

RENEWAL AND RECREATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2011

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 and Councillor Tom
Papworth

Also Present:

Councillor Julian Benington, Councillor Roger Charsley,
Councillor Gordon Norrie and Councillor Charles Rideout
CVO, QPM

49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sarah Phillips declared a personal interest in item 7c as a Governor of Bromley Adult Education College.

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

There were no questions.

51 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24TH JANUARY 2011

The Director reported that the queries raised by Councillors Payne and Papworth had been addressed.

Councillor Benington reported that in relation to minute 48 - BAEC he had verbally recommended these items to the Executive on 14th February.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2011 be agreed.

52 PROGRESS ON MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Report LDCS11024

Firstly officers explained that item 27, relating to the resources devoted to tree protection work was included in error as this item had been considered by DC committee and should not therefore still appear on this committee's matters arising.

In considering the two other matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting, officers had circulated a paper giving an outline of the discussions that had taken place between Councillor Tickner, Chairman of the Beckenham and West Wickham working party and officers. The paper detailed that funding may be available from TfL to undertake some scoping work but the outcome of the funding would not be known until April.

Councillor Humphrys was pleased to note that the West Wickham schemes were being pursued and requested an update at a later date. He questioned why the scheme for a bus route from West Wickham to The PRUH was not included.

Councillor Payne asked when the Beckenham scheme might be progressed and in response officers explained that the LIP funding results were due in the next couple of months and then the precise design could be worked on.

Officers were pleased to report that the placing of Town Centre notice boards was on-going.

It was also noted that a preparatory report on Penge Town Centre would be provided to the next meeting of the PDS Committee.

The Portfolio Holder reported that with regard to the recommendations relating to the Bromley Arts Council and the planning enforcement posts he had made the necessary requests, verbally, to the executive.

53 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO - PREVIOUS DECISIONS

No decisions were made by the Portfolio Holder since the previous meeting of the Committee.

54 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO REPORTS

54.a BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2010/11

Report DRR11/002

The latest 2010/11 budget monitoring position for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio based on expenditure and activity levels up to December 2010 showed a projected underspend of £134k. Officers reported that the underspend of £100,000 for LDF consultancy would be carried forward.

Councillor Peter Fookes asked if chip and pin had been implemented in all the libraries. Officers explained that there had been some IT problems but that it should be installed in all libraries by 1st April.

Councillor Ince asked about the income for major and non-major planning applications. Officers would provide this information outside of the meeting. Councillor Tickner requested that next years budget took account of the actual planning applications and market conditions.

Officers also reported that in order to maintain flexibility once the recession finished they would leave posts vacant rather than delete them. These could then be filled once the economy recovered.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the latest budget projection for the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio.

55 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Getgood, Councillor Fookes attended as his alternate.

Apologise for lateness were received from Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe.

55.a CAPITAL PROGRAMME - 3RD QUARTER MONITORING 2010/11 AND 2010 CAPITAL REVIEW

Report DRR11/013

On 2nd February 2011 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. At that meeting the Executive also approved new capital bids recommended by Chief Officers in the Capital Review process in respect of Bromley North Village public realm improvements and Bromley Museum at the Priory. Minor provision had also been made in 2014/15 for feasibility studies.

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

55.b ADULT EDUCATION FEES AND CHARGES 2011/12

Report DRR11/014

The Committee considered a report proposing an increase in the fees charged to adults enrolling on courses at Bromley Adult Education College. This increase would allow the college to maintain income at a time when

Government funding was being reduced and to meet the income generation expectations of the Skills Funding Agency. The increase for accredited courses would be 2.5% and for non-accredited courses it would be 4.5%.

The Principal of the Adult Education College addressed members. He reported that this was the lowest increase in the last 7 years as the Governors were aware of the current economic climate. However he considered, even with the increased changes, that the college offered good value for money.

The increases were in line with neighbouring and similar borough's; Bexley and Kingston.

Members commented that they were pleased to see that accredited course fees were only rising by 2.5%. They felt that the increases were sensible and reasonable.

The Principal invited members to visit the college.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the proposed increased in course fees at Bromley Adult Education College.

55.c BROMLEY TOWN CENTRE VARIABLE MESSAGE SYSTEM

Report DRR11/008

The Director recommended that this item was deferred so that the value of the initiative could be properly assessed.

RESOLVED that this item is deferred until the next meeting.

55.d RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER INITIATIVES FUND 2011/12

Report DRR11/006

The Committee considered a report summarising proposals for Town Centre Management activities planned for 2011/12 and requesting that sufficient resources be made available from the Portfolio Initiatives Fund to deliver the planned activities. The report also proposed a reduction in the net expenditure by the Council on Town Centre activities during the 2011/12 financial year, to be offset by seeking additional contributions from the private sector.

The report outlined a number of costed activities for members to consider. These included a celebration of the Royal wedding in April, a celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, and following on from the success of the "Poppy Day" celebrations, an event around Remembrance Day for 2011.

The Christmas lights were also costed in the report. However, officers have written to approximately 1500 local businesses in the 4 main town centres for

contributions towards the Christmas lights and are also approaching major retailers directly. Officers would bring an update report on the outcomes of this exercise to the next meeting.

The Portfolio Holder was being asked to recommend to the Executive that the expected under spend of £53,400 could be carried forward and allocated for Town Centre Management for use on the proposed activities from 2011/12 onwards.

