

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 13 September 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), Mark Ingleby (Vice-Chair), Abdeslam Amrani, Andre Bourne, Suzannah Clarke, Amanda De Ryk, Sophie McGeevor, Paul Upex and James-J Walsh

APOLOGIES: Councillor Eva Stamirowski

ALSO PRESENT: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), Deborah Efemini (Capital Project Manager), Roland Karthaus (Director) (Make Architects), Jessie Lea (Senior Programme Manager), Kplom Lotsu (SGM Capital Programmes), Freddie Murray (SGM Asset Strategy and Technical Support), Gavin Plaskitt (Programme Manager), Emma Talbot (Head of Planning), Sarah Walsh (Regeneration and Urban Design Planning Manager) and Ralph Wilkinson (Head of Public Services)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2017

- 1.1 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting on 20 July be agreed as an accurate record.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1 There were none.

3. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

- 3.1 Ralph Wilkinson (Head of Public Services) introduced the response from Mayor and Cabinet on post office changes. The following key points were noted:
 - The recommendations put forward by the Committee had been agreed and all actions had been implemented.
 - Provisional terms for a new lease for Sydenham post office had been agreed.
 - A consultation on the relocation of the post office in New Cross had started. The consultation would close in October.
- 3.2 Ralph Wilkinson (Head of Public Services) and Freddie Murray (SGM, Asset Strategy and Technical Support) responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:
 - 'Heads of terms' for Sydenham post office had been agreed, a contract had not yet been signed.
 - The consultation in New Cross was about the relocation of services. The Post Office had already decided that the service would be franchised.
- 3.3 **Resolved:** to note the response from Mayor and Cabinet.

4. Beckenham Place Park update

4.1 Gavin Plaskitt (Programme Manager) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- The report responded to a number of questions that had been raised about the regeneration of Beckenham Place Park. This included an update on the rationale for the interim use of the mansion building in the park as well as information about the events and activities that were taking place in the park.
- A number of options had been considered for the use of the buildings in the park.
- The option for providing round the clock surveillance and security for the mansion house would have cost more than a quarter of a million pounds a year.
- A second option for property guardianship was considered, which would have required additional spending to make the building habitable.
- A third option for meanwhile use was also considered, which entailed some costs but also enabled the mansion building to host events and activities for park users.
- A pros and cons analysis of each of the options was included in the appendix.
- One of the significant benefits of the meanwhile use option was to attract new audiences to the park and to generate positive feelings about the regeneration.
- The meanwhile use option was chosen (for an initial period of 22 months), this helped the project avoid significant security costs and provided additional time for the consideration for future options for usage of the mansion house.
- It was believed that the audience for activities in the park needed to be better developed before options for the long term use of the mansion could be decided.
- A range of meanwhile activities were currently taking place and the mansion building was being well used.
- Analysis on building usage carried out over the past few weeks demonstrated that a majority of users from Lewisham were from Bellingham and Downham wards.
- It was estimated that over the year more than ten thousand people would use the building.

4.2 Gavin Plaskitt responded to questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- Officers had considered a number of options for the meanwhile use of the mansion house. A single provider (which the Council had an existing relationship with) had been considered for the meanwhile management of the mansion house, but they had withdrawn at the last moment.
- The short timescale for the safeguarding of the building and the extremely high potential security costs meant that officers had to act quickly to appoint a meanwhile use provider.
- The meanwhile use provider in the mansion house at present had a record of sustaining activities in buildings that were not in optimum condition.
- There was not a tendering process for the leasing of the meanwhile use contract for the building. Officers had to demonstrate that the contract

for the lease was good value of money but there was no requirement for a tendering exercise.

- There were options to adapt the business rates system to encourage meanwhile use (that would be applicable across the borough). One option was to value the social impact of activities taking place alongside the rateable value, in practice, this was very rarely done.
- The park had been in decline for decades. The process of regenerating and rehabilitating the park would take the best part of a decade.
- £20-£25m in funding had been secured to invest in the park. Work was just beginning and not everything would happen at once.
- The Heritage Lottery fund had advised that the decision about the future of the mansion house should not be rushed. It was important to gain a good understanding of the audience for activities in the park. It was likely that over the course of the regeneration scheme, the audience for activities would change.
- Consultation was taking place with stakeholders to address concerns about the application for an events license in the park. The license would enable more of the types of events that were currently being held in the park, rather than any large scale music events or festivals.

