

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

There were no questions.

33 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12TH OCTOBER 2010

Members agreed the minutes and in so doing Councillor Getgood commented on Minute 23, *“Final Report on the Stretch Target on Worklessness: People into Employment (PIE)”* suggesting that outcomes of the project by ward circulated following the meeting indicated that outcomes for the Penge and Mottingham wards were not encouraging and that more effort was needed in certain areas.

Concerning Minute 21b the Chairman asked that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Development Control Committee be invited to the Committee’s Special meeting on 24th January 2011 concerned with the 2011/12 budget proposals for the Portfolio.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2010 be agreed.

34 PROGRESS ON MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Report LDCS10204

In considering the two matters arising from minutes of the previous meeting, the Chairman highlighted that action concerning Minute 27 was the responsibility of the Head of Strategy and Renewal which was the updated name of the post formerly known as the Head of Heritage and Urban Design.

It was also confirmed that the Vice-Chairman, as Chairman of the Committee’s Beckenham and West Wickham Town Centre Working Group, would be consulted on preparation of a report on Beckenham and West Wickham scheduled for the Committee’s meeting on 15th February 2011. It was also reported that Penge would be considered slightly later in the municipal year although the Vice-Chairman noted that the Penge Town Centre Working Party had carried out its work ahead of the Beckenham and West Wickham Working Group.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

35 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO - PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Decisions of the Portfolio Holder taken since the Committee’s previous meeting on 12th October 2010 were noted.

36 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO REPORTS

36.a BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2010-11

Report DRR10/00136

The latest 2010/11 budget monitoring position for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio based on expenditure and activity levels up to September 2010 showed a projected underspend of £7k.

The Bromley Adult Education College (AEC) was also looking to undertake a review of its strategic options for the future given the proposed FE College merger, a reduction in external funding, the general economic climate and introduction of minimum levels of contract value by the Skills Funding Agency. It was proposed to commission an external impartial study to undertake such a review at an estimated cost of up to £10K.

The proposal for an external study prompted a number of comments from Members many of whom were unsupportive of such work being undertaken externally at a cost of up to £10k. As a first step it was suggested that the Colleges themselves look into the matter including a future combination of the Bromley and Orpington Colleges and the AEC. It was also felt that expertise was already available. If another authority had proposals for linking with the AEC then it was felt that such an authority should be invited to submit their proposal to officers. It was also highlighted that Orpington College had submitted a proposal some time previously to link with the AEC and it was suggested that this could be looked at again.

The Director explained that the Adult Education College is a large and complex organisation which is almost entirely dependent on Government grants and fees income. Options for the future of the College would need to be robust and any proposal for change would need to be supported by a costed plan and appropriate due diligence. To ensure Members and potential external partners (including Government) could support any proposed option an independent assessment was recommended. The AEC Principal referred to the adult learning focus of his College suggesting that working with other organisations might be the best way to preserve such an adult environment. A Member agreed that an external study should be undertaken as courses were valued and there were sensitivities attached to a decision.

However, there was a continued view that such an external study was not appropriate in the current economic climate and upon a vote it was agreed to recommend that the external review at £10k should not be supported.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- (1) endorse the latest budget projection for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio; and**
- (2) decide against approving the funding of an external review of the future strategic options for Bromley Adult Education College at £10k from the Portfolio Initiative Fund.**

36.b CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING- 2ND QUARTER 2010/11

Report DRR10/00126

On 3rd November 2010 the Executive agreed a revised Capital Programme for the four year period 2010/11 to 2013/14. The report before the Committee highlighted changes made in respect of the Capital Programme for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note and confirm the report.

36.c BROMLEY MYTIME SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

Report DRR10/00128

The Committee considered the Bromley Mytime Leisure Trust Draft Service Delivery Plan for 2011/12 including Bromley Mytime's Annual Partnership Plan for 2011/12, details of Bromley Mytime's five-year Investment Fund proposal and details of Bromley Mytime's pricing proposals for 2011/12.

Mr Dennis Barkway, Chairman of Bromley Mytime introduced the item and Mr Steve Price, Chief Executive of Bromley Mytime gave an overview.

In discussion there were questions from Members. On pricing, Mr Price referred to the business being particularly price sensitive. Prices had been frozen the previous year and this year it was about selective increases. Benchmarking was undertaken and the provision of services considered with customers being prepared to pay slightly more for some services.

In regard to any benefits that might arise from the 2012 Olympics, Mr Price felt that they would create a bow wave of participation in sport which Bromley Mytime would look to be involved in. There would also be financial provision for a sports legacy following the Games and Mytime would look to see whether it would be possible to apply for any funding from this provision. It would also be good if Bromley participants could win the London Youth Games in the approach to the Olympics.

In connection with dual use facilities at schools and refurbishment, Mr Price referred to MyTime having a sinking fund where certain equipment at a school could be replaced and decorations undertaken; however the level of the fund was small and matters concerned with the structure of a school building was for the school.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- (1) approve Bromley Mytime's Service Delivery Plan for 2011/12; and**
- (2) approve Bromley Mytime's Investment Fund Programme of Works for 2011/12.**

36.d ORPINGTON PRIORY MUSEUM

Report DRR10/00127

On 29th June 2010 the Executive was presented with three options for the future of The Bromley Museum at The Priory, Orpington having agreed to relocate Orpington public library. Having considered the three options the Executive chose to investigate Option 3, which aimed to enhance the existing museum space and create an 'arts and heritage hub' in the conservation area at the southern end of Orpington High Street, supporting the aims and objectives of the Orpington Masterplan and complimenting the various capital schemes that had been successfully completed over the previous two years.

The report before Members outlined the results of consultation around Option 3 and advised on potential funding for the proposal as a result of a 'pre-application' submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Councillor William Huntington-Thresher as a Ward Member welcomed the proposal. He enquired whether any consultation requirement was necessary for the application process. The Assistant Director confirmed that the open consultation session held on 9th November 2010 at The Priory was part of the consultation process approved by the Executive rather than any consultation related to the HLF application process. Councillor William Huntington-Thresher also highlighted a need for sufficient car parking facilities and Councillor Russell Jackson felt that the proposal was important for Orpington Town Centre.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be advised to recommend that the Executive approve the submission of a first stage application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding to implement works associated with the enhancement of museum space at the Bromley Museum, The Priory, Orpington (Option 3) with the outcome reported back in due course.

36.e THYME OUT SCHEME

Report DRR10/00125

Report DRR10/00125 provided an update on the 'Thyme Out' project which aimed to improve the life chances of adults with learning disabilities. External funding was previously provided for the project through the award of £308,320 from the Big Lottery's Reaching Communities Fund.

At the Adult and Community Portfolio Holder meeting on 10th March 2009 a regular six-monthly update was requested on the progress of the project and its participants from the start of the Scheme in May 2009.

In discussion it was commented that the Thyme Out scheme was an excellent project with another comment referring to excellent work undertaken. The Chairman referred to an excellent and detailed standard of work at the Civic Centre and she acknowledged the contribution provided by helpers and assistants. Responding to a question from the Vice-Chairman, the Manager of the Field Studies Centre referred to further work developments associated with the project.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the project being an admirable scheme which he felt was well run and he asked for his best wishes to be taken back to those involved.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the progress of the project which aims to target improving life chances of adults with learning disabilities.

36.f PROPOSED BROMLEY AND ORPINGTON COLLEGE MERGER

Report DRR10/00135

Orpington College and Bromley College were revisiting and developing an earlier joint proposal that the two colleges should work towards merger with effect from 1st August 2011. The proposal drew upon joint work already undertaken by the Colleges between 2007 and 2009 when the two Corporations developed an Initial Outline Proposal (IOP) for merger. This was endorsed by the London Borough of Bromley, local MPs and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Ministerial approval was also received to proceed to consultation.

The original rationale for merger still remained and the colleges believed the case was now even more compelling in the light of increased pressures on Further Education (FE) funding. The merger proposal was put on hold in October 2009 when members of the Joint Steering Group of College Governors concluded that *“although a merger of Orpington and Bromley Colleges would offer increased opportunities for students and employers and would benefit both Colleges, the current political and financial uncertainties pose too great a risk to proceed at this time”*.

With a proposed merger involving the establishment of a merged FE Corporation with the dissolution of an existing FE Corporation, the Skills Funding Agency would consult on the Draft Proposal and evaluate and submit the Final Proposal to the Secretary of State for determination. Following Skills Funding Agency approval of the colleges' Draft Proposal by the end of

December 2010, consultation was expected to take place in January/February 2011 and approval to establish the merged college by early summer 2011.

A working draft of the Colleges' proposal for the merger was appended to Report DRR10/00135.

In discussion, Simon Norton, Principal at Orpington College introduced the item. He referred to the Council as an important stakeholder in the merger process. He was confident of support for the merger which would be tested in consultation. Merger would reduce overhead costs, savings could be made, and the offer could be protected for the locality. Mr Norton confirmed that both sites and facilities would remain operational.

Responding to a question on the effect of a rise in the education participation age to 18 years and a reduced level of funding, Mr Norton indicated the extent of reduced funding and felt that the number of 16 to 18 students would continue to be about the same. However he cautioned that there were a number of different factors that would need to play out.

Mr Norton also provided a turnover figure and referred to a level of savings made. He also referred to separating courses between the two Colleges although he confirmed that some courses were provided at both locations. It was also suggested that if courses were well supported then they should be offered at both locations although for new courses it was suggested offering them at one site only.

Mr Norton confirmed that a merger would help to maintain courses and quality. A combined college would also be well placed to compete. On enquiring about college satellite sites a Member referred to a role for Colleges in the community. In regard to higher education and proposed changes, Mr Norton suggested that there might be a demand for part time study and study for modules of degree courses – he felt that any merger would strengthen provision for this.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the recommendation of the Director of Children and Young People and the Director of Renewal and Recreation for continued Local Authority support of the college merger proposal.

37 INTERNAL AUDIT AND VALUE FOR MONEY REPORTING - BUILDING CONTROL PILOT

Report LDCS10178

On 16th September 2010, the Audit Sub Committee approved an approach to Value for Money (VfM) reporting by Internal Audit. In developing this approach the Sub Committee undertook a Value for Money assessment of the Building Control service which it granted a score of 3 (out of a potential 4) i.e. that Value for Money requirements were being substantially met.

The Sub-Committee requested that the Development Control and Renewal and Recreation PDS Committees consider the pilot VfM work on Building Control.

The Vice-Chairman as Chairman of the Audit Sub Committee introduced the report and the Chairman noted that the Building Control Service had received a score of 3 even though the number of Building Control staff was down.

RESOLVED that the approach to Value for Money reporting as endorsed by the Audit Sub Committee be noted particularly the pilot work on Building Control.

38 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS WORK PROGRAMME

Report LDCS10205

Members agreed the latest Work Programme subject to the addition of the following items for the meeting on 15th February 2011:

- Outcomes from the review by the Committee's Working Group on the future delivery of the borough's library service and
- Way finding proposals for Bromley Town Centre.

RESOLVED that the work programme be agreed subject to the addition of the above items for the Committee's meeting on 15th February 2011.

39 REVIEW OF COUNCIL-OWNED SHOPPING PARADES

Report DRR 10/00138

Members considered a report to the Resources Portfolio Holder on 12 Council Shopping Parades of estate shops (141 shop units) built as part of housing estate schemes in the 1950's to provide local facilities for the day to day requirements of local residents.

Two of the parades (Chilham Way and Hazel Walk) were owned freehold by the Council with the remaining ten held leasehold by virtue of 999 year leases granted by Broomleigh Housing Association through a sale and leaseback arrangement in 1992. These head-leases were at nil rent and were effectively full repairing and insuring, administered through service charges payable to Broomleigh. The Council sub-let to individual shopkeepers and small businesses most of which were local traders although there are some multiple traders.

Chilham Way and Hazel Walk were both freestanding with the remainder of the parades having residential accommodation above. The Council's shopkeepers occupied ten of the residential units and six of the lock up

garages and the remainder were occupied by a mix of Broomleigh housing tenants and leaseholders where the “Right to Buy” has been exercised.

The Council was currently achieving a gross annual rental income of £778k from the parades and an additional income of £75,050 was anticipated over the next few months as ten of the 20 voids were currently under offer.

Allowing for estimated costs such as service charges, repairs, cost of voids, management, legal and bad debt provision, the current net rental income from all 12 parades was estimated at £639k excluding any allowance for major capital works which Broomleigh recharge when such works were undertaken.

Members were informed in Report 10/00138 that the shops currently produced a good net return to the Council when measured against their indicative capital values. Overall this was currently estimated at 9.2% and it was anticipated this would improve further when the voids were reduced over the next few months.

Report 10/00138 also referred to advice from the Director of Resources that, as a general principle, revenue income was still preferable to capital receipts while the rate of return was greater than that which could be achieved by investing the capital receipts. With the parades achieving a net return of at least 9.2%, this exceeded what was currently achieved by the Council on the money markets which was averaging 1.5% interest up to one year. There was the added element that the Council held an appreciating asset and financially it would be preferable to retain the properties for their income unless an enhanced capital receipt could be achieved through marriage or development value which when reinvested produced a higher rate of return.

Members considered the report. Councillor John Ince referred to the parades being a community resource and he highlighted the rate of return that was being achieved through revenue income. Councillor William Huntington-Thresher also supported retention of the parades and the Vice Chairman referred to the benefit of revenue income to the Council.

RESOLVED that the Resources Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree the retention of the shopping parades.

40 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.

**41 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH
OCTOBER 2010**

The exempt minutes were agreed.

RESOLVED that the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2010 be agreed.

**42 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO - PREVIOUS PART
2 DECISIONS**

Members noted two Part 2 decisions taken by the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Holder following the previous meeting.

The Meeting ended at 9.53 pm

Chairman