

MINUTES OF THE SYDENHAM ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 18 March 2015 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Chris Best, Liam Curran and Rachel Onikosi

ALSO PRESENT:

Apologies for absence were received from

89. Welcome from the Chair

Cllr Liam Curran Chair of the Sydenham Assembly welcomed everyone to the Sydenham Assembly and introduced Cllr Chris Best and Cllr Rachel Onikosi.

90. Updates and Information Items

Cllr Curran referred the attendees to the briefing notes that were issued upon arrival.

2.1 Planning issues

The Greyhound – The September Assembly meeting made a referral to the Mayor and Cabinet meeting on the 1st October. The Council's strategy for rebuilding the Greyhound Public House was then set out in a report to the following Mayor and Cabinet meeting on the 22nd October.

That report stated that, having taken legal advice, the Council would seek to enforce the provisions of the existing May 2010 planning consent. Schedule 10 of the legal agreement places an obligation, amongst others, on the Owner of the land to 'construct and complete the Restoration and Refurbishment Works, in accordance with details that have been approved by the Council.'

In October 2014, a S96a Non-Material Amendment application was formerly submitted to the Council to address alterations to the building that were not proposed within the 2010 consented scheme, including:

- The construction of a replacement roof;
- The retention of an enlarged basement;
- The omission of a rear elevation window;
- Amendment to the west elevation regarding the proposed sliding door and the omission of a ground floor window;
- Provision of replacement railings and door to the existing first floor balcony;
- The formation of a chimney to accommodate internal ventilation ducting;
- The provision of new timber openings;
- A rooflight to the rear slope;
- Stone plinths with replica greyhounds.

During the course of the application, site inspections were undertaken by Planning Officers with Building Control officers and the developers. The submission of further details were requested by officers in relation to window openings, the appearance of balcony railings, brickwork and re-pointing.

Amended plans were received on 22 December 2014 and 22 January 2015. On 10 February the S96a application was granted planning permission as officers were satisfied the revised plans demonstrated that the nature of the proposed alterations would not materially harm the appearance of the Greyhound building, the amenities of neighbouring occupiers or the character of the Cobbs Corner Conservation Area.

On 5 March the applicants submitted a formal Building Regulations application to the Council and engineers structural calculations followed on 7 March. On 11 March Building Control officers confirmed the details submitted were acceptable and the application was formally approved.

Whilst the Building Regulations application provided sufficient information to secure Building Control approval there were outstanding details required to satisfy planning requirements. Planning officers therefore requested further advice on 11 March from the applicants on how the lintels would be removed without damaging the brickwork and what tools would be used, confirmation of the proposed treatment to make the flank wall bricks appear more like the existing in terms of colour and, with regard to the rebuilding of the gables, in particular the bonding and pointing, confirmation that the new mortar mix would match the original in type, consistency and colour.

On 13th March the applicants advised that:

1. The lintels will be removed by carefully taking down the brickwork gables with the use of small hand tools only. These will then be re-constructed with lime mortar and cleaned down on completion.
2. We understand the desire to use a water/chemical based cleaning agent on the brickwork and will consult with a specialist masonry cleaning contractor once works have commenced on site.
3. In rebuilding the gables, we will use a lime mortar to match the original but do not necessarily see that the joints will be wider as we will use the original imperial sized bricks.

This response is considered to provide sufficient detail to sign off the Schedule 10 works.

The applicant has confirmed that they would require 3 to 4 week from receiving the final approval of the scheme of restoration and reinstatement works from the Council to be able to commence works on site. The building works once commenced would take up to 4 months to complete. It is considered reasonable to expect mobilisation to be achieved by the week beginning 13 April 2015.

The applicants still wish to pursue proposals for an external staircase to the rear of the Greyhound building leading down to the basement area and a single-storey conservatory to the side. Both additions would require full planning permission. Whilst the principle of a conservatory was approved in the 2012 planning application, the provision of external stairs is a new proposal. This will need to be the subject of consultation and will require thorough assessment. The applicants have advised that the planning application will be submitted at 'the earliest opportunity' and that they do not intend to delay works from commencing on site whilst the application is considered.

Cllr Curran stated that the three Councillors will continue to monitor the situation very closely.

Enforcement issues – The Zanzibar

Zanzibar is now operating under the revised licence which amongst other conditions has to close at 2am. They are entitled to apply for Temporary Event Notices to operate later on an occasional basis but to date these have been objected to and not allowed. The Magistrates' Court has also upheld this decision upon appeal.

2.2 Highways issues

Station Approach - J B Riney's have completed the brick wall and the new toilet is on site awaiting Healthmatic to make the final connections (electricity, water). The proposal is that JB Riney's will complete the footway works around the toilet in March and some snagging footway works to Sydenham Road. Contact officer for Sydenham Road Improvement Scheme is Tom Henry – any queries to: Highways@lewisham.gov.uk

Traffic Flow - TfL carried out some recent amendments to the signals at Kent House Road.

Cllr Curran stated that there is a further complication with the traffic island near to St Phillip Neri school as this means that traffic cannot get past cars that have stopped. Traffic Officers have stated that they will monitor this.

Sydenham Road East – Mayow Road to Kent House Road

Highway works in Sydenham Road (East) from Kent House Road junction will be complete in March .Contact officer is Tom Henry Highways@lewisham.gov.uk

A railing is proposed for the ramp to the Sydenham Centre and should be installed by May

Big Budget Challenge - Almost 4,000 people engaged with the Big Budget Challenge in a variety of ways. This is the biggest conversation that the Council has ever engaged in with its public.

We used the following ways of engaging people in Lewisham's Big Budget Challenge:

- an online budget simulator
- discussions at local assemblies
- a quick survey through assemblies and online.

The areas of council spend that consistently attracted greater support were:

- crime reduction and safety
- refuse and street cleaning
- children and family services.

Areas where people thought spending could be reduced were reducing costs across the Council, particularly on senior management and external consultants, by sharing services and better procurement.

People were very keen that the Council pursued options to increase income and supported suggestions like using assets more commercially and increasing planning charges.

In terms of council tax, the most popular option was to continue the freeze. Of those who did opt for an increase in council tax, the most popular option was the maximum increase offered of 4%.

There were some significant differences between services that people regard as important to them individually and to their families compared with those they thought were most important to the community as a whole. Parks and open spaces were quoted popularly as important to individuals, whereas crime and safety and housing and education quoted more often as important to the community as a whole.

People found trying to balance the Council's books a very difficult exercise.

The Big Budget Challenge has helped to raise awareness of the financial position the Council faces, the size of the challenge it faces and the sorts of decisions that the Mayor and councillors will need to take and the trade-offs that will be necessary.

The Big Budget Challenge outcomes were reported to Lewisham Council at its meeting on 26 November 2014. This report is available on the Council's website by going to www.lewisham.gov.uk/bigbudgetchallenge

Balancing the books

The Council has been forced to make £40m savings in order to set a balanced budget for 2015/16.

This comes on top of savings of £93m that the Council has already made since 2010 and is likely to be followed by another £45m savings to balance the books in the next two years.

The reason for these savings is that the funding that the Council gets from central government is falling, while the population and demand for services from the Council continues to rise.

The Council has also chosen to freeze Council Tax once again this year, to offer some help to those struggling with the cost of living. The Council has now frozen council tax in five of the last six years. The result has been a real terms saving in the tax you have paid to the Council of almost 12%.

Where are savings coming from?

Savings will continue to come where possible by getting better deals on our contracts, by reducing management overheads and through joint working with others. Around 45% of new savings this year are linked to greater efficiency and effectiveness.

But because of the level of savings needed, there will inevitably be an impact on the level of service we are able to provide in some areas. No area of spending can be spared savings, as those who tried the Big Budget Challenge online simulator found out.

Nearly half the Council's net budget is spent on adult social care and children's social care. While councillors try and protect these very important and often life changing services as far as possible, some savings will have to come from here otherwise there would be very little money left for any other service at all.

Savings in these areas include:

Adult Care cost effective care packages: £2.68m will be saved by making sure that a consistent approach is taken in meeting care and support needs in the most cost effective way. This may result in some community based packages of care ending or being reduced where needs can be met in different and more cost effective ways.

Learning Disability care packages: We are looking at how we provide care to adults with learning disabilities and challenging the organisations who deliver this care to provide the most cost effective service. In addition we have consulted on extending the existing charging policy in adult social care to include adults with learning disabilities in supported accommodation.

Remodelling day centre services: The Council will be consulting on a review of all day service provision. This is to further promote choice in line with the requirements of personalisation ie service users having greater independence and choice over the service they receive. Savings of £1.3m are envisaged.

Access to childrens' social care services: Savings of £5.5m over two years are proposed. These include measures to reduce the number of children's social care assessments by directing those who do not need social care to the right services earlier, using the Government's Troubled Families Grant to fund early intervention work, reducing more expensive residential placements and recruiting more of our own foster carers, including specialist carers. The Council will also be consulting on changes to children's centres that would lower the costs of providing reception and administration, reduce the unit cost of working with each family by bringing all costs down to the level of the best performing centres and reducing the number of families to be worked with by a third.

Savings across other areas include:

Parks and Open Spaces service: £108,000 will be saved by reducing management costs.

Street cleaning: £400,000 will be saved by reducing the frequency of sweeping across the borough.

Voluntary and community grants: £1.5m will be saved from a budget of almost £6m. Though the level of cut is likely to lead to some organisations closing and some loss of services no longer deemed to be a priority, the remaining grants budget will be able to provide a good range of VCS support ensuring that the sector is able to remain an active partner in meeting the needs of Lewisham residents.

Youth service: savings of £1.4m have been agreed. This includes a reduction in front line youth provision – two youth centres (Rockbourne and Ladywell) will no longer have council-run youth services in them. Alternatives are being put in place, including finding alternative youth provision through the voluntary sector to deliver services at Rockbourne, and to open the Ladywell Adventure Playground during some evenings. Other non-youth service provision at both sites will not be affected and will continue to run.

Cultural and community development: savings totalling £240,000 will be made in the arts and sports budgets and in leisure management. However the budget for the local assemblies will not be affected.

Full details are published on the Council's website with the papers for the meeting of Mayor and Cabinet on 11 February 2015.

Street Trees for Sydenham

The Sydenham Assembly agreed to invest £4,800 in Street Trees for the following areas:

2 x trees in Longton Avenue

1 x tree in Longton Grove

2 x trees in Jews Walk

3 x trees in Queensthorpe

1 x tree in Bishopsthorpe

1 x tree in Dukesthorpe

9 x trees in Knighton Park Road

1 x tree in Fairlawn Park

Very soon we will begin the process of liaising with our tree officers and residents regarding preferred species and the timings for the planting of the trees.

We will continue to update the assembly regarding the progress.

Cllr Curran reminded the assembly to continue to suggest locations where trees can be planted as this is something that can be funded again.

91. Transport update

London Bridge – Barry Milton from the Sydenham Society told the assembly that in 2011 Network Rail advised people of the timetable for the works 4 platform closed until August 2016 and South Eastern Trains not stopping at station during this time. We were told by transport managers that this would not be a problem due to increases in London Overground. Tried out and it collapsed with London Travelwatch making complaints to the Minister with trains being cancelled up to 50% of evening trains from London Bridge on this line, and for example if you were travelling back tonight there would only be 2 trains per hour, this is going back to the 1970s and the whole thing has been a catastrophe. We were promised that from Monday 9 March they would get proper barriers set-up and start again, but within 2 days the system broke down. We have now been told that some of services will return, but we are not very optimistic about this. We are really worried that this will continue until August 2016. Sydenham has had a huge increase in passenger use.

4.2 Bakerloo Line extension - TfL held a public consultation on the Bakerloo Line Extension which closed in December.

- The Council submitted a detailed response and full supporting report in January (see M&C report 14th Jan)
- TfL will be reporting on the consultation at the end of March (there were over 15,000 response so it has taken some time to analyse)
- The Council continues to liaise with TfL and neighbouring boroughs to promote the extension.

This is the link to the M&C report

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s33029/Bakerloo%20Line%20Consultation.pdf>

And here is the Council's consultation response

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s33030/Appendix%201%20Draft%20Bakerloo%20Line%20Extension%20Response.pdf>

Proposed Assembly Motion

Cllr Curran explained that whilst Sydenham Road has received a great deal of improvements, the bus stop opposite Newlands Park is very busy and yet it does not benefit from a shelter. He therefore proposed that we should pass the following

"The Sydenham Assembly requests that TfL consider installing a bus shelter and a Countdown Indicator at the bus stop outside of Boots, 55 Sydenham Road and ensure a consistently working Countdown Indicator at the Newlands Park bus stop opposite. These are very busy interchange stops for Sydenham Station and passengers would greatly benefit from these much needed improvements."