4.3 In the Committee discussion, the following key points were also noted:

- Members were concerned about the timing and management of the appointment process for the meanwhile managers of the building.
- Opinions differed between members of the Committee about the appropriateness and the ambition of the medium to long term vision for the use of the mansion house building in the context of the regeneration of the park.
- Several members commented on the excellent variety and high quality of events and activities taking place in the park.
- Members were disappointed that the application for the events license in the park had been delayed.

4.4 **Resolved:** that the report be noted.

5. Catford town centre quarterly update

5.1 Kplom Lotsu (SGM Capital Programmes) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- The report included updates on the timetable for the development of the regeneration programme. There were also updates on the consultation and a presentation on the start of masterplanning processes.
- An indicative timeline from Transport for London for the realignment of the South Circular had been provided in the report.
- A timeline for the development of the masterplan for the town centre had also been provided. Dates had been factored into gather the views of the Committee before consideration by Mayor and Cabinet.

5.2 Deborah Efemini (Capital Project Manager) introduced an update on the regeneration communications programme. The following key points were noted:

- Filigree communications (based in the business incubator space in the Old Town Hall) had been appointed to support the consultation.
- Filigree specialised in consultation for regeneration projects.

- Filigree and officers involved in the regeneration communications programme had branded themselves as ‘team Catford’ to represent the views of local people.
- A range of engagement activities, both face to face and online, were taking place.
- The Commonplace platform was being well received. More than a thousand people had registered to use the platform and made comments online.
- The team were tracking interactions through social media and attempting to generate positive comments about the town centre and the Council.
- Consultants from Urban Narrative had been working with Councillors and officers to gather information and ideas about the views of these stakeholders.

5.3 Sarah Walsh (Regeneration and Urban Development Programme Manager) and Roland Karthaus (Director of Matter Architects) gave a presentation (included in the part two papers). The presentation incorporated an update on the development of the brief for the masterplan for the town centre. An overview was provided of the different options for the use of space in Catford, including the possible criteria for configurations and locations for the Council’s civic and office functions. It was reported that a key consideration for the master plan was the integration of existing activities taking place in the town centre as well as the place making opportunities of the redevelopment. It was noted that the process that had been followed for the development of the masterplan so far would enable the Council to focus its options for the masterplan brief.

5.4 Sarah Walsh, Kplom Lotsu and Deborah Efemini responded to questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- The consultation and regeneration plans were encouraging positivity about the future of Catford.
- Historically, people had only moved to Catford because it was affordable. There were positive signs that people were coming to Catford for a broader range of reasons.
- There would be different options for the future location of the registry office. Beckenham Place Park provided one option but – depending on timing of the regeneration programme- there might be opportunities to move the office into the new civic complex in Catford.
- In order to keep its London Plan designation as a major town centre Catford would need to retain its current level of retail. It was not envisaged that the amount of retail floor space would substantially change.
- Officers had carried out a study of major town centres in London and the layout of the transport and infrastructure offer. The study indicated that of London’s 35 major town centres Catford’s transport connections were most disconnected from the town centre.

5.5 In the Committee discussions, the following key points were also noted:

- Officers should give consideration to the impact of air pollution on the people who live and work in the town centre.
- The Council’s offices and civic space should be open to the public to enable interaction between the community and elected members.
- It was encouraging that work was taking place to consider how the built environment could improve the Council’s civic and official functions.

- Officers should build on existing knowledge and research (including the historic Intercultural Cities work that was carried out in Deptford) to develop plans for the cultural offer in the town centre.
- Officers should consider working with estate agents to encourage positivity about Catford town centre.
- There should be collaboration between the regeneration team and the officers responsible for the management of Catford town centre to ensure that decisions about the management of the shopping centre reflected the ambition of the regeneration programme.
- The Committee was concerned about the affordability of Catford's future retail offer and the variety and uniqueness of local businesses.
- Members reiterated their support for an improved cycling and pedestrian environment along the key arterial routes into Catford.

5.6 **Resolved:** that the Committee should refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet, as follows:

- The Committee welcomes the sense of coherence and direction provided by the delivery of the masterplanning process. The Committee commends the work of the Catford regeneration programme team and it reiterates its appreciation for the careful consideration that officers are giving to all elements of the programme.
- The Committee believes that the process of masterplanning has reached a point at which all councillors would benefit from the opportunity to be involved in discussions. The Committee asks that opportunities be provided for all elected members to be involved in the next stages of the development of the Catford town centre masterplan.
- The Committee recommends that proposals for the future of the Council's offices and civic facilities retain a connection between civic functions, office space and the public. The Committee believes that the Council's offices should be open and accessible to the community so that there are opportunities for all residents to engage in the civic life of the borough.
- The Committee recommends that officers' future discussions with Transport for London and the Greater London Authority should emphasise the connection between the delivery of housing action zone targets and improvements in transport connections. The Committee is concerned about current plans to stop the extension of the Bakerloo line in Lewisham, rather than extending it to Hayes (via Catford).
- The Committee reiterates the importance of incorporating quality cycling and walking routes on the key arterial routes into Catford.
- The Committee recommends that as part of the master planning process officers should consider the potential for the development of an education campus with further and higher education providers.
- The Committee highlights the importance of Catford's varied and unique collection of businesses. The Committee recommends that consideration be given to options for provision of affordable premises for local businesses and organisations with a social purpose. This might include changes to the business rate system which enable innovation, encourage social purpose and support community participation.

6. Planning: key policies and procedures

6.1 Emma Talbot (Head of Planning) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:

- The report provided an update on the work that the planning department work progressing.
- The elections had slowed progress on the new Lewisham Plan.
- There had been a senior appointment to develop the Council's approach to the Bakerloo line.
- The Mayor of London had published housing viability planning guidance. Officers were looking for opportunities to brief all members about the implications of the new guidance for Lewisham.

6.2 Emma Talbot responded to questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- Officers would give consideration to the definitions used in planning documents. The example given by Committee of the distinction between a house and a home would be reviewed as part of the local plan process.
- The process of site selection for a gypsy and traveller site in the borough started about two years ago. At each stage of the selection the Council was attempting to be as open and transparent as possible about the options.
- More work was taking place to develop the two existing options for gypsy and traveller sites.
- Decisions on the options for Lewisham's gypsy and traveller site had been taken by Mayor and Cabinet, future reports would be subject to scrutiny in the usual way.
- Officers were keeping the options for protecting large amounts of Lewisham's housing stock from becoming homes in multiple occupation under review following the review in 2015/16.
- The Council's approach to basements would be included in the residential extensions and alterations SPD.
- The technical standards for new developments has improved since some of the recent developments in Lewisham had been approved. However, the Mayor of London was supporting schemes reducing the minimum floor areas to increase the level of affordable housing.

6.3 **Resolved:** that the report be noted.

7. Select Committee work programme

7.1 The Committee discussed the work programme. It was noted that the Lewisham Future Programme savings were due to be considered at the next meeting and the Committee might need to alter the work programme at short notice in order to accommodate the savings report. Members also suggested that the Committee's future work programme might include items on:

- Further developments at Beckenham Place Park.
- Recycling and the implementation of the new waste service.
- Markets.

8. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

8.1 **Resolved:** that the Committee should refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet under item five, as follows:

- The Committee welcomes the sense of coherence and direction provided by the delivery of the masterplanning process. The Committee commends the work of the Catford regeneration programme team and it reiterates its appreciation for the careful consideration that officers are giving to all elements of the programme.
- The Committee believes that the process of masterplanning has reached a point at which all councillors would benefit from the opportunity to be involved in discussions. The Committee asks that opportunities be provided for all elected members to be involved in the next stages of the development of the Catford town centre masterplan.
- The Committee recommends that proposals for the future of the Council's offices and civic facilities retain a connection between civic functions, office space and the public. The Committee believes that the Council's offices should be open and accessible to the community so that there are opportunities for all residents to engage in the civic life of the borough.
- The Committee recommends that officers' future discussions with Transport for London and the Greater London Authority should emphasise the connection between the delivery of housing action zone targets and improvements in transport connections. The Committee is concerned about current plans to stop the extension of the Bakerloo line in Lewisham, rather than extending it to Hayes (via Catford).
- The Committee reiterates the importance of incorporating quality cycling and walking routes on the key arterial routes into Catford.
- The Committee recommends that as part of the master planning process officers should consider the potential for the development of an education campus with further and higher education providers.
- The Committee highlights the importance of Catford's varied and unique collection of businesses. The Committee recommends that consideration be given to options for provision of affordable premises for local businesses and organisations with a social purpose. This might include changes to the business rate system which enable innovation, encourage social purpose and support community participation.

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

Chair:

Date:
