

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 14 September 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), Suzannah Clarke (Vice-Chair), Bill Brown, Amanda De Ryk, James-J Walsh, Mark Ingleby, Pauline Morrison, Eva Stamirowski and Paul Upex

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Sir Steve Bullock (Mayor), Timothy Andrew (Interim Overview and Scrutiny Manager), Jessie Lea (Senior Programme Manager), Kplom Lotsu (SGM Capital Programmes) and Emma Talbot (Head of Planning)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2016

The Committee agreed the following clarifications to the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2016:

- 1.1 On page three, the wording of the referral to Mayor and Cabinet was meant to have read: 'The Committee recommends that the strategy be formally adopted as Council policy and *should* also referred to in the local development management plan.'
- 1.2 On page seven, 'the Committee felt strongly about the benefits of a potential *piazza* in Catford' (in the vicinity of the current location of Laurence House)
- 1.3 On page eight that the referral was intended to have read: 'The route down from the station will feel processional *and* engender a sense of expectation of what is to come.'
- 1.4 The Committee also noted that, at Members' insistence, there had been a trial of street light dimming in a whole polling district.
- 1.5 The Committee also noted that their strongly worded and highly passionate discussion about the re-routing of the road in Catford. Members felt that this may not have been adequately reflected in the minutes. Members reiterated their strong feelings about the importance of the relocation of the road to the vision for the redevelopment of the town centre.

Resolved: that the minutes be agreed, subject to the clarifications and amendments discussed.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillor James-J Walsh declared a non-prejudicial interest as the founder of the Bakerloo line extension.com

3. Catford Town Centre Regeneration update

3.1 Kplom Lotsu (SGM Capital Programme Delivery) and Emma Talbot (Head of Planning) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:

- The Committee had been carrying out quarterly monitoring of the scheme. This was the third update report.

- Work (set out in section 4.2 of the report) was being carried out on options for the relocation of the road. Officers were in dialogue with TfL, which had assembled a project team to work on Catford.
- Officers were keen to highlight to TfL that the Council did not want Catford merely to be a confluence of roads.
- TfL understood that the theatre was a central part of the regeneration of Catford and had started amending their plans to ensure access and prominence.
- Officers had met with senior people in TfL to discuss the importance of regeneration in Catford and to emphasise the importance of long term solutions for the town centre.
- Officers at City Hall were interested and receptive to the efforts being made by council officers.

3.2 In the discussion that followed, Kplom Lotsu, Emma Talbot, Jessie Lea and the Mayor responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- TfL was a large organisation with parts that were unconnected to each other. One part did not always know what the others were working on.
- Members gave examples of instances in which small issues (such as the relocation of a bus stop) had generated problems between partners and expressed the hope that by starting early and working with officers across TfL, issues in Catford could be avoided.
- One of the key issues in Catford was the high volume of busses travelling through it on a daily basis.
- Officers and Members were in agreement that there were many positive things about Catford, yet it was easy to focus on the negative.
- Housing zone negotiations were still in their early stages. Key documents had been drawn up and accepted in broad terms. A paper requesting decision from the Mayor on the next stage of the development of the housing zone would be presented to Mayor and Cabinet at the end of September.
- Changes to the London plan would likely require more affordable homes, which would likely have implications for the density and scale of future developments.
- The new Mayor of London would be revising elements of the London Plan. At the end of this year or the beginning of next, he would be giving his opinion about the implementation of existing policies.
- The Committee was concerned about the timetable, vision and strategy for the development of Catford as well as the level of engagement with members of the public. The Committee was frustrated by the seemingly piecemeal nature of the approach being taken.
- Before March 2018 most of the key decisions would have been made by the Mayor.
- People were enthused and excited by the future of Catford. Dates were being agreed for future consultation events and a series of sessions to meet with local people for 'Catford Conversations'.
- Members were concerned about the possibility of decisions being made whilst the consultation was ongoing.

- A programme of minor works had been agreed for the theatre. Work was also taking place to let the café space to a commercial operator.
- The issue of density of development was complicated. Increasing the density of developments had to be balanced with attention to the quality of design.
- The regeneration was not yet at a stage to provide detail. Decisions might need to be made in the future about the balance between different tenures of housing and other benefits from the scheme as well as the availability of funding.
- It was too early to discuss the possibility of compulsorily purchasing land to enable the development.
- The limits of Catford were defined in planning terms – but there were different views about what was and what was not part of Catford.
- Some Members were also concerned about the politics of bringing forward a large scheme. It was felt that the process of compulsory purchase could be complicated so it was important to build strong partnerships and to consider the implications of the disposal of land early on in the programme.