Proposer: Cllr Curran

Seconder: Annabel McLaren

The assembly then unanimously voted to pass this motion, there were no objections.

92. Safer Haven Plus Pilot

Francesca Kellaway and Osama Shoush told the meeting that Lewisham Council is working in partnership with The Jimmy Mizen Foundation to develop and pilot Safe Haven Plus in Sydenham.

Since 2009 the original Safe Haven Scheme has been operating in Lewisham to create places where people work in partnership to report and discourage crime and anti-social behaviour and are able to offer temporary shelter to young people in immediate danger.

In addition to this, the new Safe Haven Plus pilot will provide information on the local support available to families and young people. For each Safe Haven Plus an easy to read guide will be produced that contains the contact details of a broad range of community services including financial advice, help into work, housing advice, as well as parenting and school support. This information will be displayed and the shopkeeper will be able to signpost families and young people to the relevant support.

By becoming a Safe Haven Plus local businesses will be able to strengthen the relationship with their customers, as well as becoming integral part of the community support network.

Participating shops will have a large poster in their window, displaying Safer Haven Plus and on the back will be the guidance.

If you would like further information, please contact: Osama Shoush

Safe Haven Plus Project Manager 020 8314 7692 osama.shoush@lewisham.gov.uk

Q Is this just going to be on Sydenham Road?

A No we are happy to expand this and we have talked to businesses on Kirkdale

93. Police update

Police Sergeant Chris Mackin, PC Shaun Rodway and PCSO Peter Okonji told the meeting that overall crime is down; however, they reminded attendees to always check the identification of people that knock on door and look out for elderly neighbours as often they are the victims. They stated that they would like to use this meeting to take questions and address any concerns that people may have.

Q What is the best way of getting in touch with you?

A This is via our email address Sydenham.snt@met.police.uk

Q (Cllr Onikosi) There has been an issue regarding begging in Sydenham, what powers are there?

A This is under the Vagrancy Act and we are quite happy to arrest and charge beggars, we can also move them on and get other agencies involved.

Q Are there any surgeries or drop-in centres?

A Yes once a month in the library, full details are on our website

Q It's no good asking people to go the website if people do not know it is there, you have to come to us and visit websites such as Sydenham Town Forum and Sydenham Society

A We will take this on board, but our site is easy to find via www.met.police.uk and you can just click on Safer Neighbourhoods and then Lewisham Borough / Sydenham.

Cllr Curran – You can also publicise information via our Sydenham Assembly newsletter

94. SEE3 update

Cllr Chris Best Chair of SEE3 told the meeting that the SEE3 funding finished last March. They have now successfully re-applied for funding from the Mayor of London's High Street Fund and will receive £113,000.

V22 partnered with us on the bid and the funding will help improve public space on Dartmouth Road and will help to develop a long-term cultural strategy. We are now working to draw up plans to animate the underused spaces outside Forest Hill library, Louise House and Forest Hill pools, to ensure they are a key feature of the place.

Cllr Best stated that in Sydenham there will be an Easter Bonnet Workshop from 12-2pm on Easter Saturday and from 2-3pm young people under 10 can wear their Easter bonnets on the high street. Participating traders will provide them with an Easter egg

and we will also be joined by some Easter bunnies. This creates a great community buzz and once again it is fantastic that the traders are supporting us.

The following Saturday 11 April sees the return of the market, you may have noticed some hot food traders on Queensthorpe Road and these will be back. For £25 you can bring your own stall or have a SEE3 stall on Venner Road for £35. It is really important that residents support the market and this time we are working with Sydenham Arts to bring some animation.

On Thursday 16 April at 7pm there will be a Town Team Meeting and we want to get more residents involved and ascertain what you want for your high street. You can also email us at info@see3 and tell us what you would like.

Q Can you say something about the proposed road improvement scheme in Dartmouth Road and Kirkdale?

A This is a local improvement scheme and Dartmouth Road will receive £600,000 over 2 years. Like Sydenham some of traders would like to see some parking bays and we would like to develop some of the spaces such as outside the Sylvan Post, we want to do things that add value. I think that our experience here will help Forest Hill. In Kirkdale there is a smaller sum of money to look at improvements such as parking and traffic flow.

Q (Pat Trembath) In the past 10 years there have been 25 personal injury accidents in the Kirkdale area from Peak Hill to the roundabout. In comparison there have been 6 in the adjacent area, so Kirkdale does need looking at. In addition Kirkdale does not appear to belong to anybody as it is on the border of Forest Hill and Sydenham ward

Q (Annabel McLaren) Going back to Saturday 11 March, there will be a pop-up shop at Here for Good 18 Sydenham Road where crafts people and artists can have tables, so please contact us if you are interested.

(Cllr Best) It is so important that we continue to support the traders as there is so much going on within the area and we really appreciate what they doing.

95. Sydenham Arts Festival

Jonathan Kaufman told the assembly that they have a new magazine titled 'South Circular' which was delivered via Letterbox to Sydenham, Perry Vale, Forest Hill and some of Bellingham ward. Jonathan stated that Word Fayre finished on Sunday and that a world record was set. This was the longest trail of children's books (150.8 metres).

Sydenham Arts will now be operating a year round programme, it will be smaller than previous years, but better and we are always looking for volunteers. We will shortly be sending out a survey relating to what we do so please do complete this. From April to December Sydenham Arts will be working with SEE3 to deliver High Street Happenings and we are always looking for new ideas.

96. Young Citizens Programme

Sasha Leacock from Forest Hill School told the assembly that 240 young people in year 9 (ages 13-14yrs) have taken part in the project working with Councillors and ambassadors to improve the community and help young people have a voice. The project was launched in November and there was a youth assembly which Cllr Best attended along with Councillors from Forest Hill and Sydenham ward.

The young people worked in tutor groups and were supported to come up with ideas linked to the ward priorities. These included saving crystal Palace, environmental initiatives, activities and festivals. These were then pitched to a panel of judges which the Young Mayor and a representative from London & Quadrant Housing who have provided £1,200 of match funding for the project.

The winner was an inter-generational festival with a music and dance theme which will take place on 11th July. Ideas and contacts for venues, stall holders, workshop leaders and any volunteers will be most welcome. For more information visit CPA@foresthillschool.co.uk

97. Community Clean-up Day 21st March 2015

Cllr Rachel Onikosi told the assembly that this is a national initiative and there will be a number of clean-ups across Lewisham and these will take place on Saturday 21 March and people are free to join in and help. We are meeting at 11am outside the Sydenham Centre. In Sydenham we will predominantly be concentrating on shop front stickers. In addition to this we will go to Earlsthorpe Mews and tidy this area as this is an un-adopted area, but I am also keen to look at any suggestions that you may have.

Q Will you have the equipment to remove these stickers?

A Yes we have the Graffiti removal kits

Areas suggested for clean-up included behind the Greyhound and Wells Park Road.

98. Any other business

- Cllr Onikosi told the meeting that in Mayow Park there is a new trim trail that will be officially opening at 3pm on Wednesday 25 March
- Ilse Towler informed the assembly that there is now a Literary Piazza that has been built at the front of Home Park. This was funded by the Mayor's Pocket Park Fund. This provides a paved space for story-telling and readings with plants and a story chair as well as other literary themed art works from local artists. We are also hoping that the café will have some outside seating.

Q (Nigel Desborough) We have lost some parking in Silverdale which is very inconvenient, can you look at this?

A Yes we will do

Q (Alona Sheridan) The Council has put double yellow lines between the bus stop by Bishopsthorpe Road and Mayow Park, however, the Mini Cab drivers are still parking on both the yellow lines and on the pavement, there is no enforcement here?

A We will speak to officers about this and to the Taxi Office

Q Angela Hall Chair of the Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel told the meeting that there is a need to have a Zebra Crossing at Westwood Hill. Quite a few children use this route and there is a real need for one?

A Cllr Onikosi said that a new crossing patrol officer will be arriving, however, attendees felt that this was not sufficient and there will still be a need for a crossing.

Q Will Lewisham be implementing the 20MPH limit as it is noticeable that drivers speed up as they enter Lewisham from Southwark?

A Yes it is applicable in Lewisham

Q Can we have a shelter at Sydenham Station as waiting times are long and it can be unpleasant in the wet?

A Yes we can raise this

Cllr Curran then thanked James Stagg for the production of the assembly newsletter.

Cllr Curran also thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked people to complete the evaluation forms as we do read them and act upon many of the suggestions made. He then stated that the next assembly is on Tuesday 2 June.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.