Councillor Humphrys was pleased to see that Bromley retailers would be asked to contribute towards the Christmas lights. He also wanted to know if the £50,000 virement for use on Town Centre Management referred to in recommendation 2.4 was in addition to other funding. Officers explained that this money had been drawn down over a number of years and was not additional funding.

Councillor Ince reported that businesses in Cotmandene Crescent (St Pauls Cray) and St Mary Cray were already struggling financially and so would probably not be in any position to make a donation toward the lights.

The Portfolio Holder did point out the stores in the high street which also backed onto the Glades could be paying twice, as in addition to the High Street lights, they were expected to contribute to the decorations in the Glades. He also said that there may not be fireworks in 2011 as they were costly and if it rained on the day of the switching on few people attended.

Officers had reported that the event for the “Poppy Party Weekend” suggested for June in the Civic Centre Grounds may not be funded as it would not increase footfall of benefit the Town Centre. Councillor Tickner was keen that this event went ahead but that it was self funding by way of selling tickets.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- 1) Agreed the proposed schedule of Town Centre Management events, activities and projects costing a total of £132,000 during 2011/12; Except the Poppy Party detailed in 3.6 of the report.**
- 2) Request that the Executive agree to the projected underspend of the Portfolio Initiatives fund of £53,400 from 2010/11 being carried forward and allocated for proposed Town Centre Management activities during 2011/12;**
- 3) Agree that £50,000 be permanently vired from the Portfolio Initiatives Fund 2011/12 for use on Town Centre Management events and activities from 2011/12 onwards.**

Report DRR11/012

The Committee considered a report updating Members on progress in developing the Bromley North Village Public Realm improvement Project and the successful outcome of the Step 1 Area Based Funding bid to Transport for London.

Members noted that this item was for information only and made the following comments:

Councillor Tickner enquired about the possible extension of a Bromley North rail extension or a Tramlink to Bromley South and wanted to ensure there was flexibility in the plans for this to take place in the future.

Officers explained that they were looking at traffic and bus routes and that, at this stage, nothing would be ruled in or out.

RESOLVED that progress to date and the preliminary detailed design programme and governance arrangements be noted.

57 LIBRARIES WORKING GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Report DRR11/007

At the meeting of the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee on 29th June 2010, Members agreed to establish a Working Group to consider the future delivery of the Borough's Library Service and that the findings from this Working Group are reported back to a future meeting of the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee. The Committee considered a report summarising the findings of the PDS Member Working Group on Libraries and proposing four options for the future development of the Library Service.

The Chairman outlined the remit of the working party and its findings. Officers explained that the report on the agenda was a comprehensive report and recommended option 4. If members agreed to option 4 scoping would take place immediately. At this stage nothing could be ruled in or out and this included the issue of whether any branch libraries would need to close. This was an ongoing issue and further reports would be submitted to future meetings.

Councillor Ince reported that a number of residents had been against moving the Biggin Hill Library but this had turned out to be a great success and had opened up and transformed the area as well as changing the public's view. Councillor Papworth felt there should be a broader debate and would submit a question to the Portfolio Holder at the next Full Council. He also raised concerns that shutting Anerley Library would disadvantage residents in the Crystal Palace area as Penge was some distance away.

Councillor Humphrys proposed and Councillor Tickner seconded that members support Option 4.

Councillor Charles Rideout addressed the committee in his capacity as Ward member for Chislehurst North and Mottingham. He raised concern that consideration may be given to closing Mottingham library. Both he and his Ward colleague Councillor Charsley appreciated the cuts were needed but they wanted to ensure the cuts did not inhibit growth once the recession was over. Within option 4 Bexley was mentioned. His ward also bordered Greenwich and Greenwich Councillors used Mottingham Library for their surgeries he would like Bromley to explore partnership working with Greenwich. He added that the library was near a primary school and an elderly care home and if it closed the next nearest library would be in Eltham, too far for either of these groups to travel.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The work of the PDS Working Group on Libraries be noted;**
- 2) The recommendation that Option 4 around partnership working be explored further as the preferred option for the future management of the Borough's Library Service including consideration around whether a number of libraries could close or be amalgamated into other service points be agreed;**
- 3) That a further report around Option 4 providing detailed costs and savings be provided to the next meeting of the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee.**

(Councillor Papworth asked for the minutes to reflect that he supported option 4 but would not support the closure of libraries)

58 RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS WORK PROGRAMME

LDCS11025

Members agreed the latest Work Programme subject to the addition of the following items for the meeting on 12th April 2011:

- Christmas Lights Progress Report
- And the addition of the deferred item from 15th February; Variable Message signs.
- Add an update on the Beckenham and West Wickham Town Centre Report in 6 months. And include a brief verbal update at each meeting.
- A report on the Council's responsibility in relation to the Olympics to the April meeting.

Mr Wheeler asked for the word Centre to be changed to College.

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The Clerk explained the new format for the programme and that in future it would include dates for the 4 plans sub committees and development Control. In addition the meeting dates for the Town Centre working party would be included and the agendas and minutes for this meeting would form part of the Renewal and Recreation agenda.

RESOLVED that the work programme be agreed subject to the addition of the above items for the Committee's meeting on 12th April 2011.

The Meeting ended at 9.30 pm

Chairman