3.3 The Committee resolved to advise Mayor and Cabinet of the following:

- The Committee recognises the energy and enthusiasm that is shown for the development of Catford and it hopes that this will result in decisive action to move the Catford programme forward.
- The Committee remains concerned that the programme is piecemeal and lacks a genuine central vision of how the town centre will look, a cohesive approach or a single person driving the project on a daily basis. Added to the concern is the sense of rush to drive the project through.
- The Committee requests a timetable for the programme with all dates of key decisions and deadlines for delivery.
- The Committee requests a copy of the decision-making structure of the programme including all the elements of planning, regeneration and the allotted Housing Action Zone/GLA membership of the Catford programme board.
- The Committee asks that it be provided with an update on the delivery of the new 'vision' document for Catford.
- The Committee wants to understand how members of the public will have meaningful involvement in the decision-making about the design and look of Catford. The Committee asks for specific examples of how local residents' views will genuinely affect the development of plans for the town centre.
- The Committee notes a hiatus on the lottery bid and renovation work on the Broadway Theatre and requests an update on the programme of work being carried out at the Broadway Theatre, which includes full details of the resources being allocated to carry out proposed works.

Resolved: that the Committee refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet.

4. Lewisham Future Programme

4.1 David Austin (Head of Corporate Resources) introduced the Lewisham Future Programme report. The following key points were noted:

- The Council had made £138m of savings to its budget from 2010/11, which meant the whole savings programme was projected to save £200m to 2019/20.
- Members had already agreed £17m of savings to be implemented in 2016/17.
- A further £45m of savings would be needed in the three years to 2019/20, equivalent to £15m per year.
- The Lewisham Future report brought forward £7m of specific savings proposals for 2017/18. A further £14m of proposals should be anticipated.
- This still left a gap of £21m of savings to 2019/20.
- The report also included an efficiency plan for the coming four years based on the Lewisham 2020 priorities.
- It was as yet unclear what the change of government might mean for the local government finance settlement, due in November.
- Social care was still the largest areas of spend, followed by leisure and environment. It was these areas that could produce the largest level of savings.

4.2 In the discussion that followed, the following key points were noted:

- The Lewisham Future Programme board would be holding challenge sessions to look at the Council significant areas of spend.
- Work was taking place to improve income generation and make services self-sustaining.
- Work was also taking place to determine how the Council might make additional funds from the use of assets.
- Work was also taking place to release funds from the leisure centre contract. The intention would be to make the contract self-financing.
- The Council might need to develop its capacity and skills in certain areas in order to make the most of its assets.
- In existing schemes, the Council has sometimes opted to buy-in expertise.
- The planning services required an update to its technology in order to produce revenue. At present, it was hampered by outdated systems and lack of access to industry standard software.
- Some parts of the changes to the enforcement service were not being implemented, other parts were taking time to come in to effect.
- The next stage of the decision making process was for the Mayor to make a decision about the £7m of savings being proposed for the 2017/18 and to implement the £17m of savings already agreed for next year.

4.3 The Committee resolved to advise the Public Accounts Select Committee of the following:

- The Committee recommends that action be taken to improve the IT used by the borough’s planning teams. Members recognise that planning officers could provide substantially improved services and make more efficient use of resources if the IT offer was brought up to industry standards.
- The Committee recommends that the proposal to cut or reduce the assemblies fund be rejected.
- The Committee would welcome further proposals about the potential to generate revenue from the use of the Council’s assets.
- The Committee is concerned about the lack of information provided about the equalities dimension of a number of the savings proposals. It asks that officers pay close attention to areas in which there may be a cumulative negative impact on protected groups.

Resolved: that the Committee refer its views to the Public Accounts Committee.

5. Select Committee work programme

5.1 Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) introduced the report the following items for the meeting on 25 October 2016 were agreed:

- Planning obligations and regulations update
- Planning key policies and procedures
- Annual parking report

Resolved: that the work programme be agreed.

6. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

Resolved: that the Committee’s views under items three be referred to Mayor and Cabinet – and that its views under item four be referred to Public Accounts Committee.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

Chair:

Date:
